

COPENHAGEN CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THEOSOPHY AND
ESOTERICISM

Pan-Sophia



STUDENT JOURNAL

Editors:

DR. TIM RUDBØG

IDA SKOVHUS HANSEN

MATHIAS NIKOLAJ REIDL

Vol. 3

AUGUST 2020

Pan-Sophia

Published by
H.E.R.M.E.S. Academic Press
Holsteinsgade 13, st. th.
2100 Copenhagen Ø
Denmark

www.publishing.h-e-r-m-e-s.org

First Published 2020 © All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any information storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publishers.

ISBN: 9788799205646

Table of Contents

Preface	i
1 Precarious Sainthood: The Mysticism of Teresa de Ávila between Orthodoxy and Esotericism	1
LUKAS HOLST JENSEN	
2 Devil's Discourse: Witch Trials and The Malleus Maleficarum	38
AISHA FREJA WENDELBO PEDERSEN	
3 Selvtransformation og kunst: Det ekcessive og det kul- tiske i <i>Tragediens fødsel</i>	66
MATHIAS NIKOLAJ REIDL	
4 Medieval Catharism and Esoteric Heresy	89
HARALD TOKSVÆRD	
5 Kemisk Mystik: Argumenter for anvendt fænomenolo- gi i religionsforskning og studier i psykedeliske ople- velser	117
CHRISTIAN TRANBERG	

Preface

It is with great pleasure I hereby present Pan-Sophia, a student journal solely dedicated to the study of theosophy and esotericism.

The articles published in this journal are principally excellent student essays written in relation to courses offered by the *Copenhagen Center for the Study of Theosophy and Esotericism* at the *Institute for Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies* (ToRS) at the *University of Copenhagen*.

Every semester several students write very interesting, highly informative, and decidedly relevant exam essays in connection with the center's courses on various aspects of theosophy and esotericism in relation to science, philosophy, religion, literature and art. To me it always seemed a great pity to simply put good essays on the shelf once they have served their purpose as exam essays. Thus motivated by my enthusiastic students, I thought that if these essays were adapted, as they are in this journal, to article format, they could also be of benefit to readers outside our courses interested in this field as well as to students just beginning their journey into the study of theosophy and esotericism. Building on this idea, our journal is now a reality and welcomes articles from all students working on theosophy and esotericism.

For ongoing support in making this happen, I wish to express my gratitude to *The Blavatsky Trust*, all my students, and my co-editor Ida Skovhus Hansen.

For further information please visit: <http://ccrs.ku.dk/research-centres-and-projects/ccste/>

Tim Rudbøg, Copenhagen, 16.3.2018

Precarious Sainthood:

The Mysticism of Teresa de Ávila between Orthodoxy and Esotericism

LUKAS HOLST JENSEN

INTRODUCTION

On an October night in 1582, a 67-year old Spanish nun died in the convent of the Discalced Carmelites in the Castilian town of Alba de Tormes. Her dying words are believed to have been "I am a Daughter of the Church."¹. The phrase could be interpreted as expressing either relief, defiant insistence or sheer triumphalism. All three would have been appropriate considering the quite remarkable life she had lived. Teresa de Jesús, as she was known after entering the Carmelite order in 1536, was both a prolific mystical writer and an energetic religious reformer. During her work in these fields, she met fierce resistance from wide circles within the Spanish establishment. She had been sued in secular courts both by her own calced order and the City Council of her native city of Ávila, had been indicted by inquisitional tribunals all over Spain, had her autobiography confiscated by the same institution and had been ordered to burn her writings by ecclesiastical superiors. All through her public career, she was continuously met with accusations of heresy and suspicions of esoteric practices. Her troubles even continued after death, as the Inquisition opened new cases on her later books².

Suddenly, things changed with a remarkable pace. A cult grew up around her veneration, which quickly spread all over the global

¹McGaha 2009, p. 71.

²For a detailed analysis of Teresa de Ávila's travails with the Spanish Inquisition, see Llamas Martinez 1972. For the political issues in Ávila, see Bilinkoff 2014, p. 109–151. For an overview of the critique of her alleged subversion of patriarchy see Weber 1990.

empire ruled by Felipe II. She was canonized in 1622, under the name Teresa de Ávila, just 40 years after her death; An extraordinarily hasty canonization in a post-tridentine church notoriously reluctant to begin canonization-processes³. Teresa even had a two-year spell as the patron saint of Spain, along with Santiago the Moor-Slayer, until Pope Urban VIII succumbed to pressure from traditionalists and demoted her in 1629⁴. Her posthumous career culminated in 1970, when Pope Paul VI elevated Teresa, as the first female, to the status of *Doctor of the Church*, the elite circle of 36 catholic saints with the highest theological significance⁵.

This article investigates the theological minefield in which Teresa worked, the borderlands between heretical esotericism and Catholic orthodoxy. It is my claim, that by studying her trajectory from accused esoteric heretic to Doctor of the Church, it is possible to draw important conclusions in relation to the study of esotericism and orthodoxy, which will demonstrate the precariousness of both concepts.

I will begin with a review of the study of esotericism as a field and try to establish an operational definition of the concept. Then, I will proceed with short accounts of first the Counter-Reformation with a focus on Spain and then Teresa's career and theological position. Next, I will provide a presentation of her proposal for a way to accomplish the human soul's spiritual union with God, as it is found in her Autobiography and major mystical work *Castillo Interior*⁶. Afterwards, I will try to situate Teresa de Ávila within both esotericism and mainstream Christian mysticism. From there, I will analyze how she succeed in remaining a daughter of the Catholic Church. Lastly, the articles will close with a conclusion on my findings.

All quotations in English from St. Teresa's works are my own translations from the original Spanish texts.

³For a detailed study on the canonizations during the Counter-Reformation, see Burke 1984.

⁴Rowe 2006, p. 574.

⁵Wiberg Pedersen 2017, p. 70.

⁶From here on, Teresa de Ávila's *Libro de la Vida* (1565) will be referred to as *Vida* and *Castillo Interior* (1577) as *Moradas*.

DEFINING WESTERN ESOTERICISM

The study of Western esotericism, a concept covering a plethora of currents in Western Europe after the Renaissance, as a separate academic field emerged only in the last quarter of the 20th century and owes its existence to the work of Antoine Faivre⁷.

As base for the study of the field, Faivre demarcated Western Esotericism through six characteristics, four fundamentals and two secondaries, that he believed could identify esoteric currents. The first of these fundamental characteristics are *correspondences*, or the idea that the world is a theatre of mirrors, where concepts in the macrocosm are paralleled in the microcosm. The second is *the idea of living nature*, the belief that Nature is a living organism that is connected to the human being and the divine realm. Thirdly, *imagination and mediations* play important roles in esotericism, where they offer passages between the different levels of reality. The last of the fundamentals is the experience of *transmutation*, a second birth of the esoteric through the experience of the three aforementioned characteristics. The secondary characteristics are *concordance*, the belief that common denominators exist within all the different esoteric traditions, and *transmission*, the lineages of initiation into divine knowledge from master to pupil⁸.

Faivre's hallmarks have functioned as a baseline for the further study of Western esotericism, and later scholars have attempted to sophisticate this definition. In a similar vein, Versluis has convincingly argued for the inclusion of *gnosis* as a defining feature of esoteric currents. In Versluis' understanding, the term refers both to a knowledge or direct perception of the cosmos, *cosmological gnosis*, and "direct spiritual insight into complete transcendence" or *metaphysical gnosis*⁹.

Other scholars have reacted differently than Versluis to Faivre's definition. Von Stuckrad believes that esotericism does not exist as a thing in itself but appears only after the scholar begins forging it into being. Instead of a definition of an object matter, von Stuckrad

⁷Versluis 2002, p. 1.

⁸Faivre 2010, p. 12.

⁹Versluis 2002, p. 2.

offers a matrix of interpretation that identifies two dimensions of esotericism: *claims of higher knowledge* and *ways of accessing this knowledge*¹⁰.

Hanegraaf is even more insistent in removing the lens from esoteric current themselves, when he attempts to define them. On the contrary, he conceives esoteric currents as something created by others, in the course of a *Grand Polemical Narrative*. According to Hanegraaf, esotericism is characterized by heterogeneous forms of knowledge that have been rejected by alternating authorities through the ideological and polemical construction of “the other” in form of *the pagan, the heretic gnostic, the magician, the reconstructed pagan Catholic* and finally *the occultist*¹¹.

Finally, Goodrick-Clarke highlights an important aspect of esotericism when he states that it “appears as a diastole of renascent cultural and spiritual energy, after the systole of consolidated orthodoxy in ideas and institutions.”. As such, it “is an essential element of renewal in the historical process.”¹².

The concept of Western esotericism that underlines this article will be an attempt to include aspects from all four of the abovementioned scholars. I believe that must have some kind of working definition of what constitutes Western esotericism in itself, as a standard to measure our subject against. For that purpose, I will apply Faivre’s definition with the inclusion of *gnosis* from Versluis and *claims to higher knowledge and methods to partake in it that knowledge* from Von Stuckrad. However, I primarily regard Western esotericism as a category constructed by others, in the ideological battle to construct orthodoxy. In that sense, I understand it as currents of religious thoughts that run counter to the hegemonic ideology, in the Gramscian sense, of the orthodox authorities and as one that is therefore met with opposition from the elites¹³. Furthermore, I view it, along with the ideas presented by Goodrick-Clarke, as emerging from below in times of historical

¹⁰Von Stuckrad 2005, p. 99.

¹¹Hanegraaf 2005, pp. 226–47.

¹²Goodrick-Clarke 2008, p. 13.

¹³For Antonio Gramsci’s concept of Hegemony, see Thomas 2009, pp. 37–46 & 159–96.

upheaval.

This position does not entail that I regard Western esotericism as something isolated from developments in Western thought and civilization. I maintain, in accordance with Faivre, that Western Esotericism was, from the very outset, “intrinsically connected with nascent modernity” and has continued to be so ever since¹⁴. As such, it is “a structural element of Western culture”¹⁵. But in order to study esotericism, and for the purpose of this article, the investigation of where Teresa de Ávila fits in between it and orthodoxy, we must try to get a grasp of what separates esoteric currents from hegemonic doctrines. Therefore, I will work from the list provided by Tim Rudbøg of what definitely have been associated with Western esotericism¹⁶.

THE CATHOLIC REFORMATION

The Catholic Reformation was not a uniform or monolithic enterprise but must be regarded as a combination of the intensification of reformative efforts already in progression, innovative theological programs and a reaction to the different Protestant movements that emerged during early modern Catholicism¹⁷.

Starting with the condemnation of Luther at the Diet of Worms (1521), the counter offensive of the Catholic Church ended with the French Revolution (1789)¹⁸. The central incident of this period was the ecumenical council held in the Italian town of Trent from 1545 to 1563. On the one hand, the Catholic Church systematized its theology to fence off Protestant attacks. On the other hand, the council fathers attempted to eliminate abuses within the clergy and monastic orders. Among others, they insisted that bishops and parish priests should be better educated so that they could preach the faith to the believers. The initiatives on both fronts led to an in-

¹⁴Faivre 2010, p. 6.

¹⁵Von Stuckrad 2005, p. 78.

¹⁶Rudbøg 2013, p. 33.

¹⁷For a general history of the Catholic Reformation, see Wright 1982. For a historiography of it, see O’Malley 2000.

¹⁸Wright 1982, pp. 264–82.

creasingly vast centralization within the Church and accumulated unheard powers in the papal court¹⁹. This tendency was further intensified with the establishment of the Jesuit order, that functioned as papal shock troops in the Tridentine evangelization²⁰.

Besides a strengthening of papal administrative and doctrinal control, the Catholic Reformation saw an intense flourishing of popular faith, originating from below and outside the realm of ecclesiastical power, which was a continuation of developments from the medieval church. Reformers within the monastic orders advocated a return to the ascetic basis on which they were founded, new cults of saints sprung up and new ways to approach the sacred appeared. Especially marked was a thirst for the word and religious literature, which was also an important component of the Protestant program²¹.

The mixture of an intense popular renewal of faith and a reinforced and centralized papacy combined with the outward threat of Protestant heretics proved explosive for the Catholic Church that emerged from Trent. There was an urgent need for the appraisal of which tendencies that needed to be suppressed, which currents were in concordance with Tridentine ideology, and then to construct mechanisms to carry out the necessary suppression or elevation. This led to the establishment of the Congregation of Sacred Rites, to define and elevate the sacred, and the strengthening of the Inquisition, to define and suppress the heretic. No more so than in Spain, where the establishment of the nascent bureaucratic state under Felipe II was spearheaded by the Inquisition²².

The Catholic Reformation had an immediate impact in Spain. From the reign of *Los Reyes Católicos*, Isabella of Castille and Fernando of Aragon (1474), to the early years of the reign of Carlos V (1516), Spain had been in the forefront of the humanist campaign. Under the stewardship of Cardinal Ximénez de Cisneros, Archbishop of Toledo and Primate of Spain, the bible had been translated

¹⁹Olden-Jørgensen 2017, pp. 54–65.

²⁰Wright 2004, pp. 13–41.

²¹McGuire 2017.

²²For the Congregation of Sacred Rites, see Burke 1984, p. 46. For the Spanish Inquisition, See Kamen 2014, pp. 181–225 & Elliott 1975, p. 110.

to the vernacular, the state promoted mystics and humanist initiatives within the Church, the governmental printing press published progressive theological tracts and a massive education program for the clergy and reform of the mendicant orders was already begun in Spain 30 years before the opening session in Trent²³.

That changed with the discovery and arrest of a group of religious radicals in Toledo in 1524. Known as *alumbrados* (The enlightened), they were a circle of laypeople that blended mysticism inspired by Franciscan spirituality, a rejection of the Catholic sacramental scheme and a belief in the justification by faith alone, a faith that was instilled through the study and interpretation of scripture by the laity. As such, they had a dangerous resemblance to the advancing Lutheranism. This created an intense wave of moral panic within a state that saw itself as a staunchly orthodox defender of the one, true faith²⁴.

The moral panic blended with interest of national defense interests as rebellions in Germany and the Netherlands, infused with the reformatory zeal of Luther and Calvin, tried to gain independence from the Spanish-led empire of the Holy-Roman Emperor Carlos V. The combination of subversive Protestant sects at the center and open rebellion in the periphery created a stockade mentality in Spain, that answered the challenge by terminating the humanist project and mentally locking itself within its borders²⁵. In this dire situation came the Tridentine canons and an invigorated inquisition with unprecedented authority and a sense of urgency. The result was a tremendous insecurity within the Church regarding where to draw the line between the dangerous heretical and the laudable orthodox in the surging religiosity of the times. The clerical elite came to suspect anything that came from the laity or women, as it challenged the church hierarchy, and anything pertaining to interpretation of scriptures by non-theologians, as it challenged Trent's emphasis on professionalized and educated preaching. Most importantly, anything that might suggest an individual road to salvation outside the official chan-

²³Rhodes 2009, pp. 49–53.

²⁴Hamilton 1992, pp. 51–76.

²⁵Elliott 1975, pp. 212–42.

nels of the sacraments of the Church came under suspicion, as it smacked of the Lutheran notion of *sola fide*²⁶. It was deemed of vital necessity to crush the unorthodox, both for the national survival of Spain and for the spiritual integrity of the Catholic Church. This effectively put an end to the 'Cisnerosian Spring'²⁷.

THE LIFE OF TERESA DE ÁVILA

The saint was born in 1515 as Teresa Ahumada y Cepeda, in the Castilian city of Ávila, into a wealthy family of silk traders. This entitled her and her family to a position firmly within the social elites of the city. However, she carried a dark secret. Her grandfather was a *converso*, a person born as Jew but later converted to Christianity, who was convicted by the Inquisition of being a *judaizante*, one who secretly continued to practice his old religion²⁸.

This was highly problematic in a Spanish state founded on a crusading ideology and imbued with religious bigotry. Because of the *limpieza de sangre* system, elaborate certificates proving a person's pure Christian blood, people with a family background like Teresa's was excluded from holding any position of trust within the Spanish state or church²⁹. She managed to guard that secret so well that it was only discovered by historians in 1946³⁰. If she had not succeeded, she would never have been able to carry out her religious project.

We have a very detailed knowledge of Teresa's life, because she left behind an elaborate autobiography and 496 letters. However, that this material survived is a stroke of luck, since she ordered that any letter that she wrote burnt after reading, and her autobiography only escaped the same fate after 17 years of confiscation and thorough investigation by the Inquisition³¹.

At the age of 20, Teresa entered the Carmelite Order (O.Carm.)

²⁶Ahlgreen 1996, pp. 15–21.

²⁷Tyler 2011, p. 138.

²⁸Bilinkoff 2014, pp. 109–110.

²⁹Casey 1999, p. 231.

³⁰McGaha 2009, p. 73.

³¹Cammarata 2007, p. 47 & Llamas-Martinez 1972, pp. 223–6.

Precarious Sainthood: The Mysticism of Teresa de Ávila between Orthodoxy and Esotericism

upon making her eternal vows in the monastery of La Encarnación in Ávila³². Teresa did not find life at the convent very sanctimonious, rife as it was with fights for social honor³³.

As a reaction to the worldly preoccupations at the monastery, Teresa tried to approach God through mental prayer. This interior voyage began when an uncle gave her a copy of *Tercer Abecedario* by the Spanish mystic Francisco de Osuna (O.F.M.)³⁴. She was also greatly inspired by the mysticism of St. Augustine of Hippo, St. Catharina di Siena (O.P.), Bernardino de Laredo (O.F.M.) and Ludolph of Saxony (O.Cart.)³⁵. However, she did not make any progress towards mystical union, a fact she blamed on the lack of qualified spiritual advisors who could lead her along the path to God. As she lamented in *Vida*: “I did not find a Master [...] That could understand me, even though I searched for him”³⁶.

She did eventually find such confessors. First the secular priests Franscico de Salcedo and Gaspar Daza, who eventually referred Teresa to the Jesuits, who appointed first Diego de Cetina, then Baltasar Alvarez and finally St. Francis de Borgia as her confessors. Under their tutelage, she began to make significant mystical progress³⁷. That progress culminated in 1559, when in a state of ecstasy she saw a cherubim piercing her heart with a spear of gold, producing the mystical spiritual union between God and her soul enkindled with love for him³⁸. This ecstatic vision triggered a profound conversion in Teresa, who understood herself to have a heavenly ordained mission. She would have to reform her order and bring the Carmelite monastics back to the ancient basis of the hermits who founded the order in the Crusader states upon a charism of interior prayer performed in isolation from the world³⁹.

Just as she had discovered the path to mystical union with the divine through spiritual guides by mystic authors, the post-

³²Bilinkoff 2014, p. 112.

³³Ibid., pp. 112–6 & Carrera Marcén 2007.

³⁴Tyler 2011, p. 134.

³⁵McGinn 2017, p. 9 & Bilinkoff 2014, pp. 16–7.

³⁶*Vida*, 4:7.

³⁷Kavanaugh 1987.

³⁸*Vida* 29:17.

³⁹Blake 2017, pp. 78–81.

Tridentine church struck down upon exactly that. To block the dissemination of Luther's and Calvin's ideas and to prevent the populace from developing heretic readings of orthodox theological literature, Fernando de Valdés y Salas, Archbishop of Seville and Grand Inquisitor of Spain, issued an index in 1559 prohibiting certain books in the Spanish language. On the index was books by all of Teresa's favorite spiritual authors, like Augustine, Osuna and Laredo. In one blow, the Church had prohibited herself and others who could not read Latin from reaching the mystical union through spiritual guides. However, she received a vision from God that told her "Do not be afraid, for I will give you a living book."⁴⁰. For her the meaning was clear, she was to write down the instructions for the mystical progress that God would reveal to her.

The two abovementioned visions came to guide the rest of Teresa's life. In 1562, she founded her first reformed Carmelite convent in Ávila, and in 1567 she received papal permission to establish a reformed branch, the Order of Discalced Carmelites (O.C.D.). During the remainder of her life, she personally founded 17 new convents for discalced nuns, all based on a daily regime of at least two hours of interior prayer⁴¹.

Furthermore, she set out to give the world those living books they needed. The first was her Autobiography, that she originally began to write down on the orders of Salcedo and Daza, so they could determine whether her visions were produced under diabolical influence. Not long after she finished writing the book, it was confiscated by the Inquisition and held by them until her death⁴².

Both the founding of her first convent and the writing of her first book caused problems with the civil authorities and the inquisition. For the remainder of her life, each time she wrote a new text or founded a monastery in a new jurisdiction, she faced accusations of heresy. The main charge was brought against her by the Inquisition in Córdoba (1574), Seville and Valladolid (1575) and in the central Tribunal in Madrid after her death in relation to her

⁴⁰Vida 26:5.

⁴¹Reed 2009, pp. 225–6.

⁴²Weber 1990, pp. 42–8.

entire oeuvre⁴³.

The accusations brought against her were consistent. Firstly, the mental prayer she advocated was nothing short of disguised *alumbradismo*, and therefore heretic. The Spanish church had even gone to the lengths of banning interior prayer altogether. Secondly, she was interpreting scripture as a woman, thereby breaching the Pauline doctrine of the male magisterium, and thus subverting the God-created order. Lastly, the accusers believed that since women were mentally incapable of theological interpretation or mystical union, those abilities could only have come from the devil, and her texts and visions were therefore the result of diabolical possession⁴⁴.

Teresa succeeded in fending off the accusations and was always acquitted by the tribunals. She remained a daughter of the church, which Gillian Ahlgreen acknowledges probably was the single most difficult thing she ever did⁴⁵. Her strategies to obtain this extraordinary result was a fundamental part of how she constructed her own guide to spiritual union, *Las moradas*.

THE PATH TO MYSTICAL UNION

Teresa of Ávila wrote two instructions on how to achieve the mystical union of one's soul with God. Both were intended for the nuns in her reformed Carmelite order. Since the Spiritual guides that she herself had used were banned by the Valdes Index, these were to be the *libros vivos* that would shepherd the nuns during the daily interior prayer.

The first are found in her autobiography, which is a result of a very complicated creation process. It was written as a series of confessions to her spiritual advisors, who had ordered her to formulate her experiences in writing for them to determine if they were the results of diabolical possession. As such, *Vida* is a theological defense against that accusation, and Teresa's explicit rejection

⁴³Llamas-Martinez 1972, pp. 27–52, 71–7 & 279–392.

⁴⁴Ahlgreen 1996, pp. 48–50, Wiberg Petersen 2017, p. 75 & Weber 1992.

⁴⁵Ahlgreen 1996, p. 1.

of the devil are a constant theme in it⁴⁶. It is also a strategical defense for mental prayer as a legitimate way of approaching the divine. To achieve this objective Teresa turned the writing process into a collaboration with some of the most illustrious Spanish theologians of 16th century Spain, like St. Pedro de Alcantara (O.F.M), St. Francis de Borgia (S.J.) and St. Luis Beltran (O.P.), just to name a few⁴⁷. She managed to overcome the initial skepticism of her visions, and made her confessors help her express herself “with the correct terminology and avoid anything that could be misinterpreted as alumbrado error.”⁴⁸. This approach is clearly visible from a study of the original copy of *Vida*, kept in the Royal palace of El Escorial, where the corrections of the spiritual directors abound⁴⁹. We must therefore take into account that *Vida* is written in constant fear of the Inquisition and its cleansing pyres, and that it is also a theological justification made by a woman who was not allowed to make such arguments⁵⁰.

WATERING THE GARDEN

In *Vida*, Teresa likens the path to the mystical union with the watering of a garden. The progressive watering of the soul with prayer is divided into four stages. The first stage is like “drawing water from a well” and consists of meditating on Christ’s passion⁵¹. The Second stage is called the *Prayer of Quiet*, as the faculties of the soul are gradually pacified as one approaches God. This form of prayer is allegorized as “drawing water through a tread mill and watering with a bucket”⁵². In the next stage, the soul is totally pacified, and God has completely overtaken it. This is likened to the Garden being overflowed by a river⁵³. In the final stage, the

⁴⁶Garcia Rubio 2011 & Gonzalez Candela 2015.

⁴⁷Ryan 2009, pp. 39–41 & Callado Estella 2016.

⁴⁸Weber 2003, p. 109.

⁴⁹Trillia 2008.

⁵⁰Ahlgreen 1996, pp. 21–4, Wiberg Petersen 2013 & Carrera Macén 2018.

⁵¹*Vida* 11:7. The entire first stage is described in cph. 11–3.

⁵²Ibid., 11:7. The second stage is described in cph. 14–5.

⁵³The third stage is described in cph. 16–7.

Garden is soaked by heavy rain⁵⁴. Here, the soul is in complete union God, and stricken with raptures⁵⁵. The spiritual journey is portrayed as a continual ascent towards ever higher stages of union⁵⁶.

As earlier noted, the autobiography was seized by the inquisitors for further inspections. In the following years, Teresa was charged with heresy on three different occasions. The fundamental charge was that she and her nuns practiced an illegal form of prayer associated with the *alumbrados*. Being sent to the stake was now no longer a distant hypothetical possibility. However, she still needed to provide her nuns with spiritual literature for their daily prayers. More than ever, she desperately needed to convince the ecclesiastical authorities of her orthodoxy, so that both she and her reform might survive.

From the time Teresa had finished *Vida* in 1567 and to 1577 where she began to write *Moradas*, she had experienced a profound progress in her spiritual life, as she discovered that what she had understood to be the full union with God was in fact not full union at all. It struck her that there was an even more intimate stage of union beyond, or rather within, what she had previously experienced. Because now, Teresa believed the spiritual path to mystical union to move inwards into the soul. That change, along with the need for a theological legitimization of her practices, resulted in a significantly more sophisticated model for spiritual union.

THE CRYSTAL CASTLE

One feature that separates *Las Moradas* from *Vida* is Teresa's relation to Scripture. In *Vida*, she only occasionally commented on or referred to passages from the Bible⁵⁷. In *Moradas* she does so constantly, to such an extent that her book may be considered an outright evangelical exegesis⁵⁸. This includes the central idea of her

⁵⁴*Vida* 11:7.

⁵⁵The Mystical Union is described in cph. 18–22.

⁵⁶McGinn 2018, pp. 59–60.

⁵⁷McGinn 2017, p. 21.

⁵⁸Castro 2015.

book, that the path to mystical union moves through a soul “that is like a Castle made of diamond or very clear crystal, in which there are many rooms, like there is many mansions in heaven”⁵⁹. This is a direct reference to the Gospel of John, where the evangelist writes: “In My Father’s house there are many mansions. If not, I would not have told you: because I go to prepare a place for you.”⁶⁰. Teresa portrays the crystal castle of the soul as consisting of seven mansions through which the believer must pass on an inward journey, before she finally attains spiritual union with God who dwells in the seventh Mansion, the very core of the soul.

The first two mansions represent Augustine’s purgative stage; where the believer is cleansed of sin through intensive prayers, that are supported by frequent use of the Church’s sacramental scheme⁶¹. The first Mansion is the outer court of the castle. Here, the supplicant is under ferocious attack from venomous reptiles that are symbols for sins. The Mansion is very dark, as no light emanating from the God-king in the center reaches it⁶². The second Mansion is the hall of the castle, where the soul for the first time hears the king calling out for it. The attacks from the devil’s minions are especially intense here, and therefore “it is very important to consult with experienced people” that can support the inexperienced seeker on her path⁶³.

The third and fourth Mansions represent the illuminative stage; where the soul is purified, and the mind is enlightened⁶⁴. The attacks from reptiles decrease, but there are still stumbling blocks everywhere and pilgrims might easily regress to the first Mansion⁶⁵. In the third Mansion, the believer becomes a vassal of God, and is then worthy to enter the fourth Mansion, from where the union with God progressively intensifies⁶⁶. One enters the fourth Mansion “as a porcupine or a turtle, when they contract into them-

⁵⁹*Moradas* 1:1.

⁶⁰John 14:2. All references to the bible is made to the Douay-Rheims version.

⁶¹Cammarata 2009, p. 221.

⁶²*Moradas*, Cph. 1.

⁶³Ibid., 2:2,10.

⁶⁴Cammarata 2009, p. 221.

⁶⁵*Moradas* 3:3,2.

⁶⁶McGinn 2018, p. 62 & *Moradas* 3:3,2.

selves”⁶⁷. It is in the fourth Mansion that the seeking soul begins the *Prayer of Quiet* that marked the second stage of the scheme in *Vida*. That entails that the soul abandons everything except God and “abandons herself into the embrace of love, where His Majesty will teach her everything she needs”⁶⁸.

The fifth through seventh Mansions represent the unitive stage⁶⁹. The soul is brought into the fifth Mansion by God, like the bride in *Canticles* is brought into the wine cellar by her spouse⁷⁰. Her soul is so inflamed by love, that it has no will of its own; but can only follow the will of God⁷¹. The soul is metaphorized as a silkworm, that in this Mansion makes a cocoon; where it meditates on the love to the triune God, dies and finally appears transmuted into a beautiful butterfly⁷². The lesson the reader needs to subtract from this metaphor is that “we cannot subtract or add to God, but only subtract and add to ourselves, like these little worms do”⁷³.

The sixth mansion is the locus for the spiritual betrothal between the soul and God, again portrayed in the language of the Spouse and the bride of *Canticles*⁷⁴. The God-King confirms the engagement with heavy raptures and visions⁷⁵. As tokens of his love, the king presents the bride with three jewels, the knowledge of the greatness of God, humility before God and, finally, supreme contempt for earthly things⁷⁶. Where metaphors abound in the earlier mansions, in the sixth mansion Ávila describes how it can be understood through direct experience: “I will not succeed in making it understandable, except for those that have experienced it themselves. There are no comparisons that will fit.”⁷⁷. In this inability to express the mystical experience in language, there are clear similarities between Teresian Union and the Eleusinian

⁶⁷ *Moradas* 4:3,3.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 4:3,9.

⁶⁹ Cammarata 2009, p. 221.

⁷⁰ *Moradas* 5:1,12.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 5:4,4.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 5:2,2.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 5:2,5.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 6:1:1.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 6:4,2.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 6:5.

⁷⁷ *Moradas* 6:2,1.

Mysteries⁷⁸. She eventually does succeed in offering some form of explanation, when she calls the actions in the Mansion “as if being wounded by an arrow of fire [...] that reduces everything in our earthly nature to powder”⁷⁹.

Finally, the soul is enkindled with love in the seventh Mansion⁸⁰. God at last consummates the Spiritual Marriage with the soul-bride⁸¹. Here, in the deepest center of the soul, the bride obtains full union with the triune God, but both the soul and God and the three hypostases within the Godhead are completely separated and fully merged at the same time⁸². Beyond that, it is impossible for Teresa to explain anything of the Spiritual Marriage. Language has collapsed, and it cannot be conveyed through words. The Eleusinian silence has swept over the Spanish saint. As Teresa laments “One cannot say more than that — that one understands it as if the soul [...] becomes one with God”⁸³.

ST. TERESA'S PLACE WITHIN ORTHODOXY

Even though many of her contemporaries considered Teresa de Ávila a heretic and possessed by the devil, there is a strong case for the argument that she belongs firmly within Orthodoxy.

One point of that argument is that the Catholic dogmas play a central part in her description of the road to the Spiritual Marriage, of which I will only treat the two most important here. The first is the concept of Trinitarianism, the dogma established at the Council of Nicea (325 CE), that the Godhead consists of three hypostases that are different persons but of one essence, substance and nature⁸⁴. She explicitly writes that it is this Trinitarian God that she is united with in the seventh Mansion⁸⁵. The second is the dogma established at the Council of Chalcedon (451 CE) of Christ's

⁷⁸Stein 2016, p. 3.

⁷⁹*Moradas* Chp 6:11,2.

⁸⁰Ibid., 7:1,6.

⁸¹Ibid., 7:1,1.

⁸²Ibid., 7:1,6.

⁸³Ibid., 7:2,3.

⁸⁴*Catechism* §202.

⁸⁵*Moradas* Cph: 7:1.

double nature as both True God and True Man, and where the two natures are neither confused, divided nor separated⁸⁶. Even though Teresa never states this directly in *Moradas*, Mary Margaret Anderson has presented a very convincing case of portraying the central symbol of the silkworm as a metaphor of Chalcedonian Christology⁸⁷. Her unquestionable adherence to core dogmas are further underscored by the fact that none of the comments by her redactors of *Vida* are on questions of dogma⁸⁸. Her complete accordance to these core dogmas was of central importance in Spain, where the Inquisition was established to rout out influences from Crypto-Jews and Muslims, whose far stricter monotheism was seen as a threat to the welfare of the Christian kingdoms⁸⁹.

Teresa de Ávila combined elements from both the *via negativa* and the *via positiva* in a dialectical process between the Kataphatic and the Apophatic, culminating in a *Unitas Spiritus* of complete and inflamed love modelled on Canticles⁹⁰. Therefore, it is possible to produce a mystical genealogy for her; that begins with the Desert Fathers such as St. Anthony the Great, continues with St. Augustine of Hippo and St. Gregory of Nyssa, proceeds into the 11th and 12th centuries with St. Bernard de Clairvaux (O.Cist.) and Hugh of St. Victor (C.R.), includes St. Bonaventura (O.F.M.), Thomas Gallus (C.R.) and Hugh of Balma (O.Cart.) in the 13th century, St. Catharina di Siena (O.P.) and Jean Gerson in the 14th century, before it finally culminates in Teresa's own generation, with people such as St. Ignacio de Loyola (S.J.) and St. Pedro de Alcantara (O.F.M.)⁹¹. This genealogy includes so many saints and so many religious orders, that it alone could attest to her orthodoxy.

Another feature that places Teresa firmly within orthodoxy is the importance she places on the Catholic sacraments in the path to *Unio Mystica* in *Moradas*. She strongly emphasizes the importance

⁸⁶Catechism §467.

⁸⁷Anderson 2006, pp. 331–3.

⁸⁸Trillia 2008, pp. 61–2.

⁸⁹Kamen 2014, pp. 36–73.

⁹⁰Mujica 2001, Howells 2017 & Ahlgreen 1996, p. 111.

⁹¹Rhodes 2009, p. 49, Reece Hogan p. 102, Milem 2016, Howells 2017, pp. 51–2, Boa 2001, p. 168, McGinn 2017 & Ahlgreen 1996, p. 111.

of the Sacrament of Penance and the role ordained confessors play on the path towards illumination⁹². Even more important is the role of the Eucharist. It brings the Incarnated Christ, present in the consecrated host, into the body of the believer and unites him with the trinitarian God already present in the seventh Mansion of the soul. Without the participation in the mass, the believer negates the Chalcedonian doctrine of Christ's double nature⁹³. At a time when the doctrine of Transubstantiation was under fierce attack from Protestant reformers, Teresa's unique interpretation places her firmly within post-Tridentine Catholicism. It is actually impossible to reach union without the sacraments celebrated by the Church, for they are, "living sparks that will ignite the soul" and without these sparks, the soul can never be inflamed⁹⁴.

Finally, Teresa is an Orthodox Catholic because the papacy has concluded so. Being the epitome of Agambian Sovereign Power, it is the prerogative for the Pope to ultimately demarcate the boundaries of Orthodoxy⁹⁵. This is explicitly established in the Catechism, where the Pope has sovereign power in every aspect of Church life. The authority over interpretation of scripture, the administration of the apostolic heritage and the whole spiritual life of the Church is part of the Papal Magisterium⁹⁶. In possession of these powers to define what belongs to orthodoxy and what falls beyond, succeeding popes have proclaimed the unquestioned sanctity of Teresa de Ávila, from Paul V who beatified her in 1614, to Gregory XV who canonized her in 1622, and to Paul VI who raised her to Doctor of the Church⁹⁷. Therefore, the question ends here; the Catholic Church has continuously and definitively placed her firmly within the pale of orthodox Catholicism.

⁹²Moradas 6:8, 8-9.

⁹³Williams 2017, pp. 72–3.

⁹⁴Moradas 6:7,11.

⁹⁵Agamben 1998, p. 15.

⁹⁶Catechism §85,88–90.

⁹⁷Wiberg Petersen 2017, p. 70

THE SAINT AS AN ESOTERIC

Despite her definitive saintliness, Teresa's work demonstrates such a close affinity to esotericism, that she might very well have ended up appearing like the polemical Other that Hanegraaff describes.

Her writings fit four of the five points in the compound definition I established from the works of Faivre and Versluis. The notion of *correspondences*, the world as a mirror of the divine realm, is evident in her conception of the soul as a castle with many mansions, which is mirroring the arrangements in heaven⁹⁸. Her way of approaching the divine is, like the esoterics, based on *imagination and mediations*. This is evident in both *Vida* and *Moradas*, where Teresa is joined to God through intense meditation on Christ's passion. Furthermore, a clear example of *transmutation* is evident in the metaphor of the silkworm in *Moradas*, where the faithful retires from the world, dies with Christ on Calvary and is reborn "through him, with him and in him" as a butterfly⁹⁹. This rebirth is not exclusively symbolic, as it will generate deeds and love on the terrestrial plane, as Teresa notes several times¹⁰⁰. She also fits one of the secondary characteristics, *transmission*, or lineages of initiation through a master-pupil relationship. For Teresa, this initiation was carried out primarily through her reading of mystic literature. As Versluis points out, this form of initiation is one of the trademarks of esotericism¹⁰¹. She did also foster a personal relationship with esoteric master-characters, which is evident from her exchanges with her Dominican and Jesuit confessors, who led Teresa on her spiritual path as esoteric masters would do.

Finally, she experienced the revelation of secret knowledge in form of visions of God and insight into his unknowable being outside of Creation, or what Versluis call *metaphysical gnosis*¹⁰². As Stroumsa has shown, the distribution of secret knowledge was a stable feature of the early Church¹⁰³. However, the secrets Teresa

⁹⁸ *Moradas* 1:1 & John 14:2.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 5:2,2 & Irish Catholic Bishop's Conference (2010) p.26.

¹⁰⁰ Ex. *Vida* 11:2 & *Moradas* 1:2,2.

¹⁰¹ Versluis 2004, pp. 1–16

¹⁰² Versluis 2002, p. 2.

¹⁰³ Stroumsa 2005, pp. 11–45.

de Ávila received are different from those of the ante-Nicean period in that it is private gnosis, conveyed outside the recognized channels of the Church and its authorities, and therefore esoteric in character.

Even though she is not linked to esotericism through *an idea of a living nature* or *Concordance*, I certainly believe that the affinities described above do place Teresa within the esoteric camp. However, Teresa displays several additional phenomena that are related to the esoteric currents described by Rudbøg¹⁰⁴.

First, Teresa was a Carmelite nun, and her reorganization of the order was an attempt to bring the Carmelites back to its original foundation, the hermits on Mount Carmel during the Crusades¹⁰⁵. Those founding fathers established the order on a charism whose ideal was the contemplative life of Elijah the Prophet as described in the Old Testament¹⁰⁶. Therefore, the Carmelite family is the only group of religious orders in the Catholic Church founded on a charism stretching back to the time before Christ. I claim that this attempt to model a spiritual life on something earlier than the New Testament demonstrates an affinity to the *Prisca theologia*, the search for a hidden tradition superior to Christianity, that was carried out by esoterics like Pico della Mirandola and Marsilio Ficino, both ordained Catholic priests¹⁰⁷.

As Deidre Green has noted, the understanding of the soul as a crystal castle consisting of seven mansions with a God-King that dwells in the center and whose light leads the supplicant towards him is also found in the Zoharic tradition. This would place Teresa within a tradition of Kabbalah, which is also an esoteric tradition¹⁰⁸. Green does not claim that Teresa directly took the Zohar as her model, but that the image could have slipped into her imaginary unnoticed, through the stories told in her *converso* and *judaizante* family¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰⁴Rudbøg 2013, p. 33.

¹⁰⁵Blake 2017.

¹⁰⁶Payne 2011, p. 25.

¹⁰⁷Von Stuckrad 2010, pp. 26–7.

¹⁰⁸Rudbøg 2013, p. 33.

¹⁰⁹As referenced by McGaha 2009, pp. 72–3.

Another aspect that brings Teresa into the esoteric fold and close to both *Prisca theologia* and Neoplatonism is her reliance on the heritage from Pseudo-Dionysius. His legacy is especially evident in her description of “a mystical ascent to union in terms of the superiority of an experience of affective love beyond recognition”. This Dionysian influence crept into her work primarily through Jean Gerson and Bernard de Clairvaux¹¹⁰. The language of a mystical union in love is not peculiar to Teresa but is evident in the majority of the figures in the mystical lineage that made her orthodox, who all got it from Pseudo-Dionysius. That is because, up until the 15th century, he was considered a Church Father and therefore orthodox. In his writings, he presented himself as Dionysius the Areopagite, the Greek that St. Paul converted through his speech at the Areopagus of Athens, and who Catholic tradition holds went on to become the first Bishop of Athens, and most Catholic theologians believed him. That view held sway until Lorenzo Valla and Erasmus of Rotterdam in 1457 and 1505 proved he was not the biblical Dionysius but more likely a fifth-century student who attended the Neoplatonic academy in Athens and was heavily inspired by Proclus, who used the pseudonym to establish an innovative Christian platonic theology¹¹¹.

Teresa also shared the esoteric adherence to forbidden books, which the heterodox turned to in search of superior knowledge¹¹². She continually stated that it was exactly the issuing of the Valdes Index, and its prohibition of works by Laredo, Osuna and Juan de Ávila in Spanish, that made her so furious that she herself began to write¹¹³. Obviously, she continued to practice her form of meditation that was inspired by those texts, even after the church forbade them. For her, the gnosis contained in them was so great and beneficial that she neither could nor would refrain from following her spiritual masters.

Finally, Teresa de Ávila possessed three traits that each by themselves should have made her an esoteric in the moment she

¹¹⁰Tyler 2017, p. 37.

¹¹¹Klitenic Wear & Dillon 2007, pp. 1–4. For the biblical Dionysius, see Acts 17:34.

¹¹²Versluis 2014, pp. 1–16.

¹¹³Ahlgreen 1996, p. 19.

began to teach theology to her nuns. She was a converso, she was a woman and she was not a priest. All three attributes were exactly why, for the post-Tridentine Church, she would have appeared as an esoteric master herself and *Moradas* as an early modern version of Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled*.

Now, there should remain no doubt that Teresa de Ávila had a firmly esoteric foundation. It should also be clear that some of those very traits that placed her in orthodoxy, like the tradition of a mysticism of union in love through Pseudo-Dionysius, was actually esoteric in their core, and that it was clear to her contemporaries that it was so. In the following section, I will try to provide an explanation of how she managed to be considered a saint representative of orthodoxy in spite of this.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF SANCTITY

It is obvious that Teresa knew she was walking a thin line when she started to write *Moradas*. It was illegal to print books in Spanish on *unio mystica*, the mode of prayer she advised was prohibited, she had already faced charges from inquisitors on that score and because of her sex she was barred from writing theological theses. She needed to frame her living book in such a way that, despite the blatantly problematic issues, it would be acceptable for the ecclesiastical authorities. I claim that she constructed *Moradas* according to a three-fold strategy to obtain this objective, consisting of *apparent obedience*, *tactical self-degradation* and finally *deliberate vagueness*.

APPARENT OBEDIENCE

First and foremost, Teresa de Ávila had to confront the problem that the Catholic Church did not allow women to teach theology. The Church based this ban on St. Paul, who allegedly wrote "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to use authority over the man: but to be in silence"¹¹⁴. In order to circumvent this restriction, she

¹¹⁴1. Timothy 2:12.

applied *apparent obedience*, and framed herself as just a compliant woman. This is evident from the very first line in *Moradas*, where she writes “Few tasks that obedience has commanded me to undertake, has been so difficult for me to write as these matters on praying.”¹¹⁵. Later, she explicitly states that she was ordered to write her book on interior prayer by her male confessor “He who ordered to write told me how these nuns from Our Lady of Carmel needed someone to solve some of their doubts about prayer.”¹¹⁶.

All throughout *Moradas*, she continuously insists that as a woman “I am under obligation not to dispute with my superiors, but to obey.”¹¹⁷. She writes that to follow one’s own way, disobeying your confessors is “a very dangerous thing, and therefore, Sisters, I pray in the name of Our Lord, that you will never act in that way.”¹¹⁸.

In advance, she subjects herself to the authority of the Church and declares herself ready to be corrected in theological matters and to obey its teachings, as she writes “If any of the things I am going to say is not in conformity with the Holy Roman Catholic Church, it will be out of ignorance and not out of malice.”¹¹⁹.

In line with this tactic, she presented *Moradas* as a written confession, in the line of Augustine’s *Confessiones* who established that literary genre¹²⁰. By framing herself as a subordinate woman who only acted out of obedience and her *Moradas* as a written form of the sacrament of Confession, she was able to dissolve the threat hanging over her and appear non-threatening to the male ecclesiastical authorities deciding her fate. In that sense, her apparent obedience in *Moradas* is actually a subversive strategy¹²¹. By simultaneously claiming not to be a theologian, but de-facto being one under the shroud of obedience, she was able to remain orthodox.

¹¹⁵ *Moradas* P:1.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, P:4.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 3:2,11.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 6:3,11.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, P:3.

¹²⁰ McGinn 2017.

¹²¹ Ahlgreen 1996, pp. 68–71, Ryan 2009 & Weber 1990, p. 10 & 100–1.

TACTICAL SELF-DEGRADATION

When scrolling through the pages of *Moradas*, one is unavoidably struck by the fierce language St. Teresa, a Doctor of the Church, uses to debase herself. At least 20 times, she does so in the most heavy-handed way.

Besides being a woman, and therefore slow in everything and in dire need of male instruction¹²², she also “does not know how to explain anything.”¹²³. She claims both to be a “wretched and stupid woman”¹²⁴, like a bird with a broken wing who cannot write anything of value¹²⁵, and so “stupid she knows not what to say.”¹²⁶. Finally, Teresa the prioress advises her nuns to be cautious of her, as she is so foul that she would scandalize and ruin them if they followed her example¹²⁷.

This practice of insulting herself is accompanied by a marked tendency to either misquote scripture, to assign a biblical reference to a wrong section of the holy book or claim ignorance of its proper place¹²⁸. These mistakes are very odd for a person like Teresa de Ávila. We know that she was an ardent reader, who worked herself through an impressive amount of religious literature for a person in the 16th century¹²⁹. As a Carmelite nun in a Spanish convent during the Counter-Reformation, she would have been required to participate in the recital of the Divine Office, where each of the eight daily recitations of the liturgical hours includes portions of the Bible¹³⁰. We also do know that she owned a copy of the Bible in Spanish and read it intensively, at least until that practice was prohibited by the Valdes Index¹³¹. Therefore, it is doubtful that Teresa should had been to oblivious to the content of the Bible as

¹²²*Moradas* 6:2,1.

¹²³Ibid., 1:2,14.

¹²⁴Ibid., 3:1,3

¹²⁵Ibid., 3:1,5.

¹²⁶Ibid., 6:4,9.

¹²⁷Ibid., 3:1,3.

¹²⁸Examples are found at ibid., 2:11–3:1,4 & 2:6 respectively.

¹²⁹Bilinkoff 2014, pp. 108–23.

¹³⁰Ibid., pp. 123–37.

¹³¹Weber 1990, p. 106.

Moradas might suggest.

This doubt is further enhanced by Ahlgreen, who has made a very solid case for her hypothesis that Teresa de Ávila actually constructed the Spiritual journey along key references to the Bible, something that would have demanded an insight significantly deeper than one would be led to believe Teresa possessed from a superficial reading of *Moradas*¹³².

In line with Alison Weber, I claim that this discourse of self-degradation was a method Teresa de Ávila used to comply with the required virtue of *Humilitas* in the contemporary Church. When punishing female mystics, the Spanish Inquisition had attached great importance to the fact that these women did not exhibit the proper and required humility. Such a lack was in itself sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the accused woman was possessed by the devil¹³³. The lessons Teresa learned from such cases was that a display of *Humilitas* was a lifesaving necessity when writing about *Unio Mystica*.

DELIBERATE VAGUENESS

Teresa de Ávila had a two-faced approach to the way she expressed herself in *Moradas*. In relation to the veracity of the Spiritual Marriage and its consequences, she expressed an absolute certainty: she had seen God and every fiber of her body knew it beyond doubt¹³⁴. In her union with God through Christ, she was as contemporary a witness to his resurrection as the apostles had been¹³⁵. She was so convinced of being God's bride that she almost borders on the Lutheran doctrine of Certainty of Grace¹³⁶.

This certitude is in stark contrast to the way she expressed herself when describing the actual union itself, doctrinal matters and any issue that might be considered theological in nature. On

¹³² Ahlgreen 2005, p. 21,39,49,67,84 & 116, referring to John 14:2, Matthew 19:24, Psalms 188:32, Colossians 3:3, Canticles 5:8 and 1.Corinthians 13:12.

¹³³ Weber 1990, p. 44–5 & 105–9.

¹³⁴ Krajl 2011 & Walsh 1995, p. 262.

¹³⁵ Matthew 2017, pp. 91–3.

¹³⁶ Moltmann 1984.

those questions, she shrouded her statements in vagueness.

One of the most important methods to produce this vagueness is through her use of the word *parecer* — translated as “it seems”. It appears a stunning 313 times in its various forms on 136 pages. When she approaches a subject that might be theological, she minimizes her commitment to her assertion. This is observable on the question of whether a person who reached spiritual union could fall from grace and regress into sin; “This person [Teresa referring to herself, LHJ] says that, as she understands it, it seems that it is not possible to sin at all.”¹³⁷. This is an important qualification, as the soteriological issue and the question of sin were central in both the Protestant and the Catholic program, and through *parecer* she avoids committing herself too much to a position that might prove to be considered heretical. A related issue is when she softens her statement that one’s own merits play a part on the road to union with God: “it may seem our work has paid off.”¹³⁸.

Her fundamental vagueness is also evident in that she even qualifies if, despite her own absolute confidence in the fact, she has entered union at all, stating “I saw, it seems to me, the faculties of the soul working in God and joined with Him.”¹³⁹.

There is no doubt that her use of *Parecer* is a strategic choice through which she, despite the fundamental certainty of the veracity of her mystical experiences, subjects herself to the rulings of the Church’s ultimate authority in such matters. She directly writes so, when she states that “I use the language of >it seems to me< for if I am deceived, I am very ready to believe the very educated”¹⁴⁰.

Through her deliberate and strategic vagueness, she steered clear of openly assuming the status of theologian in her own right, which would be trespassing into the domain of the male authorities, while she actually provided an exegesis on justification, salvation and Spiritual Marriage for her readers.

¹³⁷ *Moradas* 1:2,2.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 4:1,4.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 4:1,8.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 5:1,7.

TERESIAN COUNTER-HEGEMONY

Through framing herself as an obedient, humble and vague woman, Teresa de Ávila succeeded in presenting the post-Tridentine ecclesiastical authorities with a model of a female author that they could accept, because it did not threaten their hegemony of the magisterium. However, under the cover of those features, she was able to assume the role of theologian. This happened despite those qualities that from birth inhibited her from assuming the role, as woman and conversa, and despite the large inheritance of esoteric thought clearly influencing her writings.

I propose an interpretation of St. Teresa as an example of the Gramscian notion of the subaltern challenging the hegemonic powers through the cracks and fissures they unwittingly leave open for the mounting of a counter-hegemonic challenge¹⁴¹.

If she had not appeared in that submissive guise, she would have constituted a threat for the inquisitors, who would have judged her according to her theology. And there were plenty of things to convict her for. Laden with Neoplatonism, Zoharic imagery and Prisca Theologia, odds are that she would not have escaped unharmed. Instead of reaching sainthood, she would have fallen outside of orthodoxy, joining magicians and gnostics in Hanegraaf's camp of the Grand Polemical Others. That she did not, despite displaying the majority of traits that in Faivre's and Verluis' opinion constitute esotericism, is testament to her successful employment of purely discursive means.

Through those means, she was regarded not only as orthodox, but as such a divinely inspired female representative of Orthodoxy that she could posthumously be venerated as a Doctor of her Holy Mother Church¹⁴².

CONCLUSION

Saint Teresa lived in a time Where radical changes occurred in the religious fabric of Europe. Born during the Cisnerosian spring, rea-

¹⁴¹Crehan 2002, pp. 98–100.

¹⁴²Weber 1990, p. 36 & Ahlgreen 1995, p. 143.

ching adulthood in the middle of the surging reformations and carrying out her own renewal of Catholic spiritual life at the moment when the post-Tridentine Church sought to rout out everything she incarnated and represented: the feminine, the non-ordained, interior prayer and mysticism. In spite of this, she managed to stay within the pale of orthodoxy.

She achieved this even though her spirituality was nothing short of esotericism, that had functioned as the defining other against which the official Church had constituted itself. Containing the ideas of both *Correspondances and Transmutations*, strategies of *imagination, mediation and transmission* and imbued with *gnosis*, she could easily have fallen out of Orthodoxy and into the camp of *The Grand Polemical Others*.

That she did remain within the Apostolic Church depended on the verdicts emanating from the Petrine Magisterium, the paradigmatic example of Agambian sovereign power. That succeeding popes could sanction her saintly representativeness of Orthodoxy was due to a subversive and counter-hegemonic discourse consisting of a strategy built upon *apparent obedience, tactical self-degradation* and *deliberate vagueness* as exemplified on the pages of *Moradas*.

I believe that the case of Teresa de Ávila illustrates important issues concerning how we perceive and operationalize the concepts of both orthodox Catholicism and esotericism.

If she avoided being thrown into the pits of esotericism, but instead became elevated to the highest echelon in the Catholic pantheon of saints only due to a discursive strategy, in complete disregard of her factual esoteric heritage, we must question the solidity of both categories to the point of a complete reconceptualization of them.

It seems evident that the classification of the orthodox and the esoteric are fluent, depending on the sovereign decisions of others, whether they be popes or scholars, who need to demarcate the territory on which they exercise their call. The consequence is that both categories are void in that they do not describe inherent features of the subject under investigation but reflect the changing temporary interests of the sovereigns that apply them.

In that sense, we must be more aware of the ways in which

Precarious Sainthood: The Mysticism of Teresa de Ávila between Orthodoxy and Esotericism

orthodoxy and esotericism influences The Other and are influenced by him across precarious frontiers.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer - sovereign power and bare life*. Stanford University Press, 1998.

Ahlgren, Gillian. *Teresa of Avila and the Politics of Sanctity*. Cornell University Press, 1996.

Ahlgren, Gillian. *Entering Teresa of Ávila's >Interior Castle < — a reader's companion*. Paulist Press, 2005.

Anderson, Mary Margaret. "Thy Word in Me — on the Prayer of Union in St. Teresa of Avila's >Interior Castle <". In: *Harvard Theological Review*, no.3 Vol.99, pp. 330–354. 2006.

(the) *Bible*, Douay-Rheims Version, 1609. http://catholicbibleonline.douay_rheims?bible-. Assessed 26/05-2019.

Blake (O.C.D.), Matthew. "Teresa- Her vocation as founder". In: Peter Tyland & Edward Howells (eds.), *Teresa of Avila- Mystical Theology and spirituality in the Carmelite tradition*, pp. 77–81. Routledge, 2017.

Bilinkoff, Jodi. *The Avila of Saint Teresa- Religious reform in a sixteenth-century city*. Cornell University Press, 2014.

Boa, Kenneth. *Conformed to His Image- biblical and practical approaches to spiritual formation*. Zondervan, 2001.

Burke, Peter. "How To Be a Counter-Reformation Saint". In: Kaspar von Geyserz (ed.), *Religion and Society in Early Modern Europe 1500-1800*, pp. 45–55. The German Historical Institute, 1984.

Callado Estela, Emilio. "Teresa y Luis, Luis y Teresa- Dos Santos en tiempos recios". In: *Scripta- Revista Internacional de Literatura I Cultura Medieval i Moderna*, no. 7, pp. 150–9. 2016.

Cammarata, Joan F.. "Letters from the Convent- St.Teresa of Ávila's Epistolary Mode". In: Jeana Delrosso, Leigh Eicke Ana Kothe (eds.), *The Catholic Church and Unruly Women Writers*, pp. 41–54. Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Cammarata, Joan F.. "Teaching Image and Allegory in Teresa of Ávila's >The Interior Castle<". In: Alison Weber (ed), *Approaches to Teaching Teresa of Ávila and the Spanish Mystics*, pp. 218–224. The Modern Language Association of America, 2009.

Carrera Marcén, Elena. "Honra, Social Authority, and their Ideological Contradictions- Teresa of Avila's Views". In: *Hispanic Research Journal*, no. 4 Vol. 8, pp. 307–317. 2007.

Carrera Marcén, Elena. "El miedo intersubjetivo en la autobiografía de Teresa de Ávila". In: *Historia Moderna*, no. 2 Vol. 40, pp. 63–111. 2018.

Casey, James. *Early Modern Spain- a social history*. Routledge, 1999.

Castro (O.C.D.), Sacundino. "Las Moradas Teresianas y el Seguimiento Evangélico". In: *Estudios Eclesiásticos*, no. 354 vol. 90, pp. 445–477. 2015.

Cathecism of the Catholic Church. 1992. http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM. Assessed 11/05- 2019.

Crehan, Kate. *Gramsci, Culture and Anthropology*. University of California Press, 2002.

Elliot, J.H.. *Imperial Spain 1469-1716*. Penguin Books, 1975.

Faivre, Antoine. *Western Esotericism- a concise history*. State University of New York Press, 2010.

Garcia Rubio, Francisco. "La función retórico-jurídica del demonio

en el Libro de la Vida de Teresa de Jesús". In: *Ehumanista- Journal of Iberian Studies*, no. 17, pp. 185–204. 2011.

Goodrick-Clarke, Nicholas. *The Western Esoteric Traditions — a historical introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2008.

González Candela, Francisco Javier. "El contraste místico del bien y el mal- la presencia del demonio en >La Vida< de Santa Teresa de Jesús". In: Carlos Mata Induráin & Ana Zúñiga Lacruz (eds.), *>Venia Docendi<- Actas del IV. Congreso international Jóvenes investigadores Siglo de Oro*, pp. 85–94. Servicios de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Navarra, 2015.

Hamilton, Alastair. *Heresy and Mysticism in Sixteenth-Century Spain-the Alumbrados*. James Clarke & Co., 1992.

Hanegraaf, Wouter J.. "Forbidden Knowledge- Anti Esoteric Polemics". In: *Aries*, no. 2, Vol. 5, pp. 225–254. 2005.

Howells, Edward. "Teresa of Avila- Negative theologian?". In: Peter Tyland & Edward Howells (eds.), *Teresa of Avila- Mystical Theology and spirituality in the Carmelite tradition*, pp. 51–64. Routledge, 2017.

Irish Catholic Bishop's Conference. *Order of Mass- The Roman Missal*. 2010. <https://www.catholicbishops.ie/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/Order-of-Mass.pdf>. Assessed 14/05-2019.

Kamen, Henry. *The Spanish Inquisition- a historical revision*. Yale University Press, 2014.

Kavanaugh (O.C.D.), Kieran. "Saint Teresa of Avila- Her first spiritual directors". 1987. <https://www.icspublications.org/blogs/saint-biographies/saint-teresa-of-avila-her-first-spiritual-directors>. Assessed 07/05-2019.

Klitenic Wear, Sarah & John Dillon. *Dionysius the Areopagite and the*

Precarious Sainthood: The Mysticism of Teresa de Ávila between Orthodoxy and Esotericism

Neoplatonist Tradition- Despoiling the Hellenes. Ashgate, 2007.

Krajl, Robert. "La certeza mística en Santa Teresa". In: *Cuardernos del Tomás*, no. 3, pp. 85–102. 2011.

Llamas-Martinez (O.C.D.) Enrique. *Santa Teresa de Jesús y la Inquisición Española*. Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1972.

Matthew (O.C.D.), Iain. "St. Teresa- Witness to Christ's resurrection". In: Peter Tyland & Edward Howells (eds.), *Teresa of Avila- Mystical Theology and spirituality in the Carmelite tradition*, pp. 82–96. Routledge, 2017.

McGaha, Michael. "Teresa of Ávila and the Question of Jewish Influence". In: Alison Weber (ed.), *Approaches to Teaching Teresa of Ávila and the Spanish Mystics*, pp. 67–73. The Modern Language Association of America, 2009.

McGinn, Bernard. "True confessions- Augustine and Teresa of Avila on the mystical self". In: Peter Tyland & Edward Howells (eds.), *Teresa of Avila- Mystical Theology and spirituality in the Carmelite tradition*, pp. 9–29. Routledge, 2017.

McGinn, Bernard. "Teresa de Jesús- the contemplative in action". In: *English Language Notes*, no. 1 Vol. 56, pp. 53–66. 2018.

McGuire, Brian Patrick. "Et Andet Europa- middelalderens reformationer". In: Pernille Carstens, Mogens Nykjær & Hanne Roer (eds.), *En Anden Reformation- Rom som religiøst epicenter*, pp. 28–43. Forlaget Orbis, 2017.

Milem, Bruce. "Medieval Christian Mysticism". In: Glenn Magee (ed.), *The Cambridge handbook of Western Mysticism*, pp. 107–117. Cambridge University Press, 2016.

Moltmann, Jürgen. "Teresa of Avila and Martin Luther- the turn to the mysticism of the cross". In: *Studies in Religion*, no. 3, vol. 13,

pp. 265–278. 1984.

Olden- Jørgensen, Sebastian. "Tridentinerkoncilet 1545-63- Mellem Modreformation og Katolsk Reformation". In: Pernille Carstens, Mogens Nykjær & Hanne Roer (eds.), *En Anden Reformation- Rom som religiøst epicenter*, pp. 46–69. Forlaget Orbis, 2017.

O'Malley (S.J.), John W.. *Trent and all that*. Harvard University Press, 2000.

Payne (O.C.D.), Steve. *The Carmelite Tradition*. Liturgical Press, 2011.

Reece Hogan, Laura. *I Live, No Longer I- Paul's spirituality of suffering*. Wipf & Slock, 2017.

Reed, Helen. "Teaching Teresa's >Libro de Fundaciones < (The Book of Foundations)". In: Alison Weber (ed.), *Approaches to Teaching Teresa of Ávila and the Spanish Mystics*, pp. 225–231. The Modern Language Association of America, 2009.

Rhodes, Elizabeth. "Mysticism in History- the case of Spain's Golden Age". In: Alison Weber (ed), *Approaches to Teaching Teresa of Ávila and the Spanish Mystics*, pp. 47–56. The Modern Language Association of America, 2009.

Rowe, Erin Kathleen. "The Spanish Minerva- Imagining Teresa of Avila as Patron Saint in 17th Century Spain". In: *The Catholic Historical Review*, no. 4 Vol. 92, pp. 574–596. 2006.

Rudbøg, Tim. *The Academic Study of Western Esotericism- early developments and related fields*. H.E.R.M.E.S. Academic Press, 2013.

Ryan, Maria del Pilar. "Defiance and Obedience- reading the Spanish Mystics in Historical Context". In: Alison Weber (ed), *Approaches to Teaching Teresa of Ávila and the Spanish Mystics*, pp. 142–7. The Modern Language Association of America, 2009.

Precarious Sainthood: The Mysticism of Teresa de Ávila between Orthodoxy and Esotericism

Stein, Charles. "Ancient Mysteries". In: Glenn Magee (ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Western Mysticism and Esotericism*. Cambridge University Press, 2016.

Stroumsa, Guy G.. *Hidden Wisdom- Esoteric Traditions and the Roots of Christian Mysticism*. Brill, 2005.

Teresa de Ávila (O.C.D.). *Libro de la Vida*. 1565. <http://www.santateresadejesus.com/wp-content/uploads/Libro-de-la-Vida.pdf>. Assessed: 27.05.2019.

Teresa de Ávila (O.C.D.). *Castillo Interior*. 1577. <http://www.santateresadejesus.com/wp-content/uploads/Castillo-Interior-o-Las-Moradas.pdf>. Assessed: 27.05.2019.

Trillia, Raquel. "Algunas reacciones de los primeros lectores del >Libro de La Vida< de Teresa de Ávila según el autógrafo". In: *Alpha*, no. 26, pp. 47–68. 2008.

Thomas, Peter D.. *Gramscian Moment- philosophy, hegemony and Marxism*. BRILL, 2009.

Tyler, Peter. *The Return to the Mystical- Ludwig Wittgenstein, Teresa of Avila and the Christian mystical tradition*. Continuum, 2011.

Tyler, Peter. "Mystical affinities- St. Teresa and Jean Gerson". In: Peter Tyland & Edward Howells (eds.), *Teresa of Avila- Mystical Theology and spirituality in the Carmelite tradition*, pp. 51–64. Routledge, 2017.

Versluis, Arthur. "What is Esoteric? Method in the Study of Western Esotericism". In: *Esoterica*, IV, pp. 1–15. 2002.

Versluis, Arthur. *Restoring Paradise- Western esotericism, literature, art, and consciousness*. State University of New York Press, 2004.

Von Stuckrad, Kucko. "Western esotericism- towards an integrative

- model of interpretation". In: *Religion*, no. 2, Vol. 35, pp. 78–97. 2005.
- Von Stuckrad, Kucko. *Locations of Knowledge in Medieval and Early Modern Europe- Esoteric discourses and Western identities*. Brill, 2010.
- Walsh (S.J.), Terrance G.. "Writing Anxiety in Teresa's >Interior Castle<.". In: *Theological Studies*, no. 56, pp. 251–275. 1995.
- Weber, Alison. *Teresa of Avila and the Rhetoric of Femininity*. Princeton University Press, 1990.
- Weber, Alison. "Saint Teresa, Demonologist". In: Anne J. Cruz & Mary Elizabeth Perry (eds.), *Culture and Control in Counter-Reformation Spain*. University of Minnesota Press, 1992.
- Weber, Alison. "The Three lives of the >Vida<- The uses of Convent Autobiography". In: Marta E. Vicente & Luis R. Corteguera (eds.), *Women, Text and Authority*, pp. 107–125. Ashgate, 2003.
- Wiberg Pedersen, Else Marie. "Heterodoxy or Orthodoxy — what makes a Holy Woman's Text Holy?". In: Sabrina Corbellini (ed.), *Cultures of Religious Reading in the Late Middle Ages- instructing the soul, feeding the spirit and awakening the passion*, pp. 13–32. Brepols, 2013.
- Wiberg Pedersen: Else Marie. "Modreformation og Reform i Spanien-Teresa af Avila og 'Lutheranerne'". In: Pernille Carstens, Mogens Nykjaer & Hanne Roer (eds.), *En Anden Reformation- Rom som religiøst epicenter*, pp. 70-87. Forlaget Orbis, 2017.
- Williams, Rowan. "Teresa, the Eucharist and the Reformation". In: Peter Tyland & Edward Howells (eds.), *Teresa of Avila- Mystical Theology and spirituality in the Carmelite tradition*, pp. 67–76. Routledge, 2017.
- Wright, A.D.. *The Counter-Reformation- Catholic Europe and the non-christian world*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982.

Precarious Sainthood: The Mysticism of Teresa de Ávila between Orthodoxy and Esotericism

Wright, Jonathan. *God's Soldiers: adventure, politics, intrigue, power- a history of the Jesuits*. Doubleday, 2004.

Devil's Discourse:

Witch Trials and The Malleus Maleficarum

AISHA FREJA WENDELBO PEDERSEN

"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live"¹

Witches are dangerous, manipulative and out to get you. They are everything we imagine them to be and worse, in essence evil. Otherwise, why would the Bible say that they should not be allowed to live (see epigraph)? This begs many questions; what is a witch? Who is a witch? What can they do? And how to find them? *The Malleus Maleficarum* (In English *The Hammer of Witches*; In this article it will be referred to as *The Malleus*), probably the most influential book of its kind, sets out to answer exactly these questions and much more. In doing so it establishes the belief in witchcraft as an aspect of catholic faith and anyone who believed otherwise as heretics. Witches and their powers thus had to be real, as a big part of catholic faith finding and persecuting theses witches was of the highest priority, and this search for the enemies of god had severe historical consequences. This article examines the whys behind the ideas represented in *The Malleus*, specifically in relation to the book; the effects it can be said to have had, what the ideas of witchcraft and the Devil is built upon, what challenges the church was facing that drove it to a war on witchcraft, and what or who that war was actually against?

First a background examination of *The Malleus* is presented, in addition to some brief examples of the text and the theology that primarily lies behind its views on witches and the Devil. Secondly, three sections of examination containing historical facts, discussions of reasons for witchcraft and the development in the interest therein, along with further elaboration of the content of

¹King James Bible 1611, Exodus, 22:18.

The Malleus. Lastly follows a conclusion on the article as a whole.

The thesis of this article is that a ‘Devil at work’ was a discourse developed and put to use by the Roman church to regain religious monopoly, due to a spread in unorthodox behavior of laity.

The theoretical approaches in the article are threefold. Every section has a starting point at an individual angle on witchcraft combined with analysis of *The Malleus*.

The first section will deal with a dualistic-way-of-thought, as described by William R. Uttal, who argues that a dualistic interpretation of the world originates in the fear of death: “Death fears gave rise to a dualistic approach to the nature of reality including the fundamental idea of the immortality of mind/soul”.² This cognitive condition can help shed some light on why the belief in witchcraft ended up having such an effect on the populace, and why the church succeeded in constructing a category of heretics that would be persecuted from the 12th until the late 17th century.³ As a result of this, society ended up being separated into two strands of traditions, what in this article (borrowed from a book by Richard Keckhefer, *European witch trials; their foundation in popular and learned culture*. 1976) will be categorized as learned or popular tradition. Here the idea of “collective memory” will play an important role, as it can explain a possible rise in heresy, or a general disconnection from church authority in the decades prior to the witch trials.

Secondly, considerations about ‘field’ and ‘habitus’, as understood by Pierre Bourdieu, of the period before and after the publishing of *The Malleus* will be discussed and put into context. The field of religion saw much conflict in this period, field strategies⁴ of different kinds shaped the landscape of orthodoxy and in addition to this, the conflict further sustained itself due to the people of Europe having different habitus, traditions, geography, heritage, memory.

Lastly, witchcraft will be analyzed as a discourse, as Wouter Hanegraaff utilizes polemical discourse in his analysis of Western

²Uttal 2004, p. 58.

³Napier 2017, pp. 9–11.

⁴Swartz 1997, p. 125.

esotericism as a field.⁵ Discourse (understood as stories told internally in society; reigning viewpoints or values) helped shape one of the darkest and most intriguing periods in western history; a polemical battle waged by the church against paganism and heresy; a discourse that ended up separating the lower classes of society from the higher classes, the culmination of a great battle of narratives. There were many religious and theological traps and terms to consider, a world of superstition still thrived and interpretations and application of things considered magic or magical will be examined in extension.

The Malleus was published in 1486, by inquisitor Heinrich Kramer, and Jacob Sprenger, both theologically educated in the Dominican order. The primary author, Kramer, had partaken in the fight against heresy for the most of his life, and gradually started preaching against witchcraft as well. It is on the basis of his experience with, and belief in sorcery that *The Malleus* came to be.⁶ The book itself could probably not have been composed at a better time in history. It enjoyed much popularity and reputation by being manufactured just after the printing press broke through,⁷ it was credited with a bull from the pope and was sanctioned by multiple authoritative figures, by either support or quoting. All of these components, as well as the book's theological and legal presentation,⁸ made it into a weapon of mass destruction.

The modus operandi of *The Malleus* can be divided into three parts; firstly, the book presented proof that witches and witchcraft exist, and with this it corrects previous errors of faith;⁹ secondly, it deals with inflictions caused by witchcraft; and thirdly, how to identify and prosecute witches.¹⁰ It is an educational book that

⁵Hanegraaff 2005, p. 226.

⁶Broedel 2003, p. 14.

⁷Mackay & Institoris 2009, p. 1. "Published in 1486 (only a generation after the introduction of printing by movable type in western Europe)"

⁸Broedel 2003, p. 7. "Perhaps as important, though, was Institoris and Sprenger's explicit claim to the status of authority combined with the ready availability of their text."

⁹Mackay & Institoris 2009, p. 91. "Claiming that sorcerers exist is such a Catholic proposition that to defend the opposite view steadfastly is altogether heretical."

¹⁰Broedel 2003, p. 3.

stands as a guide for anyone who would want to know about or how identify a witch. It is a tale of a time and an environment of social control and zero tolerance for unorthodox behavior.

The influence of Kramer and Sprenger's education in the Dominican order comes clear across in the book, as the references most commonly used, besides the Bible, are to Thomas Aquinas, with whom they share a version of the Devil that is very present and who acts independently in the world.¹¹ Another theologian often quoted is St. Augustine, whose views probably influenced the attitude towards women and their sexuality. Augustine formulated the doctrine of original sin,¹² a sin inherently 'female' due to Eve persuading Adam to eat the apple. That witches are female does not need much affirmation, since "it would not be helpful to cite arguments to the contrary".¹³

The very first chapter of *The Malleus* deals with the question of whether claiming that witches do not exist is heresy — to which the answer is yes.¹⁴ It further seeks to clear up misconceptions of what sorcery is, of whether it is opinion, imagination, or demonic illusions. According to *The Malleus*, sorcery is very real and in no way imaginary by the fact that demons are fallen angles they indeed have real power,¹⁵ and this must be acknowledged by the faithful. Furthermore, since the Bible demands witches to be killed, it serves to prove that they do, and mean, real harm to people and the church. *The Malleus* says about the Bible that, "It would not impose penalties of this kind, if they did not actually co-operate with devils in bringing about real effects and injuries".¹⁶

This chapter only speaks specifically on the gender of a sorcerer

¹¹Ibid., p. 43.

¹²Greenblatt 2017

¹³Mackay & Institoris 2009, p. 160. "It was Eve who led Adam astray, and since the sin of Eve would not have brought the death of the soul and body upon us if the guilt in Adam to which she and not the Devil misled him has not ensued, she is 'more bitter than death'".

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 92–3.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 93. "[...] by which we believe that angle fell from heaven and that demons exist, we also avow that as a result of the subtlety of their nature, they have many powers that we do not".

¹⁶Ibid., p. 94.

on one occasion, “they are burned alive, perhaps because of their being female”¹⁷ but often hint to the female nature by talking about “her” as a substitute for the word sorcerer. The Devil was granted powers by God over sexuality,¹⁸ and the idea that females were more likely to succumb to the Devil’s seduction has much to do with him being male.

The second chapter deals with the question of whether demons and sorcerers are dependent on each other or if they have powers of their own — to which the answer is yes. Although it seems it has not always been so as both the Devil and sorcery has been told in scripture to occur alone. The increase of the heresy of witchcraft is the result of the Devil’s intent, a willing subject and the permission of God,¹⁹ making it more powerful than ever before. Here we learn that superstition and magical practices have a long history, and that these “arts” have been in development since the time of Zoroaster, who was, according to *The Malleus*, “(...) the first inventor of the arts of magic and astrology (...)”²⁰ although this was also by the help of the Devil.²¹ This chapter sets out to show that the evolution of sorcery has reached a critical point that demands immediate attention.

DUALISM — NOTHING IN BETWEEN

The Good, The Bad and Nothing

Christendom has a heritage from previous religions, the closest being Judaism since the old testament applies to both. More interesting, however, when talking about witch hunting and the thoughts

¹⁷Ibid., p. 97.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 172. “St Thomas [...] gives explanations to show why more power over the sexual acts of man is granted to the Devil by God than over other acts [...].”

¹⁹Ibid., p. 119 “Here it should be noted that since three elements must cooperate to bring about such an effect, namely the demon, the sorceress and God’s permission, Augustine says that this superstitious vanity was discovered as a result of a baneful alliance of humans and demons. Therefore, the origin and increase of this heresy is derived from this pestilential alliance.”.

²⁰Ibid., p. 111.

²¹Ibid. “he is the only man to have laughed when he was born, which was nothing but the work of the Devil.”.

that fostered the fear thereof, is the heritage from Zoroastrianism and its founder Zoroaster, who was a magician, “(...) the father of materialism and dualism”.²² A dualistic worldview creates a line that can be drawn between everything, and as such everything can either be of one; the good, or the other; the bad. While it is easy to understand a world that is divided in such a way, it can create a lot of problems in a changing society; is the old way the right way? Is it good or bad? Or is it the new way, thoughts and ideas that one should be weary of?

“Dualism, in a nutshell, is the conviction that there are at least two levels of ontological reality”.²³ This notion feeds the concept of dichotomy as it can never be of both worlds. Written by psychology professor David Uttal, the book, *Dualism: the original sin of cognitivism*; argues that humanity suffers from a fear of pain and death and will ultimately do anything, conjure anything, to avoid dealing with this head on, the fear will always assume the form of something else. The argument is that the fear of death, not only caused the development of burial rituals, it also sets the foundation of western religious belief systems as it nurtured the dualistic way of thinking.²⁴

These systems were further elaborated by ascribing meaning to the things the human mind experiences while dreaming “[...] the evolution of this central idea in all religions may have been driven by dream, hallucinations, and other inexplicable and mysterious mental phenomena”.²⁵ The idea that a fear of death, imagination and dreams have fueled the evolution of religious ideas is not unique to Uttal. Other scholars such as James Frazer, and Edward Taylor have reached similar conclusions. Frazer argued magic came first (understood also by Taylor as sympathetic in nature; primitive man mistook his thinking as related to actual facts,²⁶) then religion and then science. Taylor’s term “survivals” (coined due to

²²Hanegraaff 2012, p. 246.

²³Uttal 2004, p. 310.

²⁴Ibid., p. 58.

²⁵Ibid., p. 134.

²⁶Hanegraaff 2012, pp. 164–5.

superstition having too many distorting connotations,²⁷⁾ describes that the ancient people, because of lack of visible agency in the world, survived by implementing practices to accommodate blind spots. These practices in turn survived (through reinvention) and can be recognized in ideas of magic, religion, ritual and tradition to this day.

It is my argument that due to circumstances such as the black death with a collective memory thereof (an estimated third of the European population died), the death of farm animals and bad harvests due to weather changes; general poverty and starvation, the wars already waged by the church on pagans, heretics and Muslims, the trial of the Templars, that had a great reputation and transnational influence, and the later schism of the Reformation, made death and damnation ever present in the middle ages, and placed the battle between good and evil in people's everyday lives. "A fundamental dualism, the acceptance of the premise that there is a separate and perpetual state of existence for the spirit/soul/mind, on the one hand, and the transitory nature of the body and its material parts, on the other"²⁸ is the result of the human brain needing an "escape hatch" from the awareness of pain and death. The argument here is that in the toughest periods of history, periods of greater calamities,²⁹ the 'dualistic lines' have a tendency to be sharper; you are either with or against the dominating position. As Uttal concludes, the "dualist ideas have exerted a powerful influence on how humans construct their environments and live their lives". How this constructed the category of witchcraft, with all its consequences will be examined in the following sections.

The idea of God had undergone much change since the time of the old testament and was now associated with all things good. All things bad in the world had to be the result of an intervention from something evil and sinister, and this is why the Devil was

²⁷⁾Ibid., p. 158.

²⁸⁾Uttal 2004, p. 190.

²⁹⁾Ibid., p. 317. "floods, winds, volcanoes, droughts famines, and innumerable other calamities all seemed to require explanations from cognitively active entities like us".

needed. Death was close therefore the Devil was close, which begs the questions; why does he torment the world? How is he working his evil? And why does he seem to be successful on such a big scale? An explanation of this is the construction of witchcraft, heretics, and black magic. Uttal writes “[...] Calamities all seemed to require explanations from cognitively active entities like us”,³⁰ those would be witches. This, however, opens up for a terrifying reality: death is not the only thing to fear, because with the Devil at work, it's not only about life or death, but salvation or damnation. With the promise of God's salvation people might not have feared death as they did before the monotheistic religions, but a new fear would consume Europe in the middle ages, and conflict would rage for hundreds of years because of the fear of the corruption of the soul, and the fight to save the right faith from evil.

Transmutation — A Fall from Grace

Like I argued in the previous section, historical events, such as the black death, has had an effect on the mentality and the relationship between the church and the population, and can be said to have played a part in forming a landscape, imagined to be plagued by witches. But what other events could have fueled the population's distrust in the church? What cases of witchcraft had been persecuted prior to the actual witch craze? The most important question for this section is who had already been charged with working with the Devil?

The first example is of the greatest significance. The trial of the Knights Templar, from 1307–14, initiated by pope Clement V and King Phillip the IV of France, was due to fear of the Templar's growing power, wealth and transnational connections, and accusing them of worshipping the Devil was a method the church found highly effective, “The inquisition became an organ of state authority, a weapon of the crown, sometimes unleashed against the regime's perceived political enemies”.³¹ From a popular perspective (the common folk) this would undoubtedly have been

³⁰Ibid., p. 317.

³¹Napier 2017, pp. 56–7.

a very unpopular decision since the population had enjoyed the protection and the banking system of the Templars, who had the reputation of heroes, and a force of some thousand men spread out across Europe. We can speculate that due to the Templar's travels and encounters with other nations and cultures, they would have had knowledge of other unorthodox practices and ways of thought. It does not take much imagination to think that they might have adopted some of these heretical behaviors into their own understanding of Christianity. Gordon Napier writes in his book *Maleficium*, that Baphomet, a goat-like devilish figure the Templars were said to worship, strongly resembled an ancient Egyptian deity, and that the crusades of the Templars would have taken them to and through Egypt.³²

Casting the Templars in the role of heretics and devil-worshippers sent a powerful signal; if warrior monks, charged with protecting not only the faithful on their pilgrimage, but also the (allegedly) crown jewels of Christendom, could fall under the influence of the Devil, then it was a very powerful Devil, and no one could really think themselves protected from him.

By removing the Templars, the catholic church removed a great sense of security from society, not just physically when traveling, but mentally by the accusation, and then the burning, on the charges of diabolism. On the other hand, successfully prosecuting the Knights Templar proved what important work the inquisition was actually doing, and what a formidable enemy the Devil really was.

Another case worth mentioning, closer in time to the center of attention, is that of Joan of Arc, who was burned in 1431.³³ Joan of Arc, later cleared of all charges and sanctified, was a special child who was said to be able to hear the voices of saints and angles. With the help of these divine voices, she became a war hero in the Hundred Years' War between France and England. Captured by the English, the voices heard by Joan were recast to be demonic, but in the end, she ended up being burned as a heretic because she wore men's clothing. This makes sense since this is

³²Ibid., p. 58.

³³Ibid., p. 9.

an accusation and trial conducted by enemy forces, although they could not condemn her on trials of diabolism, they had to condemn her as a heretic. This illustrates what was, in essence, going on during the inquisition, the witch trials and the Reformation; the enemy, by having money, influence, different theology or behavior is transformed by discourse into something evil.

Transgressing the Social Norms

According to *The Malleus*, a witch is a woman who serves the Devil and has a sexual relationship with him³⁴ in return for magical powers. That is the foundation of the nature of the witch. The Devil does not have physical power on earth and needs humans to do his bidding, he is a “disjunction between impressive diabolic power and minimal diabolic presence demanded a mediator”.³⁵ Like the witch of *The Malleus*, views presented in folklore all perceive the witch as some kind of monster. A monster is a being that in some way or another transgresses social norms. An example could be drinking blood, eating people, or sacrificing children. Monsters are creatures that look, but most importantly, behave beyond established norms. However, this alone does not make a monster. Every mythical creature could be a monster. The unicorn, however, is not a monster by any standard since the behavior of the *thing* must hold some kind of sinister intent. In other words, a monster’s behavior inspires fear. The degree of how monstrous a monster is, is as such not a direct result of its appearance, although they often have deformities.

Monsters evolve and emerge in times of cultural change and clashes, the monsters will take the form of what a given society tries to put behind it, or what a given society tries to accommodate (the monstrous, by being old or new, transgresses social norms. Human sacrifices, once normal, became a monstrous acts). In the pre-Christian world there were a lot of deities, folklore about

³⁴Mackay & Institoris 2009, p. 172 “St Thomas [...] gives explanations to show why more power over the sexual acts of man is granted to the Devil by God than over other acts, and therefore it is necessary to say by similar reasoning that those women who are more given over to these acts suffer more harassment.”.

³⁵Broedel 2003, p. 4.

spirit, myths about strange beings and beneficial magical practices, however being unaccustomed to living in an urban area could also be interpreted as a transgression:

The movement into cities during and after the black death furthermore created a large class of new town-dwellers who were unaccustomed to urban life. These newcomers did not necessarily sever all ties with their original homes and social systems, but to the extent that they did so they must have suffered profound disorientation, which would help to explain the rise in trials during the late fourteenth century.³⁶

The category of monsters can be used politically and polemically. If you succeeded in constructing your enemy in the image of a monster, you would automatically cast yourself in the role of a hero and take historical advantage. The implementation of Christendom demanded changes in social norms, things such as pagan gods, idolatry, magic and superstition was reinterpreted and made into the agency of the only monster of Christianity, the Devil. Since this monster could not walk the physical earth himself, the witch was reinvented as his mediator. "Monstret afslører, idet det viser sig, en sprække i tingenes orden"³⁷ — the monster reveals, when it shows itself, a flaw in the way of things; the flaw being the unorthodox practices of laity, combined with unexplained suffering of the time. The witch can now be viewed as a pagan-hybrid-monster, that represents all of what the church sought to purge from faith and society; Everything supernatural, not performed by the church, is the work of witchcraft also becoming the explanation for sickness, famine and death.

Since the change of social norms (*habitus*) cannot happen immediately — nor spread evenly or equally fast, encounters with this new category of witchcraft would have been many and happen often. An example of paganist infused ideas of witchcraft in *The Malleus* is a reference to the Roman goddess Diana; "Women who believe that they ride on horseback with Diana or Herodias during the night-time hours are censured"³⁸ another one might be

³⁶Keickerhefer 1976, p. 95.

³⁷Brudholm 2014, p. 118.

³⁸Mackay & Institoris 2009, p. 93.

two instances where scorers are called “pythons”,³⁹ this may be because snakes are associated with the serpent form of the Devil, but could also (since Divination is heresy) be a reinterpretation of the famous Delphi oracle called *the Pythia*.

The created monster creates the need for a hero, or if someone or something should ever wish to be a hero they must create a monster, “Hvis monstrene ikke viser sig af sig selv, har guder og helte, avisredaktører og cirkusdirektøre til alle tider forstået at udstille dem”⁴⁰ — If the monster does not show itself, God and heroes, reporters and circus directors has always understood displaying them. But what kind of monster was the inquisitorial witch? Since society was a patriarchy, it was more likely for women to transgress the social norms. The image of a witch as an old hag is perhaps due to a cultural value of youth and beauty. Age can also mean wisdom, so the old hag had to know of things other did not. An old hags often has the ability to transform, and aging itself transforms the human with bigger consequences for women than for men; by entering menopause they lose their most contributive aspect, the ability to bear children. This is perhaps why *The Malleus* puts emphasis on midwives, (assuming this is due to high rates of cradle deaths and miscarriages) as the worst kind of witch, since witchcraft (and general ideas of female evildoers) often involve stealing or eating children. This belief was such a big part of the witch that *The Malleus* identifies the midwife witch as especially powerful in a section only dedicated to this matter.⁴¹ Pre-Christian religion often had female deities at the center of worship, and Christianity defined much of itself against pagan practice — and thus against female fertility and worship. With the doctrine of original sin, men could blame woman for much, and a woman perceive to be in league with the Devil for even more.

³⁹Ibid., p. 94 & 98.

⁴⁰Brudholm 2014, p. 116.

⁴¹Mackay & Institoris 2009, pp. 211–2. “In addition, in these practices midwife sorceresses cause greater losses than anyone, as penitent sorceresses have often related to us and to others, saying, ‘No one harms the Catholic Faith more than do midwives.’ In instances where they do not kill children, they take the baby out of the room as if to do something, and raising them up in the air they offer them to the demons.”.

The examples from this section point to grave consequence for the dualistic way of thinking for in Christianity, since the problem with dualism is the non-existent nuances in between. There exist so many dualistic relationships in Christianity that it would be tedious to list them all. A few of them relevant to this article clearly reveal a field of conflict between them, such as; God vs. Satan; Orthodox vs. Heterodox; Monster Vs. Hero; Popular vs. Learned traditions; Doctrine vs. Tradition; Man vs. Women, and so on. If warriors of God, like the Knights Templar could be in league with the Devil, then truly, no one was safe, not from evil, not from accusation.

HABITUS, AND A FIELD IN CONFLICT

Popular vs. Learned Tradition

An area that can be considered dual, but not in reality separate, is the relationship between individual and society. The theory of habitus by Pierre Bourdieu reveals a relationship between the two as “the socialized body does not stand in oppositions to society; it is one of its forms of existence [...] as if they are two dimensions of the same social reality”.⁴² This is not to say that this reality does not have different standpoints within itself (the standpoints discussed in this article are identified either as popular or learned tradition.) To understand this internal conflict, Bourdieu has provided the term “field”, which will be applied as well, since the field of religion in this period of time saw many conflicts, one of which, I argue, culminated as the witch hunts.

It was the elite that presided over the trials and prosecuted suspected witches⁴³, although this is not the case for all trials, as some reveal obvious differences in interpretations of witchcraft. Where the popular tradition, represented by the accused, might confess to sorcery (or other magical practices) of a harmful or beneficial kind, the learned tradition, represented by judge and jury, reinvented this into diabolism, “If these trials are typical (...)

⁴²Swartz 1997, p. 96.

diabolism played little or no role in popular belief".⁴³

If the populace didn't accuse each other on charges of working with the Devil, then why did he end up playing such a prominent role in this period of history? One way to understand this is by examining the views on magic as presented in *The Malleus*. The power of God is expressed through miracles, so the power of the Devil was perceived as magical since "The Aristotelianism of the medieval schools was unwilling to recognize magic as an independent type of reality, and had to interpret it in religious terms"⁴⁴ *The Malleus* refers to the magicians of the Bible who stood in the way of God's work, well known stories such as the flight from Egypt. "For in the ten plagues Moses smote Egypt with the assistance of good angles, while in the nine the magicians simply co-operated with evil spirits".⁴⁵ Witchcraft, which I will argue was more of a heretical renaissance, can be analyzed as a religious analogy with Bourdieu's capitalist economic example, since it

emphasizes that the peasants reaction is not a 'purely mechanical and passive forced accommodation' to the new economic system. Rather, the peasants respond with "creative reinvention" to the discrepancy between the demands of the new economic rationality and their customary habits (...)

the people of popular tradition reinvented Christianity to better fit their everyday experience, which in turn made people of the learned tradition reinvent their unorthodox behavior as witchcraft. A great example of this is demonstrated in *The Construction of Witch Craft*, written by Hans Peter Broedel, which says:

A spirit of the dead is causing disease, which will abate only when the corpse is mutilated or destroyed. Such an interpretation, however, was completely at odds with the accepted teachings of the Church, and generations of clerics had condemned such beliefs and practices as superstitious nonsense. Institoris and Sprenger accept the story nonetheless as being essentially accurate, provided that the dead woman had been a witch.⁴⁶

⁴³Keickerhefer 1976, p. 31.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 80.

⁴⁵Mackay & Institoris 2009, p. 110.

⁴⁶Broedel 2003, p. 96.

The trials are a clash between two attitudes of faith. The rise in accusations (as well as the use of torture) after *The Malleus* was a strategic reaction by the actors of society in order to regain control.⁴⁷ When the Reformation began a new rise of witch accusations followed, more on this in following sections. The dominant position of the catholic church, had been playing the field of religion in a conservative manner,⁴⁸ reproducing and transmitting what they saw as legitimate bodies of Christian knowledge as well as instituting the inquisition to rid the field of the rest. The Reformation attempted a strategy of succession,⁴⁹ since they wanted to receive access to the field in the same way as the dominant position. If there was a heretical conspiracy, or indeed a secret cult of witches, they used a subversive strategy,⁵⁰ creating their own forms of knowledge. The catholic church remained dominant in places not conquered by the Reformation, the speculated third contestant failed to gain access to the religious field, by either not being real or remaining unorthodox and hidden.

A Habit Of Superstition

With the institutionalization and domination of Christendom, the old pagan religions were banished from the European continent, but remnants of their belief systems remained in society. As such, idolatry and superstition could be said to have been reinvented in a Christian context. These heretical practices might even have had a renaissance due to events such as the Black Death, and as such, it is not farfetched to assume that since the church proved unable to explain/contain/heal the plague, many people may have abandoned Christianity for alternative, paganist, or other heterodox, practices, with a new interest in magic, healing and abilities of so-called cunning people. We must at least assume that there was a rising problem with heretics or that the church

⁴⁷Swartz 1997, p. 100 “actors are not rule followers or norm obeyers but strategic improvisers who respond dispositionally to the opportunities and constraints offered by various situations”.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 125.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid.

had experienced some loss of power, since ideas of witches and demons were developed to such an extent. *The Malleus* refers on several occasions to the need for a “healthy understanding of the canon”⁵¹ which implies that an unhealthy understanding existed. Furthermore, *The Malleus* also identifies a problem with magic and other such superstitions, of which there are three types; idolatry, divination and observation.⁵² These have existed since the time of Zoroaster, and have since then evolved to become a serious issue.⁵³ These three categories were big in the polytheistic world and continued to survive and be a problem for the church. It is not possible to change people’s habitus, at least not rapidly, and thus it became a long battle of narratives. The witch hunts were a way for the church to reclaim power and establish their monopoly on faith. The construction of witchcraft could furthermore also be used as an explanation as to why the Christian faith did not spread as evenly or as quickly as one would wish, by theologically interpreting this as the result of the Devil. If this was the case it would more than justify hunting those people down and executing them in the name of God.

The witch craze could also have been a construct of “Psychic solutions” since “Allusions to ghosts or spirits can help to fulfill the need of those who are afraid of death by providing a kind of evidence of the existence of an afterlife without invoking gods of one kind or another”.⁵⁴ While this might have been useful to ancient communities, this would have caused some serious trouble later in history with institutionalized religion. The fearful imagination could get out of control and conjure up dangers that could not exist, giving rise to a conflict between people who believed in the supernatural separate God (as the case with much folklore), and those who saw no difference. On this, Wouter Hanegraaff writes “a failure to keep nature and the divine separate, and the result of

⁵¹ Mackay & Institoris 2009, p. 93.

⁵² Ibid., p. 111. “the first inventor of the arts of magic and astrology was Zoroaster”.

⁵³ Ibid., “Idolatry is the first kind of superstition, divination being the second and observation the third”.

⁵⁴ Uttal 2004, p. 191.

such failure is that the mind becomes vulnerable to emotional excess: fear of invisible beings.”⁵⁵ With such beliefs flowing around society there was a need for order; definitions of what and who were the agents responsible of the emotional distress people were experiencing. These agents are examined and put on full display in *The Malleus* creating the possibility of taking action and regaining control, not only for the church but for people seeking answers.

Malleus Maleficarum: Playing The Field

There was a religious crisis. The elite had noticed malpractice of faith in society, and both them and the population sought to understand the wickedness of the world around them. The answer to these wonderings was provided by Kramer and *The Malleus* by “proving” that witches indeed existed and were working with the Devil himself “[...] Since the authority of the holy scriptures says that demons have power over bodily objects and over the imagination of humans when they are allowed by God”.⁵⁶ Kramer, being well educated and an inquisitor, has the right habitus and capital to expand the field of witchcraft into mainstream society. A theologist presenting proof and declaring that those who do not believe in witches are heretics,⁵⁷ probably forced members of society to participate in the field even though this was not of their nature or faith. “People were using soothsayers, alternative priests and ‘cunning folk’, for fortune telling and magic remedies, or even practicing magic domestically themselves, incorporating quasi-catholic or even pre-Christian elements.”.⁵⁸ The learned elite, concerned with the agent behind this superstition, could not accept the idea of magic being something neither of God or the Devil. The category of witchcraft had been in development for many years before the publishing of *The Malleus*. Therefore, the

⁵⁵Hanegraaff 2012, p. 163.

⁵⁶Mackay & Institoris 2009, p. 92.

⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 94–5 “It is quite absurd to contradict all these men, and in doing so cannot be absolved of the vice of heresy. Rather, in law whoever errs in the explanation of holy scriptures is considered a heretic, [...] as is anyone whose opinion about matters of faith differs from the teaching of the Roman Church.”.

⁵⁸Napier 2017, p. 97.

book strongly represents learned attitudes towards sorcery and its ontological origins. Because of this “to most learned observers, ‘witches’ and ‘witchcraft’ in the world about them would look more like those described in *The Malleus* than those in similar texts.”.⁵⁹ This coinciding description of witchcraft with already established ideas undoubtedly contributed to the popularity of *The Malleus* and ensured its primary use in trials, thereby becoming the single most authoritative text on all matters of witchcraft in continental Europe.

DISCOURSE — IT IS AS THEY SAY

Managing Meaning

Through time something happened with the connotations of words like magic, superstition and demons, which in their origin (imported from other religious systems) held quite different meanings. Superstition originally referred to some kind of awe or respect for the gods.⁶⁰ This is closely related to demons, which derives from the Greek word *daimones*, who were Greek gods or deities. Sorcery in *The Malleus* is a form of superstition and “[...] this superstitious vanity was discovered as a result of a baneful alliance of humans and demons”.⁶¹ The Greek word for superstition is *deisidaimonia*,⁶² and refers to the worship and respect of the *daimons*. The reinvention of pagan deities as devils or demons maintain the relationship between the two words, but by dualistic Christian theology they end up being associated with darkness and evil.

A discourse, as suggested by Hanegraaff, needs five things:⁶³ First, a sense of threat, misfortunes (threat to the people) and heresies (threat to the church). Second, that the source of this is not completely clear, the obscure nature of the Devil. Third, a target, witches and heretics (since the Devil is out of reach). Fourth, an

⁵⁹Broedel 2003, p. 7.

⁶⁰Hanegraaff 2005, p. 159.

⁶¹Mackay & Institoris 2009, p. 119.

⁶²Hanegraaff 2012, p. 159.

⁶³Hanegraaff 2005, p. 226.

audience, people struck by misfortune, clergy discovering heterodoxy. Fifth, that it is simple, all this is because of evil people doing evil things because of the evil Devil (dualistic).

Diabolism is a fundamentally different charge than sorcery since it implies that someone had entered into a pact with the Devil “when the populace pointed to instances of maleficent magic, growing numbers of intellectuals could only see the influence of Satan”.⁶⁴ Sorcery, which gradually became synonymous with diabolism,⁶⁵ became the discourse by which all heterodox, or non-church-sanctioned activity, was transformed into evil, a phenomena that we also see in the cases of the Knights Templar and Joan of Arc.

This discourse, developed to protect the one true faith, also played its part during the Reformation where: “[...] both sides of the divide accused each other of being false churches inspired by Satan, and as a result the Devil was closer to the forefront of people’s minds”.⁶⁶ This might even have served protestant theology better than catholic, as the Roman church could be accused of superstition and magic, because of practices like the transubstantiation. “The protestant reformers sought to eradicate what they saw as ‘superstition’, including semi-magical services offered by the clergy”.⁶⁷ The benefit of this categorization of one’s enemy has already been discussed (*monsterizing*).

Hanegraaff has argued that the study of Western esotericism is the study of rejected knowledge, “[...] the field of study referred to as “Western esotericism” is the historical product of a polemical discourse, the dynamics of which can be traced all the way back to the beginnings of monotheism.”.⁶⁸ Hanegraaff further elaborates this argument with a contemporary example of polemical discourse, the *War On terror* under the presidency of George W. Bush. The very study of witchcraft, be it real or not, is the subject

⁶⁴Keickerhefer 1976, p. 103.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 21 “historians have long thought of southern France as the area in which diabolism and sorcery were joined to form ad composite notion of witchcraft”.

⁶⁶Napier 2017, p. 95.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 96.

⁶⁸Hanegraaff 2005, p. 226.

of rejected history because people engaged in such practices never had a legitimate place in a Christian society.

Therefore, along the trail of thought established by Hanegraaff, an exemplification of the thought-pattern behind the polemics of witchcraft will briefly be compared to contemporary polemics on terror. Like witchcraft (before *The Malleus*) terror is not a well-defined category, but the war against terror created an image of who was most likely to be a terrorist; Muslim male and probably brown skinned. Most western people may recognized the idea that *not all Muslims are terrorist but all terrorist are Muslim*, not as a belief or actual conviction by as recipe to recognize the enemy. However, could the same not have been said in the time of witch trials? *Not all women are witches, but all witches are (for the most part) women*. The point is just that the same idea is applied, *Evil is real, and it must be opposed*.⁶⁹ If an authoritarian text or site, (with such credentials *The Malleus* received) existed today, we can speculate that the War on Terror would be taken to the streets and waged everywhere and not just from seats of political power. One only needs to think about one example from Denmark to see the potential: A young nervous looking man was thought to be carrying a bomb on the bus, when in reality it was a printer and he was headed for an examination.⁷⁰

The structures seen in the witch trials are not exclusive to the trials alone (although the result is). Society has the potential, by means of polemical politics, to blindsight itself with fear, and this fear (in forms of terror or witchcraft, because it can happen or be anywhere), used by governments or powerful institutions turns their efforts, against the polemical enemy, ironically, into what may as well be called the Devil's work.

Magic or Miracle — In the Name of Who?

When talking about witchcraft one can hardly avoid the topic of magic. What this elusive artform is, is hard to determine and as Hanegraaff has argued, this is a category of the imagination as it

⁶⁹Bush 2002.

⁷⁰Berlingske 2014.

does not exist in reality.⁷¹ However, this does not mean that it is not relevant, because it is the imagination of humans that shape society.

First let me start by identifying different types of what might be considered magic. Widely known are types like black and white magic, the connotations make it clear that one does good, and the other bad. Another type of magic is miracles, although religion might argue that this only looks like magic but is in fact not (in the Bible the miracles of God triumphs over magic). Miracles can achieve feats just like the two categories mentioned above, a miracle can both be good or bad (for some). Take for example, Moses' miracles in Egypt, the plagues (if they had not been sent by God) would have been that of dark or black magic, but since the cause is God it is not in fact evil.

Three things make up a magical interpretation. First the 'source', the one with the actual power; be it humans, God, the Devil, Spirits or fairies. Second is 'intention', is it for own benefit or for others? for good or bad? Third is 'effect' does it do harm or does it benefit in some way. While forms of magic are related in intention, some in effect, and other by cause, they can never be related on all three forms at once. It would seem that the 'source' determines the way the 'effect' is interpreted (miracles being of God makes it good even though they can cause harm), as such we have many different categories of "magic" — black, white, natural, miracles and so on. Necromancy is a type of black magic (since it means black arts; nigromancy), as it deals with the communication or revival of the dead. However, it is not a black art because of the 'effect' of the practice but because of the 'source' and secondly the 'intent'. The exact same result can be accomplished by way of miracles or white magic. *The Malleus* mentions the apostle "Peter revived the dead Tabitha",⁷² and in Christian folklore in general "The restoration of a more vital importance make up the largest segment of the

⁷¹Hanegraaff 2012, p. 168 "It is literally a creature of the theoretical imagination, conjured into existence by the same intellectual fallacy that has so often been considered the very essence of magic".

⁷²Mackay & Institoris 2009, p. 108.

miracles of this kind. Revivals of the dead are so common [...]"⁷³ Saints, magicians and witches practice the same things, evocation, raising of the dead and so on (though they have differences in style and preference), it is only by theological contemplation and cultural import of words that the categories of magic becomes many.

The word magic itself originates from the Persian word *Magu*, which was some kind of Persian religious profession or status. This word was adopted by the Greeks, where the meaning was changed as they understood *Mageia*, as worshipping the gods.⁷⁴ The pre-Christian Roman world was polytheistic wide spreading and extremely diverse. The practice of evocation (inviting the gods to follow) when conquering new territory meant a lot of religious multiplicity. With this being the way of the Romans, one can imagine the huge amount of words following the import of cultures of different origin. When Christianity became state religion, the diverse nature of the Roman empire became a problem. In terms of theology it could not be further from the Christian model, and as such Christianity was forced to wage war both within and outside itself (the great schism, inquisitions, witch hunts and the Reformation). The attempt to be in opposition to the *heathen other* made it difficult, because these were religions created in the same world, and in reality they were so closely related that Christianity had to sacrifice its own to maintain order; be it Gnostics, Cathars, Templars, and other forms of declared heresy.

The Malleus identifies four types of magic; assisted, harmful, sorcery and natural.⁷⁵ Assisted is by help of good angles; harmful by evil spirits; sorcery by the Devil; and natural is by influence of heavenly bodies. Witches were assisted by the Devil, but what magic were they allegedly practicing? Magic for the sake of vengeance against one's neighbor was common, maybe by killing their farm animals.⁷⁶ This would have affected the farmers in two ways,

⁷³Loomis 1948, p. 83.

⁷⁴Hanegraaff 2012, p. 169.

⁷⁵Mackay & Institoris 2009, p. 110.

⁷⁶Keickerhefer 1976, p. 55 "the reason for afflicting farm animal seem clear enough: if a sorceress actually wished to injure a man she could jeopardize his very

they lived close to their cattle so some might have held affection for them, and they were of course dependent on them for food. Things like harsh periods of weather could also be interpreted as the result of witchcraft “There is evidence of a general climatic transformation throughout Europe, beginning around the year 1300. Severe winters were frequently followed by cool and wet summers”.⁷⁷ Another type was love magic (the power of seduction), and this is also the power that witches really display the most in *The Malleus*, as much emphasis is put on the lustful nature of women. “There is a natural explanation, namely that she is more carnal than a man, as is clear in connection with many filthy carnal acts”.⁷⁸ Since the witches carry many pagan connotations, the fascination with their sexual nature makes sense since sex was considered something divine in the pre-Christian world. In creation mythology the world is commonly created by the union of a male and a female deity, so people believed that they themselves could unite with the gods through this act. Such has also been the case in more mystical parts of Christian thinking.⁷⁹ The reinterpretation of these pagan ideas about sex became the way to enter into a pact with the Devil.

Émil Durkheim viewed magic as non-social in nature, as it is something not found or shared amongst a larger group,⁸⁰ (like institutionalized religion). One can certainly argue that magic is of a private or hidden nature, it is commonly performed by a single person, often away from prying eyes, and if it is witnessed by others it is rarely understood. This is true for the miracles of Jesus as well. People did not understand what he did, sometimes he did it in secret and it was him alone who had the power (the apostles later gaining the same power in the Book of Acts). I will however argue that there are elements of magic in religious social groups, although it still maintains its hidden nature; the catholic transubstantiation (here the priest turns his back to the room),

livelihood by bewitching these creatures.”.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 61.

⁷⁸Mackay & Institoris 2009, p. 165.

⁷⁹Cavendish 1968, p. 12 “when sexuality is admitted into the world of the divine it is possible to think of union with the divine in sexual terms (and many Christians mystics have spoken of union with God in these terms)”.

⁸⁰Hanegraaff 2012, p. 165.

and the absolving of sins (in private). The hidden and mysterious nature of magic has more to do with the fact that it does not exist than an anti-social nature. Magic is in fact very social since people came up and developed the concepts as collective imagination. It has been shown how the notions of witchcraft in *The Malleus* are a result of popular and learned tradition (and imagination) fusing. But witches flying to meet in great numbers at sabbaths, would definitely be a social group or indeed a *church of magic*.

Categorizing things we think of as magic by the 'source' of it could clear up discussions of definition and nature, can we even define something that only lives in human imagination? Types of magic have often received their name from their 'sources', for example; celestial magic, angelic magic. Therefore there can also exist church magic, like there does ritual magic and sex magic.

The Malleus Maleficarum — Not The Only Manual

Much can be said about the witch hunts, and the fact they do not follow the same patterns, or scripts if you will, leaves more to be noted. In 1486 *The Malleus Maleficarum* would turn out to be the most effective tool in the following decades of the trials. Its most significant contribution was probably changing the debate about witchcraft and witches from that of "if" to "where". "historians have typically viewed the continental witch trials as fundamentally different from those in England".⁸¹ This difference is because the British Isles had a wholly different manual for discovering and prosecuting witchcraft. King James VI of Scotland (later the I of England) had an unfortunate voyage over sea and came to believe that the Devil was after him personally, "the Devil, indeed was said to have declared that James was the greatest enemy that he had in the world".⁸² This drove him to write his Demonology, published in 1597.⁸³ In 1603, the first year James' reign in England, he had the law on witchcraft tightened and it became a capital crime to be

⁸¹Keickerhefer 1976, p. 103.

⁸²Napier 2017, p. 107.

⁸³Ibid., p. 89.

a witch,⁸⁴ one-hundred-and-seventeen years after the publishing of *The Malleus*. Another reason for the differences between the two was that England had undergone the Reformation and was now protestant.

The nature of the witches in Europe and those in England are different in more ways than one where in Europe the Devil had enslaved the witches, he seemed to be under the witches' influence in England. Here they had cultivated the idea of familiar spirits or imps which affected their image of witchcraft, "the Devil seemed to be in the role of servant to the witch as much as being the master".⁸⁵ In *The Malleus* Kramer and Sprenger put emphasis on the witch having to obey the Devil once she has entered into a pact with him.⁸⁶ There were also differences in execution styles, in Europe they were burned, in England hanged but torture was not generally used in the trials of the isles.⁸⁷

CONCLUSION

This article has argued for the use of the witch trials primarily as a weapon of the church, but also as a cognitive "escape hatch" from the physical and mental environment of the middle ages. Cognitive dualism, as a result of ancient man's fear of death, created a mentality of opposition, a way of thought deeply rooted in Christianity in notions of fundamental good and evil. The church, experiencing a decline in power and influence, because of periods of uncertainty, calamity and violence, developed a discourse (as it has all five needs of a polemical discourse as presented by Hanegraaff) to regain control and spark the purge of heretical ideas, of any sort, from society. The church fused popular lore with learned theology into a new witch-hybrid-monster in league with the Devil.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 173.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 179.

⁸⁶Mackay & Institoris 2009, p. 113 "we have learned from the confessions of these women (I am speaking of womenfolk burned), they are compelled to work with them in very many acts of sorcery if they wish to escape scourging at the hand of the demons. Nonetheless, they remain bound by the initial avowal in which they willingly subordinated themselves to the demons.".

⁸⁷Napier 2017, p. 179.

The same thing happened with the ideas and practice of magic, which became sorcery and then diabolism, the opposite to the miracles of God. All this was cemented with the publishing of *The Malleus Maleficarum* (enjoying ideal historical timing) which was fully sanctioned by the church because of the papal bull. No one could oppose the truth of this work, with those credentials, and as such you had to believe in witches to be of the right faith, forcing everybody to participate in one way or another. Winning historical favor by creating your enemy in the image of a monster not completely obvious in nature (therefore more monstrous) has been used since, as by example of the War on Terror. In places where witchcraft was identified in the Christian world witches were prosecuted, the basic concepts worked everywhere, also places where *The Malleus* was not the manual, suggesting that the book did not start the prosecutions but legitimated them, proving the hunt for witches as being of the highest theological priority.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Berlingske. *Udsat for menneske jagt: jeg skulle til eksamen i terror.* 28/8-2014. <https://www.b.dk/nationalt/udsat-for-menneskejagt-jeg-skulle-til-eksamen-i-terror>. Assessed 29/5-2018.

The Bible, King James, Exodus 22:18. 1611. <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/search.php?hs=1&q=witch>. Assessed 29/5-2018.

Broedel, Hans Peter. *The Malleus Maleficarum and the construction of witchcraft*. Manchester university press, 2003.

Bush, George. *The State of the Union Address*. Transcript of President Bush's Speech. 29/1-2002. <https://www.npr.org/news/specials/sou/2002/020129.bushtext.html>. Assessed 29/5-2018.

Cavendish, Richard. *The Black Arts: A Concise History of Witchcraft, Demonology, Astrology, Alchemy and Other Mystical Practices Throughout the Ages*. Tarcher Perigee, 1968.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *How St. Augustine Invented Sex*. 19/6- 2017. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/06/19/how-st-augustine-invented-sex>. Assessed 26/5-2018.

Hanegraaff, Wouter J.. "Forbidden Knowledge: Anti-Esoteric Polemics". In: *Aries*, 2005, Vol. 5 (2). Brill, 2005.

Hanegraaff, Wouter J.. *Esotericism and the academy, rejected knowledge in western culture*. Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Keickerhefer, Richard. *European witch trials: their foundations in popular and learned culture, 1300-1500*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976.

Loomis, C Grant. *White magic: An introduction to the Folklore of Christian Legend*. Kessinger Publishing LLC, 1948.

Mackay, C., & Institoris, H.. *The Hammer of Witches: a complete translation of the Malleus Maleficarum*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Napier, Gordon. *Maleficium: Witchcraft and Witch Hunting in the West*. Amberley Publishing, 2007.

Swartz, David. *Culture & power: the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*. The University of Chicago Press, 1997.

Thomas Brudhold. "Begrebet monster, en lillebitte filosofisk undersøgelse". In: Søgaard, Ditte Maria & Brudhol, Thomas (eds.), *Tværkultur nr. 5—monstre. Årbog for ToRS 2014*, pp. 116–125. Copenhagen University, 2014.

Uttal, William R.. *Dualism: The Original Sin of Cognitivism*. Taylor & Francis Group, 2004.

Selvtransformation og kunst:

Det ekcessive og det kultiske i *Tragediens fødsel*

MATHIAS NIKOLAJ REIDL

INDLEDNING: *Tragediens fødsel* SOM KULTISK TILBAGEVENDEN

I Nietzsches første værk *Tragediens fødsel* er der en interessant brug af kultiske og mytiske idéer at finde, en brug, som bliver særlig tydelig i kontekst af de antikke mysteriekulte. I *Tragediens fødsel* bliver kunsten en indgang til selvtransformation, som muliggør, at man kan se en hemmelighedsfuld natur i øjnene, i al dens vanvid, grusomhed og umenneskelighed. På dette punkt bærer værket ligheder med de gamle mysteriekulte, og præsenterer hertil en åbning for en mere omfangsrig diskussion af kunsten, som adgangsskabende til hvad Giorgio Agamben ville beskrive som en ”anden viden”, der ligger hinsides det strengt videnskabelige.

Det følgende essay tager sin begyndelse i en kort beskrivelse af de gamle mysteriekulte, som beskrevet i Walter Burkerts *Ancient Mystery Cults* (1987). I dette værk beskrev Burkert på mesterlig vis de særlige kendetegegn, der var ved de gamle mysteriekulte, navnlig at de var orienterede mod personlig indsigt, samt at der i kultene var et fokus på det ”selvtransformative”; på radikale sindsændringer, som åbner op for nye måder, at anskue omverdenen på. Herefter præsenterer jeg kort Giorgio Agambens beskrivelse af ”den ekcessive signifiant” — en idé, som vil blive brugt til at forstå det komplekse felt, som Nietzsches filosofi i *Tragediens fødsel* bevæger sig i. Argumentet er her, at Agambens beskrivelse af det ekcessive, samt Walter Burkerts beskrivelse af mysteriekultene, kan fungere som en indgang til at forstå en del af *Tragediens fødsel*, som ellers let kan overses, nemlig at Nietzsches tænkning hverken er ”hellig” eller ”profan” (eller ”troende” eller ”ikke-troende”), men at den derimod placerer sig i et område, der ligger imellem

disse kategorier, et område, som i dag bliver studeret under den samlede rubrik af vestlig esotericisme. Jeg håber at kunne vise, at kunsten for Nietzsche var dét, som gav adgang til dette område, og at kunsten herigennem var en indgang til en særlig personlig, og i Nietzsches optik mere sandfærdig, måde at se verden på.

Den mest grundlæggende problematik i denne tekst, har dog ikke eksplisit at gøre med Nietzsches håb om selvtransformation, men derimod om dét besvær, som mange tænkere oplever, når de skal klassificere Nietzsches tænkning. Denne problematik bliver illustreret særligt godt i det følgende citat fra Charles Taylors *A Secular Age* (2007), hvor han præsenterer en bestemt analyse af Nietzsches tænkning, hvor nuancen om selvtransformation går tabt:

The Nietzschean understanding of enhanced life, which can fully affirm itself, also in a sense takes us beyond life; and in this it is analogous with other, religious notions of enhanced life (like the New Testament's "eternal life"). But it takes us beyond by incorporating a fascination with the negation of life, with death and suffering. It doesn't acknowledge some supreme good beyond life, and in that sense sees itself right as utterly antithetical to religion. The "transcendence" is, once again in an important sense and paradoxically, immanent.¹

Selve paradokset, dvs. det transcendentale aspekt, som alligevel ikke er transcendentalt fordi det ikke er "beyond life", kan brydes ved at anskue den immanente transcendens for selvtransformation, her forstået som en radikal sindsændring. Denne form for selvtransformation, som var central for de gamle mysteriekulte, kan hertil anskues som en form for transcendens, der ikke er koblet til en højere magt, men derimod til oplevelsen af store begivenheder, f.eks. et voldsomt initieringsritual, storstået musik, eller særligt rammende kunst. Denne transcendens forekommer således ikke at være paradoksal, som Taylor ellers skriver, idet at transcendens ikke nødvendigvis behøver, at have med en overjordisk entitet at gøre, som er umulig for det menige menneske at nå (denne idé om en uopnåelige Gud er hertil, som bekendt, i særlig grad et levn fra Protestantismen, hvor Guds ontologiske relation til mennesket bliver særligt fjern).

¹Taylor 2007, s. 374.

Med hensyn til indsigten om det transcendentale i det immanente, så var det for de gamle ægyptere, for eksempel, snarere ritualer end dogmer, der karakteriserede deres praksis². Der er her en væsentlig indsigt at finde, nemlig at vi, ved at agere på en særlig måde, også kan forandre os selv, samt at guden på sin vis kan eksistere, hvis man lader den eksistere — at guden netop eksisterer som den samlede praksis, der udfoldes omkring den. At mange af os i dag har tabt indsigten i denne nuance mellem den nære og den fjerne guddommelighed skyldes formentlig senere tiders skarpe opdeling af religion og videnskab, hvori alt der er ”virkeligt” ryger under videnskabens domæne, og alt udflydende og svært definébart ryger under religionens (eller, som vi vil se om lidt, under ”smagens”). Som Wouter Hanegraaff desuden har beskrevet i *Esotericism and the Academy*, så har den skarpe opdeling af religion og videnskab sit ophav i bestemte idéer, som har fået den akademiske betegnelse ”konflikttesen”, og som kan ledes tilbage til det 19. århundrede, særligt i form af John William Drapers *History of the Conflict Between Religion and Science* fra 1874, og Andrew Dickinson Whites *History of the Warfare of Science and Theology in Christendom* fra 1896³.

Selve analysen af *Tragediens fødsel* har fokus på hvordan kunsten indtager en særlig rolle, som indgang til selvtransformation, eller som hvad Kocku von Stuckrad kalder ”the conscious transgression of borders”⁴, hvori en kultisk forståelse af denne selvtransformation danner baggrunden for Nietzsches løsning på en modernitet, der, i hans optik, er fyldt med rædsler og ængsteligheder. Analysen tager sig hertil ud som en litterær analyse, hvori jeg nærlæser en række udvalgte citater fra *Tragediens fødsel*, og bruger dem som indgang til en større diskussion om både Nietzsches tænkning, men også om æstetikken generelt. Der er nemlig en række grundproblemstillinger tilstede i Nietzsches tekst, som kan opsummeres som følgende: (1) Problemet om distinktionen mellem viden og smag, (2) kultens forsvinden fra filosofien til fordel for en større rationel samfundstænkning (oplysningsproblematikken), (3) spørgsmålet

²Podemann Sørensen 2013, s. 16.

³Hanegraaff 2012, s. 196.

⁴von Stuckrad 2010, s. 82.

om, om der er et mere sandfærdigt verdensbillede, som er blevet tilsløret, men som kan fremvises, for eksempel igennem kunsten (forfaldsnarrativet, som dertil samtidig indeholder en redning). Argumentet er héri, at det er muligt at læse tragediens fødsel som et opråb for det kultiske, og herigenem som én af mange mulige måder, at løse en særlig forfalderen oplevelse af verden på, i.e. "modernitetens rædsel", samt at værket kan læses som et perspektiv på, hvordan et opgør med dikotomien mellem viden og smag kan se ud.

Begrebet *myte* vil desuden være centralt i denne tekst. Jeg benytter mig her af Adornos beskrivelse af myten, som noget der er "helt", og som ikke er delt ud i delelementer, som ikke er "adskilt"⁵, og som således adskiller sig fra hvad Adorno kalder "afmytologisering", som, ulig myten, ikke gør brug af en "bedragerisk enhed". At denne myteforståelse kan fremstå vag er netop også dens styrke; i kontrast til en tankning hvori alt skal stå så klart, som muligt, fremstår den mytiske, udflydende og uklare tankning som dens modsætning. Dette passer også godt til Nietzsches egen kritik af det ikke-mytiske, som noget der netop ikke er helt, en kritik som jeg har inkluderet i analysen, og som jeg mener, bedst indfanges på dens egne præmisser. Hertil er Adornos kritik af myten naturligvis, at myten netop skjuler delelementerne, som måske ikke hænger sammen, og som, grundet det, at de i myten er samlede, ikke kan kritiseres i rimelig grad. Jeg vil ikke komme videre ind på denne diskussion i denne tekst, men jeg mener at analysen viser, at der ikke er noget let svar på problemet — et problem, som også viser sig i den mængde af tid og tankekraft, som Adorno selv brugte på at reflektere kritisk over myten, og i den omfattende litteratur, der op igennem det 20. århundrede opstod, hvori myter, det irrationelle og det ubevidste blev studeret. Ét kan man i hvertfald sige med sikkerhed, og det er at myter er kraftfulde, og at de kan skabe store forandringer; det er således ikke uden af grund, at de havde en så prominent plads i de gamle mysteriekulte, eller at Nietzsche kunne tage dem op årtusinder senere, og dette stadigvæk med stor kraft, eller at myten er anset som farlig, ikke mindst grundet

⁵Adorno 2017, s. 117.

fascismen.

Særligt centralt må spørgsmålet være: Hvorfor denne tilbagevenden til kulten? Mit svar i det følgende vil være at Nietzsches svar er ét af flere mulige, som indeholder en dertilhørende løsning på en oplevelse af et tab af Gud, som opstår indenfor en særlig modernitetsopfattelse, som senere også bliver beskrevet af Max Weber igennem affortryllelses-begrebet. Jeg skriver her ”en særlig modernitetsopfattelse”, for som Jason Josephson-Storm i *The Myth of Disenchantment* (2017) har påpeget, så forekommer idéen om den affortryllede verden selv at være en myte⁶, hvortil at kendte tænkere såsom netop Weber, men også Marcel Mauss og Max Müller, var velbevandrede i okkulte miljøer⁷, som vi måske i dag ellers forestiller os, at de ikke ville have kendt til, eller beskæftiget sig med. Kocku von Stuckrad har også beskrevet denne problematik, det vil sige problematikken omkring ”tabet af Gud”, i essayet *Utopian Landscapes and Ecstatic Journeys: Friedrich Nietzsche, Herman Hesse and Mircea Eliade on the Terror of Modernity* (2010), hvori det fremgår at Nietzsches tænkning er én blandt en række tænkere, som forsøger at beskrive og artikulere ”modernitetens rædsel”. Det er blandt andet af samme grund, at jeg i starten af denne tekst har inkluderet citatet af Charles Taylor, som på mange måder følger i Webers fodspor, igennem dét, at denne affortryllelse har været en central problematik i Taylors værker (særligt igennem spørgsmålet om hvordan mennesker på ét tidspunkt kan se verden som fortryllet og fyldt med magi, og på et andet tidspunkt, i vores egen tid, kan se den som radikalt affortryllet — hertil Taylors distinction mellem et ”porous” og et ”buffered self”). Taylors læsning af Nietzsche forekommer nemlig, set i lyset af studiet af esoteriske traditioner, at gå henover dén egentlige tænkning, som finder sted i f.eks. *Tragediens fødsel*, og i stedet for at lægge en meget partikulær (og dog almen og velaccepteret) ramme over tænkningen, som får den til at se paradoksal ud.

Essayet tager sin begyndelse i en gennemgang af de gamle mysteriekulte, som beskrevet af Walter Burkert i *Ancient Mystery Cults*. Herefter gennemgår jeg kort Giorgio Agambens beskrivelse

⁶Josephson-Storm 2017, s. 7.

⁷Ibid., s. 6–7.

af den ekcessive signifiant i værket *Taste*, for herefter at påbegynde analysen.

OM DE GAMLE MYSTERIEKULTE

De antikke mysteriekulte havde særligt to kendetegn, som er relevante i relation til *Tragediens fødsel*, nemlig at de i høj grad var personligt orienterede, samt at de var eksperimentelle⁸ og ikke havde til hensigt, at immunisere folk fra livets lidelser, og herigen-nem at devaluere selve livet⁹. Mysteriekultene var på denne måde orienteret mod håb¹⁰, og mod en lyst til et bedre liv.

Af særligt prominente mysteriekulte var kultene omkring Dionysos, Eleusis, Isis, Meter og Mithras, hvoraf hver kult havde særlige kendetegn og forskellige initieringsritualer. Centralt for dem alle var dog, at det var op til den enkelte borgers, om han eller hun ville lade sig initiere eller ej, samt at kultene handlede om privat indsigt eller oplevelse (*private discovery*)¹¹. Hertil havde selve ordet "mysterie" heller ikke den betydning, som det har i dag, og bør snarere blive anset som blot "initiering", som netop kræver en form for personligt ritual, som skal udøves af den, som er i færd med at blive initieret, og som desuden indeholder en vis grad af hemmelighed (*secrecy*) og eksklusivitet¹². Mysteriekultenes primære formål var en således radikal sindsændring, som hertil skulle bringe et bedre liv med sig — og af samme grund var det heller ikke ualmindeligt at man måtte forsøge sig med adskillige kulte, før man fandt en der virkede, ej heller var det ualmindeligt slet ikke at finde en kult, der kunne skabe en sådan sindsændring, og at måtte give op, dette ikke mindst grundet kulternes eksperimentelle karakter¹³. Således kan man sige, at et særligt kendetegn ved mysteriekultene var selve oplevelsen, som opstår undervejs og ikke mindst efter initieringsritualet — en oplevelse, som ikke bør

⁸Bukert 1987, s. 28–9.

⁹Ibid., s. 29.

¹⁰Ibid., s. 28.

¹¹Ibid., s. 11.

¹²Ibid., s. 8.

¹³Ibid., s. 29.

forveksles med en metafysisk tro¹⁴, men som derimod er langt mere konkret; oplevelsen virker, hvis den initierede forandrer sig, eller hvis den initierede forandrer sin verdensanskuelse, og hvis denne verdensanskuelse ikke forandres, så er intet som udgangspunkt gået tabt.

Spørgsmålet om mysteriekulten er, i relation til det foregående, således ikke som udgangspunkt et spørgsmål om et samfunds institutionelle opretholdelse, men derimod et spørgsmål om muligheden for personlig udvikling. Hertil var mysteriekultene holdt sammen af et fællesskab af troende, men de individuelle distinktioner var større end gruppens identitet, som helhed¹⁵. Historisk set er der herudover ikke mange eksempler på mysteriekulte, som begynder at ligne organiseret religion, som vi forstår det i dag, på nær måske bachannalia i 186 f. Kr., hvori der var tale om en konspiration for at rejse et nyt folk — en konspiration, som muligvis kan kobles til mere end 6000 henrettelser af gangen, som foregik på tidspunktet¹⁶. Hertil bemærker Burkert, at jødiske, kristne og islamiske sekter, i kontrast til mysteriekultene, har vist sig at have en evne til overlevelse, som kultene ikke har haft¹⁷, dette muligvis grundet kulenes markant mindre grad af integration i det øvrige samfund.

Ikke mindst var myten central for mysteriekultene, og hver kult havde typisk en myte tilknyttet til sig, som spillede en særlig rolle i ritualerne¹⁸; her spillede myten en central rolle i selve initieringsprocessen, idet at mysteriekulenes hemmelighedsfuldhed (*hiddenness*) ofte var en måde at imitere naturen på, dette igennem at naturen netop præsenterer sig som en uigennemtrængelighed, som noget fåget, samt at myten, grundet dens manglende konsistens og fokus på detaljer, kan kommunikere den levede oplevelse (*living experience*)¹⁹, dvs. oplevelsen af det levede liv, som vi alle har, og deler, og som kan tage sig både forvirrende og rodet ud. Således

¹⁴Ibid., s. 46.

¹⁵Ibid., s. 48.

¹⁶Ibid., s. 52.

¹⁷Ibid., s. 53.

¹⁸Ibid., s. 73.

¹⁹Ibid., s. 77.

kunne myten anskues, som værende tættere på naturen, og således blev det mytiske anset som en mere sandfærdig måde at tilgå en usikker og hemmelighedsfuld verden på. I mysteriekultene var der en mulighed for at komme tættere på denne hemmelighedsfuld verden, og for potentelt at se den på ny. I relation til dette kan det tænkes, at Nietzsche selv var i færd med at skabe sin egen myte (som senere bliver særligt tydeligt i *Således talte Zarathustra*), en tese, som vil blive udforsket mere i analysen. Før dette er der dog en anden central idé, som må præsenteres, nemlig distinktionen mellem viden og smag, som Agamben i værket *Taste* har beskæftiget sig med. Her finder vi en indgang til en større diskussion om videnskabens og kunstens roller, som forekommer at være særlig vigtig i mødet med *Tragediens fødsel*, da værket netop placerer sig et sted mellem videnskab og kunst, og mellem historie og myte.

AGAMBEN OM SMAG, VIDEN, OG DEN EKCESSIVE SIGNIFICANT

I det lille essay *Taste* (originalt udgivet som *Gusto* i 1979) beskriver Agamben smagens betydning for filosofien, for viden og for æstetik. På trods af sin lille størrelse rummer værket en række centrale indsigter, blandt hvilke vi finder indsigten om at smag, traditionelt set, har været anset som den laveste og mest svært definérbare af sanserne²⁰, og således til det laveste af æstetikken (her forstået blot som ”fornemmelse” fra det oldgræske *aisthesis*). I det syttende og attende århundrede, hvor æstetikken startende med Baumgarten pludselig skulle finde sig en plads i en ny videnskabelig tænkning, blev ”smagen” dog til den primære sensation²¹ i metaforisk forstand, og i dag taler vi også på dansk om at ”have god smag” i kunst. Smagen blev til en beskrivelse af en ”anden viden”²², som var forskellig fra videnskabens viden. Det centrale spørgsmål, som Agamben her stiller, er spørgsmålet om hvorfor viden originalt er opdelt i dikotomien mellem viden og

²⁰Agamben 2017, s. 3.

²¹Agamben 2017, s. 5–7

²²Ibid., s. 6.

smag, samt hvorledes den har en relation til tilfredsstillelse²³, altså *philo*-delen af *philosophia*. Til dette skriver han: “Why is knowledge originally divided and why does it maintain, likewise originally, a relation with the doctrine of ethics?”²⁴. Her spørger Agamben om det er muligt, at heale dette fraktur, nemlig at videnskab kender til sandhed, men ikke kan nyde den, og at smag nyder skønhed, men ikke kan vide den, og spørger ydermere om det er muligt, at videnskaben kan være “the pleasure of knowledge”²⁵. Agamben pointerer at denne dikotomi er særligt stærkt tilstede hos Kant i *Kritik af dømmekraften*, hvori det skønne bliver en ekcessiv signifiant, det vil sige en signifiant, som overskridt sig selv, og fører tilbage til noget andet, eller større (her er der et klart overlap mellem den “ekcessive signifiant” og dét, som Agamben senere udvikler i begrebet “signatur” i *Signatura Rerum* og *The Kingdom and the Glory*), som kan vides om, og nydes gennem “smagen”, og hér definerer Kant ifølge Agamben den æstetiske tilfredsstillelse som en “... excess of representation over knowledge”²⁶.

Den “ekcessive signifiant” er hertil særlig interessant, da der her er tale om et begreb, som kan bruges som indgang til at forstå forskellen mellem videnskab, filosofi og divination. Ifølge Agamben var der i antikken en opdeling af videnskab og sansning, mellem viden der er kendt, som er skabt ud fra en tildeling af signifiant og signifié, og viden der ikke er kendt, som er funderet på den overskydne, ekcessive signifiant²⁷. For Platon lå filosofien mellem disse to videnskaber, og var således i domænet for divination, men samtidig med den mulighed at det kunne “gemme” fænomenet i Ideen²⁸. Filosofiens mål var, i og for sig, at nå ud af dette rum, væk fra divinationen, men også væk fra videnskaben, hvori filosofien ville kunne finde en plads for sig; på sin vis kan man sige at meget filosofisk historie netop udspiller sig i denne dialektik mellem divination og videnskab, mellem det ukendte og

²³Ibid., s. 8.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid., s. 40.

²⁷Ibid., s. 62–3.

²⁸Ibid., s. 63.

det kendte, og de løsninger, som der opstår i muligheden, eller umuligheden, for en syntese mellem disse to typer af viden. I dag forekommer det dog, ifølge Agamben, at æstetikken har overtaget divinationens rolle²⁹, og agerer som substitut; således bliver æstetikken indgangen til det ydre, til det ekcessive, i en verden der i stigende grad bliver videnskabeliggjort. Agamben bemærker her at der, imens verden i stigende grad er blevet videnskabliggjort, er opstået adskillige nye videnskaber, som alle lader til at placere sig i divinationens rum; disse strækker sig fra filologi³⁰, til politisk økonomi³¹, og psykoanalyse³². Herudover bemærker Agamben at det er som om, at nu mere verden bliver videnskabeliggjort, des større bliver pladsen for divinationens erstatninger³³. *Tragediens fødsel* har en særlig plads i denne diskussion, da værket forekommer netop at være funderet på denne ekcessive signifiant; af samme grund kan værket, hvis ikke man er klar over dette centrale element, virke rodet og famlende. Jeg vælger her at kalde det "rum", som filosofien placerer sig i, dvs. udenfor en formalisme, udenfor en adækvering af signifiant og signifié, for det "ekcessive rum" eller "det ekcessive". Dette ekcessive rum kan, og har taget, mange former for forskellige tænkere, og kan både anskues som noget man skal søge hen imod, og noget som man skal søge væk fra — som noget kaotisk, der skal tilpasses, og som noget helt, der skal omfavnes. Dette rum kan således også anskues som værende nært beslægtet med den sfære, som myten optager, og som i den tidlige sektion blev beskrevet i relation til mysteriekultene, dette særligt igennem mytens rolle, som noget der kan imitere en kaotisk eller hemmelighedsfuld natur. Argumentet i det følgende vil være at *Tragediens fødsel* på interessant vis placerer sig midt i denne problemstilling, samtidig med at værket søger at bryde ud af det — at der i *Tragediens fødsel* er en akut fornemmelse for det ekcessive, med alle de problemer, som det indebærer.

²⁹Ibid., s. 64.

³⁰Ibid., s. 65.

³¹Ibid., s. 66.

³²Ibid., s. 68.

³³Ibid., s. 70.

ANALYSE: DET EKCESSIVE OG KULTEN I TRAGEDIENS FØDSEL

Tragediens fødsel tager sit udgangspunkt i det følgende citat, hvori det appolinske og det dionysiske bliver sidestillet med kvinden og manden, ikke som dikotomiske størrelser, men som en ”duplicitet”, som en tofoldighed:

Vi vil have vundet meget for den æstetiske videnskab, når vi har nået ikke blot til den logiske indsigt, men også anskuelens umiddelbare vished om, at kunstens udvikling er knyttet til dupliciteten af det appolinske og det dionysiske: på tilsvarende vis som slægtens gang under vedvarende kamp og kun periodisk indtrædende forsoning afhænger af kønnenes duplicitet.³⁴

At dette kønssyn er problematisk på flere ledder og kanter, vil jeg for indeværende lade ligge³⁵, og istedet påpege sammenhængen mellem værkets begyndelse i det kønslige, som et udtryk for seksualitetens, eller driftens, centrale rolle i den tænkning, som i værket bliver præsenteret. Allerede her er vi udenfor videnskabens, i agambiansk forstand, demarkering af signifianter, og inde i noget større, og mere udflydende, hvori både tænkningen og sansningen har en plads. Her er det dog vigtigt at notere at ordet ”videnskab” (Wissenschaft), som Nietzsche bruger det, ikke bør forstås som dét, der i dag bliver forstået som videnskab (science), men derimod som noget langt bredere. Ligeledes er det værd at bide mærke i ordet ”kamp”, da netop kampen er så central for det verdenssyn, som der bliver præsenteret i værket, og som Charles Taylor har beskrevet som en pre-platonisk, pre-Kristen krigeretik, der ligger i kernen af tænkningen³⁶, og som kan anskues som en central del af Nietzsches myteskabelse.

³⁴Nietzsche 1996, s. 40.

³⁵Der er en større mængde litteratur om emnet vedrørende Nietzsche og hans køns/kvindesyn. For denne analyse er det væsentlige ikke så meget Nietzsches syn på køn, som det er hans løsning på modernitetsproblematikker; her ønsker jeg, som nævnt tidligere, at vise hans genopvækelse af kultiske idéer, som en vej ind til selvtransformation. Om man er enig med Nietzsches løsning eller ej, så er der en indsigt at finde i selve muligheden for selvtransformation, som kan overvejes i andre sammenhænge.

³⁶Taylor 2007, s. 373.

Denne foregående idé om krigeren, eller ridderen, er også tilstede senere i værket i beskrivelsen af Schopenhauer, som bliver beskrevet som en ridder, der med et fast blik kan ridde igennem "rædslens vej"³⁷. Schopenhauer bliver hermed italesat som et eksempel på en kriger, eller hero, der som den eneste kan håndtere en vanvittig verden uden at lyve og se væk. I selve ordet *duplicitet* bliver vi desuden præsenteret for noget, som er skelsættende for hele værket, nemlig at der ikke er tale om en dikotomi, men derimod en tofoldighed; at der er tale om kategorier, som er afhængige af hinanden, og som til tider blandes og mødes. Med andre ord er disse kategorier, det appolinske og det dionysiske, snarere krafter, eller guddomme, end koncepter, en idé som også bliver udtrykt i det følgende citat, hvor Nietzsche skriver:

Og således kan det vanskelige forhold mellem det appolinske og det dionysiske i tragedien virkelig symboliseres som en broderpagt mellem de to guddomme: Dionysos taler Apollons sprog, men Apollon taler til sidst Dionysos sprog: hvormed det højeste mål for tragedien og for kunsten overhovedet er opnået.³⁸

Her er det appolinske og dionysiske ikke blot konceptualiseret som koncepter, men derimod personificeret i guddommene selv. Der er her tale om en sammensmelting af analyseredskab og myte, i.e. af det appolinske og dionysiske som analytiske kategorier, og som guddommelige (mytiske) kræfter. Duplicitets-begrebet afslører hertil, at der er tale om et udviklingsnarrativ, som dækker over et langstrukket spil, over årtusinderne, der har fundet sted imellem de to kategorier. Allerede her tager Nietzsche de første skridt mod skabelsen af en myte, som er hans egen, men som bærer rammende ligheder med grundprincipperne i de gamle mysteriekulte, særligt igennem idéen om selvtransformation. Denne tænkning er tilstede i hele værket, men kommer særligt til udtryk ved slutningen af kapitel 5, hvori kunstneren kan "smelte sammen" med verdens "urkunstner" (et eksempel på hvad der kan anskues som en selvtransformation):

Kun i det omfang geniet i den kunstneriske frembringelsesakt smelter sammen med verdens urkunstner, ved han noget om kunstens evige væsen; for i denne tilstand ligner han

³⁷Nietzsche 1996, s. 138.

³⁸Ibid., s. 146.

på forunderlig vis det uhyggelige billede fra eventyret, der kan dreje øjnene om og skue sig selv; nu er han på samme tid subjekt og objekt, på samme tid digter, skuespiller og tilskuer.³⁹

Denne enigmatiske paragraf bærer interessante ligheder med de tidlige beskrevne mysteriekulte; som nævnt før er *sammensmeltingen* central for passagen. I denne sammensmelting kan ellers autonome kategorier mødes, og en skelen bliver umuliggjort. Som med den fornævnte start af værket, hvori dupliciteten mellem det dionysiske og det apollinske blev beskrevet, er der her igen tale om *mødet* mellem ellers forskelligartede kategorier; her forsøger Nietzsche ikke at bringe dem længere væk fra hinanden, men derimod at bringe dem tættere på hinanden, i en helhed, som kan anskues netop som værende mytisk i dens samlethed. Således er der, i den kunstneriske frembringelsesakt, en selvtransformativ mulighed at finde, som tillader en kobling til noget, som er ude i verden, i dette tilfælde ”urkunstneren”, som er evig. Kunsten tager her en divinatorisk form, og er adgangsgivende til yderliggende kræfter, eller som Agamben ville sige: Kunsten tager formen som en ”anden viden”, idet at det at lave kunst bliver en indgang til at komme i kontakt med en ”urkunstner”, hvis kræfter man i varierende grad kan forbinde sig med — i varierende grad, da ikke alle vil have de fornødne evner, til at kunne opnå denne forbindelse til urkunstneren (her meget lig de gamle mysteriekulte, hvori man kun måske ville kunne opnå den centrale indsigt, og hvori man skulle initieres først). Dog bliver diskursen om kunsten, som overtager divinationens plads, i det foregående reproduceret; det er gennem kunsten, at vi kan nå ud til dét, der ligger hinsides os selv, og således komme i kontakt med en ”anden viden”. Men ulig Kant, hvis kunstsyn er karakteriseret ved interesseløshed, er interessen for Nietzsche en helt central del af dét, at lave kunst⁴⁰, og i Nietzsches tænkning bliver kunstneren centrum for den æstetiske oplevelse, herudover med en mulighed for at blive ét med værket — en bliven-ét, som kan anskues som selvtransformation.

I relation til denne bliven-ét ser vi for eksempel i slutningen

³⁹Ibid., s. 61.

⁴⁰Ibid., s. 56.

af 4. kapitel en klar idé om selvtransformation, idet at der står: "mennesket er ikke længere kunstner, det er blevet kunstværk". I denne optik er kunsten, livet, og selve dét at være menneske, alle forbundne. Hertil bør denne idé ikke adskilles fra den, som senere bliver præsenteret i værket, hvori Nietzsche beskriver grækernes foragt for individer⁴¹, samt idéen om alle heltene som værende den samme "lidende Dionysos"; bagved individet ligger der noget, som er delt af alle, men som ikke alle kan få adgang til — det kræver en kunstner, mere specifikt en lyriker, som kan nå ind til denne indsigt, og her er lyrikerens rolle tæt forbundet med den af det "ur-Ene", som kan anskues som et udtryk for den tidlige beskrevne ekcessive signifiant, netop i kraft af det ur-Enes karakter af totalitet.

Det ur-Ene (som gennem dets "enhed" også er noget *helt*, som i Adornos beskrivelse af myten) er hertil et begreb, som kræver særlig opmærksomhed: På s. 57 forekommer det "ur-Ene", for første gang, og bliver her beskrevet som noget, som lyrikeren kan blive ét med. Her er det ur-Ene noget, som går ud over den almindelige forstand, men som er mere sandfærdigt end det umiddelbare, og som rummer både "smerte" og "modsigelse"⁴², to verdensopplevelser, som mange mennesker (også den dag i dag) vil gøre deres bedste for at se bort fra, og undgå. Hertil beskriver Nietzsche lyrikerens process, som en af både kunstnerisk konstruktion, men også som en form for selvtransformation:

Men nu bliver denne musik atter synlig for ham som i et *lignel-sesagtigt drømmebillede* under påvirkning fra den appolinske drøm. Ursmertens billed- og begrebsløse genskin i musikken frembringer nu med sin forløsning i skinnnet en anden spejling som var enkeltstående lignelse eller eksempel. Sin subjektivitet har kunstneren opgivet allerede i den dionysiske proces: det billede, der nu viser ham hans enhed med verdens hjerte, er en drømmescene, som får urmodsigelsen og ursmerten samt skinnets urlyst til at træde frem for sanserne.⁴³

Den dionysiske kunstner, lyrikeren, har her adgang til en anden viden, til et "sceneri", som kan skabe en selvtransformation. Det-

⁴¹Ibid., s. 83.

⁴²Ibid., s. 57.

⁴³Ibid.

te sceneri har sin adgang via sanserne og ikke via de rationelle fakulteter. Det “ur-Ene”, som lyrikeren kan smelte sammen med, kan således anskues som noget ekcessivt, hvortil at den dionysiske kunstakt, kan anskues som en vej ind i det “ekcessive rum”, hvortil kunstakten bliver til en, på sin vis, ekcessiv akt. For Nietzsche er denne adgang til det ekcessive tæt koblet med selvtransformationen; der er visse ting, som skal være tilstede, for at det transformative kan finde sted. Af samme grund bør vi ikke læse det “ur-Ene” som ekcessivt alene, men som noget ekcessivt, der er tilføjet noget mytisk⁴⁴. Hvis man dog alligevel læser det ur-Ene udelukkende som ekcessivitet kommer man til at domestikere begrebet, idet at det “ur-Ene” indeholder en mytisk medbetydning, som ikke på samme vis er at finde i den mere kliniske betegnelse “det ekcessive”, som blot benotterer dét, at være udenfor den gængse adækvering af signifianter.

Men for at vende tilbage til myten, så er der i *Tragediens fødsel*, som nævnt tidligere, en myteskabelse i gang, som er central for hele værket. Her er en mulig forklaring på mytens vigtighed netop de tidligere nævnte mysteriekultes brug af myten, som et centralt element i muliggørelsen af selvtransformation, hvori myten var dét, som strukturerede baggrunden for initieringsritualet i kulnen — uden myten ville selvtransformationen miste sin kraft. Af samme grund spiller det ur-Ene således en vigtig rolle i sammenspillet med den dionysiske kunst, som værende adgangsgivende til selvtransformation; der er her tale om en samlet verdensanskuelse, hvori det ur-Ene, som myte, indeholder et helt centralt element i den samlede fortælling. Her er særligt det følgende citat en indgang til en forståelse af dette sammenspil:

For det er på den måde, religioner plejer at uddø: nemlig
når en religions mytiske forudsætninger under en retroende
dogmatismes strenge, forstandsmæssige øjne bliver systema-

⁴⁴På interessant vis får Nietzsche, på siden forinden, præsenteret det delfiske orakel som det objektives “arnested” (*Ibid.*, s. 56), og således påpeger han også indirekte det komplekse forhold mellem videnskab og divination. Samtidig får han, i denne dobbeltkritik, som både henvender sig mod oraklet, såvel som mod videnskabsmændene, vist at hans egen position er en anden; måske er den netop den af “filosofien”, som et sted mellem de to, eller som noget helt tredje. Her kunne man med rette anskue Nietzsches tænkning ikke som filosofi, men måske snarere som en form for teosofi.

tiseret som en afsluttet sum af historiske begivenheder, og man begynder ængstligt at forsøre myternes troværdighed, men kæmper imod, at de på nogen måde kan leve og vokse videre; når altså følelsen for myten dør ud, og religionen i stedet stiller kravet om et historisk grundlag.⁴⁵

Vi ser her at myten har en central funktion, som noget "udflydende", noget fleksibel, noget levende, hvis kraftfuldhed netop består i dens dynamik, og i dens forandringsmulighed. Hvor Adornos kritik af myten ville være, at den præsenterer en bedragerisk enhed, ville Nietzsches pointe netop være, at dette er hvad der gør myten anderledes end den gængse historiefortælling, og at det samtidig er dette, som skaber mytens transformative potentiale, idet at myten præsenterer en helhed, som man i verden oplever, men som man i sproget sjældent, hvis overhovedet, kan indfange. Myten er, kort sagt, ekcessiv. Der er, herudover, en central kritik tilstede i det foregående citat, nemlig at der i moderniteten er opstået en afkøling af det åndelige. Her spiller særligt Sokrates-kritikken en central rolle, idet at Sokrates anskues som havende ødelagt det kultiske element⁴⁶; Sokrates har taget refleksiviteten med sig fra kulten, men lagt indsigerne og sin stræben efter det højere fra sig. Sokrates placerer sig således midt imellem jordiskhed og himmelskhed, og dette på en provokerende måde, og han besidder samtidig tilsyneladende ingen respekt for dikotomien mellem det profane og det sakrale. Hér kan man også sige at Nietzsches aristokratiske konservativisme (som Georg Brandes kaldte det), samt den fornævnte krigeretik, som Taylor beskriver, udfolder sig igennem idéen om, at man naturligvis skal stræbe efter det højere, det stærkere, det større — efter krigerens liv. Alt dette er Sokrates dog et, for Nietzsche, provokerende modsvar på. Sokrates-figuren bliver hertil et udtryk for begyndelsespunktet for en verden, der i stigende grad er blevet videnskabeliggjort og afkølet, og som herudover har glemt forbindelsen til den mere sande og voldsomme tragiske verden. For eksempel står der i det 17. kapitel skrevet:

Blev den gamle tragedie drevet på afveje af den dialektiske drift mod viden og mod videnskabens optimisme, så vil man

⁴⁵Ibid., s. 85.

⁴⁶Her forekommer Nietzsche at skelne mellem Platon og Sokrates, på trods af at Sokrates er Platons Sokrates. Platon bliver brugt analytisk, hvorimod Sokrates bliver fremstillet, som et centralt kritikpunkt.

ud fra denne kendsgerning kunne slutte sig til en evig kamp mellem *den teoretiske* og *den tragiske verdensanskuelse*; og først når videnskabens ånd har nået sin grænse, og dens krav på universal gyldighed er tilintetgjort ved en påvisning af disse grænser, er det muligt at håbe på en genfødsel af tragedien: og for denne kulturform måtte vi fremholde symbolet den *musicerende Sokrates* i den føromtalte betydning. I denne modstilling forstår jeg videnskabens ånd som den tro, der første gang så dagens lys i Sokrates' person, troen på naturens udgrundelighed og på videns universale lægekraft.⁴⁷

Nietzsche påpeger her, at videnskaben har en grænse; en grænse, som kan forstås ud fra den tidlige beskrivelse af videnskab, som værende en demarkering af signifianter. Udenfor videnskaben er der i denne optik noget andet, noget større, som kan anskues som det ekcessive. Herudover skaber Nietzsche på sin vis sin egen "konflikttese" omkring det teoretiske og det tragiske, som ikke er ulig tesen om videnskaben og religionen, som blev beskrevet tidligere. Den musicerende Sokrates bliver til et udtryk for denne transformation og udvikling hen imod noget større og mere sandfærdigt. Den mest centrale pointe må her være, at Nietzsche kan se en begrænsning på videnskabens adgang til verden, men at han samtidig anerkender, at videnskaben finder frem til *noget* om verden — som dog bare ikke er helheden og sandheden. Her er det særligt interessant, at Nietzsches fortælling både bærer præg af at være en form for udviklingshistorie, og samtidig et forfaldsnarrativ; eller måske netop et rigtigt forfaldsnarrativ, som bliver udtrykt igennem tabet af den gamle græske tragiske verdensanskuelse⁴⁸, men som dog alligevel ikke er en udialektisk fortælling, og som således indeholder en åbning for en form for hinsides, som aldrig før er set, og som vil ske igennem fusionen af den teoretiske og tragiske verdensanskuelse, som dog hidtil ikke er lykkedes på et større plan, men som man i Wagners opera, ifølge Nietzsche, kan finde et eksempel på. På sin vis er Nietzsches udlægning af Sokrates, som her bliver anskuet som begyndelsen på dette samfunds problematikker, i sig selv mytisk. Nietzsches "Sokrates" er hans forfaldsmythes hovedaktør og er ej at forveksle med den konkrete

⁴⁷Nietzsche 1996, s. 119–120.

⁴⁸Her påpeger Stuckrad at Nietzsches optik har at gøre med idéen om, at dét, som engang var farligt, lavede grækerne til kunst (von Stuckrad 2010, s. 82), dvs. at den tragiske oplevelse af verden, kunne kunstliggøres.

historiske figur *Sokrates*, som ingen af os kender til, og som vi kun har sparsomme skriftlige kilder, at gå ud fra. Denne Sokrates-figur, dvs. Nietzsches Sokrates, er desuden sin egen Orpheus, som går imod Dionysos⁴⁹, hvortil at man med rette kan bemærke, at der er tale om en vis ambivalens i beskrivelsen af figuren (eller, igen, måske netop en dialektik) — for der ligger, i og for sig, en indsigt gemt i Nietzsches brug af denne Sokrates-figur, idet at Nietzsche implicit anerkender, at Sokrates, på nuværende tidspunkt i historien (både på Nietzsches tidspunkt og på vores eget), kun kan være myte. Hertil skriver Nietzsche for eksempel i det 18. kapitel:

Netop dette er kendetegnet på det “brud”, som alle og enhver plejer at omtale som den moderne kulturs urlidelse: at det moderne menneske bliver skræmt af sine egne konsekvenser og utilfredsstillet ikke overer at forlade sig på tilværelsens frygtelige strømme af is: ængstelig løber det frem og tilbage på bredden. Det vil ikke have noget helt længere, helt også med alt hvad tingene rummer af naturlig grusomhed.⁵⁰

Vi ser her igen et eksempel på hvad der kan anskues som en italesættelse af det ekcessive — tingene rummer, i deres helhed, også en grusomhed, eller en ekcessivitet, som det moderne menneske ikke tør at forholde sig til. Det moderne menneske har ladet sig forvænne med det videnskabelige og tør ikke at se helheden, det ekcessive, i øjnene. Nietzsche beskriver hertil det ekcessive som frygtelige strømme af is, eller hvad vi kunne tolke som et isnende hav — en metafor, som lader tankerne hen på de mange måder, hvorpå man kan fortabe sig på havet, falde igennem isen, lade sig opsluge (metaforer, som er almindelige igennem litteraturen, og som i særlig grad forekommer i spørgsmål om ontologi og epistemologi, dialektikken mellem lys og mørke, indsigt og forblændelse, fast grund og flydende fortabelse, virkelighedssans og sindssyge). Det moderne menneske nøjes dog, i sin egen frygt, med at løbe frem og tilbage på bredden, og kommer således ikke i kontakt med den uhyrlige sandhed, som der er at finde lige foran det, i de isnende strømme af is' ekcessivitet. Centralt er det at bide mærke i, at det moderne menneskes videnskabelige tilgang har

⁴⁹von Stuckrad 2010, s. 81.

⁵⁰Nietzsche 1996, s. 127.

konsekvenser, som manifesterer sig som ulogiske; her er det kunsten, som kan lade os komme tættere på konsekvenserne, og indse dem i deres helhed. Den særlige dionysiske kunst, lyrikken, som kan give adgang til det ur-Ene, er herigennem også en indgang ind i en mere, i denne optik, sand verden. Dette kunstsyn var i miderltid på tidsunktet velbevandret⁵¹, hvortil at særligt idéen om en sand og en falsk verden var almindelig.

På ironisk vis, hvis man tager udgangspunkt i Nietzsches kritik af oraklet, kan Nietzsches filosofi således også selv anskues, som værende på denne divinatoriske plads, idet at æstetikken bliver en substitut for det divinatoriske. Dette er måske også et centralt problem i den tænkning, som Nietzsche i *Tragediens fødsel* præsenterer, nemlig at der er et grundlæggende problem tilstede om, at det rationelle har vist sig at være falskt (herigennem også i dets divinatoriske rødder), men at løsningen, den immanente transcendens gennem den dionysiske kunst, selv viser sig som en form for divinatorisk praksis.

Afslutningsvis er det desuden vigtigt at nævne spørgsmålet om kunst som misvisende eller retvisende — et spørgsmål, som værket undervejs kredser om. Hegel beskrev tidligt et almindeligt kunstsyn, hvori kunsten bliver anset som bedragerisk, og herigennem mere usand⁵², og som således skulle stå i kontrast til et mere sandfærdigt mål. Nietzsche, i *Tragediens Fødsel*, placerer sig indenfor denne samme tradition i kraft af, at han forholder sig til bedraget, mens han dog snarere ophøjer dette bedrag, idet at bedraget kan vise vejen til en mere sandfærdig måde at se verden på (også på trods af at denne adgang sker gennem bedraget), netop fordi at den dionysiske kunst, som vi har set, kan have en selvtransformatorisk kraft, hvori dét, som man bliver til, er sandfærdigt. Der er således en fundamental diskussion tilstede i værket, som vedrører mytens rolle for mennesker, hvortil at Nietzsches eget kunstsyn i sig selv er en myte: Det appolinske og det dionysiske er ikke direkte applikérbare koncepter, men derimod mytiske kategorier, som man kan se verden igennem — mytiske i den forstand at de skal *genkendes*, og at de fungerer som

⁵¹Ibid., s. 85.

⁵²Hegel 1975, s. 4.

krafter eller guddomme i verden. Ligeledes er Nietzsches Sokrates-figur mytisk; denne figur tager formen som begyndelsen på en videnskabelligørelse, en køling, af livsverdenen, som ifølge Nietzsche kulminerer i Nietzsches tid. Hvis vi følger Burkerts udlægning af mytens centrale rolle for mysteriekulten, kan vi se at Nietzsches projekt kan anskues netop som et forsøg på en konstruktion af en ny myte, som kan følges (vi ser måske særligt fuldbyrdelsen af denne myte i *Således talte Zarathustra*). Men vi bør ikke alene fokusere på myten, men derimod på de store paralleller, som er mellem Nietzsches tænkning og det kultiske, navnlig i den selv-transformation, som det kultiske i antikken muliggjorde, og som kan tænkes at finde sted langt flere steder i dag, end man skulle tro (heriblandt i vores daglige liv).

KONKLUSION

Mytologien, som i de gamle mysteriekulte havde en central rolle i skabelsen af muligheden for immanent transcendens, spiller i *Tragediens fødsel* en markant rolle, her udtrykt igennem det “ur-Ene”, som ligger i en svunden, uvis tid, og som man gennem kunsten kan komme i kontakt med. Her rammer Adornos forståelse af myten godt, da myten for Adorno er noget der er samlet, men dog samlet på bedragerisk vis. Kritikken af det bedrageriske ville Nietzsche dog formentlig ikke dele, da netop bedraget kan være en vej ind i noget sandfærdigt, nemlig i det ur-Ene, som kan fordré skabelsen af et nyt menneske. På dette punkt minder Nietzsches tænkning dog selv om de divinationsprakssiser, som han ellers forekom at være kritisk overfor (f.eks. igennem kritikken af oraklet) — et interessant eksempel på filosofiens rolle, som værende et sted imellem videnskab og divination (men hvori filosofien som oftest, hvis ikke altid, ender ét af de to steder, på trods af ihærdige forsøg på det modsatte.)

Nietzsches tænkning i værket gør desuden brug af en form for det “ekcessive”, som beskrevet af Agamben, udtrykt i det “ur-Ene”, men også i selve den dionysiske kunsts ekcess, som opstår i en intens blanding af det dionysiske og det appolinske. Gennem denne ekcess får kunsteren adgang til en særlig viden, som

ligger udenfor det strengt videnskabelige, og som udgør en helhed, som indeholder en form for ursandhed. Her fungerer denne adgang som en immanent transcendens, en profan transcendens, som ikke er koblet til en Gud udenfor verden, men til indsigter *i* verden, som opstår i en særlig væren-*i*-verden, som lyrikeren, eller nærmere bestemt den dionysiske kunstner, kan opnå. Nietzsche præsenterer således en mulig vej ud af tabet af Guds rædsler og meningsløshed, en vej, som involverer kunstnerens mulighed for en særlig type erkendelse, og som tager plads i det jordliges muligheder for selvtransformation, i.e. de muligheder, som selv efter et tab af en højere magt, gør sig gældende, men som kan blive glemt i en "alexandrinsk" eller "overvidenskabelig" kultur. Her er der interessante ligheder mellem Nietzsches kunstsyn i *Tragediens fødsel* og de senere idéer om overmennesket i *Således talte Zarathustra*. Værket præsenterer desuden, indirekte, en interessant indsigt om, at der er forskel på den personlige tro, som udtrykkes gennem den dionysiske kunsts kultiske karakter, og den organiserede religion (særligt Kristendommen), som Nietzsche var kritisk overfor. Omend Nietzsches perspektiv i *Tragediens fødsel* ikke indeholder en decideret skabelse af en ny form for mysteriekult, så er der en interessant import af gamle mysterieideer at finde i værket — en import, som kan anskues som et moderne svar på hvordan en mysteriekult, eller kultisk tænkning, kunne se ud.

BIBLIOGRAFI

- Adorno, Theodor W.. *Negativ dialektik*. Forlaget Klim, 2017.
- Agamben, Giorgio. *Taste*. Seagull Books, 2017.
- Brandes, Georg. *Fremmede personligheder*. Gyldendalske Boghandels Forlag, 1891.
- Burkert, Walter. *Ancient Mystery Cults*. Harvard University Press, 1987.
- Hanegraaff, Wouter J.. *Esotericism and the Academy*. Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Hegel, G. W. F.. *Aesthetics*. Clarendon Press, 1975.
- Josephson-Storm, Jason Ānanda. *The Myth of Disenchantment: Magic, Modernity, and the Birth of the Human Sciences*. The University of Chicago Press, 2017.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Kritik af dømmekraften*. Det lille forlag, 2005.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Tragediens fødsel*. Gyldental, 1996.
- Podemann-sørensen, Jørgen. *Det gamle Ægyptens religiøse litteratur*. Forlaget Univers, 2013.
- Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age*. Harvard University Press, 2007.
- The Polysemy of Religion*. <<http://www.iwm.at/events/event/the-polysemy-of-religion/>>. Besøgt 30/12-2018.
- Von Stuckrad, Kocku. "Utopian Landscapes and Ecstatic Journeys: Friedrich Nietzsche, Herman Hesse, and Mircea Eliade on the Terror of Modernity". I: *Numen* 57 78-102. Brill, 2010. <<http://www.kockuvonstuckrad.com/downloads/download09.pdf>>. Besøgt

30/12-2018.

Medieval Catharism and Esoteric Heresy

HARALD TOKSVÆRD

INTRODUCTION

In the study of Western Esotericism, academic focus is most often placed on the writings, thoughts and activities of aristocrats, usually communicating solely within small groups of other aristocrats. This is true for many of those religious movements most commonly described and studied as esoteric¹; early modern Hermeticism, Rosicrucianism, Freemasonry, et cetera. It is fairly obvious why this is the case: First of all, it is much easier to study the faith of historic people with the ability to read and write, as they tend to provide ample source material. Secondly, the common conception of esotericism is an academic one; esoteric discourse is described and studied as an intellectual pursuit, involving the acquisition of divine knowledge through rigorous studying and reflection, and therefore our eye tends to draw itself towards those actors with an economic and cultural capital sufficient for this sort of immersion. But what about those religious movements comprised mainly of peasants and low-level artisans, who rarely if ever leave textual sources behind? May we, in the study of esotericism, be overlooking a large swathe of fervent believers, simply because they are much harder to locate in the annals of history? In this paper, I will provide a cursory exploration of this question through a study of medieval Catharism in what is today Southern France.

¹I will, throughout this article and for the sake of brevity, be using the descriptor 'esoteric' to denote *things recognizable as fitting into a discourse of Western Esotericism*, and not as synonymous with secrecy, as per the traditional definition.

Furthermore, I will explore the question of how esoteric belief systems can function as ideological catalysts for broad social resistance against those in power. And while the scope of this paper is not broad enough to describe a larger theoretic framework for the study of peasant esotericism as social resistance, I believe it can provide insights into the little explored borderlands of the academic construct that is esotericism, and therefore lead us to a better understanding of the concept, as well as shine a light on a religious movement whose inner workings has too often been shrouded in darkness.

To achieve the above, I will mainly be applying a critical historical method, as well as some sociology and discourse theory, the reasons for which will be discussed in the methodology chapter. I will begin with a short discussion of the sort of methodological problems one faces when working with Catharism in this specific academic framework, as well as an explanation of the central theories I will apply in my analysis. Thereafter, I will try to answer the following questions: Where does Catharism fit on the spectrum of esoteric religion? And how was Catharism constructed as a heretical esoteric movement by its believers as well as its enemies?

To answer these, I will be analysing several of the central surviving texts held holy by the Cathars, employing both the general theories of Western Esotericism created by some of the most important scholars within that field, and the historic works of several scholars of Catharism. As a part of this, I will be introducing the term *heresoterization* to try and make sense of the complex interplay of Church polemics, heresiological literature and esoteric practices that has constructed Catharism.

Afterwards, I will move on to a broader discussion of the question of how and why esoteric movements function as social resistance movements, using Catharism as an exemplary template.

Finally, I will try to gather the above explorations into a conclusion that will hopefully present the feasibility of a larger study into the mechanizations of popular esotericism and esoteric revolt, and perhaps even a better understanding of esotericism itself.

METHODOLOGY AND CHALLENGES IN STUDYING CATHARISM

In general, when studying Catharism, one quickly runs into a somewhat paradoxical problem; namely that we simultaneously know too much and too little about them. There is an enormous wealth of historical sources on the medieval heresy, gathered primarily by heresiologists and inquisitors trying to weed out and persecute Cathars. So many, in fact, that the largest available register (the inquisitorial register of Jacques Fournier) is not yet fully translated into English². This has provided historians with a unique glimpse into the lives and beliefs of medieval peasants in France, but in this wealth of sources it is difficult to locate the snippets of information that could lead us to a better understanding of Cathar theology, beyond the most basic tenets of faith. A large part of this problem pertains to the fact that, because of continued persecution, the Cathars never had the opportunity to create one centralized system of belief, and so the ideas found by the inquisitors differ enormously with time and geography³. Additionally, what is probably the vast majority of Cathar texts has been lost to the systematic destruction of heretical literature conducted by the Church⁴. This is part of the reason why I've chosen to focus less on the inquisitorial registers, and more on those secret texts kept and preached by the Cathar Perfects that we still have access to. The other part is that I'm not as interested in whether the lay Believers of Catharism were keepers of a complex and secret faith — it is almost certain that they were not — as much as I am interested in the Neo-Gnostic and possibly esoteric theology being passed between the Perfects of the church; the 'hidden tradition' of the Cathars, so to speak.

My methodology, therefore, will mainly be a literary historical reading, focusing on the texts of the Cathars, supplemented by the secondary readings of other Cathar scholars, and put into the

²The ongoing translation work is being performed by Nancy P. Stork at San Jose State University (Stork 2018).

³Runcimann 1947, pp. 147–8.

⁴Stoyanov 2000, p. 263.

context of modern esoteric theory. I have deemed it unnecessary to place much emphasis on the history and true origin of these texts (as well as the oft-discussed lineage of the faith itself), as I am more interested in how they were read and used at the time, than when they were truly written and for what purpose.

THEORY

When it comes to the question of definitions of Western Esotericism and how the term can be applied in a scholarly context — and to Catharism specifically — my theoretical foundation will be one similar to both Kocku von Stuckrad and Wouter J. Hanegraaff's. I believe that Stuckrad's conception of esotericism as a discursive framework that can be used as a tool in certain academic contexts to gain a better understanding of historical currents that are often overlooked, is especially useful in the study of a group such as the Cathars that challenges the borders of our definitions⁵. Meanwhile, Hanegraaff's theory of the Grand Polemical Narrative and the way esotericism is constructed antagonistically through the definition of forbidden knowledge fits perfectly with the narrative of the Cathars, a group deemed heretical and exterminated as such, one of my central questions being how their status as heretics and their esoteric heritage interplayed and constructed each other⁶. However, while I agree conceptually to an extent with the above frameworks, when it comes to a hard textual analysis I believe that there is still a necessity for a system of recognizable characteristics associated with esotericism. Therefore, I will combine the discourse theory-focused analytical foundation of Stuckrad and Hanegraaff with the classic typology of Antoine Faivre to manage an analysis that is simultaneously open to the permeability and elusiveness of the term 'Western Esotericism', but also accepts that to understand these currents in an academic context we need some form of clear analytical framework. In addition to the above, I will also be applying Guy Stroumsas study of mysticism and initiation in the Hellenic and Early Christian world as a comparative tool.

⁵Stuckrad 2005, pp. 93–4.

⁶Hanegraaff 2005, pp. 248–50.

To a lesser extent, I will be using the typology of Monika Neugebauer-Wölk⁷, as well as the mysticism-focused theory of Arthur Versluis⁸ to demonstrate the ways in which the Cathars fall *outside* the popular definitions of esoteric religion.

In my discussion, I will be applying the sociological theory of Georg Simmel⁹ to discuss the potential for social resistance within pseudo-esoteric movements and how the ideology of secrecy plays a central role in this mechanism. In addition, my definition and understanding of a revolutionary project will draw on the composite typological theory of revolution defined by Jack A. Goldstone¹⁰.

WHO WERE THE CATHARS?

The Cathars were a group of heretical Christians active between the 12th and 14th centuries, though it is impossible to trace either their origin or their end to a specific point in time. Their churches existed mostly in what is today Southern France, especially the Languedoc area, as well as in certain parts of Italy and Germany, and at their height, it has been speculated that they posed a credible threat to the unity of Catholic Christianity¹¹. So numerous were they that church scholars have often referred to their movement as the 'Great Heresy', and subsequently, scholarly as well as popular interest in their history and works has been great¹². As has been mentioned, most of what we know about them comes from heresiological and inquisitorial literature, and most of their texts have been lost to time and to deliberate destruction — thus fueling the myth of the 'Cathar Treasure', a secret cache hidden by the group said to have contained everything from ancient divine wisdom to the Holy Grail¹³. What we do know of their origins is that they almost certainly came about through communication

⁷Stuckrad 2010

⁸Versluis 2004

⁹Simmel 1906

¹⁰Goldstone 2014

¹¹Martin 2005, p. 15.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid. pp. 154–6.

with Bulgar or Byzantine Bogomils somewhere around the 12th century, seeing as their theology, practices and textual interests are often functionally identical. From the Bogomils, they inherited a dualistic worldview that casts the Old Testament and most of its prophets, as well as the creation and governing of the material world, as the evil work of Satan, opposed to the good and true God that lives above in pure spirit. They also inherited a number of apocryphal holy texts, a liturgy as well as a system of initiation and transmission¹⁴.

The Cathar church was divided into a hierarchical system of Listeners, Believers and Perfects; Listeners being the uninitiated but interested, Believers being the initiated, faithful lay people, and Perfects being the ascetic preachers carrying and proselytizing the secret knowledge of the church¹⁵. Besides their dualist cosmology, the Cathars rejected the sacraments, the Catholic Church (as well as any physical church building), and all prayers except the Pater Nostre¹⁶. Their churches were spread wide, and their theology most likely differed greatly from town to town, but they can primarily be viewed as inhabiting either Moderate Dualist or Absolute Dualist camps; the Moderates with a Monarchic theology, believing Satan and Christ to be the two elder sons of the one, good God, while the Absolutes, more radically Manichaean, believed in two eternal, equally powerful principles, one of the evil Satan, and the other of the good God¹⁷.

The Cathar church was comprised of people from all layers of society, from peasants to nobles, but most of them probably came from the lower classes, being peasants, labourers and low-level artisans¹⁸. The Cathar Perfects were also known as the Weavers, as their ascetic faith did not allow them to perform many sorts of work, and so they would often work as travelling weavers while spreading the faith¹⁹.

¹⁴Ibid. pp. 52–3.

¹⁵Ibid. pp. 53–4.

¹⁶Robinson 1905, p. 381.

¹⁷Runcimann 1947, pp. 147–8.

¹⁸Ibid. p. 132.

¹⁹Martin 2005, p. 51.

Regarding the spread and demise of the Cathars, the political situation, both within the Catholic Church as well as in Southern France, allowed Catharism to spread far and wide before any real action was taken against it²⁰. Eckbert of Schönau wrote the first tract against them in 1163²¹, after which followed some trials and debates between churchmen and Cathars that were mostly unsuccessful. It would take until the beginning of the 13th century before the Church, as a reaction to their numerous theological and political defeats in the Languedoc, got their hands dirty, and on March 10th, 1208, Pope Innocent III called for a crusade against the heretics²².

The Albigensian Crusade that followed led to tens of thousands dead, an enormous shift in power due to the newly conquered lands (as per tradition, crusaders were allowed to keep the lands they 'purged' for themselves), and the Cathars being forced into hiding, making their already secretive practices even more clandestine²³. The final blows against the Cathars were the Inquisitions, led by prominent theologians like Jacques Fornier and Bernard Gui, which weeded out some of the last believers and led French Catharism to nigh-eradication by the midst of the 14th century²⁴.

AN ESOTERIC HERESY?

I would like to preface my analysis with two disclaimers: Firstly, I do not believe that there is necessarily such a thing as esotericism, other than as a historical academic construct, and therefore do not believe it to be useful in discussing whether a religious group is or is not inherently 'esoteric'. What I do believe is that the study of esotericism is a useful framework of analysis, as pointed out by scholars such as Kocku von Stuckrad²⁵, that is able to shed light on certain factors and historical currents often overlooked by other

²⁰Runcimann 1947, p. 131.

²¹Ibid. p. 122.

²²Martin 2005, p. 83.

²³Ibid. pp. 83–93.

²⁴Ibid. pp. 106–121, 132–8.

²⁵Stuckrad 2005, pp. 93–4.

forms of study. Therefore, my question of where the Cathars fit on the esoteric-religious spectrum is not as much about whether they do or do not fit into a hard typological category of 'esotericism', but rather whether we might learn something new about the group, as well as the field itself, by studying them through the academic lens of Western Esotericism.

Secondly, and rather paradoxically, I do not believe that Catharism fits in neatly with any of the aforementioned typological categories, and therefore I hesitate to directly call the movement 'esoteric', favoring instead terms like 'pseudo-esoteric' or 'esoteric-adjacent'. Even when we deconstruct the term 'esotericism' and reject any hard typologies, it is quite hard, when studying Catharism, not to notice the elements of the faith that simply seem utterly 'un-esoteric'. As a consequence, I will begin my analysis by looking at those elements within Catharism that do not fit in well with the category of esotericism, with reference to the theories of scholars such as Faivre, Neugebauer-Wölk and Arthur Versluis, and then move on to explain why the Cathars, in spite of this, should still be studied through the analytical framework of Western Esotericism, specifically through the work of Hanegraaff, Faivre and Stuckrad.

The Un-Esoteric

When studying the Cathars with the framework of Western Esotericism in mind, there is one facet of their faith that unavoidably and incessantly comes to mind: their utter lack of mysticism. In works like Sean Martin's *The Cathars* (2005), Steven Runcimann's *The Medieval Manichee* (1947) or even Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's *Montaillou* (1978), Cathar belief, history and practice is expounded in astounding detail, but we almost never hear of the individual search for divine knowledge and experiential ritualism that we have come to expect from esoteric movements. In Faivre's typology, one of the four central characteristics of esotericism is that of *mediation and imagination*, i.e. the processes of gaining sacred knowledge from a 'magical imagination', mediated through some form of higher being, be it an angel or a mystical Master of Truth.

Combined with the fourth characteristic, that of *transmutation*, this describes the experiential dimension often seen as intrinsic to esoteric practices²⁶. According to Versluis, this dimension is really the *basis* of esoteric religion, as he argues that: “[...] esotericism has as its central characteristic gnosis, meaning experiential insight into the nature of the divine as manifested in the individual and in the cosmos.”²⁷.

But the Cathars seem to have completely lacked this faculty. While there is an aspect of personal transmutation in the ritual of the *Consolamentum*²⁸, as well as an idea of personal salvation reminiscent of the Gnostics, neither transmutation nor salvation are experiential — they are transsubstantial. The Cathars, as pointed out by Yuri Stoyanov, were a sacramental cult²⁹. Like their greatest enemies, the Catholic Church, their soteriology was based on twin principles of sacrament and a holy ascetic life, and salvation did not come through meditation over divine mysteries, but through pure rejection of the material world³⁰. Here we see our first evidence of the Cathars as being a sort of ‘watered down’ version of earlier Gnostic and Manichaean groups, containing bits of the theology and liturgy, but lacking key complex elements. I will return to the question of mysticism, as well as that of a ‘simplified’ esotericism, but first I will cover the other esoteric element seemingly lacking within Catharism; that of a complex cosmology.

At times, Cathar cosmology can seem rather cut-and-dry: There is a good God and an evil one. The good God created spirit, while the evil one created matter. Souls are divine sparks trapped in sinful, material bodies. Through sacrament and penance, you can return to the spiritual resting place of the good God. In the end, all souls will return to spirit and the evil God will be destroyed along with his material world³¹.

This story is obviously, and at least typologically, reminiscent

²⁶Faivre 2010, p. 12.

²⁷Versluis 2004, p. 1.

²⁸The *Consolamentum* was the initiation ritual that turned a Cathar Believer into a Perfect (Martin 2005, pp. 54–9).

²⁹Stoyanov 2010, p. 274.

³⁰Martin 2005, pp. 54–5, 58–9.

³¹Ibid. p. 52.

of the one told by the dualist esoteric cults of Late Antiquity, like the Valentinian Gnostics and the Manichees. And while it is not controversial to say that this is where the narrative of the Cathars originates³², it seems to lack some of the mythological punch inherent in its forebearers. There is no mention of Archons and Eons guarding the numerous spiritual levels that one must, through gnosis, traverse to reach a heavenly Pleroma, no narrative of the primordial masculine and feminine and their pairing and disconnection, no long list of mysterious riddles and parables that must be understood to gain access to salvation. Indeed, apart from the dualist doctrines, secretive practices and anti-Church polemics, the Cathars often seem more reminiscent in their cosmology of the Catholics, if simply for lack of complexity and mystery. Reading the extensive absolute dualist Cathar tract *The Book of the Two Principles*, one senses more of an interest in biblical hermeneutics and theological debate than in investigating the mysteries of sacred history³³. Here, the doctrines of the Cathar church are laid out clearly, dryly even, for newly initiated to read and understand, with focus resting almost solely on one central theological issue (understandably enough the one that the Roman Church is also most interested in): That of the twin principles of dualism. Another central Cathar text, *The Vision of Isaiah*, contains a journey through the seven heavens, yes, but on a surface reading it does not seem very theologically controversial, and the seven heavens is a popular and ancient orthodox narrative³⁴.

According to Monika Neugebauer-Wölk, esotericism should be defined in *contrast* to Christianity, its five central 'thematic fields' all being antithetic to Christian thought³⁵. According to Hanegraaff, Western Esotericism has its roots in polemics surrounding

³²Stoyanov 2000, p. 264.

³³See, for example, the opening of chapter 4, *A Compendium for the Instruction of Beginners*, that is structured like a preacher's handbook, systematically listing dogma and proving their truthfulness through bible quotes and interpretation. (Wakefield 1991, pp. 551–2).

³⁴This can be seen anywhere from Pauls 2nd Letter to the Corinthians (2nd Corinthians 12.2–4 NRSV) to Irenaeus' *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* (Smith 1978, p. 17.).

³⁵Stuckrad 2010, pp. 49–50.

pagan traditions and philosophy³⁶. But the Cathars were *extremely* Christian. They swore fealty to God and Christ, not Zoroaster or Hermes, and led apostolic lives to a degree that even their mortal enemies were forced to admit their virtues³⁷. They did not call themselves 'the Cathars', but instead opted for 'the Good Christians', or simply 'Goodmen'³⁸. So should we still study these Good Christians through the perspective of Western Esotericism? I would argue yes. For while on the surface many facets of Cathar belief and practice may seem simply heretical, the more that we unearth about them, the more mysterious they seem.

The Esoteric

Before delving into those Cathar texts that I have chosen for analysis, I would like to go over some of the more practical elements of Cathar life that have the air of esotericism about them, chief among them being their initiation rites.

Earlier in this article, I have briefly described the Cathar hierarchical system of Listener, Believer and Perfect. What I haven't explored is the kinship that this system shares with those movements most commonly described as the forefathers of Western Esotericism, as well as the Early Church. In fact, the Cathar transmission system can be traced back to the first centuries after Christ, through the Bulgarian Bogomils, the Massalians, the Manichees and finally some of the first groups of Christians in the melting pot of religion that was the Roman Empire of Late Antiquity.³⁹ As described by Guy Stroumsa, the mystical oral transmission system of Master to Pupil was a central component of esoteric thought in Late Antiquity, being shared between the Greek Mysteries, the Gnostics, the Hermeticists, the Jewish mystics and even the early Christians, and this is the system we find among the Cathars of the Languedoc, a thousand years later.⁴⁰

³⁶Hanegraaff 2012, pp. 6–7.

³⁷Martin 2005, p. 52.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Runcimann 1947, p. 164 & Obolensky 1948, pp. 27, 48–9, 111–2.

⁴⁰Stroumsa 2005, pp. 27–9.

On a surface reading of our secondary sources, however, this is not immediately apparent. Often, it seems simply that the Perfects are a stylite and soteriological class, more akin to a Franciscan monk than a secretive Master; ascetic preachers meant to live by example and herd the flock to salvation, handing out freely of their heretical theology. This, I would dare say, stems from the fact that Cathar scholars are often not very interested in the esoteric elements of Catharism — reading Sean Martin, Dimitri Obolensky or even the elder and more polemical Stephen Runcimann, the secrecy of the Perfects is a mere footnote, mentioned in passing, and left unexplored.⁴¹ But reading further, and specifically delving into the heresiological literature of Euthymios Zigabenos, as dualist scholar Yuri Stoyanov has done, a new image of the Perfects begins to form: It is apparent that the sacred history of the Cathars, the dualist doctrines and myths, were not to be shared with just anyone. Instead, as a Listener became a Believer and a Believer became a Perfect, more and more of the secret theology would be revealed to them, clandestinely and orally, as, through years of living as the equivalent of a catechumen, they were deemed worthy of divine secrets⁴² Stoyanov 2000, pp. 260–4. Here, then, we move into the territory of the sort of esoteric traditions described by Stroumsa, that have apparently survived, or at least been resurrected, in the High Middle Ages.

Stuckrad, in his *Locations of Knowledge*, describes as part of his analytical framework the discourse of perfect knowledge, as well as the discursive need for this knowledge to be kept, if not secret, then *hidden*. According to him and his reading of Georg Simmel, the act of hiding this particular knowledge, along with the claim of its absolute status, is a tool of legitimization that allows the knowledge-bearers, the esotericists, to claim their own closeness to the divine.⁴³ While in the typology of Faivre, *transmission* is only a secondary characteristic of esotericism,⁴⁴ I would argue along with Stroumsa and Stuckrad, that it is central to the sort of discourse we

⁴¹Martin 2005, p. 54, Obolensky 1948, p. 181 & Runcimann 1947, pp. 177–8.

⁴².

⁴³Stuckrad 2010, pp. 55–6.

⁴⁴Faivre 2010, pp. 12–3.

view as esoteric. Departing from Stuckrad, though, and entering the territory of Stroumsa, the act of hiding and transmission can also be fostered through polemics, as an act of defence.⁴⁵ This I will explore further in my chapter on *heresoterization*, though. For now, let us take a look at some of the Cathar apocrypha, and see what truths lie hidden within them.

THE VISION, THE SECRET SUPPER AND THE TWO PRINCIPLES

The Book of the Two Principles

I will begin my reading with the longest of the texts, which is also the one least suited to an esoteric reading: *The Book of the Two Principles*. The book is a 'modern' product of the Italian absolute dualist Cathars, by some attributed to Italian heresiarch John de Lugio, and is by far the longest member of the Cathar library that we know of, clocking in at over 35.000 words.⁴⁶ It is in many ways representative of the absolute dualists and their reformist tendencies, lacking the mysteries, myths and primacy of gnosis found in other Cathar texts.⁴⁷ The book serves two purposes extremely well, though: Firstly, it functions as an astoundingly thorough polemical guidebook, disavowing the Catholic Church first, and the moderate dualists second, through numerous Bible quotations.⁴⁸ Accordingly, it can be swiftly imagined as a sort of theological handbook for the Perfects, written to train them in meeting with the polemicists of the Church, their moderate dualist competitors, and their fellows to be converted. Secondly, the last part of the book is dedicated to a long list of proofs for the necessity of persecution, again using the Bible as a primary source.⁴⁹ This section would have served to strengthen the resolve of the believers, arguing that *they* are the true apostles, and that it is natural that in an

⁴⁵Stroumsa 2005, p. 34.

⁴⁶Wakefield 1991, pp. 511–2.

⁴⁷Stoyanov 2000, p. 262.

⁴⁸See for example the last chapter, that consists almost exclusively of bible verses (Wakefield 1991, pp. 578–91).

⁴⁹Wakefield 1991, pp. 578–91.

evil world ruled by the servants of the devil, God's chosen are to suffer and die.

The most relevant conclusion that we can draw from reading *The Book of the Two Principles* in this context is, as was also pointed out by Stoyanov,⁵⁰ that some of the absolute dualist Cathars (specifically the followers of John de Lugio) seem to lack some of the esoteric discourse of their moderate brethren. Instead, their argument, based on hard and thorough Bible readings, seems much more reminiscent of the hermeneutics of the Roman Church — perhaps what we are seeing in the *Book* is a movement towards the mainstream within the Cathars, now ready to truly challenge the Catholics and lay behind them their mystical past.⁵¹ Either way, it seems clear that when studying the esotericism of the Cathars, the authors and students of the *Book* are not the most relevant group to look into.

Interrogatio Iohannis

Next, I would like to discuss one of those texts most commonly identified with the Cathar and Bogomil heresies, and specifically their moderate dualist branches: *Interrogatio Iohannis*, often known under the name *The Secret Supper*. It is a piece of Johannine literature, probably produced by the Bogomils as an adaptation of an earlier piece of apocrypha, and came to the Languedoc around the time of the Albigensian Crusade.⁵² First, I will present a short overview of the text, to then make a closer analysis, since this is one of those pieces of literature that hints more clearly at the esoteric tendencies within the Cathar church.

The narrative framework of *Interrogatio Iohannis* is a story told by John the Beloved, that depicts a 'secret supper' held in the kingdom of heaven, where the author interrogates Christ about the making of the world and of humanity. Through the questioning,

⁵⁰Stoyanov 2000, pp. 283–4.

⁵¹This is not to say that the absolute dualists didn't carry many of the same esoteric practices as the moderates — but since the esoterically inclined Cathar texts we have access to (the two analyzed below) are both representative of moderate dualism, this is where I will place my focus.

⁵²Wakefield 1991, p. 448.

Jesus tells of a rather fantastic cosmogony, in which Satan, originally an angel of light, leaves the spiritual plane of the Father, seduces some of his angels, and then creates the material world from a primordial ocean, only to be spurned and punished by God, by having his angelic vestments taken from him.⁵³ He then goes on to create Adam and Eve by trapping the spirits of his helping angels in bodies of flesh, only to then tempt them into sin, and, in the form of a serpent, impregnate Eve with the spawn of the devil.⁵⁴ Finally, Christ tells John that the devil will be allowed to rule the world for “seven ages”, before describing a rather straightforward Johannine eschatological scenario, in which the world will end, Satan and his followers will be punished, and the just will sit by the throne of God.⁵⁵

The first facet of *The Secret Supper* that I would like to explore is the structure. It is structured as a dialogue, with a pupil (John) questioning his master (Christ), receiving answers containing divine knowledge. Already here, we can see a literary example of the sort of esoteric transmission system described by Stroumsa and Stuckrad,⁵⁶ exemplifying through narrative the practices of the writers of the text, as well as its later users, the Cathars. Part of this, of course, is the fact that the supper itself is clearly denoted to be *secret*.⁵⁷ This is a clandestine meeting between master and pupil, designed to secretly transmit knowledge not meant for uninitiated ears. In Platonic terms, Heaven in this instance stands in for the Academy as the place where the initiated are allowed access to gnosis.

Secondly, the strange mythology of the dialogue hints at a more complex cosmos than what is usually ascribed to the Cathars — Stoyanov aptly describes the way Gnostic myths would find their way into the dualist heresies, and this is a perfect example of that, while also going towards esotericizing the much simpler cosmo-

⁵³Ibid. pp. 458–9.

⁵⁴Ibid. p. 460.

⁵⁵Ibid. pp. 463–4

⁵⁶Stroumsa 2010, pp. 27–8 & Stuckrad 2010, pp. 54–7.

⁵⁷Wakefield 1991, p. 458.

logy of the absolute dualists.⁵⁸ In keeping with this, the layered heavens (that also figure more prominently in *The Vision of Isaiah*) as well as the angelology of the elemental angels opening heavenly elemental ‘portals’ to allow Satan passage, hint at a Gnostic conception of the cosmos, with numerous layers of ascending spirit between the material world (the primordial ocean) and the pure spirit plane of God.⁵⁹

Another puzzling aspect of the text is the strange mercantile dialogue between the devil and the angels of air and water. It goes as follows:

He ascended to the very heavens, even unto the third heaven, subverting the angels of the Father invisible, and saying to each of them, “How much dost thou owe thy lord?” The first answered, “A hundred barrels of oil.” He said to him, “Take the bill and sit down and write fifty.” And he said to another, “Now you, how much dost thou owe thy lord?” Who said, “A hundred quarters of wheat.” To him he said, “Take thy bill and sit down quickly and write eighty.” To the other heavens he ascended with like speech; he ascended even unto the fifth heaven, seducing the angels of the Father invisible.⁶⁰

Now, why would angels, made of pure spirit, in a cosmos where the material plane is as of yet non-existent, who serve a lord of pure spirit, be indebted to the sum of barrels of oil and quarters of wheat? On the one hand, we know that the text has undergone extensive editing through its handing down across the centuries, and it seems likely that this is a later addition to the original text. We know that the tenets of Bogomilism and Catharism were likely communicated by travelling merchants, and it would make sense that these were the kinds of metaphors that they would layer onto their myths.⁶¹ On the other hand, what we are witnessing here could also be the heretic love of parables and symbolism described by Stoyanov as a central part of the transmission and rhetoric of the Cathar-Bogomils.⁶² In that context,

⁵⁸Stoyanov 2000, pp. 264–5.

⁵⁹Wakefield 1991, pp. 458–9.

⁶⁰Wakefield 1991, p. 459.

⁶¹Runcimann 1947, p. 133.

⁶²Stoyanov 2000, p. 261.

the above passage is a mystery, possibly meant to be pondered over and experientially understood by the initiates. In its original form, the passage is easy to communicate to the peasant, artisan and merchant believers of the faith, but to the truly initiated, it could represent a more mystical narrative. Here, then, we see both the Gnostic dimension of the church, possibly practiced by the Perfects, and the more mundane mythological dimension taught to the lay believers, which will be central to our later discussion.

The most obvious example of esoteric discourse in the *Supper*, though, is the anthropogeny. To create man, Satan forces angels to enter material bodies, imprisoning them and keeping them from returning to God.⁶³ This is surely an example of a Neo-Platonist Gnostic theology, concretizing the idea of the human soul as a divine spark meant to return to pure spirit through gnosis or salvation.⁶⁴ At the same time, it implies a narrative of self-divinization — if man is truly angelic spirit trapped in sinful matter, he can become divine again by escaping that matter. This corresponds well with Faivre's typology's 4th characteristic, that of the *transmutation*, exemplified often in the Hermeticist Humanism of the Renaissance.⁶⁵

Lastly, it should be mentioned that *The Secret Supper* also functions as a piece of anti-sacramental dogmatic literature, by describing in clear terms how the baptism must be conducted in spirit and not in water, as well as the true Eucharist being simply the saying of the Pater Nostre, thereby refuting the two most central sacraments of the Roman church.⁶⁶ These contentions are also among those most often mentioned by heresiologists.⁶⁷

The Vision of Isaiah

Now, on to the last of the Cathar texts that I would like to explore: *The Vision of Isaiah*. This text is also ancient, probably a work of 1st

⁶³Wakefield 1991, p. 460

⁶⁴Stoyanov 2000, p. 266

⁶⁵Faivre 2010, p. 12

⁶⁶Wakefield 1991, p. 462

⁶⁷See for example the accounts of Raynaldus and Bernard Gui in, respectively, Maitland (1832, pp. 392–4) and Robinson (1905, pp. 381–2)

century Gnostics, and the most esoterically laden of the surviving Cathar library.⁶⁸ In summary, it describes a messianic vision given to the prophet Isaiah, that relegated through him to the court of King Hezekiah, where he is led through the layers of heaven by a nameless angel to finally stand before God, only to witness the sending down of Christ to Earth. Finally, Isaiah instructs the court that his revelation is to be kept secret from the children of Israel.⁶⁹ This text is more cryptic in its imagery than *The Secret Supper*, but through my analysis I hope to show how it is in fact full of allusions to esoteric discourse.

My first comment will, again, be on the structure of the text. It is an apocalypse, a revelatory vision given to a mystical preacher, in this case Isaiah. Reading this, it should stand out to us that the Cathars, despite their seeming lack of mysticism, were not averse to the idea of gnosis gained through mystical experience, though it remains unknown to what extent they practiced this themselves.

Secondly, the epistemology of the text stands out in several places, with emphasis on the unknowable, and the conscious revelation of the unknowable to the subject. Isaiah mentions, seeing the layers of heaven, “a light I could not describe”, and throughout the text, the divine is framed as something so far from materiality that it can barely be comprehended.⁷⁰ Also, this comprehension is consciously kept from Isaiah, exemplified in the angel who, when being asked its name, answers: “but my name you do not know, because you wish to return again to your body.”⁷¹ Here is, then, a hint at a gnosis-based soteriology that we do not usually see from the study of the Cathars. It seems to be implied that, simply by knowing the name of the angel, Isaiah would be released from his fleshly prison and return to spirit. The knowledge of divine names and their role in salvation is a classic example of esoteric discourse within, for example, Gnostic sects of the early centuries AD as well as many later occultist movements,⁷² and it must to some extent,

⁶⁸Wakefield 1991, p. 447

⁶⁹Ibid. p. 456.

⁷⁰Ibid. p. 450.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Found anywhere from ancient Syrian magic, to Pseudo-Dionysius, to Hermetic

then, have been taught by the Cathars.

Next, transfiguration plays a large role in the *Vision*. As Isaiah transcends the heavens, he describes his soul as being transformed to become divine like the angels. Here again we see an example of divine transmutation, that is then repeated when Christ descends from the highest heaven and transforms to lower and lower states of spiritual being with each step downwards.⁷³ This narrative could be explored much further, but there are several more points to be made about the *Vision* that must be mentioned.

When Isaiah calls the angel his lord, the angel replies: “I am not your lord, but your counselor.”. To return, again, to the typology of Faivre, this is *mediation*, an angelic being relegating perfect knowledge to the subject through mystical revelation.⁷⁴ This is the only example I’ve come across of mediation being used in Cathar lore, but now we can see, at least, that it played some part in the soteriological discourse.

Finally, another singular example lending itself to Faivre: “[...] because replicas of what are in the firmament are on earth.”⁷⁵ Isaiah sees in his vision that there is a sort of mirroring of the material world in the spiritual one — what Faivre calls the characteristic of *correspondences*, a divine interconnectedness of matter and spirit.⁷⁶ And while all of these examples are singular in the text if not the entire surviving Cathar library, they seem to point towards Catharism as not simply fitting into a deconstructed discourse of esotericism, but even the classic definitions of the term. All of the above analyses suffer from some central problems, though, which I will try to address in the conclusion of my analysis.

HERESOTERIZATION

Throughout this article, I have alluded to a number of problems with studying the Cathars, both with the perspective usually ap-

tracts and Kabbalist mysticism (Hanegraaff et al. 2006, pp. 65, 312, 488, 625).

⁷³Wakefield 1991, p. 455.

⁷⁴Wakefield 1991, p. 452 & Faivre 2010, p. 12.

⁷⁵Ibid. p. 450.

⁷⁶Faivre 2010, p. 12.

plied by scholars of the movement, as well as the perspective of Western Esotericism. The central problem, from which the others spring, is the one I mentioned in the introduction: while we have a wealth of sources on the heresy, we still know very little about them. The lifeworld of the Perfects is almost entirely hidden to us, as they were not as easy to interrogate as their compatriots, and so what we end up with is the image of a religion that, to the majority of its followers, probably did not have much esoteric content, while we can only guess at the sort of theology shared between the elite members.

We can surmise that much of Cathar teaching was carried and transmitted orally, since literacy would not have been a common trait within the movement. Adding to that, most of their written literature was most likely lost to time and deliberate destruction. Therefore, it is certain that the extant Cathar literature does not comprise all of their teachings.

But even more importantly, we do not know *how* the Cathar literature was taught. It is one thing to analyze their texts for clues pointing towards esoteric practice, but we have no way of knowing what part of the esoteric elements were actually taught, practiced or seen as central by the church's members. If one were to trust most of the Catholic heresiologists, as well as the Listeners and Believers they interrogated, little of it appears to have been taught.⁷⁷

While we can have no definite answers to the above mysteries, throughout my analysis I have demonstrated that some esoteric traditions were certainly practiced to an extent, probably almost exclusively by the Perfects, and probably with much variation depending on the area and time. What we end up with, then, is a very fascinating constellation, where Catharism managed to exist as both an every-day 'people's religion' practiced by the Listeners and the Believers, and as an esoteric one, practiced by the Perfects.

⁷⁷Reading, as an example, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's *Montaillou*, one is often struck by the simplicity of the heresy practiced by the Occitan peasants, focused mainly on a simple soteriology of an apostolic life and a general hatred for the Catholic clergy; even the idea of dualism was reserved for only a few of the faithful (Le Roy Ladurie 1978, pp. 309–12, 342–5).

This model is not perfect either, though. For as we know, Catharism changed over time, and probably radically.⁷⁸ This change was centrally a response to persecution from the Church, and a heightened need for secrecy and carefulness.⁷⁹ When Catharism is first encountered in the Languedoc, it is described as a public religion, having almost overtaken the entire population; Southern France was popularly described as 'the land of many heresies', and Catharism was ignored, if not practiced, by the local nobles.⁸⁰ This fact, along with the fact that those Gnostic documents we know were taught by the Cathars (*The Vision of Isaiah and The Secret Supper*) both came to France around the time persecution began, points towards a complex question: how much of the esotericism within Catharism was inherent from its inception, and how much came to be as a result of persecution? We know for a fact that the Cathars became more secretive, more introverted and more protective of their secrets as a consequence of the Crusade and Inquisitions, but we do not know how much these factors already existed as part of Cathar practice. We also know that some of the absolute dualists of Italy, largely left to their own devices by the Church, became less esoterically inclined with time, working their way towards the mainstream through reformist tendencies.⁸¹ To try and solve this problem, I would like to tentatively present a term to encompass it: *heresoterization*, a composition of 'heresy' and 'esotericism', which I will define as follows: '*the complex discursive matrix through which a religious sect already containing the seeds of esoteric discourse is made to enhance and implement them more widely in the face of persecution by the dominant religious group, as well as how this very enhancement of heretic practices leads the dominant group to increase their persecution, thereby making the effect circular.*'.

I lend here from Hanegraaff's theory of The Grand Polemical Narrative,⁸² while adding a more practically defined dimension of the mutual construction process between dominant and minority

⁷⁸Martin 2005, p. 112.

⁷⁹Ibid. p. 98.

⁸⁰Ibid. p. 15.

⁸¹Runcimann 1947, pp. 126–8.

⁸²Hanegraaff 2005, pp. 234–6.

religious movement. And while this process should be studied in much greater detail, I believe it is entirely evident that the Cathar's status as an esoteric religion has been constructed just as much through their own literature and theological inheritance, as through the wish for defence against polemical and violent attacks from the Church, and even through a wish for differentiation from the persecuting Church. Catharism, therefore, manages to exist as both popular and esoteric religion as a result of *heresoterization*, and I believe it is the role of scholars of Western Esotericism to look more closely into movements like it; those that straddle the border between popular and esoteric and as a consequence manage to both fit and break our usual categories. The reason I find the need for a term to encompass this process is that it seems to be inherent to certain (very specific) kinds of movements in specific historical and political contexts. As will be touched on in the next section, both the development of Bogomilism and Alexandrian Gnosticism follow very similar processes of revolt, oppression and secrecy, and even the failed religious revolution led by Thomas Müntzer in Reformation Germany had elements of esotericism introduced and explored as a consequence of a perceived need for heightened secrecy.⁸³

Furthermore, I believe this conclusion leads inevitably to what I would like to discuss next: Is popular esoteric religion inherently revolutionary? And if so, which parts of esoteric discourse lends themselves to a discourse of social revolt?

Esotericism and the Revolution

I began this article by mentioning how we, when studying esotericism, tend to focus on small groups of economically privileged people communicating with each other. But now that we've taken a deeper look at one of those movements that does not fit our usual perception, a strange pattern has shown up; namely, that within Catharism, there seems to exist an intrinsic revolutionary potential, embedded in the very roots of the movement. In the following discussion, I would like to create a short mapping of

⁸³Scott 1947, pp. 24, 84

the factors inherent in the history and sociology of Catharism that lend to the project of social revolt. I draw here upon a rather broad definition of the revolutionary as described by Jack A. Goldstone.⁸⁴ More specifically, he defines revolution as “[...]complex emergent processes”⁸⁵ in which the right combination of a state in an “[...] unstable equilibrium”,⁸⁶ general social unrest and dissatisfaction and the introduction of the right revolutionary ideology can lead to broad political upheaval and the introduction of new systems of power.

Following these ideas, Catharism’s potential as a social resistance movement can be split up into two categories: a material, political one (ie., the sociological foundations of its success as a heresy), and a discursive one (ie. the ways in which its practices and beliefs lend themselves to the resistance project). The first category I will summarise as follows:

At the time of the rise of Catharism, one factor that was ubiquitous in most of Europe was a hatred for the papacy. The last few centuries had seen the Church turned into an image of greed and pomposness, and popular opinion of the clergy in the Languedoc was beyond low.⁸⁷ This anti-clericalism was the foundation of the reformatory movements that would begin in the High Middle Ages with the Lollards, the Hussites, the Waldenses and even the Cathars, and end with the final demise of papal primacy in the 16th century’s Reformation.⁸⁸ It is clear, then, that there was a definite ideological foundation for resistance against empire at this time, and this combined beautifully with the factor of the economic and cultural situation in Southern France. Namely, as Martin describes, the fact that the Languedoc was a thriving hub of commerce and culture in the 12th century.⁸⁹ And while we may instinctively connect revolutionary movements with times of great strife, it should be uncontroversial to say that it is often the combi-

⁸⁴Goldstone 2014

⁸⁵Ibid. pp. 30–1.

⁸⁶Ibid. p. 32.

⁸⁷Martin 2005, pp. 45, 61.

⁸⁸Nordberg 1987, pp. 278–9, 284–5 & Frasetto 2007, pp. 56–60.

⁸⁹Martin 2005, p. 71.

nation of amassed cultural and economic capital (i.e. the resources needed to effectively organize) together with the perception of an oppressive ruling class (in our example, the Roman Church) that best fosters well-functioning revolutionary ideologies.⁹⁰

This brings us to the second category, the discursive one. In his article *Sociology of Secrecy*, Georg Simmel expertly describes the ways in which keeping knowledge systematically hidden can be used as a discursive tool, not just to protect one's group from the oppression of others, but also to strengthen it from within.⁹¹ Secrecy simultaneously grants a feeling of special privilege, and therefore loyalty, to the initiated members of the group, as well as allowing those members to polemicize and plan against the dominant group.⁹² Here, it is often hard to miss the similarities that esoteric movements share with purely revolutionary ones. But secrecy is especially effective when the movement is both comprised of a large number of uninitiated believers, who do not know the intricacies of the faith so as not to be scared away from it by its extreme contents (or accidentally share its more sensitive tenets), and a smaller number of initiated proselytizers, who are able to keep their knowledge safe and pick and choose when to share part of it. This is the model of the Cathars.

The second essential part of the discursive category is dualism. It should come as no surprise that a dualist discourse, radically splitting the cosmos into Good and Evil, is useful for polemicizing. This is especially true when the dualist movement is fighting against a much more powerful enemy, like the Roman Church or Empire, which can easily be recontextualized as an evil Goliath to be fought against by the weaker but just David. This is not only true for religious movements, of course, but political ones as well; Marxist discourse is made all the more powerful by the dualist rhetoric of the evil, mighty Capitalist Class pitted against the manifold, but underprivileged Working Class. Fascist discourse works through a splitting of the evil Other, be they Jews, Muslims or Leftists, against the humble *Volk*. It figures that a religious

⁹⁰Goldstone 2014, p. 28.

⁹¹Simmel 1906, pp. 470–2.

⁹²Ibid. pp. 472–3.

movement that makes this split part of the essential truth of the cosmos has an easy time instrumentalizing it in the context of social polemics.⁹³

Finally, the idea of self-divinization, I believe, is inherently revolutionary in the right societal context. Since a system of power like the Roman Church (and thereby, Empire) is built on a soteriological foundation of *having the power to grant you salvation as well as take it away from you*, introducing a faith where salvation is entirely in the hands of the individual or their closest associates (i.e. the Perfects) is a terrifying threat to those in power. All of these factors combine into a movement that, at the time, threatened to destabilize the greatest power on the planet, through something as simple as peasants and artisans congregating for themselves and making their own teachings. So, while the average Cathar believer would probably not have seen themselves as part of a revolutionary project, Catharism as a movement had invariably become it.⁹⁴

CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have tried to apply a new theoretical perspective to an oft-studied historical movement, and through that uncovered several details that are not immediately apparent within the existing scholarship. First of all, I have shown how Catharism tends to skirt the line between popular Christian sect and esoteric movement, and how, while there are certainly parts of Cathar history that seem to fit into the popular narrative, the further one looks, the more is uncovered of their esoteric heritage. To come to this conclusion, I have analyzed several of their inherited (and self-written) texts and deciphered some of the esoteric and Gnostic elements

⁹³Goldstone 2014, pp. 34–5

⁹⁴In comparison, Henry Green has created a sociological model describing how Alexandrian Gnosticism came about through new, oppressive modes of production forced upon Egypt by the Roman Empire, and this model might well be refitted to research Catharism (Green 1982, pp. 470–80). Additionally, Obolensky explains how Bogomilisms mystical origins came about as a violent reaction to economic crisis and religious apathy in Bulgaria (Obolensky 1948, pp. 101–3).

within. I have also tried to merge the two understandings of Catharism, as well as explain the movements' puzzling relationship with secrecy and transmission, with my own concept of *heresoterization*, that covers the two-pronged construction process of an esoteric heresy. Lastly, I have discussed how a movement like Catharism, that manages to exist as both popular and esoteric religion, carries an intrinsic revolutionary potential and foundation through its theology and sociological context. In all these things, this article should serve as a cursory exploration into some facets of Western Esotericism, as well as the study of Medieval heresy, that have not been satisfactorily explored, and hopefully prompt further and more rigorous research.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Faivre, A., & Rhone, Christine. *Western Esotericism: A Concise History*. State University of New York Press, 2010.
- Frasetto, M.. *Heretic Lives*. Profile Books, 2007.
- Goldstone, Jack. A.. *Revolutions: a very short introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Green, H.. *The Economic and Social Origins of Gnosticism*. St. Andrews University, 1982.
- Hanegraaff, W.. "Forbidden Knowledge: Anti-Esoteric Polemics". *Aries*, Vol. 5(2), pp. 225–254. 2005.
- Hanegraaff, W.. *Esotericism and the academy, rejected knowledge in western culture* (Reprint. ed.). Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Hanegraaff, W., Faivre, A., Broek, R., & Brach, J.. *Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism*. Brill, 2006
- Le Roy Ladurie, E.. *Montaillou: Cathars and Catholics in a French Village*. Penguin Books, 1978.
- Maitland, S. R.. *History of the Albigenses and the Waldenses*. C. J. G. and F. Rivington, 1832.
- Martin, S.. *The Cathars*. Pocket Essentials, 2005.
- Nordberg, M.. *Den Dynamiske Middelalder*. Per Kofoed, 1987.
- Obolensky, D.. *The Bogomils. A Study in Balkan Neo-Manichaeism*. Cambridge University Press, 1948 [1972].
- Robinson, J. H.. *Readings in European History*. Ginn, 1905.

Runciman, S.. *The Medieval Manichee*. Cambridge University Press, 1947 [1999].

Scott, Tom.. *Thomas Müntzer*. St. Martins Press, 1947.

Simmel, G.. "The Sociology of Secrecy and of Secret Societies". In: *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (Jan., 1906), pp. 441–498. 1906.

Smith, Joseph P.. *St. Irenaeus: Proof of the Apostolic Teaching*. The Newman Press, 1978.

Stork, Nancy P.. *Inquisition Records of Jacques Fournier*. 2018. www.sjsu.edu/people/nancy.stork/jacquesfournier/. Assessed 05/27/2019.

Stoyanov, Y.. *The Other God*. Yale University Press, 2000.

Stroumsa, Guy G.. "Hidden Wisdom: Esoteric Traditions and the Roots of Christian Mysticism". In: *Numen Book Series: Studies in the History of Religions*, Volume 70, pp. 27–45. Brill, 2005.

Stuckrad, K.. "Western esoterism: Towards an integrative model of interpretation". In: *Religion*, 1. April 2005, Vol. 35(2), pp.78–97. 2005.

Stuckrad, K.. *Locations of Knowledge in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. Brill, 2010.

Versluis, Arthur. *Restoring Paradise, Western Esotericism, Literature, Art, and Consciousness*. State University of New York, 2004.

Wakefield, W. L. & Evans, A. P.. *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*. Columbia University Press, 1991.

Kemisk Mystik:

Argumenter for anvendt fænomenologi i religionsforskning og studier i psykedeliske oplevelser

CHRISTIAN TRANBERG

“Kemisk mystik” kalder Stanislav Grof — i sit eksperimenterende værk *The Adventure of Self-Discovery* fra sidst i 80’erne — de tilsyneladende religiøse og mystiske oplevelser, som fremtræder for individer i psykoterapeutiske sessionsforhold, under inducering af psykedeliske stoffer såsom LSD og psilocybin. *Kemisk mystik* smager underligt på religionsvidenskabelige læber. Det smager underligt, fordi vi har skjulte fordomme om, hvad oplevelse og erfaring *bør være*, før det *tæller som religion* og derved er kvalificeret til at blive studeret religionsvidenskabeligt.

Denne artikel vil analysere og diskutere oplevelser, som opfylder definerende strukturer og kvaliteter for religiøs erfaring, men som er oplevelser *udenfor* rammen af etablerede, religiøse traditioner, for på denne baggrund at tydeliggøre hvorledes vores begreber og definitioner ikke længere passer på fremtrædelserne foran os.

Denne artikel ønsker at oprøre en tvivl hos læseren om, *hvad der tæller som religiøs erfaring*. Jeg vil argumentere for, at religionsvidenskaben skal inddrage fænomenologisk teori og metode i studiet af menneskets oplevelser. Jeg vil også argumentere for, at religionsvidenskaben skal rette fokus mod psykedeliske substanser som studieobjekt og slutte sig til den voksende bølge af forskning på dette område.

Alt dette vil jeg udføre gennem 1) et nærmere kig på fænomenologien og dens mulige bidrag til religionsforskningen, 2) et kig på tilgangene til studiet af religiøs erfaring indtil nu, 3) en gennemgang af forskningshistorien i psykedeliske stoffer, dens iboende relation til religionsvidenskaben og dens eksplasive renæssance netop nu, 4) små fænomenologiske analyser af individers oplevel-

ser og 5) en diskussion og kritik af en religionsforskers nuværende begreber for, og kategoriseringer, af ”disse slags oplevelser”. De små analyser fungerer også som inspiration og opfordring til videre fænomenologisk forskning på området.

Af hensyn til sproglig simplificering, vil jeg herfra referere til begreberne mystiske, psykedeliske, religiøse og vertikale oplevelser som hhv. MO, PO, RO og VO.

FÆNOMENOLOGI V. RELIGIONSFÆNOMENOLOGI

Fænomenologi er *ikke* religionsfænomenologi, lad os slå dette fast én gang for alle. Religionsfænomenologien var en retning i starten af forrige århundrede udformet af Chantepie de la Saussaye, Rudolf Otto, Mircea Eliade og Gerard van der Leeuw. Fænomenologien er en kontinentalfilosofisk retning etableret af Edmund Husserl og videreført af bl.a. Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty og i dag af bl.a. Dan Zahavi og Anthony Steinbock. Fænomenologien er ”et forsøg på en umiddelbar beskrivelse af vor oplevelse, som den er”,¹ eller rettere, oplevelsens *givethed*, den måde den *fremtræder* på.² Fænomenologien tillader os, at gå hinsides vores kategorisering af oplevelsen (fx religiøs, mystisk, psykedelisk) og studere dens fænomenale grundstrukturer og -kvaliteter. Fænomenologi muliggør en suspendering af begrebslige forudsætninger,³ hvilket muliggør, som jeg vil eksemplificere med egne små analyser, et fænomenologisk studie af menneskets oplevelser *i og udenfor* etablerede religiøse miljøer (jf. psykedeliske).

Fænomenologien har været og er stadig genstand for kritik. En hyppig kritik, ytret bl.a. af religionsforsker Lars Albinus,⁴ er fx, at fænomenologien er essentialiserende. Ja, den er jo ”studiet af essenserne”, som Merleau-Ponty slår fast⁵ — men det er vigtigt at bemærke, at fænomenologien er *epistemologisk* essentialistisk, ikke

¹Merleau-Ponty 2009, s. VII.

²Zahavi 2010, s. 39 & Steinbock 2007, s. 2.

³*epoché*, jf. Zahavi 2010, s. 41.

⁴Albinus 2005, s. 21, 22, 28.

⁵Merleau-Ponty 2009, s. VII.

ontologisk essentialistisk! Det centrale begreb *eidetisk variation* handler netop om, at rense oplevelsen for de ikke-essentielle kvaliteter, for derved at nå en ”kerne” af essens (græsk, *eidos*) — dét som ikke kan ændres og som gør fænomenet til netop dét fænomen.⁶ Men kritikere forvirrer ofte dette epistemologiske udgangspunkt med et ontologisk slutpunkt, fx Albinus, der sammenligner fænomenologiens studieobjekt med meteorologens vejrfænomener.⁷ Fænomenologien tilfører ikke ontologisk autoritet til en ”objektiv verden dérude”, om noget er den en kritik af dette *indre/ydre-skel*; se blot Heideggers centrale begreb *Dasein* (tilværelsen), som han understreger ikke kan beskrives *indre/ydre-dualistisk*, men skal forstås som en allerede integreret *i-verden-væren*.⁸

På samme måde er fænomenologien heller ikke en introspektiv psykologisk disciplin, en subjektiv følen-efter, som udenforstående ofte sidestiller den med.⁹

FORSKNING I RELIGIØS ERFARING, INDTIL NU

For denne artikels kontekst kan vi passende starte vores forskningshistoriske tilbageblick hos den amerikanske psykolog William James (1842–1910), der i 1902 udgiver bogen *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. I denne psykologiske afdækning af oplevelser kategoriseret som religiøse eller mystiske, finder vi faktisk allerede fænomenologiske tendenser, særligt i hans *four marks (ineffability, noetic quality, transciency, passivity)*, ved hvilke han mente, at en religiøs erfaring kunne bestemmes.¹⁰ Den britiske filosof Walter Stace (1886–1967) uddyber herpå, et halvt århundrede senere i *Mysticism and Philosophy* fra 1961. Der har været lignende forsøg på filosofiske kategoriseringer af religiøs erfaring i anden halvdel af sidste århundrede, dog alle med en tiltagende kritik af Stace.¹¹ Parallelt finder vi Rudolf Otto og Mircea Eliade, der, med vær-

⁶Zahavi 2010, s. 46–7.

⁷Albinus 2005, s. 23.

⁸Zahavi 2010, s. 178–9.

⁹Ibid., s. 38, 42, 158, 176.

¹⁰James 1963, s. 380–2.

¹¹Pike, Zaehner, Wainwright, se Gellman 2014.

ker som *Das Heilige* fra 1917 og *Das Heilige und das Profane* fra 1957, anlægger en ahistorisk og ikke-reducerbar tilgang til religiøs erfaring og oplevelsers fremtrædelse. To særskilte tilgange har således domineret forskningshistorien over studiet af individets religiøse erfaring. Vi kunne kalde disse to for den essentialistiske og den konstruktivistiske, eller, som den amerikanske religionsforsker ved UCSB Ann Taves kalder dem, hhv. *the sui generis model and the ascription model*.¹² Kendetegnende for den essentialistiske *sui generis*-tilgang er Otto og Eliade og religionsfænomenologien som sådan. Kendetegnende for den modsatte er William James, Émile Durkheim (gennem den sociale konstruktion af *det sakrale*) og Stace bl.a.¹³ Disse lægger, modsat Otto og Eliade, vægt på den sociale, kulturelle og historiske konstruktion af oplevelser og deres fortolkning. Selvsagt har denne tilgang vundet frem under det poststrukturalistiske paradigme med dets stærke diskursive fokus. Det er således svært i dag at finde religionsforskere, der operer med *sui generis*-tilgangen til religiøs erfaring, mens forskere som Ann Taves, i den mere konstruktivistiske ånd, bidrager til vores forståelse af de historiske og sociale processer, der fungerer i kategoriseringen af erfaring som specifikt religiøst.¹⁴

Det er som en middelvej, at fænomenologien kan indskrive sig i religionsvidenskaben — som en disciplin, der både kan kortlægge de førrefleksive strukturer i oplevelsers fremtrædelses og samtidig være med til at afdække de efterrefleksive processer, der transformerer mennesker og tilskriver oplevelser religiøs/mystisk/spirituel/psykedelisk karakter. Et eksempel på dette er fænomenologen Anthony Steinbocks arbejde, samt mine egne små analyser som videreudvikling, som snarligt følger. Et yderligere eksempel findes ved Taves, som jeg giver i artiklens afsluttende bemærkninger.

¹²Taves 2009, s. 17–8 — for detaljeret liste over de metodiske forskelle mellem de to tilgange, se tabel 1.1 s. 18.

¹³Ibid., s. 16.

¹⁴se Taves 2009 og Taves' *Rereading Varieties of Religious Experience in Transatlantic Perspective*.

FORSKNING I PSYKEDELIA — I GÅR OG I DAG

Ordet *psykedelisk* opfandt den britiske psykiater Humphrey Osmond i en brevudveksling med forfatteren Aldous Huxley, til hvem han fire år forinden havde introduceret stoffet meskalin (eller *peyote*). Ordet er en sammensætning af det græske *psyche* for sind/sjæl og *delos* for afslørende/manifesterende. Således betyder *psykedelisk* "sindsmanifesterende".¹⁵

Mødet mellem psykedeliske substanser og religion er ikke nyt. Deres forhold ses fx i den religiøse brug af ayahuasca (dets aktive stof DMT), psilocybinsvampe og peyote i hhv. sydamerikanske stammer og nordamerikansk/mexicansk indianerkultur.¹⁶ I *Varieties of Religious Experience* selveksperimenterer William James med kvælstofforilte (eller "lattergas") i et forsøg på at inducere oplevelser af religiøs karakter¹⁷ og fra midten af 1940'erne fremstilles og klassificeres de fleste af de substanser, vi i daglig tale kalder *psykedeliske* — blandt de mest kendte er LSD, psilocybin, DMT, meskalin og ketamin.

I 1966 udgiver R.E.L Masters og Jean Houston det tydeligt James-inspireret forsøg på klassifikation af PO kaldet *The Varieties of Psychedelic Experience*, og fra halvtredserne til firserne foretages der psykiatriske studier af psykedeliske stoffers anvendelighed i behandlingssammenhæng, primært i USA og bl.a. af den tjekkiske psykiater Stanislav Grof, der i 1975 udgiver *Realms of the Human Unconscious: Observations from LSD Research*. Han udarbejder i starten af firserne et firebindsværk, med kapitler dedikeret til religiøs erfaring reduceret gennem psykedeliske substanser, kaldet *The Adventure of Self-Exploration*.

Sideløbende sker en tiltagende folkelig eksperimenteren, bl.a. ved fornævnte Aldous Huxley (1894–1963), der i 1954 udgiver *The Doors of Perception*, hvori han beskriver selvsamme meskalinoplevelse, som Humphrey Osmond havde givet ham, og reflekterer over de religiøse konsekvenser af og muligheder heraf.¹⁸ Lidt

¹⁵Pollan 2015.

¹⁶Masters & Houston 1966, s. 28.

¹⁷James 1963, s. 387–9

¹⁸Huxley 1968, s. 13, 18–9, 29, 32, 37, 43, 45.

senere forsøger den britiske filosof Alan Watts samme, og udgiver i 1962 *The Joyous Cosmology*, der indeholder et essay ved navn *Psychedelics and Religious Experience*, hvori Watts bl.a. belyser de filosofiske årsager til organiserede religioners modstand mod psykedelisk induceret religiøs erfaring og brugen af psykedeliske stoffer generelt.¹⁹ En position jeg senere vil vise har sneget sig ind i religionsvidenskaben og som lever, i det skjulte, i bedste velgående.

I dag er forskningen endeligt ved at ryste sig løs af de politiske, juridiske og kulturelle lænker, der kriminaliserede, og således forhindrede, forskningen fra 60'erne og frem.²⁰

En tværfaglig, forskningsmæssig opblomstring i studiet af psykedeliske stoffer finder sted netop nu og er blevet kaldt et paradigme skift af Dr. Matthew Johnson fra John Hopkins University, som bl.a. står bag et forskningsprojekt (efterår 2015), hvis resultat er et spørgeskema (MEQ30), der afstemmer intensiteten af individers psykedelisk inducede MO og som samtidig verificerer den tætte sammenhæng mellem intense PO-inducede MO og varige, positive effereffekter.²¹ MEQ30 definerer MO ved tilstedeværelsen af netop de samme grundstrukturer og -kvaliteter, jeg i denne artikel vil afdække.

I foråret 2016, for første gang på dansk jord, begynder på Rigshospitalets Neurocenter forsøg med psykedeliske stoffer, dette med formålet at kortlægge psilocybins effekter i hjernen — forsøg der blev foretaget i USA i 2011 og i England i 2014.²²

Et nyere eksempel er de nyligt offentliggjorte og banebrydende forskningsresultater fra kognitive studier af effekter på hjernen ved indtagelse af 75 mikrogram LSD, et forsøg udført ved Imperial College London i vinteren 2015/16. Forsøget, som er det første kognitive realeids-studie af effekten af LSD på hjernen til dato, peger på følgende: "decreased connectivity between the parahippocam-

¹⁹Watts 2013, s. 107–113.

²⁰For et bredt udvalg af eksempler på denne udvikling, se Cormier 2016, Speth 2016, Weller 2015, Carhart-Harris 2016 I, II, III, MacLean 2011, Boult 2015, Wong 2016, Pollan 2015, Sample 2016.

²¹Barrett, Johnson & Griffiths 2015.

²²Christiansen 2015.

pus and retrosplenial cortex (RSC) correlated strongly with ratings of ‘ego-dissolution’ and ‘altered meaning,’ implying the importance of this particular circuit for the maintenance of ‘self’ or ‘ego’ and its processing of ‘meaning’”²³ — fund der bekræfter kognitivt den fænomenologiske relation mellem psykedelisk-inducerede oplevelser og religiøs erfaring såsom *enhedsoplevelser*, *egodød*, *transformation af i-verden-væren* (og som er eksemplificeret i mine små analyser af PO som følger snarligt). Carhart-Harris uddyber i The Guardians artikeldækning af forskningsresultaterne, at “this experience is sometimes framed in a religious or spiritual way, and seems to be associated with improvements in wellbeing after the drug’s effects have subsided.”²⁴ Fremtidige tværdisciplinære studier — fænomenologien, religionshistorien og kognitionsvidenskaben i mellem — ville således åbenlyst være, at studere de både før- og efterrefleksive processer der gør, at *disse oplevelser af sindet som manifesteret kategoriseres som enten religiøs, mystisk eller psykedelisk*.

Grof skriver i 1975, at “the capacity of psychedelic drugs to exteriorise otherwise invisible phenomena and make them the subject of scientific investigation gives these substances a unique potential as research tools for the exploration of the human mind”.²⁵ Trods at fyrré år er gået, forekommer dette udsagn stadig aktuelt og særdeles rammende for lige præcis den rolle, psykedeliske stoffer kan spille i religionsvidenskaben, ved fænomenologiske og kognitive studier især. Psykedeliske stoffer er simpelthen et *sindsmantesterende redskab*, der gør det muligt for forskere at studere de typer af oplevelser, der gennem flere tusinde år er blevet kaldt mystiske, religiøse, åbenbarende etc. og som er en hjørnesten af religionshistoriens grundlag, men som indtil nu kun har været tilgængelige via skrift, pergament og diskursanalyse. Denne *realtids vending mod de indre landskaber* er derfor banebrydende i måden, hvorpå vi kan studere vertikal erfaring (religiøs, mystisk, åbenbarisk, psykedelisk) — *mens det finder sted!*

Den fremadstormende forskningsrevolution indenfor psykedeliske substanser vil uundgåeligt resultere i, at disse typer op-

²³Carhart-Harris 2016, abstract.

²⁴Sample 2016.

²⁵Carhart-Harris 2016 II.

levelser vil optræde meget hyppigere blandt mennesker *udenfor etablerede religiøse traditioner og institutioner*, hvorfor det er religionsvidenskabens ansvar at udvide sin forskning og dertilhørende begrebskategorier for at omfavne disse strømninger. Hertil hører det også, at videnskaben har et ansvar for at være rollemodel ift. brugen af disse substanser, som Carhart-Harris siger:

The key point is that these are not party drugs, they're incredibly powerful substances that should be treated with respects, as they have been by certain cultures for hundreds if not thousands of years.²⁶

It's also important to emphasise that when we give psychedelics to patients, we do so with full legal and ethical approval and we simply don't tell them to chuck a bunch of magic mushrooms down there necks and hope for the best.²⁷

I think it's important that I emphasize to you, especially to those of you who are naive to the effects of psychedelics, that an experience with one of these drugs can be among the most profound of the whole of your lives. The evidence suggest that in terms of meaningfulness it can be up there with pretty much anything; facing death, falling in love or bringing in new life.²⁸

DE SMÅ ANALYSER:

EKSEMPLER PÅ FÆNOMENOLOGISK METODE ANVENDT I RELIGIONSVIDENSKABEN

Et eksempel på et fænomenologisk studie af religiøs erfaring er dem, som er blevet foretaget af den amerikanske filosof og fænomenolog Anthony Steinbock. Men hans studie af tre mystikeres oplevelser indenfor hhv. kristendommen, jødedommen og islam og hans dertilhørende begrebsdefinition af MO, tydeliggør samtidig de fornævnte begrebsproblematikker. Dette vil jeg afdække snarligt.

²⁶Ibid..

²⁷Ibid..

²⁸Ibid..

Én af disse tre mystikere — den kristne St. Teresa af Avila — samt Steinbocks analyse heraf, har jeg valgt at bearbejde og sammenligne med fem PO-cases. Det er St. Teresas rå og direkte beskrivende form af sine MO, der gør hende særlig relevant for denne opgave, og som også er Steinbocks begrundelse for valg af kilde.²⁹ Det gør sammenligningsgrundlaget med MO stærkere, da disse består af fem forskellige cases, superviseret af den tjekkiske psykiater Stanislav Grof, hvori lægfolk beskriver, i rå og direkte form, deres psykedelisk inducede erfaringer.

Steinbock slår fast, at hans MO-definition ikke forsøg- er at favne alle spirituelle traditioner i verden.³⁰ Mit udgangspunkt er ikke at bryde med Steinbocks specifikke abrahamske MO-definition for en mere perennialistisk definition, der kan omfavne alle verdens spirituelle oplevelser, *indenfor* rammen af religiøse traditioner. Mit udgangspunkt er rettere at analysere, sammenligne og diskutere typer af oplevelser, der rent faktisk opfylder alle Steinbocks definerende strukturer og kvaliteter for MO, men som er oplevelser *udenfor* rammen af etablerede, religiøse traditioner — jf. lægfolk i kliniske sessionsforhold hos Grof. På baggrund heraf vil jeg slutteligt diskutere om begrebsafgrænsningerne, som Steinbock opsætter, holder vand.

I sin begrebsdefinition benytter Steinbock sig af begrebet *vertikalitet* til at betegne den grundlæggende struktur i MO. Lad os redegøre for begrebet her. *Vertikalitet*, ifølge Steinbock, beskriver en *opadgående målrettethed* og denoterer de typer af oplevelser, der har sine egne strukturer, egne beviser og egne former for givethed. *Vertikalitet* konnoterer *dynamik*, *orientering*, *bevægelse* og fremkalder *ærefrygt* og *forundring* og flytter mennesket *hinsides sig selv*. Steinbock bruger udtrykket i stedet for *transcendens*, pga. dets mange associationer, og ender med at bruge begrebet VO som et paraplybegreb, hvorunder både RO og MO hører hjemme. Jeg vil i artiklens s del diskutere, hvor PO passer ind i denne begrebslige optegning.³¹

Jeg vil benytte mig af Steinbocks VO-kategori som en pa-

²⁹Steinbock 2007, s. 50, 51.

³⁰Ibid., s. 24.

³¹Ibid., s. 12–5.

raplykategori, hvorunder MO og PO begge kan indgå. De små fænomenologiske analyser af MO og PO, som nu følger, har til formål, at eksemplificere hvorledes den nye fænomenologiske religionsvidenskab kan tage sin konkrete form, samt tydeliggøre de skævvredne og hullede kategorier, vi arbejder med.

ANALYSE AF MO

Steinbock redegør og analyserer for St. Teresas *fire typer bøn*, som skal forstås som fire forskellige, men sammenhængende MO.³² De fire bønner kalder St. Teresa for henh. *erhvervet bøn, stihildebøn, suspenderet bøn* og *guddommelig enhed*.³³ Den første oplevelse har sit navn netop efter dét, at tilstanden kan *erhverves* ved egen bedrift. De næste tre karakteriseres som *infuserede*, dvs. oplevelser, der er hinsides individets kontrol, altså *infuseret* med noget *andet* end individets egen indsats.³⁴ Deres fænomenale kvaliteter rangerer gradvist fra *hårdt arbejde, trættende* og *alene* i erhvervet bøn,³⁵ at intellektet lader sig styre gennem *kærlighed fra Gud* med *fred, indvendig ro* i stihildebøn,³⁶ at individet *overflydes* af *Guds tilstedeværelse*, hvor sindet er sat ud af spil og sjælen er ved at forlade kroppen i øjeblikke af *intens glæde* i suspenderet bøn³⁷ og slutteligt til oplevelsen af at *dåne/besvime*, en *glemsel af selvet* og dyb *stilhed i sanserne*, Guds tilstedeværelse i alle ting, ubeskrivelighed og uforståelighed, “an understanding which understands not”, dog med en dyb bevidsthed om at man *intet selv kan gøre* i den kulminerende guddommelige enhed.³⁸

Hvad er de væsentligste strukturer, som Steinbock afdækker i sin MO-analyse? For det første påviser han en *intensivering af vertikaliteten* som grundstruktur i MO.

³²Ibid., s. 55.

³³St. Teresa 1975, s. 58–65 & Steinbock 2007, s. 56, 57, 60, 62.

³⁴St. Teresa 1975, s. 83–4, 88–9, 90, 91.

³⁵Ibid., s. 66, 74.

³⁶Ibid., s. 83, 88.

³⁷Ibid., s. 96, 97, 101.

³⁸St. Teresa 1975, s. 108–9, 110 & Steinbock 2007, s. 63, 64.

Vi går fra erhvervet bøn, hvor individets oplevelser er proportionelle med egne bedrifter, mod en stejlere og stejlere *vertikal* struktur i infuseret bøn, hvor individet oplever at være *uden kontrol, i selvtranscendens og ekstase, i enhed* med en *inter-Personlig-tilstedeværelse*, der både i og efter oplevelsen ændrer individets *selv- og verdensforhold* radikalt, og som i dets kulminerende fase og efterfølgende forekommer *sprogligt ubeskrivelig* og *intellektuelt uforståelig*.³⁹ Bemærk denne differentiering mellem *bedrift* og *inducering*: hvad der kan fremprovokeres af individet ved egen indsats og hvad der er hinsides individets kontrol og som hos St. Teresa opleves som en *forbarmelse* og *nådegave*.⁴⁰ Dette er et definerende skel hos Steinbock og St. Teresa, som vil spille en central rolle i begrebsdiskussionen- og kritikken.

For det andet viser Steinbock, at MO har en anderledes givethed end *præsentation* — en givethed han kalder *åbenbarings-givethed*. MO, mener Steinbock, er VO, fordi de åbenbarer *det Hellige i en inter-Personlig-tilstedeværelse* med individet.⁴¹

For det tredje defineres denne *inter-Personlige- tilstedeværelse* som den særlige intime tilstedeværelse af en absolut, ikke-reducerbar og almægtig intelligens. For St. Teresa ses denne *inter-Personlige-tilstedeværelse* i den intime enhed/ekstase mellem sjælen og Gud, individet og Herren, og som er kendetegnet ved *kærlighed*.⁴² Bemærk også, at det kun er gennem denne slags intervention, hvori det Hellige åbenbarer sig, at individet kan flyttes hinsides sig selv — det er umuligt ved egen indsats/bedrift.⁴³

For det fjerde skelner Steinbock mellem oplevelsens grundlæggende *positive* og *negative effekter*. Er oplevelsen overvejende *positiv*, er den ægte, er den *negativ*, er den falsk?⁴⁴ Uddybende kan oplevelsen testes ud fra dens *klarhed* (*muffled* ord fra sindet vs. ord af *unmistakable clarity* fra Gud), *magt*, *dybde* (at føle på kroppens overflade vs. helt ind i ens knogler), *hinsideshed* (*fra-et-andet-sted*-

³⁹Steinbock 2007, s. 12–5 & St. Teresa 1975, s. 58, 65, 70, 84, 88, 146.

⁴⁰Steinbock 2007, s. 61.

⁴¹Ibid., s. 15.

⁴²Steinbock 2007, s. 59 & St. Teresa 1975, s. 90.

⁴³St. Teresa 1975, s. 90 & Steinbock 2007, s. 58–59.

⁴⁴Steinbock 2007, s. 31, 121, 122.

kvalitet og hinsides individets kapacitet og kontrol), *pludselighed* og *fuldhed* (oplevelsen er ikke *manglende* eller *aventende*, men *absolut* og *total*), samt om individet fremstår *hypernormal* efterfølgende modsat *normal* eller derunder, som er tilfældet ved bl.a. psykoser eller skizofreni.⁴⁵

Efter kort at have opsummeret Steinbocks analyse af St. Teresas MO, vil jeg nu uddybe med egne fænomenologiske analyser. Analysen vil jeg basere på hendes uddybende beskrivelser af *ekstase* og *enhed*. Hvorfor netop disse beskrivelser? Da Steinbocks analyse har været bred og omfavnende alle fire bønner, er det nu på tide at dykke dybere ned i den kulminerende fase, den fjerde bøn, hvor oplevelserne antager den *højeste grad af vertikalitet*. Det er på disse tinder, at vi finder de mest fremtrædende og karakteristiske elementer af vertikal erfaring.

ENHED OG EKSTASE I MO

Selvom at St. Teresa skelner mellem *enhed* og *ekstase* som forskellige oplevelser,⁴⁶ må vi forstå, at det er to aspekter af samme kulminrende fase, som hun kalder fjerde bøn eller *guddommelig enhed*, og som har mange overlappende kvaliteter.

Enhed opleves indledende som, at individet holder op med at *trække vejret* og at dets *kropsstyrke svinder*; det kan *ikke bevæge* sine hænder, *øjne lukker ufrivilligt*, *kan ikke tale/beskrive*.⁴⁷ St. Teresa bemærker også, at oplevelsen ofte indtræffer efter *lang mental bøn* og at den opleves som *kortvarig* (at en halv time ville være lang tid) og at *hun aldrig har været i tilstanden længere end dét*. Hun beskriver også hvorledes individet ikke er bevidst om tiden, mens det befinner sig i *enheden*.⁴⁸

St. Teresa beskriver enhedsoplevelsens kvaliteter som en *smerteligt længsel efter Gud* og herefter *pludselig ekstase* med dyb bevidsthed om at man *intet selv kan gøre*, samt en følelse af "elendighed mod

⁴⁵Ibid., s. 117–8.

⁴⁶St. Teresa 1975, s. 119

⁴⁷Ibid., s. 108–9.

⁴⁸Ibid..

alle, der ikke har rettet deres opmærksomhed mod Gud på denne måde”.⁴⁹ *Ekstasen*, affødt af *enheden*, beskrives som *ophøjelse/flugt af sjælen*, der sker *pludseligt* og uden mulighed for *at gøre modstand*.⁵⁰ Det er her at beskrivelserne af *enhed* overlapper med *ekstase*, som St. Teresa uddyber i følgende citat.

You realize, I repeat, and indeed see, that you are being carried away, you know not whither [...] My soul has been borne away, and indeed as a rule my head also, without my being able to prevent it: sometimes my whole body has been affected, to the point of being raised up from the ground.⁵¹

Lad os først se på anden halvdel af beskrivelsen, for her introduceres en interessant fænomenal differentiering mellem *sjælen*, *hovedet* og *kroppen*, som er vigtig for resten af oplevelsens beskrivelse. St. Teresa omtaler flere gange hvorledes *sindets fakulteter* er aktive eller ej i MO. Med *sindets fakulteter* mener hun sanserne, intellektet, viljen, hukommelsen, fantasien.⁵² Altså, når individet oplever at dets *hoved* løftes, så er der tale om en oplevelse af sindet generelt. Det vil sige, at *sjælen* løftes, *sindet* påvirkes i en sådan grad at det beskrives som at blive løftet, mens *kroppen* oftest tilbagelægges på jorden, dog også oplevet som løftet af og til. Vi kan således slå fast, at der er en *oplevet adskillelse* mellem *sjæl* (og *sind*) og krop og at individet synes at opleve fra sjælens position, snarere end kroppegens.

Lad os nu se på selve strukturen. Det beskrives hvorledes individet *ser* sig selv blive løftet. Dette rejser en spændende fænomenologisk problemstilling. At *se* sig selv blive løftet modsætter sig til dels Merleau-Pontys formulering af perceptionens kropslige forankring, ”at min krop er verdens akse”,⁵³ for i oplevelsen af, at *sjælen* løftes og *kroppen* tilbagelægges og at individet perciperer løftet *væk fra kroppen*, kan vi så stadig tale om en kropsforankret perception og rumlighed?

⁴⁹Ibid., s. 63.

⁵⁰Ibid., s. 64.

⁵¹Ibid., s. 120

⁵²Ibid., s. 97, 102, 103/104, 109.

⁵³Merleau-Ponty 2009, s. 20.

Vi må fastslå, at der stadig er tale om en *rumlighed*, da et løft i sin essens er en rumlig oplevelse; at blive løftet *opad*. Men hvordan kan et individ have en oplevelse af rumlighed, der ikke er kropsforankret? Kroppen, ifølge Merleau-Ponty, er jo netop dét, der gør rumlighed mulig — at verden er rumlig er fordi individet selv befinder sig et bestemt sted i verden, og dette gør individet altid, da dens i-verden-væren er kropsligt betinget.⁵⁴

Man kan selvfølgelig indvende, at løftet i høj grad *er* kropsforankret, da løftet kun opleves som en rumlig bevægelse *i forhold* til kroppens position i rummet — kroppen forbliver således rummets akse, hvorfra sjælens bevægelse kan retningsbestemmes som *opadgående* (løft), men dette ville være fejlagtigt, da argumentet baserer sig på en *allocentrisk* rumlighedsforståelse; altså objektivt, ontologisk og uafhængigt af den *perciperendes position*. Og perceptionen sker netop ikke længere *fra* kroppen, hvis individet har en perception *af* kroppen som tilbagelagt. Vi må derfor anskue oplevelsen fra en *egocentrisk* rumlighedsforståelse⁵⁵ og således synes MO at bryde med den accepterede forståelse af kropsligt betinget rumlighed.

Men hvad så med *perceptionen*? Er der tale om samme ikke-perciperbare midte, hvorfra ting præsenteres, men at denne ikke længere er situeret bag øjnene, mellem ørene? Kroppen, siger Merleau-Ponty, udgør en permanens i og med, at den altid allerede er der for individet, som aldrig iagttager sin egen krop; "for at kunne gøre det, måtte jeg have rådighed over en anden krop, der ikke selv ville være iagttagelig".⁵⁶ Men hvad der fremtræder synes netop at være en iagttagelse af individets egen krop og synes således også at bryde med den kropsforankrede perceptionsforståelse. Dette udgør et interessant grundlag for senere fænomenologisk forskning, som bl.a. kunne tage sit afsæt i Imperial Colleges' forsøg med LSD, der bl.a. fandt at forsøgspersonerne *så med deres øjne lukkede* eller som Carhart-Harris uddyber: "We saw many more areas of the brain than normal were contributing to visual processing under LSD, even though volunteers' eyes

⁵⁴Ibid., s. 34.

⁵⁵Zahavi 2010, s. 202–3.

⁵⁶Merleau-Ponty 2009, s. 20, 33.

were closed".⁵⁷ Kan dette kognitive resultat bringe os tættere en fænomenologisk forståelse af *oplevelsen at percipere sin krop udefra*? Kan den ikke-kropsforankrede perception af den tilbageladte krop være en perception af mentale agter, en drømmelignende vision som virker gennem hjernens visuelle processeringsområder? Dette kunne være et oplagt emne for videre fænomenologisk udforskning!

Vi vil nu kaste et kort blik over *eftreffekterne* af enhed/ekstase, som først antager en kropslig dimension; *oplevelsen af kropslig lethed*, der kan vare i flere timer.⁵⁸ Ekstasens evne til at forvandle individets oplevelse af kroppen fra *erfaringsprincip* til *erfaringsgenstand* bæres med over i eftreffekterne. Den såkaldte *proprioception* eller medfødte, førrefleksive positionssans og bevidsthed om sig selv som kropslig, synes netop at flytte sig fra at være førrefleksiv til at blive nærværende og en aktiv del af det oplevede.⁵⁹ Dette kan ligeledes danne et interessant grundlag for videre fænomenologisk forskning i, hvordan vertikal erfaring forandrer individets forhold til egen krop, ikke blot sig selv, men den helt specifikke kropslige forandring fra *erfaringsprincip* til *erfaringsgenstand*.

Den anden side af eftreffekterne er det ændrede *selv- og verdensforhold*:

This becomes very evident in the little weight now given by the soul to earthly matters, which it treats as the worthless things that they are [...] How ashamed it is of the time when it was attached to everything! How amazed it is at its blindness! How it pities those who are still blind [...] It is weary of the time when it paid heed to niceties concerning its own honour [...] It laughs at itself.⁶⁰

Eftreffekten er her i den *etiske dimension*, hvor værdierne rykkes fra verdslige og materialistiske til verdensforsagende. Dog er det vigtigt at forstå, at verden ikke udelukkende afskys og tages af-

⁵⁷ Sample 2016.

⁵⁸ St. Teresa 1975, s. 125, 126.

⁵⁹ Zahavi 2010, s. 194, 197.

⁶⁰ St. Teresa 1975, s. 127, 128, 129.

stand fra, for St. Teresa beskriver også andetsteds, hvorledes disse oplevelser medfører en *stor humanitær bevidsthed*, der manifesterer sig hos individet i form af lyst og behov for at give velgørenhed og medmenneskelig tjeneste.⁶¹ Altså, de *positive* effekter af øget bevidsthed om intersubjektivitet kommer stærkt til udtryk. Vi ser også, at individets forhold til sig selv og til verden ændrer sig til et bemærkelsesværdigt *før/efter*-forhold, med MO som det liminale skæringspunkt. Individet spejler sin fortid i MO, og resultatet er en *akkommodation* af det videre liv.

ANALYSE AF PO

Modsat i analysen af MO, har vi nu seks forskellige PO-kilder. Afsnittet er derfor opdelt under de vigtigste grundstrukturer og kvaliteter, og forskellige PO-kilder bruges til at fremhæve forskellige aspekter ved disse.

KROPSLIGHED, RUMLIGHED OG TIDSLIGHED I PO

Kropslighed som grundlæggende fænomenal kvalitet i PO, synes at være fremtrædende i de indledende faser, *på-vej-op*. Det ser vi i beskrivelserne af *at rejse* gennem tid og rum,⁶² *at rejse hurtigere end lysets hastighed*,⁶³ den kropslige sansningsoplevelse af *lysets varme og stigende intensitet*⁶⁴ og oplevelsen af *at svæve over lyset*, der beskrives som *flammende, intenst*⁶⁵ eller *kraftfuld og mægtigt*.⁶⁶

Samme beskrivelser afslører også en *rumlighed* i oplevelsen, der kommer tydeligt til udtryk i netop dét, at individet oplever en bevægelse gennem et rum, at individet oplever at svæve *over lyset*, der har *en rund form som en bold*,⁶⁷ *at galakser passerer forbi* og *at nærme sig en central lyseksplosion*.⁶⁸ Og jo tættere individet kom-

⁶¹Ibid., s. 102.

⁶²PO-case II, linje 2.

⁶³PO-case III, linje 1–4.

⁶⁴Ibid., linje 4–13.

⁶⁵PO-case V, linje 1–8.

⁶⁶PO-case I, linje 31–2.

⁶⁷PO-case V, linje 1–8.

⁶⁸PO-case III, linje 13.

mer på det vertikale højdepunkt i oplevelsen, jo mere paradoksal bliver fremtrædelsen af de kropslige og rumlige kvaliteter:

Da grænsen blev transcenderet, skiftede oplevelsen dimensioner på en måde, der er vanskeligt at beskrive. I stedet for bevægelse i rum forekom der at være tale om en umådelig udvidelse af bevidstheden.⁶⁹

Proportionelt med oplevelsens *intensiverende vertikalitet* ses en tiltagende afvigelse fra veldefineret krops- og rumlighedsprincipper, hvor bevægelsen fremtræder som *uden-kropslig* og ikke gennem *rum*, men gennem *bevidsthed*.⁷⁰

Vi bevæger os nu i samme teoretiske grænseland, som vi gjorde tidligere. Merleau-Ponty minder os atter om, at rum- og kropslighed er to uadskillelige størrelser; at ”kroppen er vor generelle måde at have en verden på” og at vores kropslighed betvinger verdens specifikke rumlighed og vice versa.⁷¹ Men vi ser i beskrivelserne et skift i individets oplevede krops- og rumlighed, fra *allocentrisk* til *egocentrisk*. Som nævnt tidligere, er dette et oplagt emne for videre fænomenologisk forskning, særligt da dette *brud* synes at være typisk i både MO og PO, typisk for vertikal erfaring generelt.

Endnu en fremtrædende kvalitet i PO synes at være *forandret tidslighed*:

Denne oplevelse stilnede af efter ca. ti minutters forløb ifølge uret; den transcenderede imidlertid enhver forestilling om tid og føltes som en evighed.⁷²

Vi ser en forskel på *allocentrisk tid* og *egocentrisk tid*. *Tidsbevidstheden* ikke blot ændrer sig, men træder i forgrunden, som en del af oplevelsen. Dette er en interessant fænomenologisk problemstilling, for ifølge Husserl er den fænomenale tidsbevidsthed tredelt struktureret i en *retention*, der udgør en bevidsthed om det forløbne, en *protention*, der er en bevidsthed om det kommende (skal ikke forveksles med *hukommelse* og *forventning*, der er intenderende,

⁶⁹PO-case IV, linje 28–30.

⁷⁰Ibid., linje 10–2.

⁷¹Merleau-Ponty 2009, s. 102.

⁷²PO-case I, linje 43–6.

mentale akter) og som til sammen konstituerer en *urimpression*, bevidstheden om et afgrænset *nu*. Tidsbevidstheden er ikke bare tredelt opbygget, den er også en *automatisk proces*, tilstede i enhver oplevelse og endnu vigtigere, den indeholder ikke selv en tidslig udstrækning.⁷³

Men hvad vi bemærker i PO er for det første, at tidsbevidstheden træder frem fra at være en førrefleksiv, automatisk proces til at blive en oplevet kvalitet. For det andet, at tidsbevidstheden synes at antage en *tidslighed* i sig selv, da dét at være bevidst om at opleve tiden som enten *evig* eller *stoppet*,⁷⁴ forudsætter et tids-*løst* punkt, hvorfra individet perciperer tiden i sig selv, som et *oplevelsesobjekt*. Samtidig forudsætter den fænomenale bevidsthed om *evig/stoppet tid* en kontrast i *ikke-evig/ikke-stoppet tid*, som gør oplevelsen mulig at identificere som netop det modsatte (tiden er stoppet, ved jeg, fordi den plejer at være ikke-stoppet). Altså, at opleve tiden som *evig* eller *stoppet* er et brud på den tredelte tidsbevidsthedsstruktur og synes at gøre *urimpressionen* til en ikke-afgrænset størrelse; en uendelig fase af *nu*, hvor individet oplever at øjeblikket enten varer *evigt* eller er *stoppet*, en “concentration in the present”, som Alan Watts formulerer det i sine sprogligt rige beskrivelser af PO.⁷⁵

VERTIKALITET OG ÅBENBARING AF INTER-PERSONLIG- TIL- STEDEVÆRELSE I PO

Vi skal nu se på grundstrukturen i PO, og det vil hurtigt blive tydeligt, at den er *vertikal*, som dén vi støttede på i MO ovenfor. Vi skal også belyse *hvordan* oplevelsen gives til individet og *hvilken art* fremtrædelsen af det vertikale antager. Af hensyn til klarhed er afsnittet opdelt herefter, men det skal understreges, at disse forskellige dimensioner forekommer mere eller mindre simultant i PO.

I overgangen til en højere vertikal struktur ser vi indledende, at individet oplever en *udvidelse af bevidstheden*;⁷⁶ en oplevelse af at

⁷³Zahavi 2010, s. 112, 121, 124.

⁷⁴PO-case IV, linje 30–4.

⁷⁵Watts 2013, s. 101.

⁷⁶PO-case III, linje 1.

sindet påvirkes og ændrer sin egen fremtrædelse overfor individet. Vi ser *intensivering* af vertikaliteten ifm. *lyssets varme*, der antager *utrolige proportioner*, i stigende grad, *lyssets intensitet*⁷⁷ og i lyden der bliver *højere og højere*.⁷⁸ Både i oplevelsens kvaliteter og i dens opbygning kommer den vertikale struktur således til udtryk.

Bevægelsen blev hurtigere og hurtigere, indtil den nåede det, der syntes at være en eller anden absolut grænse [...] Vi følte alle, at det var muligt at gå hinsides denne grænse, men at resultatet ville være absolut uforudsigligt og potentiel farligt. I en yderst eventyrlysten ånd [...] besluttede vi os til at gå videre og konfrontere det ukendte.⁷⁹

I ovenstående citat ser vi tydeligheden af den *intensiverende vertikalitet* og at individet selv er klar over denne grundstruktur. Vi har altså med en *oplevet vertikalitet* at gøre, fremfor en refleksiv efterrationalisering; at oplevelsen bliver stejlere og stejlere, at individet oplever at nå *det højeste, endelige mål, kilden*.⁸⁰ Vi ser også vertikalitten fremtræde gennem de oplevede kvaliteter, fx i identificeringen med *rav* og dernæst *diamant*⁸¹ — en oplevet proces fra lavere mod højere vertikale kvaliteter, såsom *essens, skabt under højt tryk, intens varme, lysspektrum*, altså at de materielle kvaliteter sidestilles med *oplevede tilstande*.⁸² Den vertikale grundstruktur og dens iboende intensivering forudsætter også en tinde, et *peak*, en kulmination. Vi så i ovenstående citat en intensivering ledende op til kulmination, der beskrives som *en absolut grænse*, at gå hinsides denne grænse og en *konfrontation af det ukendte*, der er *absolut forudsigligt og potentiel farligt*. Men hvad er dét? Og hvordan gives det?

Givetheden af PO kan identificeres med *åbenbarings-givethed*, som formuleret af Steinbock. Tåge letter og der opleves en pludselig *klarhed*, som opleves som kontrast til *misforståelser, fordringninger, illusioner*.⁸³ Individet oplever en *øjeblikkelig, ikke-sproglig erkendelse*, som er en definerende kvalitet for *åbenbarings-givethed* og som er højest

⁷⁷PO-case III, linje 9–10.

⁷⁸PO-case V, 3.

⁷⁹PO-case IV, linje 22–27.

⁸⁰PO-case IV, linje 53–4.

⁸¹PO-case IV, linje 35–41.

⁸²PO-case IV, linje 42–4.

⁸³PO-case V, linje 1–3.

irrationel og førrefleksiv — en *jeg følte, jeg forstod*-erkendelse,⁸⁴ som er typisk åbenbarisk i sin givethed.

Jeg fik at vide – ikke gennem sproget, men gennem medfødt erkendelse – at denne brølende ekspllosion var selve livet.⁸⁵

Denne *absolutte* givethed har således samme *vertikalitet* over sig som Steinbock formulerer for *åbenbaring*; der induceres i individet en erkendelse af vertikale proportioner, som individet aldrig ville kunne nå frem til selv og som har sin egen bevisførelse ifm. ægtheden af oplevelsen. Det er mødet med noget andet, noget yderst vertikalt, der lader individet *få at vide* disse metafysiske sandheder. I brugen af Steinbocks begreb om *åbenbaring* som fænomenal givethed på PO og anden vertikal erfaring, er det vigtigt at være kritisk, bl.a. overfor de mulige konnotationer begrebet indeholder til til abrahamske religiøse traditioner (jødedommen, kristendommen og islam). Strukturerne af denne særlige givethed finder vi både i MO og PO, og man kunne derfor indvende her, at *åbenbaring* som navn til denne form for vertikale erfарings givethed, er højst begrænsende. Samme kritik kan rettes mod begrebet af den *inter-Personlige-tilstedeværelse*. Jeg skal ikke her foreslå ny terminologi, så jeg vil blot bemærke begrebernes aktuelle mangel på inklusivitet overfor anden vertikal erfaring end specifikt, vestlig religiøs.

Åbenbarings-givetheden hænger uadskilleligt sammen med dét, som gives gennem åbenbaring og som vi kan identificere som en *inter-Personlig-tilstedeværelse*. Denne har ikke altid en kropslig og kønslig fremtrædelse, fx ifm. beskrivelser som *ren bevidsthed, hin-sides tid og rum*⁸⁶ eller *guddommeligt lys af overnaturlig glans og skønhed*,⁸⁷ men er i høj grad en *inter-Personlig-tilstedeværelse* ved dens særlige *intimitet og målrettethed* mod det oplevende individ. Dette ser vi fx i fremtrædelsen af et *endnu mere strålende lys*, der *indoptager* individet og som, trods at det er *abstrakt* (og altså ikke kropsligt/kønsligt defineret), indeholder *personlige træk* og en *uendelig intelligens*, som individet genkender som *Det Universelle*

⁸⁴PO-case IV, linje 44.

⁸⁵PO-case V, linje 9–10.

⁸⁶PO-case IV, linje 47–9.

⁸⁷PO-case I, linje 31–2.

*Selv/Brahman.*⁸⁸

Den *inter-Personlige-tilstedeværelse* antager også en absolut tilstedeværelse i form af guddomme, som fx hinduguden *Shiva*, der er målrettet individet ifm. gudens *tordenlignende tryk*, fra hans *enorme fod*, der *knuser* og *sprænger* individet i *stumper* og *stykker*.⁸⁹ Eller hindugudinden *Kali*, hvor individet *tvinges* og *skubbes* til *overgivelse* gennem *uimodståelig kraft* med stor følelse af *ydmyghed*.⁹⁰

ENHED OG EKSTASE I PO

Når enhedsoplevelsen indtræffer i PO, er det altid som en kulmination, på toppen af vertikaliteten, og den er eksemplarisk for alle de grundstrukturer, vi har belyst indtil nu; *vertikalitet, åbenbarings-givethed* og *inter-Personlig-tilstedeværelse*:

Det forekom mig, at jeg momentant gik ind i selve kernen af denne kosmiske skabelses universelle smelteovn. Oplevelsen var ekstatisk og fyldte mig med en følelse af uendelig kraft. Jeg forstod pludselig princippet bag organiseringen af kosmos. Jeg var den universelle kosmiske bevidsthed.⁹¹

Vi ser vertikalitetens struktur i kulminationen, *selve kernen*, der andetsteds omtales som *den højeste kosmiske ekstase* eller *diamantbevidsthed*,⁹² at blive “én enhed med et klart formål og ingen indre modsætninger”,⁹³ som individet erfarer som en absolut metafysisk sandhed — hvad James kaldte oplevelsens “noetic quality”.⁹⁴

Vi ser *åbenbarings-givetheden* i den pludselige, ikke-sproglige erkendelse, jeg forstod pludseligt. Vi ser den *inter-Personlige-tilstedeværelse* i den intime relation, der slutteligt bliver til *enhedsoplevelsen*. Vi ser *ekstasen* som affødt af *enheden*, den vertikale kulmination.

Dens sande identitet er udelelig enhed, hinsides negativitet og dualisme af enhver art.⁹⁵

⁸⁸Ibid., linje 39–43.

⁸⁹PO-case I, 14–9 & Grof 1987, s. 170.

⁹⁰PO-case I, linje 20–30.

⁹¹PO-case III, linje 13–7.

⁹²PO-case IV, linje 44–6.

⁹³Ibid., linje 8–9.

⁹⁴James 1963, s. 380–1.

⁹⁵PO-case III, linje 22–3.

Vi ser visheden om oplevelsens *positivitet* som grundlæggende sandhed. I enheden oplever individet altså samme skel mellem *positiv* og *negativ*, *enhed* og *dualisme*, som vi fandt i St. Teresas religiøse erfaring. Der ligger dog også i enhedsoplevelsen — både i PO og MO — endnu en interessant fænomenologisk-teoretisk problemstilling, jeg ikke har berørt endnu, og den handler om *selvet*:

Jeg flød ind i denne energi som et bevidsthedspunkt uden dimensioner, fuldstændig opløst, men bevarede alligevel en eller anden fornemmelse af adskilt identitet.⁹⁶

Hvordan skal vi fænomenologisk forstå en oplevelse så paradoxal som ovenstående; en oplevelse af *enhed*, der i daglig tale ofte kaldes *egodød*, hvor individet *mister sig selv* eller *opløses fuldstændigt*, men stadig er *til stede*, som *adskilt identitet*, og kan berette om oplevelsen efterfølgende?

Dan Zahavi mener, at enhver form for bevidsthed og oplevelse har en grad af selvbevidsthed over sig og går endda så langt som at sige at “on this account, any experience that lacks a self-awareness is nonconscious.”⁹⁷ Med *nonconscious* mener Zahavi fx søvn (drømmeløs, må vi formode), hvor der ingen oplevelse er — en anti-oplevelse, så at sige. Men i *enhedsoplevelser* har vi klart med en oplevelse at gøre. Vi har endda også en klar *minhed*; det er *mig*, der oplever enheden! Altså, en førrefleksiv selvbevidsthed, som Sartre kaldte *ipseity*.⁹⁸ For ordenligt at kunne gå ind i diskussionen af problemstillingen omkring *minhed/ipseity* i enhedsoplevelser, må vi uddybe de nuværende fænomenologiske teorier om selvet — og vi skal gøre det kort, af hensyn til de små analysers længde.

De domineres af to nuværende tilgange — *det narrative selv* og *det eksperientielle selv*. I førstnævnte anskues selvet ikke som et objekt, men en *handling*, realiseret gennem ens liv, altid foranderligt og betinget af individets selvfortolkning. Selvet er altså en konstruktion. Sidstnævnte anskuer heller ikke selvet som et objekt, men heller ej blot som en narrativ konstruktion. Der argumenteres

⁹⁶PO-case IV, 50–3.

⁹⁷Zahavi 2008, s. 16.

⁹⁸Ibid., s. 21, 115.

for, at selvet er en grundlæggende struktur i oplevelser, nemlig at oplevelser altid gives i *førstepersonsperspektiv*. Dette perspektiv skal ikke forstås som et subjekt, der sidder i midten af hovedet, bag øjnene, men at oplevelser altid har en *subjektivitet*, snarere end et *subjekt*.⁹⁹

Zahavi ender med at argumentere for, at der er flere forskellige typer selvbevidsthed; at de to tilgange til selvet er komplementære, men at *det eksperientielle selv*, med dets *minimal self* (eller *minhed/ipseity*), forudsætter det *narrative* derfor er mere grundlæggende.¹⁰⁰

Hvordan kan vi anvende disse teorier på *enhed/egodød*? I enhedsoplevelsen er en klar *minhed* — en oplevelse af at det er *mig*, der mister mig selv. Hvis vi bryder med den *kantianske* forståelse af selvet, nemlig at oplevelser sker *for* et subjekt, en egopol, der er konstanten i alle oplevelser, situeret i midten af hovedet¹⁰¹ og i stedet følger Zahavi i tilslutningen til *det eksperientielle selv*, synes problemstillingen at være knap så problematisk. For hvis vores præmis for at forstå enhedsoplevelser har sin rod i en forståelse af selvet, ikke som *et subjekt*, men som en oplevelse iboende *subjektivitet*, blødgøres den hårde kontrast, der førhen syntes at være ifm. *enhed/individ, objekt/subjekt, indre/ydre*. Det er denne *subjektivitet* der konstituerer den refleksive følelse af *mig*, men ifølge den eksperientielle tilgang er der ikke et *mig*, der oplever, men blot en førrefleksiv *minhed*, som er fundamentalt integreret i bevidsthedens uendelig strøm.

Der synes på denne måde ikke at være en kontrast, men snarere en *dialektik* ifm. oplevelse af enhed. En bevægelse, parallelt med den intensiverende vertikalitet, fra *en refleksiv, snæver oplevelse af subjektivitet* til *en førrefleksiv, udvidende oplevelse af subjektivitet* (med reference til Sartres skelnen mellem *ego* og *selv*, som han gør i bl.a. *L'être et le néant* fra 1943¹⁰²) Og *en tilbagevenden til refleksiv, snæver subjektivitet* til slut; til profan, horisontal bevidsthed, der opleves i

⁹⁹Ibid., s. 104–5, 106–115, 115–132, 124.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., s. 129, 146.

¹⁰¹Ibid., s. 104.

¹⁰²Ibid., s. 115.

et nyt perspektiv og som gør formuleringer såsom *jeg oplevede at miste mig selv mulige*.

Dette er et oplagt område for videre fænomenologisk forskning — hvordan tilstande af udvidende subjektivitet (bl.a. ved inducering af LSD som påvist af Carhart-Harris¹⁰³) påvirker menneskets oplevelse af egen subjektivitet og hvordan denne afføder en transformation af ens i-verden-væren.

SELV- OG VERDENSFORHOLD I PO

Lad os slutteligt se på *eftreffekterne* og det ændrede *selv- og verdensforhold* i PO.

Alt, hvad jeg nogensinde havde troet på, alt, hvad jeg gjorde eller stræbte efter, alt, hvad der syntes at give mit liv mening, forekom pludselig fuldstændig falsk.¹⁰⁴

Vi ser, hvorledes PO bliver et tyngdepunkt, der konstituerer et *før/efter*-forhold. Som vi så i MO, så spejler individet sin fortid i de nye erkendelser og akkommoderer sit videre liv herefter. Vi ser også hvorledes oplevelsen medfører *dybtgående ændring i hele min livsfilosofi*,¹⁰⁵ hvordan det nye selv- og verdensforhold fremtræder som en sandere erkendelse, der er blevet afdækket, en *selvfølgelighed*.¹⁰⁶

Samtidig fremtræder oplevelsens kvaliteter som *positive* i beskrivelser som *velvære*,¹⁰⁷ *elsker, helt i orden, alle forenede og kærlighed, spiritualitet og fred*.¹⁰⁸ Disse kvaliteter fremtræder enten i kulminationen af PO eller som effekt, og står i stor kontrast til de indledende faser, hvor individet beskriver oplevelsen som bl.a. *forvirrende, misforståelser og fordringninger*.¹⁰⁹ Oplevelsen fremtræder førrefleksivt for individet som *sand* og *ægte* qua dens positive

¹⁰³Se s. 5 igen.

¹⁰⁴PO-case I, linje 9–10.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., linje 49.

¹⁰⁶PO-case V, linje 23–4, se også Grof 1987, s. 91, 180, 182–3.

¹⁰⁷PO-case I, linje 46.

¹⁰⁸PO-case V, linje 23–6.

¹⁰⁹PO-case V, linje 2.

kvaliteter, fx *kærlighed, klarhed, ekstatisk enhed* som metaphysiske sandheder. Oplevelsen verificeres refleksivt af individet som sand og ægte qua dens *positive* effekter, der varer ved længe efter oplevelsens afslutning.

SAMMENFATTENDE SAMMENLIGNING AF MO & PO

Vi har påvist ved fænomenologisk analyse, at MO og PO har grundlæggende fænomenale strukturer og kvaliteter til fælles: 1) *vertikal struktur*, der intensiverer, kulminerer og reducerer, 2) *åbenbarings-givethed* og 3) *inter-Personlig-tilstestedeværelse*. I vertikalitetens *kulmination* opleves 4) en *enhed* med en *inter-Personlige-tilstestedeværelse*, som afføder 5) *ekstase* hos individet og som udvider dets selvforhold, fra hvad vi har kaldt *ego* til *selv*, i en sådan grad, at det 5) varigt ændrer individets *selv- og verdensforhold*. Eftereffekterne fremtræder i et 6) *før/efter-skel* med oplevelsen som det liminale midtpunkt og de ikke-sproglige, *åbenbarings-givet* erkendelser som basis for en 7) *akkommodation* af individets videre livsførelse. Oplevelsens ægthed verificeres gennem dens 8) *positivitet*, 9) opfyldelse af kriterierne *klarhed, magt, autoritet, dybde, hinsideshed, pludselighed og fuldhed* og at individerne i både MO og PO fremstår som 10) *hypernormale*.

Således kan MO og PO have påviseligt samme fænomenale grundstrukturer og –kvaliteter.

BEGREBSDISKUSSION & -KRITIK

MO hører, ifølge Steinbock, ind under begrebet RO grundet dets *åbenbarings-givethed*. Han konkluderer, at *MO altid er RO, men at RO ikke altid er MO*.¹¹⁰ Både MO og RO hører til gengæld under paraplybegrebet VO ud fra deres *vertikale struktur*.¹¹¹

På basis af mine analyser kan jeg nu tilføje, at *PO ikke altid er MO*, men at *MO kan induceres gennem PO*. Mængden af observationer af PO, især fra Huxley, Watts og Grof, viser, at PO ikke altid er MO. Særligt Grofs klassifikationsskema, hvori han kate-

¹¹⁰Steinbock 2007, s. 24.

¹¹¹Ibid, s. 115.

goriserer observerede PO ud fra deres dominerende kvaliteter, tydeliggør, at PO fremtræder på måder, der mangler de definerende strukturer og kvaliteter for MO (*inter-Personlig-tilstestedeværelse og åbenbarings-givethed*). Det er fx oplevelser som *spontan psykokinese, healing, oplevelser som dyreånder og aneoplevelser*.¹¹² PO-case VI står samtidig i kontrast til de analyserede PO-case I-V, da den mangler de definerende strukturer og kvaliteter (*åbenbarings-givethed, inter-Personlig-tilstestedeværelse*), og fungerer således som et eksempel på, hvorledes PO ikke altid afføder MO.¹¹³

PO synes dog altid at være VO jf. Steinbock om at VO har *sin egen struktur*, konnoterer *dynamik, orientering og bevægelse*, fremkalder *ærefrygt og forundring* og flytter mennesket *hinsides sig selv*.¹¹⁴ En videre fænomenologisk udforskning af holdbarheden af disse kategorier kunne være interessant, særligt hvorvidt såkaldte psykedelisk inducede “bad trips” kan kategoriseres som vertikal erfaring, og generelt hvad den populære og flydende kategori “bad trips” egentlig beskriver for nogle oplevelser.

There are those who maintain that mystical experiences are everywhere; some even go so far as to assert “we are all mystics” ... The mystical life is not to be equated with the contemplative life because what qualifies the mystics as such are their experiences, not the fact that they engage in contemplative practices.¹¹⁵

But this does not mean that everyone is a mystic. Rather, strictly speaking, it means that mystical experiences are not within anyone’s reach because they are not correlative to our efforts in the first place.¹¹⁶

Her fremtræder den centrale tvetydighed i Steinbocks begrebsdefinition. I første del af citatet fremhæves det, at det er oplevelsen, der definerer et individ som *mystiker*, ikke deres religiøse praksisser eller *livsførelse*. Men i anden del betegner Steinbock mystikerens

¹¹²Grof 1987, s. 68–70.

¹¹³PO-case VI, særligt linje 1–13, 42–65 & 67–87.

¹¹⁴Steinbock 2007, s. 13–5.

¹¹⁵Ibid., s. 25.

¹¹⁶Ibid., s. 26.

livsførelse som en definerende betingelse for MO — MO er netop ikke tilgængelig for alle, da alle ikke *fører det liv*, der afføder MO.

One can always strive to dispose oneself to the Holy, one can always engage in rigorous spiritual exercises and try to live a “religious” life in this way, but it is not a forgone conclusion that mystical experiences will come about.¹¹⁷

Steinbock udtrykker her, at MO aldrig er garanteret, trods mystikerens *livsførelse* og at individet aldrig kan *fremprovokere* MO). Bør *livsførelse* så være en definerende betingelse for definitionen af begrebet MO, kan vi med rette indvende nu! Hvis en kristen mystiker kan have fuldstændig eksemplarisk *livsførelse* og aldrig få en MO, men en psykoterapeut uden *korrekt livsførelse* kan indtage et psykedelisk stof under kliniske sessionsforhold, der *inducerer* en MO, falsificeres *livsførelse* så ikke som forudgående betingelse for MO? Og er PO så ikke netop et bevis på, at *livsførelse* er sekundært, da MO kan *inducerer* hos lægfolk gennem PO? Det svarer Steinbock næsten selv på, når han siger, at mystikeren har sin autoritet gennem oplevelsen og ikke “from a commitment to a philosophical theory or by theorizing about the nature of God.”¹¹⁸ *Oplevelsen* giver altså mystikeren hendes autoritet, ikke den *livsførelse*, hvori oplevelsen fremtræder.

Hvorfor vægter Steinbock så *livsførelse* så højt i sin begrebsdefinition? Steinbock mener, at mystikerens *livsførelse* er eksemplarisk for MO, deres “refined character” giver mulighed for at lægfolket kan se de essentielle strukturer i MO.¹¹⁹ Men vi kan i lige så høj grad afdække noget vigtigt om de essentielle strukturer i menneskets vertikale erfaring ved netop at se på *lægfolket* (psykoterapeuter og alm. testpersoner i dette tilfælde), samt hvordan vertikale oplevelser *inducerer* gennem psykedeliske substanser, uden korrekt *livsførelse*. Det siger noget om den grundlæggende struktur i vertikal erfaring som fænomen, at det ikke er forbeholdt en elitær skares *livsstil*, men at det kan *inducerer* i alle individer gennem PO, uden for en organiseret religiøs tradition.

¹¹⁷Ibid.

¹¹⁸Ibid., s. 28.

¹¹⁹Ibid., s. 31.

Så Steinbock synes at være fanget mellem to definitive punkter, *bedrift* versus *inducering*. På den ene side mener han, at MO affødes af korrekt *bedrift/livsførelse* og at det således er uden for lægfolkets rækkevidde. På den anden side slår han fast, at MO aldrig kan fremprovokeres af individet eller garanteres som resultat af *bedrifter/livsførelse*, fordi MO *inducerer* hinsides individets kontrol.

Steinbock forsøger at komme denne faldgruppe til livs ved at påstå, at problematikken består i en forkert forståelse af *bedrift*. Det er en moderne fordom, at individet ”starter i sig selv”, mener han, for ifølge mystikerne er individet altid i et *vertikalt inter-Personligt forhold*, også selvom individet ikke oplever dette til hverdag. Endvidere giver han udtryk for, at *sekularisme* er en abstraktion fra det inter-Personlige, vertikale forhold og således er en trussel mod traditionelle religiøse forhold.¹²⁰

Det bliver tydeligt, at *bedrift/inducering*-problematikken udspringer af Steinbocks forsøg på at fastholde et teologisk værdisæt, der dikterer hvad *genuin* MO er — en beundring af mystikeres livsførelse og en fordom om, at MO skal nås via hårdt arbejde (*livsførelse*) og at man ikke kan snyde sig til den (*PO-induceret*). Får Steinbock lov til at definere en *genuin* MO, så ekskluderer det PO på baggrund af *livsførelse/bedrift*. Men ser vi til gengæld udelukkende på de fænomenale strukturer, kvaliteter og eftereffekter i MO og PO — *tilbage til oplevelsen selv*, som Husserl ville sige — så kan vi konkludere, at MO *kan induceres* gennem PO og at det at leve som en mystiker *ikke* er en definerende betingelse for MO. PO *garanterer ikke* MO, men PO *prædisponerer* individet, eller rettere *sandsynliggør* MO i tilstrækkelig grad til, at vi kan konkludere, at individet *kan* fremprovokere MO ved egen indsats, gennem indtagelse af psykedeliske substanser. Altså, at både MO og PO (som midlertidige kategorier) kan være fænomenologisk samme form for vertikal erfaring.

Det er mit personlige håb, at de små analyser kan være til inspiration og opfordring til nye studiemetoder i religionsvidenska-

¹²⁰Ibid., s. 144–5.

ben. Af forslag til videre forskning, udover dem jeg har bemærket undervejs i artiklen og analyserne, er bl.a. studier af *overgangen* mellem horisontal og vertikal erfaring, de liminale faser mellem profane og sakrale oplevelser, for bedre at forstå bevidsthedens underliggende strukturer i disse bevægelser.

MOD DE INDRE LANDSKABER

Afkriminaliseringen og reetableringen af forskningen i psykedeliske substanser har potentiale til at være en snebold, der får lavinen til rulle — et begyndende skred mod *de indre landskaber*. Hvorfor? Fordi vi nu kan studere *i realtid* ændrede bevidsthedstilstande og ikke-almindelig erfaring. Vi kan nu inducere tilstande, hvis fremtrædelse og strukturer er definitorisk af samme art som dét, vi indtil nu har kaldt ”*religiøs erfaring*”. Det åbner for det fænomenologiske *førstepersonsperspektiv* af oplevet religion, samt udarbejdelsen af bredere, mere præcise kategorier af vertikal erfaring generelt. Denne bevægelse er et paradigmeskifte, væk fra Foucaults diskursive magtfokus, der i alt for høj grad har fået lov til at forme religionsvidenskaben som en næsten udelukkende sociologisk og historisk størrelse.

Et aktuelt eksempel på bevægelsen mod de indre landskaber i vor egne religionsvidenskabelige rækker, kan ses i arbejdet af tidligere nævnte amerikanske religionsforsker Ann Taves, der med sit værk *Religious Experience Reconsidered: A Building Block Approach to the Study of Religion and Other Special Things*, forsøger et terminologisk skift i studiet af individets oplevede religion. Ann Taves' metode er selverklæret *Attributional*¹²¹ — hun går til studiet med en begrebskritisk hammer i hånden i studiet af ”experiences deemed religious (and, by extension, other things considered special) rather than 'religious experience')”.¹²²

Denne vinkel er rigtig spændende, da den tager vores forudsatte begreber og kategoriseringer op til revision — hvordan, hvornår og hvorfor bliver erfaring kategoriseret som religiøs erfaring? Det

¹²¹Wilson 2013.

¹²²Taves 2009, xii.

er i denne ånd, at fænomenologien kan virke for religionsvidenskaben. Et tværdisciplinært samarbejde mellem fænomenologien og denne nye religionshistorisk-etnografiske tilgang til *erfaring kategoriseret som religiøst* er oplagt — fx ved forskning, som mine analyser er inspiration til, der begrebsskitserer og studerer oplevelser for at udvide vores viden og forståelse af vertikal erfaring og bevidstheden i det store hele.

BIBLIOGRAFI

Albinus, L. & Geertz, A.. *Religionsvidenskabens Komparative Udfordringer*. Museum Tusculanum Press, 2005.

Barrett, F., Johnson, M., & Griffiths, R.. *Validation of the revised Mystical Experience Questionnaire in experimental sessions with psilocybin*. 2015. <http://jop.sagepub.com/content/29/11/1182.abstract>. Besøgt 14/12-2016.

Boult, A.. *Silicon Valley professionals are taking LSD at work to increase productivity*. 2015. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/howaboutthat/12019140/Silicon-Valley-professionals-are-taking-LSD-at-work-to-increase-productivity.html>. Besøgt 26/4-2016.

Carhart-Harris, R.. *Neural correlates of the LSD experience revealed by multimodal neuroimaging*. 2016. <http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2016/04/05/1518377113?tab=author-info>. Besøgt 15/4-2016.

Carhart-Harris, R.. *The paradoxical psychological effects of lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD)*. 2016. <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract;jsessionid=2A44D1064412350DC26606CC0DA628C5.journals?aid=10261226&fileId=S0033291715002901>. Besøgt 26/4-2016.

Carhart-Harris, R.. *Psychedelics: Lifting the Veil*. 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZIaTaNR3gk>. Besøgt 19/4-2016.

Christiansen, M.. *Danske forsøgspersoner skal have psykedeliske stoffer*. 2015. <http://videnskab.dk/krop-sundhed/danske-forsøgspersoner-skal-have-psykedeliske-stoffer>. Besøgt 14/12-2015.

Cormier, Z.. *Brain scans reveal how LSD affects consciousness*. 2016. <http://www.nature.com/news/brain-scans-reveal-how-lsd-affects-consciousness-1.19727>.

Besøgt 26/4-2016.

Gellman, J.. *Mysticism*. 2014. <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/mysticism>. Besøgt 26/4-2016.

Grof, S.. *Introduktion til Den Indre Rejse*. Borgen, 1987.

Huxley, A.. *The Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell*. Chatto & Windus, 1968.

James, W.. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. University Books Inc., 1963.

MacLean, K., Johnson, M. & Griffths, R.. *Mystical Experiences Occasioned by the Hallucinogen Psilocybin Lead to Increases in the Personality Domain of Openness*. 2011. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3537171/>. Besøgt 26/4-2016.

Masters, R. & Houston, J.. *The Varieties of Psychedelic Experience*. Dell Publishing, 1966.

Merleau-Ponty, M.. *Kroppens Fænomenologi* (1. del af 'Perceptionens Fænomenologi'). Det Lille Forlag, 2009.

Pollan, M.. *The Trip Treatment - research into psychedelics, shut down for decades, is now yielding exciting results*. 2015. <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/02/09/trip-treatment>. Besøgt 19/4-2016.

Rudbøg, T.. *The Academic Study of Western Esotericism*. H.E.R.M.E.S Academic Press, 2013.

Sample, I.. *LSD's impact on the brain revealed in groundbreaking images*. 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2016/apr/11/lsd-impact-brain-revealed-groundbreaking-images>. Besøgt 15/4-2016.

Speth, J.. *Decreased mental time travel to the past correlates with default-mode network disintegration under lysergic acid diethylamide.* 2016. <http://jop.sagepub.com/content/30/4/344.abstract?rss=1>. Besøgt 26/4-2016.

Steinbock, A.. *Phenomenology and Mysticism.* Indiana University Press, 2007.

Taves, A.. *Religious Experience Reconsidered, a building-block approach to the study of religion and other special things.* Princeton University Press, 2009.

Teresa, St., oversat ved Peers Allison, E.. *The Complete Works of St. Teresa of Jesus Vol. 1.* Sheed and Ward, 1975.

Watts, A.. *The Joyous Cosmology.* New World Library, 2013.

Weller, C.. *Psychedelics Don't Hurt Mental Health; Alcohol And Controlled Substances Still Riskiest.* 2015. <http://www.medicaldaily.com/psychedelics-dont-hurt-mental-health-alcohol-and-controlled-substances-still-riskiest-324616>. Besøgt 26/4-2016.

Wilson, D.. *Religious Experience.* [podcast] The Religious Studies Project. 2016. <http://www.religiousstudiesproject.com/podcast/podcast-ann-taves-on-religious-experience/>. Besøgt 26/4-2016.

Wong, S.. *Reclaiming LSD for Psychotherapy.* 2016. <http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2016/01/lsd-ecstasy-therapy-psychology/423681/>. Besøgt 26/4-2016.

Zahavi, D.. *Subjectivity and Selfhood.* Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2008.

Zahavi, D.. *Bevidsthedens Fænomenologi.* Gyldendal, 2010.

Pan-Sophia

Volume 3