The Reality of Illusion and the Illusion of Reality

An Anthropological Study of Entheogenic Ceremonies in a Dutch Spiritual Group

Master's Thesis in Anthropology

By Julie Dalsgaard Jespersen, 20105651

Supervisor: Rane Willerslev

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Abstract

Why do people experience that drinking a psychedelic brew teaches them about themselves? If the visions that people see are "hallucinations", then how can it teach them anything about reality? This was the initial wonderment that inspired this thesis entitled *The Reality of Illusion and the Illusion of Reality – An Anthropological Study of Entheogenic Ceremonies in a Dutch Spiritual Group*. The thesis explores the understandings of consciousness, soul and reality among members of the spiritual group called 'Ontmoeting met jezelf' (i.e. OMJ, Dutch for 'Meeting with yourself').

OMJ is a less dogmatic branch of the Brazilian Santo Daime Church. The group conducts ceremonies consuming the sacrament Daime – a plant medicine with entheogenic properties. The psychedelic brew creates altered states of consciousness including hallucinations that some experience as divine visions. The thesis is based upon three-and-a-half months of fieldwork among OMJ participants in the Netherlands including participant observation at 11 ceremonies, 21 interviews and two focus group interviews. The thesis seeks to answer the questions:

With a specific focus on their concepts of 'consciousness' and 'soul', what is the spiritual group 'Ontmoeting met jezelf's' cosmological understanding of reality and how does this understanding guide their 'lifeworld'? How can an analysis of their cosmology contribute to an expanded anthropological understanding of the human condition, including the use of Daime in a ceremonial context, and as part of an anthropological methodology?

The introduction gives an overview of the empirical field and theoretical context of the so-called 'ontological turn', while challenging the anthropological tradition of 'methodological atheism'. Chapter One details the course of a ceremony, introduces the topic of altered states of consciousness, and explores the identities and experiences of the Daimistas – people who drink the Daime. It also investigates the empirical phenomenon of 'synchronicity' and argues for a transition to a 'post-materialist' paradigm when studying spiritual phenomena. The second chapter investigates OMJ's 'cosmology' evolving within the group based on their Daime experiences. The historical influences of Catholicism, shamanism and other esoteric traditions are also considered, which leads to the concepts of 'perspectivism' and 'multinaturalism' (Viveiros de Castro) to create a theoretical framework for understanding the 'cosmology' in focus. The concept of 'liminality' (V. Turner) is shown to be applicable to the ceremonies, as a state the Daimistas learn to master, rather than a naturally given part of a ritual. The third chapter investigates how the 'lifeworld' of the Daimistas are influenced by 'moral practice' in their daily lives beyond the ceremonies. The fourth

chapter explores data gathering and discusses methodologies for a better understanding of mystical phenomena, experienced as ‘acausal’ and non-logical by participants. It is the author’s belief that anthropology is hampered by ‘methodological atheism’ and should aspire to a ‘decolonization of thought’ (Viveiros de Castro); and when the empirical reality allows, take a ‘leap of faith’ (Kierkegaard) in order to create the ‘wonderment’ (Scott) that destabilises Western scientific “truths” that only encompass a limited version of the broad variety of the experiences of what reality is.

Finally, OMJ is shown to be a spiritual group with a non-dogmatic cosmology with ‘perspectivist’ traits. Based on ‘holistic experiences’ in the ceremonies, in which the Daimistas experience that everything is interconnected, the subject is understood as ultimately decentralised. Thus the ceremonies in their essence are concerned with the purification of the attendees for the goal of reaching a state of being that is closer to the divine.

It might be an ultimately impossible task to perfectly translate spiritual experiences of a mystical character into a rationalistic theoretical framework. Nonetheless, it is concluded that anthropology should attempt this, since the aim of understanding ‘the other’ is a prime goal of our discipline. Thus anthropology can contribute to science at large by creating scholarly wonderment and destabilizing scientific truths.

Keywords: Santo Daime, the Netherlands, entheogens, altered states of consciousness, soul, synchronicity, ontological turn, post-materialism.

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Formalities

Informants who wish to be anonymous are identified with single letters. Men have a consonant and the women a vowel, e.g. 'E'.

All quotations are in "double quotation marks" and quotations longer than three lines are in a free standing block.

Citations from interviews are transcribed by the author. Grammar has been corrected when necessary to facilitate the reading, but minor grammatical flaws have been left to keep the originality of the language. Empty words e.g. "you know" have been removed without indication, where it facilitates the reading.

(…) indicates that a part of a citation has been removed.

Field notes have been edited for clarity, while remaining faithful to the original meaning and substance.

Dates are written in D/M/YY format, e.g. 14/2/15.

Emic concepts in foreign language are written in *italic,* e.g. *Trabalho.*

Theoretical and empirical concepts in English are in single quotation marks, e.g. 'leap of faith'.

Cover illustration: Made by Daimista Evelyn Teunis, Eveart.
https://www.pinterest.com/evebutterfly/eveart-made-everything-myself/

Contents

Introduction

This thesis is based on fieldwork conducted in the Netherlands in the spring of 2015. This included participant observation, personal interviews, and focus group interviews with people of the spiritual group 'Ontmoeting met jezelf' (i.e. OMJ, Dutch for "Meeting with yourself") who conduct ceremonies centred on the consumption of the sacramental, entheogenic Daime brew. The group is a less dogmatic branch of the Santo Daime Church, a Brazilian religious conglomeration of Catholicism and indigenous Amazonian shamanic tradition. The Daime derives from native Amazonian shamans and contains DMT (dimethyltryptamine), a molecule with psychedelic properties. I was allowed to join the ceremonies on the condition that I participated in them, including the consumption of the Daime; and ended up attending 11 ceremonies within 14 weeks. From a materialist perspective Daime experiences are considered hallucinations defined as "cerebral malfunctions caused by the chemical activity of these substances" (Barnard 2014: 669). Nevertheless, Daimistas (i.e. the people who drink the Daime) overwhelmingly view the ceremonies as meaningful and healing, and their visions as 'real', and the number of participants is growing in spite of the physical discomfort the ceremonies often entail. Thus Daime ceremonies are viewed here as expressions of spirituality, not mere recreational drug use. Daime experiences include, but are not limited to, visions of spirits of deceased people and angels, meetings with extraterrestrials and non-human entities, and hearing the 'Spirit of Daime' give personal advice.

These altered states of consciousness raise the fundamental anthropological question: what defines 'reality'? What understandings and aspects of individual 'reality' can anthropologists 'take seriously' (Willerslev 2013)? Investigating these questions, this thesis looks at the much-debated relationship between consciousness and the brain from both anthropological and neuroscientific perspectives (Harner 1982 [1980], Lewis-Williams 2002, Beauregard 2007, Gallagher & Zahavi 2008, Winkelman 2010, Barnard 2014, Beauregard et al. 2014). The hope is to gain scientific understanding from the world view of the OMJ Daimistas.

This thesis is placed in a tension inherent to the anthropological project itself: Since Bronislaw Malinowski, we have strived to "grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realise *his* vision of *his* world" (Malinowski 1984 [1922]: 25). According to Rane Willerslev in agreement with the so-called 'ontological turn' in anthropology (Paleček & Risjord 2012), 'grasping the native's point of view' involves a radical approach that anthropologists should not strive to

translate our informants' ideas into concepts that we understand, but on the contrary challenge our own assumption to imagine how their ideas could be possible (Willerslev 2013:41-42). Since the birth of our discipline, E. B. Tylor (1958 [1871]), James Frazer (1959 [1911]), and Emile Durkheim (1995 [1912]), and more recently, Peter Berger (1973 [1967]), Meyer Fortes (1980) and Alfred Gell (1999) have demanded that anthropologists (and sociologists) remain 'methodological atheists' when studying religious phenomena. This implies that the anthropologist should have an atheistic approach when studying religion, assuming that religious ideas do not refer to any existing divinity, but rather is to be explained by the religion's other functions in society.

Following the 'ontological turn', we must strive to set aside our own assumptions of the divine and definitions of reality, in order to grasp the often mind-boggling statements such as "hallucinations *are* real". This means that we must 'take seriously' what people themselves take seriously (Willerslev 2013), by incorporating some of their cosmological concepts into an anthropological theoretical framework, in order to understand the cosmology of OMJ. Furthermore, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's 'perspectivism' (Viveiros de Castro 2012) suggests that the essence of things varies according to the perspective from which they are perceived. Here, 'perspectivism' helps understand the cosmology of OMJ, in terms of the Amazonian roots of the Santo Daime tradition – the same region where Viveiros de Castro developed his analysis of 'perspectivist' cosmology. This idea is connected to 'multinaturalism' (Viveiros de Castro 1998: 470-2): the idea that people inhabit multiple, ontologically distinct 'worlds' (Pedersen 2013) or 'natures' (Viveiros de Castro 1998: 470-2).

The 'ontological turn' affords anthropologists to take in emic concepts and make them part of our analytical framework (Krøijer 2015: 80, Paleček & Risjord 2012: 6-7). The concept of 'synchronicity' is used emically by the Daimistas, and therefore I use this strategy of encompassing the emic concept as a theoretical tool. Some Daimistas are familiar with the etymology of the concept as deriving from Carl Gustav Jung and his inspiration from the Tao and Greek philosophy (Jung 1991 [1952]: 95-106). Therefore the concept has a complex status as both an emic concept inspiring the informants and as a theoretical analysis concept. Using 'synchronicity' in an anthropological analysis of the empirical setting, provides a theoretical framework from which we can make sense of experiences otherwise difficult to understand and 'take seriously' (Willerslev 2013). The concept is used emically by the Daimistas to explain experiences where the inner- and outer worlds collide in otherwise extraordinary coincidences, but which the Daimistas perceive as meaningful,

and even divine, convergences. However, use of this singular Jungian concept does not mean that the whole thesis ascribes to Jung's full theoretical universe. Here, concepts of the empirical reality are revised in the context of altered states of consciousness.

In this thesis I also suggest that a 'leap of faith' (Kierkegaard 1987 [1843]) and a 'post-materialistic' approach (Beauregaard et al. 2014) allow a better understanding of the perception of the 'reality' and 'altered states of consciousness' of OMJ. To bridge the gap between natural science, anthropology and the empirical world of OMJ, I show that the principle of 'entanglement' of quantum physics suggests that there are physical laws that correspond with the 'law of synchronicity' (Riddle 2014). The concept of 'synchronicity' is thus not solely a Jungian idea, but consistent with elements of quantum physics and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's concept of 'écart', as it is experienced and discussed among the Daimistas. It is suggested that the Daimistas experience a state where the "'world flesh' folds" (Merleau-Ponty 1968) and 'multiple natures' (Viveiros de Castro 1998) meet, and 'synchronicity' (Jung1991 [1952]) is experienced. This state of 'synchronicity' can be understood as a 'betwixt and between' state which I, in discussion with Victor Turner (1967), believe is not created automatically by the construction of the ritual, but achieved through focused ritual practice. Through this focused practice the participants evolve their 'theory of mind' (Luhrmann 2011) into a different perception of the self, the soul, the consciousness and nature of reality; and thus perceiving reality differently by living (more or less) in a consistent state of 'synchronicity': one where no coincidences exist and where the borders between dream, awake, dead, alive, past and future are fluid. These altered states and 'holistic experiences' also dissolve the experienced boundaries between self and others dramatically, impacting both action and moral implications of such. As a result of the Daime experiences, moral action becomes a collective venture, and something that is performed both in the inner, mental, and outer, physical world.

The problem statement, which this thesis answers, is: *With a specific focus on their concepts of 'consciousness' and 'soul', what is the spiritual group 'Ontmoeting met jezelf's' cosmological understanding of reality and how does this understanding guide their 'lifeworld'? How can an analysis of their cosmology contribute to an expanded anthropological understanding of the human condition, including the use of the Daime in a ceremonial context, and as part of an anthropological methodology?*

Clarification of concepts

Scholars have called the Santo Daime Church "a new world religion" (Dawson 2013); "a transnational religious movement" and "an eco-religious movement" (Schmidt 2007: 211, iv); and "a contemporary mystery school" (Barnard 2014). Since OMJ is a branch of the Santo Daime Church, it is officially registered as a religion, and its ceremonies are arranged with influence from the traditions of the Santo Daime Church. However, this does not mean that the individual participants of the ceremonies consider themselves to be religious. This thesis uses the word 'spiritual' rather than 'religious' since most of my subjects define their personal experiences as 'spiritual' rather than 'religious', suggesting a rejection of clerical dogma.

The Santo Daime Church is, as mentioned, a conglomeration of Catholicism and the spiritual tradition of shamanism, which is less dogmatic and found in a multitude of varieties around the world (Winkelman 2010, Willerslev 2013). 'Shamanism', Morten Axel Pedersen argues, is not limited to the practice of religion and is primarily characterised by 'change' or 'transformation' of itself and its cosmological beliefs (Pedersen 2014: 169). 'Spirituality' is defined by Mario Beauregard and Denyse O'Leary as "any experience that is thought to bring the experiencer into contact with the divine (in other words, not just any experience that feels meaningful)" (Beauregard & O'Leary 2007: 59). Beauregard and O'Leary consider spirituality to be separate from orthodox religious experience, which they define as "experiences that arise from following a religious tradition" (ibid). Experiences are therefore called 'spiritual' in this thesis when the subject sees the experience as bringing him or her closer to the divine, without the subject necessarily considering him- or herself to be religious. What is then a 'religious tradition'? Talal Asad argues in "Genealogies of Religion" that it is impossible to find a universal definition of religion, since it is such a multifaceted concept shaped in a multitude of ways in different historical contexts, and thus a universal definition naturally reflect historically biased considerations (Asad 1993: 29). Therefore, instead of finding a singular definition, Asad points out characteristics typical to the Christian and Islamic churches. I belive Asad aligns with Beauregard and O'Leary in that "religious belief always involves the prior acceptance of authority", and thus shapes the interpretation of religious experiences (Ibid.: 46). Consequently, 'religion' in contrast to 'spirituality' is here understood as sacred experiences, which are interpreted in accordance with canonical beliefs with the intention of following prescribed religious tradition. On this basis, I chose to call OMJ a 'spiritual group'. I selected 'group' instead of 'movement', because they do not proselytise and are discreet in sharing informa-

tion with potential new members. OMJ do not pursue a rapid expansion, but favour a steady, organic growth where only persons serious about the spiritual work of the ceremonies join the group.

The Daime brew also calls for a clarification of the categories it falls into, because the choice of term indicates a certain interpretation of what the Daime is. The term 'psychedelic' could be considered neutral, as it refers to a substance that induces altered states of consciousness and 'hallucinations' (Strassmann 2001: 31-2). The Daimistas themselves call it a 'medicine' or 'sacrament' instead of a 'drug'. Several Daimistas regard drugstore 'medicines' as 'drugs' because they are chemical products. By contrast, the Daime is considered a natural product, simply made as a tea, brewed from two plants from the Amazon. From a neurological point of view the Daime could be called a 'hallucinogen', since it produces what could be considered 'hallucinations' (Ibid.: 30). 'Hallucination' means "an experience involving the apparent perception of something not present" (Oxford US English Dictionary). Since the Daimistas do not consider the 'hallucinations' or 'visions' they see during the ceremonies to be 'illusory', but rather 'real' in various ways, the term 'entheogen' covers their experiences of the ceremonies better than 'hallucinogen'. 'Entheogen' is defined as "a chemical substance, typically of plant origin, that is ingested to produce a nonordinary state of consciousness for religious or spiritual purposes" (Ibid.).

'Consciousness' is another key term to clarify. Among OMJ the term 'consciousness' was used in two overall senses: first, as a description of the field of awareness, which corresponds to the general theoretical definition of consciousness employed here, i.e.: "our awareness of our environment, our bodies, and ourselves" (Hobson 2007: 435). Consciousness of perceived phenomena outside of ourselves is termed 'phenomenal consciousness' referring to perception not entirely accessible to our daily consciousness, but still perceived and stored in our long- or short-term memory, consciously or unconsciously. On the other hand, 'access consciousness' is only the part of the consciousness that we have cognitive access to (Thompson 2015: 7-8). Persistent training of certain states of consciousness through meditation or as in Daime ceremonies can expand the 'access consciousness' to include more of the 'phenomenal consciousness'. Secondly, the Daimistas of OMJ also used the term 'consciousness' to refer to the conscious subject who is experiencing. In this emic use of the word, consciousness can be used more or less interchangeably with the concept 'soul' used to refer to a person's essence, or the subjective experiencer. The Daimista Margriet uses this meaning for example, when she says: "My consciousness is my heart, my being, my soul. That's who I am". I see this second understanding of 'consciousness' as the result of introspection

conducted in the ceremonies, by which the Daimistas have come to experience themselves less as a person consisting of brain, body and mind, and more as a unit of consciousness that silently observes the experience of being a person. This view is consistent with many mystery traditions such as Taoism (Lao Tzu 1992 [400 B.C.]: 12-15) and Kardecist spiritualism (Kardec 1996: 69) by which OMJ is influenced.

Delimitation

Even though the empirical data provides the opportunity to concern the analysis with other substances that some Daimistas use, such as the frog secretion called Kambo and the eye drops called Sananga, here the primary focal point is the Daime, as it is for the Daimistas; other substances are only briefly mentioned.

A different focus of the analysis and discussion could have been the role of the multicultural and supra-national spread of the Santo Daime movement in a time of globalisation and post-modernism. However, this angle has already been thoroughly documented by other researchers (Schmidt 2007, Labate & Jungaberle 2011, Dawson 2013). Since this thesis is predicated on empirical data from a limited geographical context, and the Daimistas consider the group OMJ as both affiliated with the Santo Daime Church and distinguished from it, I chose to go into details with the Daimistas' understandings of 'reality', 'consciousness' and 'soul', instead of focusing on the global context of the church.

An actor-network approach (Latour 1995) could also have been relevant for further explanation of the idea that the Daime is seen as having an intelligent spirit that the Daimistas wish to take advice from. However, I assessed that this approach would not add as much to the analysis as the other theories I have chosen, because the Daimistas already consciously treat the Daime as an actor.

Outline of the chapters

The first chapter presents the empirical reality of OMJ by showing the course of a ceremony. The concepts of 'altered states of consciousness' and 'synchronicity' are investigated and it is argued that the study can be understood as 'post-materialistic'. The second chapter analyses the 'cosmology' of OMJ and the understanding of 'the soul' acquired through the ceremonies. The concept of 'perspectivism' is used for understanding the principle of 'multinaturalism' and how it applies to

OMJ, and Turner's concept of 'liminality' is drawn into the investigation of altered states of consciousness. In the third chapter, the 'lifeworld' of the participants is described through the lens of 'morality' and 'community'. Tanya Marie Luhrmann's 'theory of mind' shows how the alterations in 'theory of mind' impact the 'lifeworld' of the participants. Chapter four considers the methods applied in the research and its methodological framework, including the study's ethical implications. Here the concepts of 'leap of faith' and 'synchronicity' as methods are proposed as alternatives to 'methodological atheism'. Finally, the conclusion argues that anthropology must begin to take all cosmologies and ontological beliefs seriously, even if they are not based on accepted logical and causal principles, in order to create better understanding between the scientific world and the 'radically different other' with the aim of 'decolonizing' scientific truths and create 'wonderment'.

Chapter 1 – Altered states of consciousness in a ceremony with OMJ

> ”It could be a product of your brain, but it could also be that you get in touch with a totally different world which is out there, that the Daime just enables you to get in touch with. [...] It *is* a possibility.”
>
> (Interview with Remko, 15/3/15)

This chapter provides a general introduction to the empirical field of the study, and into altered states of consciousness and DMT. It shows how ceremonies are performed, and an analysis is shows the most frequent types of visions and correlating experiences. Examples of these are discussed in this and succeeding chapters. Mirroring the ‘ontological turn’ in anthropology, the approach of ‘taking seriously’ is applied as an alternative to the ‘metaphor model’ for understanding phenomena beyond the scope of traditional materialist science. The phenomenon of ‘synchronicity’ is discussed as an empirical phenomenon, and in relation to Jung’s use of the concept and Merleau-Ponty’s concept of écart. Furthermore, the scientific stance of ‘post-materialism’ and the ‘transmissive theory of consciousness’ are presented as a scientific framework for understanding altered states of consciousness.

The course of a ceremony

> “We proceeded to a village nearby Groningen where we are having my first *Trabalho*, or ceremony, as they also just call it. *Trabalho* means ‘work’ in Portuguese, and I am to learn that it is indeed hard work. Johan and I are there early along with Cesar and Magda, ‘O’, ‘E’ and a few others. The ritual takes places in an old bar, in a house that seems like a village house. We prepare the room by putting up chairs and couches in a long ring with seats for the women on the one side and men on the other. In the middle Cesar hangs a UV lamp from the ceiling and places a table as a small altar with the two-armed Santo Daime Cross, a bouquet of roses, a frog figurine, a picture of Master Irineu, some glasses of water, a small plate with small pieces of ginger, and a small bottle with flower-spirit-water. Six plastic buckets and a roll of paper towel are placed around the table. Curtains and scarves cover the windows and doors.
>
> People start to arrive and greet each other with hugs, cheek kisses or handshakes. Many ask if I am nervous and I answer that no, I am excited, but not nervous.

Of the 27 participants, this is the first ceremony for eight (myself included). Some people have brought their own water bottles and blankets. The newcomers have mattresses so they can lie down if necessary. Only two people, who came together, are dressed completely in white (as is the tradition in the Santo Daime Church). A young woman called Inge also wears a white dress.

Magda provides an introduction for the newcomers, requesting that if possible we remain sitting on the chairs; but we can lie down if necessary. Once the Daime is consumed we must stay in the house until the ceremony is completed. This is not to restrict our freedom, she says, but so that we remain cared for. Magda says silence is important during the ceremony in order to avoid disturbing others. If we have problems we should simply raise our hands. She also says that we should not enforce vomiting, but let it happen naturally if it does. Novices sign a contract stating that, as voluntary participants, we absolve the organisers from any responsibility. Then Magda collects the payment: 40 Euros per person. Johan [my gatekeeper] has told me that it is inexpensive as other groups charge 100-200 Euros per person per ceremony.

The musicians sit at one end of the male side of the circle. Cesar sits as the first male and plays guitar. On his left sits a man playing keyboard, Johan plays guitar, and Frenk sings and plays an egg shaker. On Cesar's right sits first female Magda who plays maracas and is co-lead singer along with Cesar. On her right sit 'E' and 'O' who help anyone feeling ill. I sit in the middle of the female half circle, in front of the altar. The atmosphere is happy and buzzing with expectancy. Then moments before the ceremony begins, the room falls silent, full of anticipation.

When the ritual starts around 7.30 pm we all stand up and sing 'Ave Maria'. Some have their hands on their hearts. Then the men sit down and the women form a line, walking towards Cesar who pours the Daime brew into small shot glasses. Some take a bite of ginger first to cover the taste, but the very kind woman sitting next to me says that she thinks it is nice to connect with the plants by sensing the taste of the brew before covering the taste with ginger or a grape. 'E' takes the empty glasses and cleans them quickly with a paper towel to be reused. The woman completely dressed in white is seemingly suffering from the brew's taste, so I am very relieved when I taste it: 'Ah that wasn't so bad!' I burst out. From the look on 'E''s face I understand that it was an

inappropriate comment in the ritual setting. People sing a happy song: *'Quer trabalhar? Vai tomar Daime! Quer se curar? O Daime vai tomar...'* ('Want to work? We will drink Daime! Want to heal? Daime we will drink!'). The men line up to drink, and then we all sit. The singing continues with songs from a song book. The group sometimes has a hard time singing the Portuguese lyrics. It is good they practice the songs every Tuesday, I think to myself. More people sing to the few Dutch songs that are in the songbook. Sometimes Magda or Cesar interrupts the flow of songs shouting 'Viva Maria!' (meaning 'long live Mary') after which the group replies by shouting back 'Viva!' And they give a series of praises to different deities, concepts, the group, and certain people. When the Daime starts to take effect, sounds start to make a massive impression on me. I had felt my pulse rising when I drank the Daime, as I expected a quick effect from it, but now I realise that it takes longer to work. The first effect I notice is heaviness in my head, then a sensation as if my ribs are pulled apart and the heart is exposed. It doesn't hurt, but the feeling is quite physical. I recognise the feeling a bit from meditation – this is just more powerful.

I still don't see any visions when the second glass is offered one hour after the first. I ask the woman next to me for advice, and she says that she thinks I should drink again. Most people do. I also ask Johan, whispering, for advice and he nods affirming. Cesar asks me if I feel anything yet. I say 'nothing but that my heart opened'. He says, 'that's good' and serves me ¾ of a glass. Last time he served half a glass. Fifteen minutes after this glass the effect kicks in all at once…"

(Field notes, 14/2/15)

This was the beginning of my first experience of an OMJ ceremony. I had arrived in the Netherlands one week earlier. I had met up with Johan, my 'gatekeeper' (O'Reilly 2005: 91), and he had introduced me to Cesar and Magda, the Brazilian couple who started OMJ as their own branch of the Santo Daime Church. This branch, OMJ, has an estimated number of 200 regular attendees. They did not have an official membership at the time of my fieldwork. Therefore, I use the Portuguese word *Daimista*, which is used in the Santo Daime Church for people who drink the Daime. The Daimistas are all ages, 18 years and up. The oldest Daimista I interviewed was 69 and had only recently begun attending the ceremonies. They are from all social backgrounds ranging from uneducated to professor, and work in a wide variety of jobs, with an over-representation of

alternative therapists, nurses and artists. The ceremonies take place most Saturdays and some Fridays and Sundays in different Dutch towns and cities and are led by Cesar and Magda, or Armand and Willy from Amsterdam.

The Daime's effect on the consciousness

As shown above, the ceremonies are centred on the consumption of the Daime sacrament. The Daime plant brew originates from shamans of the native Amazonians (Schmidt 2007: 51). In a shamanic context the brew is known as Ayahuasca, Natemä or Yagé (Harner 1973: 153), and can contain more plants than the two ingredients of the Daime (Stuckey et al. 2005: 164). The Daime contains the chemical DMT from the shrub psychotria viridis, which has a mind-altering effect, as well as an enzyme inhibitor from the vine banisteriopsis caapi, which prevents the body from breaking down the DMT (Schmidt 2007: 125, Guimarães Dos Santos 2013: 68, Strassman 2001). In chemical structure, DMT is a tryptamine and the simplest of the known psychedelics, and the only one being endogenously present in the brain. It is created in the pineal gland in large amounts at time of birth and death, and in smaller amounts during sleep, for which reason scientists connect it to the creation of the imagery of dreams (Strassman 2001: 34-35, 60 ff). The Daimistas consider the pineal gland to be connected to the 'third eye chakra', which in their understanding is an energetic spot on the forehead that enables a person to "see" things that exist in the non-physical world. They do acknowledge the neurological explanation that the DMT makes the pineal gland create dream-like imagery, but they add this meta-physical layer to the explanation, that the DMT cleans and empowers the 'third eye' to dissolve temporarily the 'veil' between reality's the different 'dimensions'.

Ayahuasca's effect on brainwaves is similar to the effects of marijuana and of meditation, for which reason psychiatrists suggest that Ayahuasca (and thereby also the Daime) provides better access to the subconscious and 'altered states of consciousness' (Hoffmann et al. 2001). The Daime has been proven to have no negative effects on the health status of people consuming it, even after long-term consumption (Guimarães dos Santos 2013: 71). OMJ legally receive their Daime from the Santo Daime Church in Brazil, or they send a member to overseas to bring home the Daime that is produced in an OMJ-owned forest garden in Brazil. When I asked Cesar and Magda about how drinking the Daime affects you, they explained:

> Cesar: "You start to feel a different sense, different touch, a different energy in your body. More calm. You start to open your senses. (…) you listen better to your thoughts,

> your view. You see better what happens in your life. I think when we drink we make an expansion of our magnetic vibration, our vibrational field. (…) Of course when your vibration field is much bigger you have more capacity for knowing more information about you."
>
> Magda: "We are an antenna that captures all the information in the air."
>
> Cesar: "Yeah, ha ha. We have (…) the chakras in the physical body, and we have one chakra more or less here [pointing an arm's length above his head]. (…) That works like an antenna in that vibration field. How much more calm, more easy you are with yourself, the more capacity you have to capture the information with that antenna, the chakra."
>
> (Interview with Cesar and Magda, 4/5/15)

Cesar and Magda believe that the Daime does not make the brain create images independently. Instead, they feel that it expands the field of awareness, which enables participants to access more facets of 'reality'.

The question of how consciousness works is still debated in academic disciplines (Low et al. 2012). Basically the two predominant models for understanding the connection between consciousness and the brain from a neuroscientific perspective are the 'productive-' and the 'transmissive theories'. The 'productive theory' is of the 'materialist science'. 'Materialist science' assumes that only the material reality exists. Consequently, it sees consciousness as a mere product of the brain (Beauregard & O'Leary 2007: xi, Sperry 1984: 671). Understanding consciousness as being identifiable with the brain is termed 'Cartesian materialism' (Gallagher & Zahavi 2008: 123) or 'scientific materialism' (Sperry 1984: 671). The 'transmissive theory', on the other hand, views consciousness as pre-existing the brain, so the brain is defined as a transmitter that receives and transforms consciousness into brain activity (Sperry 1984: 671-2, Barnard 2014: 668-9, Strassman 2001: 311). From the perspective of the 'productive theory' of consciousness, the Daime is a 'hallucinogen', and the visions it generates, are merely synaptic errors of the brain with no deeper meaning to it (Barnard 2014: 669). From the subjective viewpoints of my informants, the visions and other sensorial experiences are meaningful and not just random neurons misfiring. They understand the Daime as an 'entheogen', rather than a 'hallucinogen', seeing it as a doorway to a divine reality invisible to us in our daily state of awareness (Ibid.: 667). As such, the 'transmissive theory' is

more in accordance with their experiences, because it allows the experiences of a transcendent reality a meaningful interpretation. This became clear to me through an interview with one of the Daimistas, a professor in algebraic mathematics. He has many years of experience with the ceremonies and works with mathematical theories related to quantum physics, which inspired his understanding of consciousness. He said:

> "I don't believe in three-dimensional or four-dimensional space-time, to say it like that. Four-dimensional space-time is a projection of us. It's an invention which allows us to understand certain basic things and allows us to build houses and build cars and do things like that, but I think in the end physics gives us nuclear power and such things, and that's correct up to a certain level, but it's just some approximation which is in some sense projected by us. And our consciousness is beyond that in my opinion, and the brain is a radio which captures that. In fact the entire nervous system, I don't think it's just the brain, I think the entire nervous system participates in this. And we are conscious with the entire body."

(Interview with 'C', 27/5/15)

Here 'C' makes clear his approval of the 'transmissive theory'. He even extends the idea to include the whole body, like Cesar and Magda above also encompass a non-physical energy body into the understanding of consciousness as being 'transmitted' to and not 'produced' in humans. I will not evaluate if the 'transmissive' or the 'productive' theory have the best scientific proofs, since that is beyond the scope of anthropology. Rather, I outline this discussion to show, in accordance with my informants, that science has not proven that consciousness is a product of the brain. Following my informants' view, I will use the 'transmissive theory' as a prism of scientific understanding in my analyses, to keep the investigation of the experiences open, by acknowledging that entheogen-induced phenomena of 'altered states of consciousness' can be as real as those phenomena understood and explained by science.

Post-materialism

The idea that the brain may be a transmitter belongs to what Beauregard et al. describe as 'post-materialist science' (Beauregard et al. 2014). In "Manifesto for a Post-Materialist Science", Beauregard and seven other scientists from the fields of biology, neuroscience, psychology, medicine, and psychiatry argue for a paradigm shift in science. Based on scientific findings in quantum

mechanics, research on 'psi' (psychic) phenomena, and investigations of near-death experiences i.a., they argue that the 'materialist science', derives from the classical, and limiting, Newtonian mechanical understanding of physics. The understanding of consciousness of 'material science', the authors suggest, is that consciousness is only a product of the brain. However, it is precisely this 'materialist' understanding of the world and consciousness including the "four-dimensional space-time" which 'C' rejects in the citation above. The 'post-materialist' paradigm that the authors hope for is a new science, that takes the consequences of quantum physics and research that documents the impact of thought on physical matter. A 'post-materialist science' should therefore accommodate the possibility of consciousness existing separately from the brain and be open towards studying spiritual phenomena (Ibid.); taking spiritual phenomena seriously is a fundamental assumption of this thesis.

Reviewing research on mind phenomena such as telepathy and the placebo effect, the manifest states that: "these events are so common that they cannot be viewed as anomalous or as exceptions to natural laws, but as indications of the need for a broader explanatory framework that cannot be predicated exclusively on materialism" (Ibid.). I argue, that moving into a 'post-materialist' anthropology should not be understood as naïve, but as a natural consequence of a comprehensive body of research that documents spiritual phenomena among many peoples globally; as this contradicts the materialist world view anthropologists must take this reality seriously. Examples of anthropologists who have documented such phenomena are Willerslev who was saved by a dream omen which inspired him to go hunting at the perfect time while starving in Siberia (Willerslev 2012: xi, 94-5), and Michael J. Harner who has done fieldwork among the Jívaro and Conibo native South Americans and undergone training as a Jívaro shaman (Harner 1973 & 1982 [1980]). As Thomas Kuhn famously showed, a scientist sees his data through the lens of the paradigm he ascribes to. When a new paradigm has been unfolded, the same results may be interpreted completely differently (Kuhn 1996 [1962]: 115). Therefore, I argue for an ascription to a 'post-materialist' paradigm, in which we do not rule out the possibility of non-physical, spiritual phenomena. This enables anthropologists to look at spiritual experiences in a new way, making it possible to take the informants seriously to a greater extent than before, and therefore to better 'grasp the native's point of view' (Malinowski 1984 [1922]). In this way, I suggest, we can better make sure that we interpret our data without dismissing phenomena that do not seem to fit into the material paradigm.

Taking seriously

The concept of 'taking seriously' is used by Willerslev (2007) as an alternative approach to the 'metaphor model' (Willerslev 2007: 181) and similar theoretical interpretations inspired by anthropology's Durkheimian inheritance (Ibid.: 181-3), by which many anthropologists have interpreted animism through the times (Tanner 1979: 206, Nelson 1983: 239, Bird-David 1992, Århem 1996: 185). Nurit Bird-David, as an example, calls the animistic beliefs of the Mbuti people regarding their reciprocal relationship with the forest a "metaphor of sharing" (Bird-David 1992). Willerslev argues that understanding talk of spirits as metaphorical is problematic, because then the spirit world is not seen in the context of its 'cosmology'. Rather than enforcing a dualistic view on animist beliefs, anthropologists who study spiritual beliefs should, according to Willerslev, see these beliefs as part of a 'cosmology' that does not distinguish between the physical world and the world of though, dreams and spirits (Willerslev 2007: 182). Thus we should strive to "take seriously what the people themselves take seriously" (Ibid.: 181).

Anthropologist Titti Kristina Schmidt has conducted thorough fieldwork within the Santo Daime movement in Brazil (Schmidt 2007). She takes the cosmology of the Santo Daime seriously by revealing that the Daimistas mean it literally and not symbolically when they say that "it is the Daime that is responsible", as an intelligent agent, for the expansion of the Santo Daime movement (Ibid.: 234). Nonetheless, she settles for describing how Daimistas understand spirits, and refrains from asking directly how anthropology can understand and deal with these beliefs as a possible reality. Instead of seeking to expand our anthropological vocabulary to encompass their world, she ends up stating that from the Daimistas' point of view, they act morally because they 'follow the Daime', but from an anthropological perspective she prefers the functionalist explanation that the Daime-inspired concerns with morality could be a response to the "violent environment" (Ibid.: 232). Furthermore, Schmidt concludes that the Santo Daime movement provides the lessons for non-participants that:

> "If one treats annoying thoughts and emotions as spirits, not connected to the individual, it may create a kind of healthy distance that can be useful in tense and problematic situations. If we humanise and collectivise thoughts and emotions, putting them so to speak outside ourselves, they will perhaps become easier to handle. At least this is the conviction of the Santo Daime members."
>
> (Schmidt 2007: 234-5)

Yet this shows that Schmidt still believes that what participants feel are actually thoughts and emotions, and not spirits, contrary to the belief of the Santo Daime members. Schmidt also maintains a distance to the beliefs of the Daimistas, implicitly refusing to encompass the beliefs as part of an anthropological understanding that, in some sense, it could be true that spirits can affect or create our thoughts. In accordance with the 'ontological turn' this thesis seeks to radicalise and deepen our understanding and approach to the 'cosmology' of the informants in order to expand the theoretical framework to encompass "plurality of ontologies" (Henare et al. 2007: 6-7).

Visions during altered states of consciousness

We now return to the empirical reality of OMJ. Speculating on materialism and the nature of consciousness in the midst of the ceremonies was a great challenge in my fieldwork, since all who come to the ceremonies must drink the Daime sacrament. Therefore, to do participant observation during ceremonies, I had to do 'complete participation' (Spradley 1980: 61) while also observing. (I will elaborate on the methodology and its implications in chapter four). The Daime is served two to four times during each ceremony, and only the first serving is mandatory. Therefore, it was possible for me to create a variety of conditions for participation and observation, drinking only one glass in some ceremonies and more in others. As aforementioned, it usually takes a while before the Daime starts to alter one's state of consciousness. When drinking several servings during a single ceremony, the effect lasts for several hours. The ceremony is scheduled to end around when the effect of the Daime is over. Each and every ceremonial experience is unique and the experiences vary widely from person to person. Some see many visions, while others have physical and emotional experiences only. Generally, the visions tend to be chaotic, overwhelming and fast for beginners, whereas the more experienced learn to make their visions slow down in speed, "stay firm" and "focus on their intention", as some informants called it. The 'intention' for each ceremony is a personal goal or question that each Daimista writes down on a little paper heart that is placed on the altar in the beginning of the ceremony.

Of course it can be difficult as a beginner to be "stay firm and focused", since the experience can be very overwhelming. This is my narration I wrote from when the Daime started affecting me:

> "...I am very surprised and amazed by the vividness of the visions that begin: Extremely bright colours and very clear. I am only used to drum journeys [shamanic visionary

ceremonies without use of substances but carried by the sound of a drum] and meditations where the images are much more blurred and you really have to keep focused not to lose them. Here the visions take me over so I cannot avoid seeing them. I can feel myself smiling and I sit with my palms together under my head watching in awe. I feel excited and a little shy to show that I am seeing so much, since when I look around most of the others are still singing. It is at song 19 and I just have to leave my songbook at that page. The first visions I see are geometrical patterns moving all the time in vivid colours. Then I see some red and purple creatures a bit like ghosts reaching out to catch my soul and take me on a journey. I give in to that and jump into their arms and see a vision of my soul as a little greyish bulk floating out of me and into their arms. I say to myself 'Oh my, I am leaving my body!' I am very surprised by the way everything looks so extremely vivid. This is also because it looks like drawings consisting of tiny points. It looks like native South American art and I think to myself 'ah, so this is where that weird style of drawings in native art comes from!' It looks like the fantasy realm in which fables, fairytales and some temple architecture with a lot of decorations has its origin. I am confused because it does not look like 'real' images to me, so I do not understand why the others are convinced that this is not just 'hallucinations' in the sense that it is just the brain making it up. But on the other hand it is just too complex for my brain to create all of that so quickly, I think. The patterns are shifting constantly, showing a lot of beings, eyes, geometry and nature in extremely bright colours.

I hear a woman crying in the bathroom very loud and for a long time. It is as if the sound and energy hurts me. The negativity from her mixes with my images and makes the images I see darker in colours as if the energy is pulling me down. On the other hand, the positive songs are pulling me up and creating a more pleasant feeling, as long as they hit the key. Then my body starts to feel bad and I get scared. I have gone so far away that I have forgotten that I have a body, so I cannot understand where that nasty feeling comes from. I have to gather all my strength and pull myself back to gain enough control over my body to open my eyes and look for a bucket to vomit in..."

(Field notes, 14/2/15)

Apparently I experienced what Cesar and Magda call "an expansion of the vibrational field". My senses felt heightened so that I became more affected by the sounds of the music and the

crying woman. The intensity and liveliness of my visions made me wonder if they were in some way "real". In the Santo Daime tradition this mind-altered state is called *Miração,* deriving from the Portuguese word "mirar" meaning "to see" and "ação" meaning "action", i.e. "active seeing" (Schmidt 2007: 167 ff). In OMJ Cesar and Magda mainly speak English so the Portuguese word is replaced with "when the curtains open", "having visions", or "to be *in* the Daime". The term 'vision' is contested, as the subject is actively co-creating the sights and interacting with it (Ibid.167). The term 'vision' is therefore here understood as an interactive phenomenon.

While participant experiences are of many different variations and combinations, they can be grouped together in categories for clarity. As my field notes suggest, one's sensorial inputs are perceived differently when the Daime is working. This fundamental Daime experience gives way to perceived visions and insights.

First, the perception is affected with changed experiences of light, colours, and the size and shape of objects. This can include visions - with eyes closed or open - of geometrical patterns, also known among OMJ as "mandalas". Some see energy around and between the others in the shape of energetic bonds between people or an energy grid in the air. Sounds appear louder or softer, and sounds may be heard that are not audible to people unaffected by the Daime, such as the sound of a whole choir singing along. One hearing-impaired informant spoke of being able to hear all details during the ceremonies. Touch, taste, and smell are also usually heightened.

Second, emotions often become more pronounced and one's thought process speeds up or slows down. It can feel like being outside of the dimension of time, making it hard to tell whether an hour or a minute has passed. Sensations of hot and cold can change, as well as the experience of one's own self and one's relation to others. These observations are also found by Rick Strassman in his experiments in laboratories with DMT on human volunteers (Strassman 2001: 39-40). Even though Strassman attributes these sensorial changes to the chemical processes in the brain, he does not reject their meaningfulness. Through his studies of DMT, he confirms that his subjects have meaningful experiences during the DMT experiments. This includes i.a. insights about psychosomatic relations between illness and emotions, which can heal physical and emotional issues (Ibid.:312). An example of these changes in experience of sensorial inputs is the account of Youri, a 33-year old Daimista:

> "The room is different, because you can see the fabric and you can actually see the music instead of just hearing it. You see it, you hear it, you feel it, so all your senses, your eyes, ears, nose, everything, is just wide open and for a whole different experience of normal things like music."

(Interview with Youri, 19/3/15)

Many participants feel that they are being cleansed through vomiting, going to the toilet, by some external energy working on them, or because they feel the urge to empty their lungs of as much residue oxygen as possible via deep breathing or through laughing. Some experience temporary amnesia where they forget who and where they are during some of the ceremony. This is mostly found among new participants. In this state of *Miração,* when the Daimistas are influenced by the Daime, a number of sensorial experiences appear. Many of the Daimistas say that it is impossible to describe or explain the experience of the Daime to someone who has never tried it. It is definitely a challenge to capture the richness of the experience, but I have nonetheless tried to schematize parts of the experiences here. I have categorized collected data and listed the experiences in order of frequency. This provides an overview of the types of experiences. The categories are analytical abstractions, and the experiences do not always fit into a single category. Therefore, this categorisation provides a framework of understanding that the unordered reality of the ceremonies almost by definition defies.

In my research, the dominant types of visions people describe are: 1. Visions of animals, fable-like beings such as dragons, and beings that look like extraterrestrials; 2. Visions of divine beings such as Jesus, Mother Mary, angels, and even the Hindu elephant god Ganesh; 3. Visions of past lives or the past of one's current life, such as birth, or scenes that appear to be from the future or other places in the universe; 4. Visions of other Daimistas changing or morphing into Native Americans, Aboriginals etc.; 5. Visions of transgressing death and experiencing life in other dimensions; 6. Visions or symbolic illustrations of how the universe functions; 7. Visions of other aspects of oneself, such as one's own 'higher self'. Apart from visual effects, auditory experiences are also common, including: 1. Hearing a voice giving advice or reassurance directly to the person; 2. Hearing new songs or poems; 3. Hearing a humming sound or other sounds that do not originate in the physical surroundings; 4. Extra effects on physically existing sounds such as a hearing choir or second voices on top of the songs that the group sings.

According to the Daimistas, many of the experiences cannot be attributed to specific senses, like vision and hearing, but rather to a general state of expanded consciousness which creates extraordinary experiences. The dominant types of these experiences are: 1. 'oneness experiences', or what Schmidt calls 'holistic experiences' (Schmidt 2007: 170) where the participant feels one with all including God, nature, and other people. This feeling of connection with the other participants can lead to the experience of knowing another's feelings and thoughts; 2. Being able to affect others at a distance via thoughts and emotions; 3. Sensing that you are undergoing surgery by nonphysical beings; 4. Communicating with nature such as gemstones and plants; 5. Communicating with diseased humans. Note that #3 may seem spectacular and unfamiliar to the reader, but the phenomenon seems to be widespread in relation to the consumption of the Daime and DMT, and has also been documented by Schmidt (Ibid.: 128) and Strassman (2001). An example from my fieldwork is the 50-year-old psychiatric home nurse Hendrik who experienced surgery from slim and alien beings at least four times. The Daimistas also describe many instances of simply knowing something or receiving an insight without attributing it to any of the senses. The types of insights will be listed under the topic of cosmology in the following chapter. The common denominator of these varying experiences is that they all create the experience of getting to know oneself better, which is the reason for the group's name, 'Ontmoeting met jezelf', "Meeting with yourself".

Synchronicity and écart

With this list of experiences within the ceremonies in mind, let us consider the concept of 'synchronicity'. As mentioned in the introduction, it was the Daimistas who made me aware of the concept of synchronicity, which they use to explain incidents that look like coincidences but happen against all odds. Most often they would not use the word 'synchronicity' but say "coincidence" in an ironic tone while gesticulating citation marks, thus jokingly and ironically pretending that they would interpret the event in question as random, while implicitly stating that it was a case of 'synchronicity'. When I would ask them to clarify what they would mean by 'coincidence' they were almost all of them familiar with the term 'synchronicity'. This term was introduced to Western psychology by Jung, with inspiration from philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer among others (Jung 1991 [1952]: 17). Jung also calls 'synchronicity' "an acausal connecting principle" (1991 [1952]), "meaningful coincidence" (Ibid.: 14) and "meaningful cross connection" (Ibid.: 16). He defines it as "the simultaneous occurrence of a certain psychic state with one or more external events which appear as meaningful parallels to the momentary subjective state' (Ibid.: 36). The term 'synchronicity' thus covers

phenomena where the physical and non-physical worlds correlate; this could be understood as coincidence, because they are not *causally* related but nonetheless appear meaningful and not random. Using a contested concept like 'synchronicity' in the analysis of OMJ is a decision based on empirical data. The phenomenon of meaningful, acausal convergences is also a part of the cosmology of the Santo Daime Church, e.g. the term *peia* refers to obstacles and accidents that are seen as meaningful incidents that can be taken as divine guidance to the subject (Schmidt 2007: 167). An example of this view, that there are no coincidences, is given by "C" who consciously uses the principle of 'synchronicity' in his work as a mathematical professor:

> 'C': "I also pay attention when… it sounds ridiculous, right, I open a mathematical book on a certain page because I am looking for something, then perhaps what I am looking for is already there. I mean it's crazy, but it's really how I work. Yeah, not all the time because at the same time I am grounded by this very strongly rational context (…)"
>
> Interviewer: "Yes, it's only crazy if you think that it's a coincidence what page you open."
>
> 'C': "Indeed. But for me there is no such thing. Everything is flowing."
>
> (Interview with 'C', 27/5/15)

'C''s remark "it's crazy" confirms Jung's finding that it appears as a 'taboo' for Jung's clients admitting to having experiences of 'synchronicity' (Jung 1991 [1952]: 6). 'C' shows that he is aware of the provocative nature of his beliefs, which may contribute to his desire for anonymity. Even though 'C' admitted to continuously experiencing the phenomenon and attributing meaning to it, he still sees it as a taboo in some social arenas. This belief in 'synchronicities' is prevalent my field of research, and therefore deserves attention despite the controversy of using Jung as its reference.

The phenomenon 'synchronicity' is not only found in psychology and esoteric traditions, it also has a strong parallel in philosophy with Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological concept 'écart' (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 192), which can be translated as divergence, spread, deviation, or separation (Ibid.: 7). Merleau-Ponty avoids the monism/duality discussion, preferring instead to describe all matter as 'flesh' (Ibid.: 133). When the world's 'flesh' folds in a manner so that it touches itself, consciousness arises, because the 'flesh' becomes a simultaneous object and subject

(Ibid.: 134, 192). Merleau-Ponty's classic example to illustrate this 'reversibility' is an image of two hands touching and thus experiencing being touched and touching at the same time, which makes self-consciousness arise (Ibid.: 133-4). Because the physical world and the non-physical are merely two sides of the same matter, the meeting between a thought and a physical event, e.g. in the event of a 'synchronicity', is in Merleau-Ponty's ontology plainly a folding of the world's 'flesh'.

Neither Merleau-Ponty nor Jung can explain concretely how the physical world responds to our inner worlds, but they provide a philosophical framework recognizing the phenomenon. Ultimately, we cannot know whether 'synchronicities' are only extremely improbable coincidences, if they point out universal laws that we do not fully understand, or if they are the result of divine interference revealing the path for each soul. If we apply the logic of 'perspectivism', and 'multinaturalism' (Viveiros de Castro 1998: 470-2) it might be the case that different explanations can be "correct" depending on the perspective of the observer. I will argue that the concepts of 'synchronicity' and 'écart' help us recognize phenomena that indisputably exist as experiences in the 'lifeworld' of the Daimistas and many others.

An example of having experienced 'synchronicity' or 'écart' is from Gavin, a 46-year-old Briton whom I met in a ceremony weekend in the Netherlands. After he went home, he sent me this description of the visions he had in one of the ceremonies:

> "I saw a dark, black, sticky, organic form. I felt disgusted with it: I knew it was 'cancerous' and that it was in the lung! I wondered if it was in mine because I had been coughing and my lungs felt like they were suffering with something, maybe because of the long motorbike ride which I had got me very chilled towards the end, so I dismissed it as an interesting 'random' image. Later on whilst I was singing from a song book I noticed that the musical chords that were written above the words were hovering a good 3 inches above the page, and I was a little amused by this effect, then noticed that they were drawing my attention to the pattern, which in sequence repeated and spelled out: D-A-D, D-A-D, D-A-D. My mind drifted off with thoughts about my Father whom I had not been getting on too well with…"
>
> (Gavin after ceremony at 15/5/15)

After being reminded of his father, Gavin starts working internally on his emotions in their relationship. When he returns to Britain he calls his father and asks him if he has lung cancer.

His father responds affirmatively, but had not told anyone about his disease yet. In this case, Gavin subjectively experienced a clear connection between the 'psychic state', where he envisions the lung cancer and notices the spelling of 'DAD' in the chords, and the external event that his father has lung cancer. The event is meaningful to Gavin as it helped restore his relationship with his father.

Jung's cases of 'synchronicity' do not include altered states of consciousness, but describe various physical events and symbolism, which are related to dreams and feelings of him and his clients. Most famously he describes the case of a client in a session, telling Jung about her dream of a golden scarab, when an actual golden-green beetle of the scarab family then suddenly knocks on the window. The event is meaningful to Jung and the client because the convergence distorts her rationalistic thinking, which enables Jung to treat her more effectively with psychotherapy (Jung 1991 [1952]:31). Jung argues that the 'synchronistic' events of 'psychic states' (like the dream) and 'external events' (like the appearing beetle) are connected in a "unitary aspect of being which can very well be described as *unus mundus*" (Jung 1963: 464-465, emphasise in original). The 'unus mundus' he explains as "the original, non-differentiated unity of the world or of Being" (Ibid.: 462). He sees the 'synchronicities' as visible 'manifestations' of the 'unus mundus' (Ibid.). I will not go further into detail with Jung's theoretical universe here, since his theories only have relevance because they are used by the Daimistas to describe their experiences. The concepts of 'synchronicity' and 'unus mundus' are relevant for the thesis because of their relevance for the Daimistas' experiences of meaningful "coincidences", and 'holistic experiences' in a state of consciousness in which the Daimistas experience "unity of the world or of Being" (Ibid.).

Another example from my fieldwork of an incident related to 'synchronicity' is the experience of the 28-year-old Daimista Stephanie. She had a common type of experience in the ceremonies of seeing or feeling a spirit being present in the room. The 'synchronistic' part of the experience is that the feeling she had was connected to a physical action:

> "There was this girl sitting next to me, to my right, and I could see... I don't know if you could say see, but I could sense this beautiful feminine being approaching the place where we were sitting. And then (...) they sort of kind of merged. And it was quiet and then all of a sudden she started to sing all by herself, and everybody else was quiet, and she was just singing most beautifully. It was kind of like an opera, (…) it was just a very special experience for me because I could see the being and see how they con-

> nected with each other, and yeah it lasted for maybe three minutes or four, and then she became quiet again, but that was a beautiful experience for me."
>
> (Interview with Stephanie, 25/3/15)

In this situation the 'psychic state' and the 'external event' are linked causally in Stephanie's experience. Believing Stephanie's story is of course a matter of trusting her honesty and memory, but as a means of ensuring honesty, my informants did not gain any reward, which could encourage them to make up interesting stories (Tucker 2005: 33). Furthermore, the stories of most informants are often so fanciful that it is counter-intuitive that they could be made up on purpose.

Jung understands the incidences as being linked in a 'unus mundus' where a connection exists, but without the incidences physically causing each other. From the Daimistas' point of view, Gavin and Stephanie have stepped into an 'altered state of consciousness' closer to 'unus mundus', where their expanded senses allow them to perceive more of the 'causality' between the 'psychic states' and 'external events' than in their regular states of awareness. Within the ceremony participants feel more connections e.g. the musical chords forming the word "dad" in Gavin's case.

The Daimistas correlate this understanding of 'synchronicity' to quantum physics, a connection also pointed out by Jung (Jung 1991 [1952]: 7), the philosopher Justin M. Riddle (Riddle 2014) and others. Together these two theories suggest an expansion of the idea of 'dualism' to 'trialism' incorporating the "spirit" realm added to the "body" and "mind" realms of 'dualism' (Ibid.: 62-65). This means that quantum physics and the theory of 'synchronicity' suggest that there are indications and evidence for the existence of a realm in which physical and psychological phenomena are connected. In quantum physics this principle is termed 'entanglement', based on experiments that show how two entangled particles, react instantly to each other even when separated (Hensen et al. 2015). In the case of Gavin, he experienced an 'entanglement' between him and his father that made him experience the correlation between three physically 'acausally' related events, of Gavin feeling ill in his lungs, reading the word 'DAD', and finding out that his father had lung cancer.

The principles of quantum physics such as 'entanglement' can, like the 'transmissive' theory of consciousness, provide a scientific framework that supports the concept of 'synchronicity' and can help us stretch our theoretical framework to encompass the experiences of the Daimistas.

A 'post-material' view on the ceremonies

The beginning of the ceremony is intended to establish the feeling of connection within the group and with the divine, through raising the vibration frequency of the participants and the energy in the room as a collective (Schmidt 2007: 174 ff). The visions and extra-sensorial experiences usually start appearing about 40-60 minutes into the ceremonies, but can begin earlier or later. When the Daime starts working, most participants are physically affected and some have to throw up or go to the toilet. In this state, the more experienced members assist in emptying the buckets or escorting others to the toilets. They are less overwhelmed by their experiences, and can choose to "step out of their visions", if they need to help others. Over time participants develop the capacity to sing and the musicians can play music while having visions simultaneously.

There are three different models of ceremonies, but the most common version is the *Concentração* ("Concentration"), which is the kind of ceremony I attended at first, that is described in this chapter. These ceremonies are structured with about two hours of singing, followed by about one hour of 'concentration', which is a silent, meditative hour. During the concentration the light is dimmed, which according to Strassman is beneficial for the workings of DMT in the pineal gland (Strassman 2001: 63). After the concentration, the music softly starts building up to loud singing and a simple dance. The songs are organized into discrete parts with a slight difference in types that are sung before and after the concentration phase. The other two types of ceremonies are *Bailado* ("Ballet"), in which the participants dance in simple steps throughout the ceremony and *Cura* ("Cure"), which is a ceremony with continuous music and singing.

The following part of my narration describes the end of my first ceremony following the concentration segment. The music has started and people have begun "coming back" by opening their eyes and joining the singing again.

> "...Some sit crying silently to themselves. Others look blessed. Some sit in meditation pose, others with their hands folded in prayer position. We start dancing to the songs by taking four steps to the one side and four to the other. This feels very nice and pleasantly familiar to me since I grew up with folk dancing. We end like we started singing the ceremonious prayer 'Ave Maria', and then we round off by singing a very happy song called 'Terra meu corpo' meaning 'Earth is my body' with a dance that reminded me of the 'Boogie-woogie' dance, in which everybody can join the easy chorus 'heia heia heia heia heia hei ho'. Then the ceremony is over.

> The Daimistas start chatting, hugging and sharing experiences immediately after the ceremony. People seem to be very happy and uplifted. Food is immediately pulled out at the bar. I share experiences with some of the others but it is hard for me to concentrate on listening. I am very tired. Everything is cleared up and Cesar shows me a picture of Master Irineu that he takes down of the altar while he tells me that this was the man who started the Santo Daime Church. He gives me a little wooden figurine of a hummingbird as a symbol showing that I have participated in my first ceremony. On the way home, Johan tells me that they are really happy to have me here and to get the new perspective that I am bringing in. I am SO happy to get to bed - at 4.35 AM."
>
> (Field notes, 14/2/15)

During the fieldwork I witnessed phenomena of consciousness acting in ways that traditional, 'materialist science' would perceive as random hallucinations caused by the toxic effect of the DMT (Beauregard & O'Leary 2007: ix-x). Nevertheless, some neuroscientists, psychologists, psychiatrists, biologists and medical doctors have in recent years opened up to an understanding of such extraordinary phenomena of expanded consciousness as meaningful, much of their research argues for a transition to a post-materialist scientific worldview (Sperry 1984: 671-2, Radin 1997, Hagelin et al. 1999, Strassman 2001: xv, Tucker 2005, Sheldrake 2006, Beauregard & O'Leary 2007, Radin 2008, Radin and Borges 2009, Riddle 2014, Beauregard et al. 2014). These phenomena include scientific research and well-documented cases of precognition (Radin and Borges 2009), nonlocal observation (Radin 2008), meditating subjects who reduce crime rates in their surroundings (Hagelin et al 1999), recollection of past lives (Tucker 2005), telepathy (Radin 1997) etc.

An example of my own similar, extraordinary experiences with such workings of consciousness was at a ceremony in Amsterdam. At some point during that ceremony, I left to use the toilet, and when I was out there, I suddenly had a strong sense of my deceased cousin being present. After the ceremony, the guitar player Jurriaan told me to my great surprise, that at that point they had been playing a song in Portuguese (which I do not understand), to commemorate the ancestors and deceased loved ones. There thus seemed to be a connection between the intention of their song and the feelings and thoughts that suddenly appeared very real to me, even though I was in another room and did not know the song and the intention. The concept of 'synchronicity' is again relevant for providing a theoretical framework of the example, since it is a 'psychic state' that is meaningfully connected to an 'external event'. With the perspective on consciousness of the 'transmissive

theory', this experience can be understood as a 'synchronistic' event. Interpreting it as a case of 'synchronicity', the idea about my cousin was not produced in my brain, but rather my consciousness was expanded enough for me to receive the signal. But from this case we cannot know the exact causal link between the two phenomena of feeling the cousin and the others singing to the deceased. Interpreting the incident with the concept of 'synchronicity' makes the incident 'meaningful', whereas if consciousness is understood with the 'productive theory', it would have to be mere coincidence, because consciousness is generated in the brain, according to the 'productive theory', and therefore, according to that theory, it is impossible that what they would do in the other room would trigger my memory.

Another example of 'synchronistic' and extraordinary experiences of sensing is an experience of Albert, one of the hosts of the ceremonies in the town of Purmerend, whose vision during a ceremony was afterwards corroborated by another participant. Again it can be argued that this event only becomes 'meaningful' when interpreted on the basis of the 'transmissive' theory of consciousness.

> **"**I remember a ceremony in Amsterdam where one of the women grabbed my attention. I was looking and I saw her changing into an aboriginal woman completely with all the tattoos and all that, and that was pretty amazing. And then after the ceremony a girlfriend came to me and said 'I saw something special, I saw that woman change into an aboriginal woman'. She saw exactly the same thing!"
>
> (Interview with Albert, 12/3/15)

Such phenomena could be interpreted as a coincidence of hallucinations against extremely poor odds, but this is not how my informants understand the phenomena. In fact, most of them have come to believe through their experiences in the ceremonies, like 'C' argued, that there are no such things as coincidences. Therefore, to take these phenomena seriously on the group's own terms, this thesis asks: could there be something about consciousness that anthropology and materialist science in general is overlooking?

Preliminary conclusion

This chapter provides a narration of a ceremony, and briefly explanations of how the Daime and DMT work from both a scientific and emic points of view. The theme of 'consciousness' has been

discussed in relation to the OMJ's collective and individual states of altered consciousness, asserting the concept of the brain as receiving 'transmitted' consciousness rather than producing it. It is argued that in order to take the informants seriously, it is necessary to reject the 'metaphor model' and move to a 'post-materialist' standpoint that encompasses a 'plurality of ontologies'. From this standpoint, anthropology study Daime experiences through a theoretical lens that is enlarged by the concepts existing in the empirical reality in study.

The most predominant types of perceptual inputs, visions and other sensorial experiences have been listed, to reveal the coherency of Daime experiences. These experiences make sense to the Daimistas and support a common perception of their souls and worlds as meaningful and divinely guided from a point of 'unus mundus'. This inspires the idea of the Daimistas that coincidences do not exist, but rather that 'synchronicities' or 'écart' take place.

Chapter 2 – The cosmology and the soul

> "What people call reality is an illusion, and what they call illusion, that is reality."
>
> (Interview with Albert, 12/3/15)

This chapter goes into depth with the cosmology the Daimistas acquire through their activities with OMJ, with a focus on the concept of the soul. First, the definition of the concept of 'cosmology' is discussed. Drawing on empirical data, an analysis is conducted, which shows the most predominant types of insights that the Daimistas get during the ceremonies and the core principles by which the majority of the Daimistas understand their world. The historical influences visible in OMJ cosmology are shown and the ideas of 'reality' and 'illusion' are discussed. The 'perspectivism' of the 'ontological turn' is used as a theoretical framework for understanding the ideas that we live in 'ontologically distinct natures' (Viveiros de Castro 1998) or 'worlds' (Pedersen 2013) and that our perspective shapes the world as we perceive it. With the concept of 'synchronicity' introduced in the previous chapter, this chapter suggests that the ceremonies through providing a scene for 'synchronicity' to be experienced, open up to a position from which different worlds can be experienced as merging together. This state of merging worlds, I argue, can be understood as the 'liminal' state of the ritual. Staying in this state can be learned, but does not happen automatically, I argue.

Cosmology and ontology defined

The study of 'cosmologies' in anthropology has been popular in the beginning of the discipline, but faced a low interest period following the crisis of representation and in the post-modern period where cultures in study are no longer seen as isolated wholes. Nonetheless, the topic of 'cosmology' has recently re-emerged as a "prime ethnographic concern for anthropology" (Abrahamson & Holbraad 2014: 2). So what is meant by 'cosmology'? Don Handelman argues that 'cosmology' is closely connected to 'ontology' (Handelman 2008: 182). For defining 'ontology' Handelman uses Bruce Kapferer's definition: "the fundamental principles of a being in the world and the orientation of such a being toward the horizons of its experience" (Kapferer in Handelman 2008: 182). 'Cosmology' is defined by the Encyclopaedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology as "the theory of the universe as an ordered whole, and of the general laws which govern it" (Howell 2002: 129). On this basis, I see 'ontology' as the phenomenological topic of being and experiencing as well as the principles of what can be experienced and how the existing world can be grasped. 'Cosmology' I take to be the understanding of the world that the subject inhabits, based on the 'ontological principles' that

the subject acknowledges. Therefore, the 'ontological principles' of a subject set a frame for the 'cosmology' that the subject is open to perceiving.

The Daimistas generally use the words 'beliefs' and 'belief systems' rather than the analytical abstractions that I was searching for: 'cosmology' and 'ontology'. When mentioning 'belief systems' their point was most often to highlight the importance of avoiding getting trapped in any closed 'belief system'. Therefore I had to draw together these hints about their independent beliefs and the ontological basis they were talking from and evaluate which overall picture they were drawing of their cosmology, without ending up with an analysis that they would find a delimiting image.

The creation of a cosmology

Because the experiences of altered states of consciousness in the ceremonies are different from the usual mode of 'being-in-the-world' (Heidegger 2010 [1953]: 53), the Daimistas get inspired to question their basic 'ontological principles'. However, when they return to their normal states of consciousness, these experiences of other 'ontological principles' are left as memories that stand in contrast to what they experience in their daily life. Based on my participation and interpretation of observations and interviews, I have come to see the creation of the Daimista cosmology as a process, in which the ceremonial experiences start reshaping the subject's personal ontology and thus also cosmology through a conscious and sub-conscious negotiation process. In this process, experience, doubt, belief, previous knowledge and assumptions, and new information fluctuate in a hermeneutic process which gradually, through smaller and bigger leaps, changes the cosmology that each person adheres to.

Writing about "the cosmology of OMJ" rests on the assumptions that OMJ is a group with a shared cosmology. This is of course a theoretical abstraction. Because the group does not have registered members, the group actually covers a loosely organised network of people who have attended at least one ceremony and are on the mailing list where they get information about subsequent ceremonies. Some of these Daimistas are very engaged in the group and all its activities. Especially the musicians and people who attend the music rehearsals become part of a closely related group and form strong friendships. Others only attend the ceremonies occasionally and do not engage in any social activities outside of the ceremonial space.

The only written material the group has reflecting their beliefs are the songs in Portuguese from the Santo Daime Church, a limited amount of songs received by Daimistas of OMJ, and some prayers. By "receiving songs" is meant that a new, complete song, often rhyming, suddenly appears in the mind of a Daimista, usually during a ceremony or in a dream. According to the legend of the group, this is the way all their songs, and the Santo Daime songs, have come into existence. The songs are, as aforementioned, in Portuguese, which makes their lyrics incomprehensible to most participants. In one of the song books, though, the Portuguese lyrics are accompanied by Dutch translation. Only few of the participants pay much attention to the lyrics of the songs. Instead, they primarily notice sound and emotion conveyed through the music. Therefore this little written material in the form of songs is not a central and permanent focal point for the 'cosmology', compared to canonical books of religions such as the Bible. Instead, the ceremonies are the overall focus of the group and they constitute the place and event where beliefs are being born and formed, mainly based on individual experiences of the participants. This central importance of the ceremonies are also found by Schmidt in her study of the Santo Daime Church, in which she writes that "The Santo Daime rituals serve as arenas for shaping and creatively expressing the dominant Santo Daime view of Reality" (Schmidt 2007: 145). Whereas the Santo Daime Church places more importance on hierarchy and on following "the doctrine", I find that OMJ, being intentionally more egalitarian, leaves more space for individual beliefs, based on personal experiences. Therefore, when talking about a 'cosmology' of the group, it is a matter of drawing together many independent views that some Daimistas may have discussed with other group members and others have kept privately. The individual views are all inspired by experiences within the ceremonies, mirrored in collective expression of cosmology in songs, speeches and the ceremonial practice. Interestingly, many of these individual believes and thoughts are aligned with each other in spite of how little talking the leaders do in the ceremonies to inspire the participants to hold particular ideas, and how little time is spend on talking afterwards.

It is also relevant to note that the people who are attracted to participating in the ceremonies are typically rather open-minded toward alternative interpretations of the world and alternative kinds of treatments, having the interest in the subject. Relatively many of the Daimistas practice meditation or use alternative kinds of treatments such as healing and massage, and relatively many have previous experience with marijuana, psilocybin mushrooms, Ayahuasca or other mind-altering substances, and many have previously had an interest in topics of shamanism, esotericism and spirituality. Other Daimistas on the other hand, do not have any such experience, but have just

been attracted by the benefits they have heard the Daime can have. Such benefits include resolving depression, addictions and existential crises. Therefore, the new cosmological beliefs that the Daimistas acquire during the ceremonies do of course not appear on a 'tabula rasa' in the minds of the Daimistas, but rather the collective cosmology of the group is a conglomerate of ideas, beliefs and experiences gathered from life experience, information from a variety of sources of the internet and literature, philosophical traditions, and the ceremonies with its internally experienced insights and Cesar's and Magda's talks as the major common input.

The historical influences which the Santo Daime Church has been shaped by are Catholicism, South American shamanism, Kardecist spiritualism, West African mysticism, Rosicrucianism, Theosophy, and Anthroposophy. This is mainly visible in the songs, many of which contain praise to Jesus, Virgin Mary and Joseph and the goddess of the forest, *Rainha da Floresta,* as well as various spirits. Most Daimistas are not greatly interested in the Santo Daime cosmology with its many spirits. During a rehearsal we practised a song called "Formosa", in which praise is given to a "Tarumim". I asked Cesar who it was, and he replied that it was "some spirit". The other participants did not find it necessary to ask for further explanations, even though they did not know the name.

Other inspiration to OMJ came through Cesar and Magda reading the Tao Te Ching and Greek philosophy, which they were inspired by and saw as harmoniously supplementing the knowledge they have acquired from the Santo Daime Church and scientific articles on topics such as quantum physics. The regular Daimistas do not necessarily have a large knowledge about these traditions, but many start independently searching knowledge from these traditions after they have attended their first ceremonies. Other popular sources of information are modern books and films about Ayahuasca and DMT made by so-called "psychonauts", who experiment with altered states of consciousness on their own bodies, such as Graham Hancock and Terence McKenna. During my fieldwork Cesar and Magda initiated a study group in which the Daimistas could meet up and discuss various spiritual teachings, starting with the influential spiritualist Allan Kardec, but they did not start before my fieldwork ended. This interconnectedness with other spiritual traditions can be seen as an argument against the idea that we inhabit multiple, distinct worlds, which will be discussed below.

Several informants stressed the importance of having an "open belief system", and therefore to keep an open mind towards integrating new ideas and insights from discussions with

others or from experiences during ceremonies. The Daimista Remko, a young psychologist and web designer said: "...I have an open belief system. So if there is information that is not in line with my belief system I am willing to discuss, to question my personal belief system" (Interview with Remko, 15/3/15). Remko explained that he deliberately keeps this attitude in order to learn more about life and the human psyche. I found this openness to be a common trait among the Daimistas. Another example where I saw that this virtue was appreciated was in a 'focus group' (O'Reilly 2005: 132-4) I conducted, in which Albert, one of the hosts of the ceremonies, lauded one of the other focus group participants, Jurriaan, for changing his mind through the discussion, because Albert thought it showed that Jurriaan had an open mind.

Experiences that transform cosmologies

To get an understanding of the major influences on the central ideas of the 'cosmology' of the Daimistas, I asked in the interviews in many different ways about where and how exactly they learned these principles about life that they were telling me about. In many instances the Daimistas saw their insights and cosmological understandings as experience-based, acquired directly through the ceremonies. Some participants feel like they are being told or showed new knowledge directly by some divine entity. Others feel like their consciousness is expanded so that they access a field of collective knowledge, or their own subconscious or "higher self". Others again find that observing the workings of their own thoughts and feelings during the ceremonies teaches them about the general functioning of the mind and soul. Furthermore, there is of course an exchange of experience and insights circulating in the Daime community, in which the Daimistas confirm their newly acquired insights by hearing it from the others. Therefore, many experiences are similar and lead to similar beliefs, while unique personal experience also sometimes inspire unique varieties of these.

In order to provide an overview of the central principles of the cosmology of OMJ, I have collected a list of the most prevalent insights that the Daimistas express to have received through their participation in the ceremonies. Some of the learning comes directly during the ceremonies, and other messages are understood subsequently. The most prevalent types of insights are: 1. Realisations of general principles of energy and the power of the mind and how the universe functions, with the central conclusions that thoughts manifest into physical reality, and that everything is energetically connected. 2. Acceptance, including acceptance of oneself, one's body, of suffering and of life and death. Subsequently, the acceptance often turns into appreciation and thankfulness, which leads to a general sense of more happiness and satisfaction with life in general.

Several of the Daimistas have gotten over depressions. 3. Realisations of things one needs to change in life, such as moving, to quit smoking, or quit a job. It can also be need of changing behaviour and thoughts such as becoming more present in the moment. Several of the Daimistas have quit alcohol and addictions to hard drugs. 4. Accessing or expanding creativity, including impulses to start playing an instrument and a releasing of blocks from expressing oneself through singing, painting, etc. 5. Moving the main point of awareness from the mind to the heart or soul. This includes a feeling of a better understanding of who one really is, and an identification with being a 'soul' rather than a 'person', and therefore starting paying more attention to intuition and less to thinking. 6. Being confronted with fears and blockings in one's personal development and realising how to dissolve them.

Outline of the group cosmology

With reservations to the mentioned variability of beliefs within the group and the complex process of creation of these cosmological beliefs, the coding and analysis of the empirical data showed some prevalent beliefs that I assess can be considered the cosmology that the participants share to a considerable level. Therefore, the overarching principles of the cosmology of OMJ are as follows: God is understood as omnipresent and many use the word "the universe" or "the source" instead, to indicate that all souls are part of the divine and to avoid personifying divinity. Reincarnation is widely believed in, and so is the idea that each soul is following its destined path. This path can be understood by the person through experiences of 'synchronicity', intuition, ceremonies, or in hindsight. The paths of all souls generally follow a direction towards a higher energy frequency, which can be reached by a greater wisdom and a cleansed body and mind, including a clean pineal gland, which is directly attained through drinking the Daime. It is a highly valued virtue to "see clearly", which is why activities that can confuse or sidetrack the mind, such as watching TV and smoking, are often avoided. For this reason also, some ceremonies involve optional treatment with Sananga eye drops, which is another Amazonian plant extract of which a few drops are applied in the eyes of the Daimistas to cause a (painful) cleansing of the eyes, third eye, and the mind, and to support their ability to focus.

The Daime is understood as possessing intelligence deriving from the spirit of the plants it contains, which guides each Daimista to have the experiences that fit his or her individual path. This intelligence is known as "the spirit of Daime" and with ascribing this intelligence to the Daime, the brew becomes an 'agent' whose ability to give advice and guidance during the ceremo-

nies are seen as the conscious 'agency' of the Daime (Gallagher & Zahavi 2008: 158). A belief that all my interviewees ascribed to and found important, was that the external world mirrors the internal thoughts and feelings of each individual, which makes it important to become aware of one's thoughts. Belief in the existence of ethereal energy was also very prevalent, which involves a belief that humans have an energetic body with chakras (energy centres) and an aura (ethereal energy layer around the body), and which makes it possible to affect other people with the use of one's energy, directed by the power of intention.

The physical reality including the concept of time is generally understood as being an illusion or a matrix, which one can learn to see trough with experience. The illusory character of the physical world is connected to the idea that the physical world exists in one of many dimensions. The dimensions can be understood as different energy frequency levels of existence, which constitute separate worlds. The Daime is thought to open "the curtain" to the different dimensions in which spirits and (other) divine beings reside. This idea of dimensions and the world as an illusion influences the perception of what 'reality' is, with a relatively high importance ascribed to dreams, imagination and "hallucinations". Theories about extraterrestrial life and conspiracies of hidden power structures in the physical world are also common, but not something that occupies all the participants.

Putting forward the documentation for all these beliefs among OMJ would be a whole book in itself, but the "Prayer for Consecration of the Space" is an example of one of the few pieces of written material that represents generally accepted cosmological beliefs. It is read aloud in Dutch, so that the participants understand the meaning of it, and participants often refer to this prayer as being an important part of the ceremonies. They also have an English translation of it, of which a part of it goes:

> "In a perfect communion between my lower self and my higher self, which is God in me, I consecrate this place to the most perfect expression of all the divine qualities that are in me and in all beings. The vibrations of my thoughts are the forces of God's strength in me that are stored here and radiate towards all beings, and so making this place into a center of emission and reception of all that is good, joyful and prosperous."

This excerpt of the prayer shows an image of the self as consisting of a "higher" and a "lower" part, of which the 'lower self' is seen as the incarnated part of the soul, while the 'higher

self' is the part of the soul which resides in the divine realms. The second sentence of the excerpt shows that thoughts are given high importance, because they "radiate energetically" out to others and thus physically affect the surroundings, giving the individual the divine power to manifest, which is to attract and create the substance of the thoughts into physical reality.

Many traits of this cosmology resemble the 'perspectivist' cosmology of the shamanic traditions of the Amazon, from which the Daime brew originates. The following section will look at how this 'perspectivism' has been understood by anthropology and how it has inspired the 'ontological turn' in the discipline.

Perspectivism and multinaturalism

The theory of 'perspectivism' was drawn into anthropology by Viveiros de Castro on the basis of his study of native South American 'cosmology'. 'Perspectivism' and Daime thus both derive from the Amazonian region. With the 'ontological turn' Viveiros de Castro presents the idea that there is not merely one ontology, but several. 'Perspectivism' suggests that ontology, the nature of what exists, differs according to the perspective (Viveiros de Castro 2012). Therefore, anthropologists should aim to perform a 'decolonization of thought' by realising that what seems real from one perspective is a result of the angle from which this subject is viewed (Viveiros de Castro 2011: 128). Viveiros de Castro, and inspired by him also Pedersen, argue that humans inhabit 'multiple worlds' which are distinct from each other and inaccessible for people living in other worlds (Pedersen 2013: 36) or natures (Viveiros de Castro 1998: 470-2). This is a problematic statement for anthropology which has as a goal for its discipline to create understanding between people, and it contradicts the basis of phenomenology, which is that all humans share a common ontological reality because of the fact that we all have human bodies, from which perspective we have the experience of 'being' (Heidegger 2010 [1953]: 33-37). Furthermore, as shown above, it is problematic because it is evident that people and religions influence each other.

When ontologies are different for different people and animals, Viveiros de Castro argues that all thought within Amazon ontology is a 'self-referential mechanism' (Viveiros de Castro 2013: 491). 'Perspectivism', as it takes form in many South American cosmologies, states that many animals have human souls, but are wearing an animal mask in the physical world. A soul coming into the physical world in the form of for instance a jaguar, experiences other jaguars as humans, while it sees humans as what humans see as jaguars. In this way, the native South Ameri-

cans who have perspectivism as part of their cosmology believe that humans and some animals share the same transcendental nature, but that our perspectives shape our realities in the physical world (Viveiros de Castro 2012: 47-55). Shamans in this context are understood as 'trans-specific' beings that are able to change perspectives as they move between the worlds (Ibid.: 48).

A central part of the cosmology of OMJ presented above is the idea that thoughts manifest into reality. This principle becomes apparent to the participants through the course of ceremonies where they have experiences of the external world reacting to their inner world. In this respect they have experiences reflecting the idea of 'perspectivism' in the sense that the physical world is different according to the perspective of the individual. In the process of integrating the new experiences from the ceremonies, the Daimistas get a new 'perspective' on life, which creates a change in their 'cosmology'. The concept of 'perspectivism' is thus relevant for understanding OMJ at two levels. First, the perspective is changed when going through a ceremony so that the subject experiences reality in a new way afterwards, and therefore he or she will perceive his or her surroundings differently. Second, 'perspectivism' is a theoretical framework for understanding the possibility of the physical world actually reacting to the inner world of the subject.

The theory of 'perspectivism' can help explaining how the Daimistas come to live in an 'ontologically different world' (Pedersen 2013: 36), or in another 'nature' than before (Viveiros de Castro 1998: 470-2), distinct from people who have not tried the Daime. It became clear to me during the fieldwork that the Daimistas saw their world as inaccessible to people who had not attended any ceremonies. An example is from a song rehearsal where I first met a group of Daimistas:

> "'B' asks me if I have tried the Daime before or if it is all gibberish to me. I say I haven't, and they all nod knowingly to each other and me, as if I am in for some big experience in the weekend, and that I am just a green fledgling right now, an outsider. But they are welcoming and agree that my stay here is a good gift for myself."
>
> (Field notes, 10/2/15)

Another situation where this divide was pointed out was at my second meeting with Cesar and Magda, where I discussed the plan for the fieldwork with Magda. The field notes from that situation say: "Magda says that I just need to wait until I have tried the Daime myself, from then on I will be able to understand what they are talking about". She hereby indicates that the boundary between the Daimistas and non-Daimistas is impenetrable with words alone. Only by drinking the

Daime would I be able to understand their 'cosmology' and enter their 'lifeworld' (Jackson 1996: 7-8) to any extent. This necessity of drinking the Daime to be let in to their 'lifeworld' was also found by Schmidt when she conducted fieldwork among the Santo Daime Church (Schmidt 2007: 22-23), and Harner when researching shamanism among the Conibo people of the Amazon (Harner 1982 [1980]: 2). 'Lifeworld' is a phenomenological concept, which Michael D. Jackson defines as:

> "…that domain of everyday, immediate social existence and practical activity, with all its habituality, its crises, its vernacular and idiomatic character, its biographical particularities, its decisive events and indecisive strategies, which theoretical knowledge addresses but does not determine, from which conceptual understanding arises but on which it does not primarily depend".
>
> (Jackson 1996: 7-8)

'Lifeworld' is thus a term which, in line with the phenomenological tradition, focuses on the lived experience, which is related to 'theoretical knowledge', or 'cosmology', but because 'lifeworld' also includes pre-cognitive experience, 'lifeworld' and 'cosmology' do not necessarily always correspond. The 'lifeworld' of OMJ will be further explored in the following chapter.

To conclude on the topic of 'multiple worlds', the understanding of the idea, that I have found relevant for this context, is that the Daimistas change their perspectives through the ceremonies and therefore start living in a new 'world', which is not accessible to people who have never drunk the Daime. Nevertheless, there is still an interconnection between these 'multiple worlds'. The 'multiple worlds' can therefore in this context not be seen as completely isolated.

Manifestation: when the non-physical materializes

Looking at the ceremonies in the light of 'perspectivism' it is relevant to remember that the Daime derives from native South American cultures where it has been used in the form of Ayahuasca by shamans and at times given to lay people, for the purpose of accessing other worlds (Brabec de Mori 2011: 28). The ceremonies can therefore be understood as a space where the boundaries between the distinct worlds are dissolved. In this state where the veils between the worlds are temporarily removed, the Daimistas get to experience what we with Jung can call the 'connecting principles', including the principles of thought manifestation. The Daimistas use the term 'manifestation' to describe the belief that thoughts and feelings shape and create physical reality. An example of this

is 'C''s description of an incident during a ceremony where he felt like he experienced the principle that thoughts have an effect on the physical world:

> "I was sitting on one side of the circle. It was at the beginning of the concentration. In the other end were the women. So there was one girl with whom I had some kind of personal contact. It was okay. I mean we were on some kind of personal level. At some point I felt coming from her, emanating from her, negative energy. It [the energy] somehow wanted me to accept this negative energy into me, as to remove it from her, to take it from her. And I said "no", I stop it, I block it, I don't want to. The moment I said no, she started vomiting. So she had to let it go. The first way was to go to me and say "I want you to take it", but I didn't, so she vomited it out herself."

(Interview with 'C', 27/5/15)

In this case 'C' has an experience of the 'connecting principles' that Jung describes as the invisible connections between events that appear meaningfully related but without a causal connection in the physical reality. In the ceremony, 'C' goes behind the veil, where he is outside of his regular, physical world, in an altered state of consciousness, where he 'transmits' inputs that he usually would not register. This makes him aware of the connection between his thoughts and the physical reaction of the woman.

When the Daimistas return to their regular states of consciousness, the 'perspective' they have on reality has changed, because of the experiences they have had. If a Daimista like 'C' has experienced 'synchronicity' and manifestation, he will have incorporated these principles into his cosmological beliefs. When he starts believing that this is how the world functions, he will start paying attention to phenomena that confirm this belief. In this way he has expanded his 'cosmology' to incorporate 'synchronicity', and he has seen the world from a shamanic privileged view between worlds in which he has had the experience that his daily perspective is limited to only a part of the reality that exists. On this basis, most of the Daimistas start believing that the physical world is only one part of reality, a matrix or an illusion, which is a faint image of the non-physical dimensions. At several occasions I heard references to the allegory of the cave by Plato. In this famous allegory, Plato creates an image of men who are chained in a cave and only able to see the shadows from the real world outside the cave. The men have always been there, so they believe that the shadows are the real world. When one of them breaks free and sees the direct daylight, he cannot go

back to believing in the reality of the shadows (Plato 2000 [380 B.C.]: 220ff.). The Daimistas use this allegory to explain that they find it impossible to go back to believing that the world of shadows –the physical world– is reality, after having stepped outside of their daily perspective through the ceremonies. They are now Daimistas, and they now have a different 'perspective', which makes them live in an ontologically distinct world than non-Daimistas. Therefore they find it impossible to explain to outsiders what the Daime experience really is like.

Liminality as a learned state

In the beginning of participating in the ceremonies the effect of the Daime is often experienced as overwhelming, as in my own case shown in the previous chapter. However, some Daimistas are less affected by the Daime and experience its effect as less intense. This ability to handling the effect of the Daime more easily grows with the experience of more ceremonies. Learning to keep the intention of the ceremony in mind is a central virtue in the group and is referred to as the ability to focus and stay firm. The aim of achieving this mental position of focusing on the intention of the ceremony and staying firm, observing the thoughts and visions that come without being caught up by them, is also found in the common Dzogchen Tibetan tradition where these techniques are called 'concentrative practises' and 'open awareness practises' (Vestergaard-Poulsen et al. 2009). 'Concentrative practise' is centred on a narrow focus such as a mantra, and in the context of OMJ, the focus could be the intention of the ceremony. In 'open awareness practises' the awareness is not fixed at a certain point, but rather observes thoughts that pass through the head (Ibid.). This way of observing the thoughts without identifying with them is practised in the ceremonies of OMJ. When keeping an 'open awareness', the Daimista is able to observe the sensorial inputs without getting absorbed in them, and can thereby stay aware of himself as being the observing awareness, receiving consciousness 'transmitted' from different worlds. In this state, the Daimista is 'between worlds'. But if he gets overwhelmed by the visions, he loses the point of quiet observation and can get carried away with emotions.

The ceremonies are structured as classical 'rites of passages', with an apparent beginning, middle and end, which creates a passage to a state of a new understanding of mysteries of life (V. Turner 1967). Starting out with separating men and women in the two half circles, becoming silent, saying the opening prayer, and drinking the Daime, instigates the 'separation' and detachment from the daily life (Ibid.: 93-95). As the Daime starts taking effect, the 'liminal period' begins where it literally feels like being 'betwixt and between' different realities, and in which it is not

allowed to leave the group and the ceremony. In this state most participants experience 'communitas' as a feeling of deep connection to the group, equality and togetherness (V. Turner 2008 [1969]: 94-96). In the end a dance and a closing prayer round off the 'ritual' after which the 'aggregation' happens, through conversation and hugging, and the separation of the genders is dissolved (V. Turner 1967: 94).

Victor Turner presented the 'liminal period' as something that automatically happens to the 'neophytes' when partaking in a ritual. They would naturally glide into a 'betwixt and between' state, created by the ritual symbolism (V. Turner 1967). This creation of the 'liminal' state might be happening naturally in the empirical context for Turner's study. However, in the context of OMJ, I suggest that it takes training to master the 'open awareness' to deliberately stay in the shamanic position of being 'betwixt and between' different realities and different ontological worlds. As a newcomer, the tendency is rather to be absorbed in one experience after the other, whereas the more experienced Daimistas would develop the capacity to stay present in between, with a leg in each camp simultaneously, so to speak.

I talked with Magda about the ability of being present in the room of the ceremony to help other participants while she is under the influence of the Daime, and she explained that the ability to focus inward and outward at the same time is something she refines through the years:

> "I need to drink the Daime and to have focus with myself, but I need to be ready, if I need to help somebody. And that is totally possible. In the beginning [it was] not, because for example you are starting right now, but when you take one, two, three years, Daime will be easier with you, or you know how to surrender easier, or you know how to work easier. So for this we are totally able to help the other. In the first year, two years, I wasn't."
>
> (Interview with Magda, 4/5/15)

Magda is now able to do physical actions while at the same time "being with herself" in the altered states of consciousness, in which she has visions, receives songs, hears voices etc. She deliberately positions herself in a shamanic 'trans-specific' state, which can be understood with Turners framework as a 'betwixt and between' state, only possible to stay focused in because of her many years of experience with the Daime.

The soul

The concept of the 'soul' is hard to grasp, because its meaning varies in differing contexts and the concept is used in a variety of ways among individual subjects. Pedersen and Willerslev write about of the understanding of the 'soul' among the Siberian Chukchi and the Darhad Mongols that "indigenous conceptions of the soul tend to be vague, paradoxical, slippery, elusive, and apparently self-contradictory" (Pedersen & Willerslev 2012: 466-7). They argue that a reason for this unwillingness to constrict the term's meaning to a narrow definition is the variations of meaning the term can have according to the perspective and context of its use (Ibid.).

In OMJ the Daimistas are also generally unwilling to give a strict definition of their understanding of the 'soul'. Instead they give many different explanations to the concept and argue against simple, dualistic interpretations. One reason for this seems to be the prevalent, perspectivist idea that what a 'soul' is depends on the perspective. For instance, a 'soul' is experienced differently depending on whether it is incarnated as a human or not and whether it is seen from the perspective of that 'soul' or from the perspective of "the ego", which is another contested concept within the group of OMJ. Another reason that they are not eager to define it, I believe, is that they rely on 'tacit' understandings (Collins 2010) of its meaning, since many ceremonial experiences are non-verbal and intrapersonal. When 'soul' is not strictly defined, this 'fuzzy' (Pedersen & Willerslev 2012: 464-8) understanding of the term allows for a broad range of personal interpretations within the group. This freedom of interpretation of the term's meaning suits the high value attributed to individual freedom of belief. When the Daimistas prefer to call themselves 'spiritual' rather than 'religious', they underline this preference for freedom of interpretation which rejects religious dogmas and thereby also strict definitions of how the 'soul' should be understood. An example of this appreciation of keeping the philosophy open-ended is the 28-year-old Daimista Stephanie who expressed a typical understanding of the soul within OMJ, which is that she basically sees herself as consisting of a "physical and spiritual part", of which the spiritual part comes from "God or the Light" and lives eternally. After explaining this she said:

> "So what am I or who am I? I don't know, it's a mystery, but it's also nice to just think about it and talk about it. I think it's very important to not put a definition on it, because in the moment you define that this is it, you kind of lose the mystery, you lose the magic."

(Interview with Stephanie, 25/3/15)

This refusal of strict definitions because it threatens the "mystery" or "magic", bears witness to the widespread tendency among the Daimistas of enjoying talking about the topic of the 'soul' and the mysteries of life in general, as long as they do not feel under pressure to deliver any final conclusions. I therefore found a broad variety of ideas and philosophical theories about the soul and its connection to consciousness and the heart. A common denominator however, was that the soul is understood as the essence of a person. It is seen as the core of a human being and is of primary identification to most of the Daimistas compared to the body, because the soul is thought to live on after the body decays. Inge, a 27-year-old Daimista, expressed this primary identification with being a soul and lesser identification with the body based on her experiences in ceremonies:

> "One time I saw… I was looking in the mirror and then I saw my face turning into all different kinds of faces, so I saw myself as an Indian woman, an old man, all different faces, but I still saw my eyes. It was me inside of all those faces. So that really felt as if I was looking at all my past lives…"
>
> (Interview with Inge, 20/2/15)

Inge got her idea of the 'soul' from ceremonial experiences such as this one, in which she experienced what she interpreted as seeing herself in previous lifetimes. She concluded to this narration that: "This is just my body now at the moment". This statement made me ask her: "So when you are not your body who are YOU then?" To this she replied "Well, I am the soul who is in this body. And I had a lot of different bodies before, because I saw them".

Another informant, my gatekeeper, the 31-year-old Johan, also expressed primary identification with the soul, when he said that he sees the soul as his "real essence" that continues to live on after death and remembers the accumulated experiences through many lives, in contrast to the body, which is only part of the physical, short-lived, illusory world. These ideas divert from the shamanic ideas that Willerslev and Pedersen find among the Siberian Chukchi and the Darhad Mongols, and Viveiros de Castro finds among the Amerindians of the Amazon. These cosmologies, including that of OMJ, have in common that they see humans as incorporating both a physical and non-physical aspect. Furthermore, the soul among the Darshan Mongols is "thought to go on living after death, which is only the loss of the envelope, i.e. the flesh" (Pedersen & Willerslev 2012: 468), which is a similar viewpoint to that of Inge, Johan and the rest of OMJ. However, when Inge only sees her body as one out of many vehicles that her essence, the 'soul', incarnates in, I will argue that

the inheritance from the Platonic and Christian tradition in OMJ is visible in combination with the shamanic 'perspectivist' idea of the soul. These shamanic parallels in beliefs include the idea of separate dimensions inhabited by different spirits which is also found among native peoples of the Amazon from whom the Daime originates, such as the Jívaro. These native South Americans believe that their *nekás wakanï* souls live on in a parallel world after the death of the person they animated (Harner 1973: 149). The Jívaro also share the belief of OMJ that there are no accidents or coincidences, but rather what happens in the physical world is a result of the events in the spiritual world and its energies (Ibid.: 144, 153). The Platonic and Christian traditions are visible in the OMJ cosmology in the dualist perception of the physical world versus the immaterial world, in which the real essence of things is to be found. This non-physical realm is the one Plato refers to in the before mentioned 'allegory of the cave' (Plato 2000 [380 B.C.]) as the real world outside of the cave. A difference between the understanding of the soul among OMJ and the shamanic perspectives from Siberia, Mongolia and Amazonia relates to the ontological status of the worlds, that is, how 'real' each of these worlds are understood as being.

"The soul of the soul is the body". So write Pedersen and Willerslev with inspiration from Viveiros de Castro when interpreting the concept of the 'soul' among their peoples of study through the concept of 'perspectivism' (Pedersen & Willerslev 2012: 469-470). By this phrase they express the idea that the 'other side', the non-physical spirit world, mirrors the physical world and vice versa: the physical world is a mirror of the non-physical. Therefore, when the soul is seen as a shadow or non-physical mirror of the physical body, the body is the shadow mirroring the soul from the perspective of the non-physical reality. With this 'perspectivist' view, the different realities of the physical and non-physical are seen as different worlds that are equally real and important, but are experienced as most real from the perspective of each world's own inhabitants:

> "I suspect that the traditional "Platonic" reading of indigenous body/soul dualities (…) is entirely wrong. It should be replaced with an interpretation of these two dimensions as constituting reciprocally the *figure* and the *ground* of each other, that is, a relation totally different from that between appearance and essence."
>
> (Viveiros de Castro 2001: 42, emphasis in original)

In other words, the ontological status of the physical world and the spirit world are understood as somewhat symmetrical in the three cases presented by Pedersen, Willerslev and

Viveiros de Castro (Pedersen & Willerslev 2012: 472). The Platonic interpretation that Viveiros de Castro rejects in the citation above, is the interpretation based on the dualistic cosmology of Plato in which the soul is completely immaterial, and where the physical body is "corruptible" to the soul, so that the soul must extricate itself from the body (Ibid.: 467-8).

It is in this cross-section between shamanic and Platonic/Christian traditions that OMJ perform their ceremonies in which they develop their understanding of the soul. The Platonic/Christian inheritance of seeing the soul as the real essence of a person is widespread in OMJ, while also the perspectivist idea of what reality is prevents the Daimistas from simply concluding that the soul is more real than the body. This understanding of the soul being the real essence of a person is also found in Kardecist spiritualism (Kardec 1996: 69), which has influenced the Santo Daime Church historically (Schmidt 2007: 132). Kardec writes in "The Spirits' book", one of the central books in Kardecist spiritualism, that "the spirit-world is the normal, primitive, eternal world, pre-existent to, and surviving, everything else. The corporeal world is only secondary; it might cease to exist, or never have existed, without changing the essentiality of the spiritual world." (Kardec 1996: 32). In Kardec's writing the hierarchy between the 'spirit-world' and the 'corporeal world' is clear: the spirit world is the primary. In OMJ the hierarchy is less clearly spelled out, since the cosmology as described is a set of fluctuating ideas fused by many individual beliefs based on individual experiences and on the spiritual tradition of the Santo Daime Church, which is also a conglomerate of varying beliefs about the hierarchy of the physical and non-physical world. So even though the physical world is referred to by the OMJ Daimistas as a matrix or illusion, the body, as the physical side of the person, has a tricky ontological status of being real, but only from the perspective of this reality, while the soul is seen a person's 'essence'.

In order to cross-check this analysis I asked some of the Daimistas if they think the 'soul' is more real than the body. One of them, Jurriaan, answered: "Your body is real in this reality, just as real as your soul, but this reality is only a splinter of all of reality". This answer contains traits of both shamanistic perspectivist thought and Platonic, dualistic, Christian ideas. By saying this, Jurriaan argues, in line with shamanic perspectivism, that the 'perspective' from which the soul and body are perceived, defines how 'real' it is. However, when the body and soul are seen in the meta-perspective of the 'perspectivist cosmology' of OMJ in which different dimensions are seen as distinct worlds, the physical reality is perceived as "only a splinter of all reality". Therefore in contrast to the view on shamanism of Pedersen, Willerslev and Viveiros de Castro, the soul is seen by

the OMJ Daimistas as the eternal, immaterial essence of the person, a consciously perceiving subject, which has a greater ontological weight than the body, because of its transcendent character. To the Daimistas, the soul is thus not only a mirror and equal reflection of the body, but the essential identity of a human being. Therefore, many of them gradually get to identify more with the soul and less with the body, and strive to act more in accordance with the soul, which is associated with wisdom, rather than on a basis of human habits and instincts.

The body is thus seen as real from the perspective of this dimension, the physical world. Likewise, the visions in the ceremonies are interpreted as 'real' and not as 'hallucinations', because the OMJ 'cosmology' contains 'multiple worlds': the physical world and non-physical dimensions. The 'cosmology' thus contains traits from both lines of inheritance and all ideas of both spiritual traditions are put into play and understood on basis of individual experiences by the Daimistas in an ever-evolving and non-dogmatic, complex 'cosmology'.

Preliminary conclusion

This chapter has outlined the cosmological principles of OMJ through an analysis of the types of insights that the Daimistas report receiving during the ceremonies, and an analysis of the historical influences that are traceable in the actions and narrations of the Daimistas. The cosmology is created in a context of a 'liminal state', which is not created automatically, but is a learned state, that the Daimistas practice mastering, and which involves the ability to stay focused in a meta-awareness of experiencing different dimensions simultaneously during the ceremonies. The Daimistas understand their 'visions' not as 'hallucinations' but rather as glimpses of other parts of reality made possible by the expansion of consciousness caused by the Daime as an intelligent agent. This interpretation of the cosmology rests on the concepts of 'perspectivism' and 'multinaturalism', which is shown to apply to OMJ, possibly because they are partly rooted in shamanic traditions. However, when it comes to the cosmology of the 'soul', the predominant experience among OMJ of the soul is that it is the immaterial essence of a person, and that the physical world, in which the body lives, is seen as an illusion. In this regard, the traits of Christianity and Platonic philosophy influence the OMJ cosmology. To understand how visions are interpreted as real, they must be looked at in the context of the whole 'cosmology', in which the physical world is seen as only one out of many dimensions.

Chapter 3 – The lifeworld of the Daimistas

> "We are all in one big boat, and we all need to row. And sometimes one person cannot row the boat, and it's okay, we row for the person. When we all go together, we will arrive."
>
> (Interview with Frenk, 23/2/15)

This chapter explores the 'lifeworld' of the Daimistas with a special focus on 'morality' in order to answer the part of the problem statement that addresses how the cosmological principles of OMJ are guiding the Daimistas' 'lifeworld'. As shown in the previous chapter, 'lifeworld' is a phenomenological concept, which refers to the lived and experienced world, and is informed but not necessarily determined by the 'cosmology' that one holds (Jackson 1996: 7-8). Empirical examples from the Daimistas will be presented as cases where the consequences of the cosmological principles are acted out in everyday life for the benefit of environmental and social causes. The concepts of 'morality as practice' (Schmidt 2007: 46) and the 'subjective turn' (Dawson 2013: 94) are consulted in order to understand the drive behind the actions of the Daimistas in their daily life. It is shown that there is a drive towards doing 'the good' and "raising the frequency" through purification and positive thoughts and actions. Luhrmann's concept 'theory of mind' is used in order to understand the change in cosmology that the Daimistas undergo, and her concept of 'attentional learning' shows how these changes are substantiated and incorporated into practice in daily life. It is argued that rather than actions undertaken to enhance personal capital, the moral drive should be understood as a result of 'holistic experiences' and 'communitas' experiences which cause the Daimistas to diminish the boundary between self and group. This inspires the offset for collective moral practice that what each person thinks and does influences the others.

Morality in anthropology

The study of 'morality' and 'ethics' as emic phenomena has existed in anthropology and sociology since Durkheim and Edward E. Evans-Pritchard in the 1950's, but has only become a popular focus in anthropology during the 1990's (Robbins 2013: 457, Laidlaw 2014: 10-11). James Laidlaw places the topic of 'morality' in anthropology as a successor of the understanding of 'agency' in 'practice theory' of Pierre Bourdieu and others who see human action as a combination of habitual actions reproducing social structures (Bourdieu 1977: 77) and personal efforts of maximizing economic, social, and cultural capital, to which recently also 'erotic' and other kinds of capital has been

added (Laidlaw 2014: 4-7). Phenomena of gift giving and philanthropy are understood by 'practice theory' as actions undertaken with a personal aim of accumulation of capital, whether this is done consciously or unconsciously. Therefore, moral acts are understood in 'practice theory' as acts simulating a moral concern but actually done in order to acquire symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1986: 252). Since Laidlaw, and as we shall see below, also Schmidt, use 'practice theory' and 'transactionalism' as opponents for discussing their understandings of morality, I use the idea of the profit maximizing and structure reproducing agent to contrast and discuss what I find to be the morality of the Daimistas.

The morally acting Daimistas

Joel Robbins argues that 'the good' and 'morality' exist as parts of empirical reality, but cannot simply be perceived, and need to be studied as something imaginatively conceived (Robbins 2013: 457), and Michael Lambek adds to this prescription for studying morality, that it can be observed as implicitly embedded in practice (Lambek 2012: 341). During my research, it soon became evident through speech and actions of the Daimistas that their 'lifeworld' is greatly influenced by a big concern and commitment to social and environmental causes. I therefore went along in some of their daily activities outside of the ceremonial setting to study which ideal of 'the good' and 'morality' the Daimistas were working towards.

Schmidt argues that in the mother community of the Santo Daime Church, the Amazonian eco-village Céu do Mapiá, the Daimistas under influence by the Daime, have 'holistic experiences' of being one with nature, and that these 'holistic experiences' inspire action to preserve the environment. Their moral drive, Schmidt argues, is then directly based on experiences with the Daime (Schmidt 2007: 170 ff). This way of living out morality both through inner and outer practice is what Schmidt calls 'morality as practice'. Among the Daimistas of OMJ there is an evident sense of responsibility towards influencing one's surroundings positively, including the natural environment as well as the social. For example the communal garden 'Dorpstuin Hardegaryp', which Johan and Cesar are working in, aims at both creating a healthy environment for social interactions, a source of healthy, organic food for the local community, and a place where old species of plants can be grown and preserved.

Actions in the outside world, however, are only one arena for moral practice. Many of my informants emphasised the importance of changing yourself before you encourage your sur-

roundings and other people to change. Milan, a Daimista in his thirties who works as a choreographer and dancer, expressed this viewpoint when talking about what he learned about his own consciousness from participating in the ceremonies:

> *"*I've learned the power of the thinking (...), the power of what you think becomes your reality. What you feel, what you are believing becomes your reality. You can change yourself; you cannot change all the world. All the time people want to change the entire world, but the first thing you can change is yourself."

(Interview with Milan, 11/4/15)

Milan expresses here the widespread opinion among the Daimistas that change has to start with the individual. It is generally believed among OMJ that the most effective way to affect one's surroundings is through clearing negativity from oneself, and thereby radiating positivity and a "high vibration" which can inspire others. They also believe that inner work with an aim of helping others directly, e.g. through praying, can create perceptible changes in the outer world. This perception of the ceremonial activities as being inner work with an important effect on the outer world for the individual and the collective is what gives the ceremonies the name 'work' or *Trabalho*. This principle that the inner world affects the outer belongs to the cosmological belief in manifestation. Therefore, the Daimistas are encouraged to primarily focus on inner work. Physical action was also considered positive but impossible to succeed in, if the personal attitude and energy is not aligned with the actions.

This tendency to focus on changing oneself is also found by Andrew Dawson in his study of the Santo Daime Church (Dawson 2013: 93 ff). Dawson uses the term the 'subjective turn', which he also calls the 'turn to the self', pointing to the turn that he has seen many Daimistas of the church in Brazil undertake from being engaged in working with social transformation in the outer world to focusing on inner transformation. However, the Daimistas often do not confine to just inner work, but also undertake a wide range of volunteer work. The long list of initiatives and morally driven activities include for instance: teaching in public schools to prevent bullying and stimulate social responsibility and musical creativity among the pupils, creating a communal garden growing organic food for the local people, playing music for refugees to give them a warm welcome to the country, arranging public spiritual events, and participating in the public debate in support of values

as free information access, sustainability, and sharing ideas on how to lead a physically and mentally healthy lifestyle.

A case of moral practice

Cesar is one of the Daimistas to whom doing 'the good' (Robbins 2013) takes up a great part of his everyday life. First and foremost, he and Magda left their mother country in order to help people in Europe benefit from the Daime. Apart from this work with arranging and conducting ceremonies and song rehearsals, which occupies the majority of their time, Cesar also partakes in the volunteer work at schools and, as described above, in the communal garden. Likewise, Cesar was also directly motivated by his experiences with the Daime in his major life decisions. He told me, that when he first started drinking the Daime about fifteen years ago, the Daime made him realise that he should quit hard drugs. Later, he heard a voice during a ceremony telling him the names "Brussels" and "Belgium". He felt that he was being called to bring the Daime to Brussels, and so he did. He started a Daime group there that existed until Cesar moved to the Netherlands where the Daime is legal in religious, ceremonial use under the protection of religious freedom, contrary to in Belgium (Labate & Jungaberle 2011: 331). In the beginning of his involvement with the Santo Daime Church, Cesar followed the church's traditions more strictly, but he faced many challenges and almost gave up on the project when he had the following experience, that he shared with me when I first met him. These are the notes I took from our conversation:

> "Cesar wanted to stop using the Daime to put an end to the troubles with organizing the group in Europe. But as he stood with the Daime about to pour it into the toilet, he experienced the Daime talking to him, saying "drink me!" So he went to the garden by himself with Magda coming to check on him now and then. He drank the Daime and had a vision of his "guardian angel or whatever you would like to call it" who said: "You have seen God and now you just want to keep it in your own drawer to look at when you feel down? People need to meet God! Also those who smoke marijuana, dress in black clothes, don't like religion, don't want to sing and so on. They are the ones who need it most! So bring it to the people"."
>
> (Field notes, 10/2/15)

It is impossible to know whether an angel actually appeared to Cesar during that evening. Nonetheless, the experience was real to him and it made him take action and keep working

with the Daime. Cesar was inspired to create OMJ as a branch of the Santo Daime Church, where uniforms and hierarchy are set aside, in order to reach out to the Dutch population whom Cesar learned are less willing to follow dogmas than the Brazilian Santo Daime Church members. In this way, the creation of OMJ as a branch of the Santo Daime Church is based upon Cesar's experiences with the Daime and is fuelled by Cesar and Magda's moral drive towards helping others.

Inner moral practice as a result of holistic experiences

Listening to- and acting on the experiences Cesar had of the Daime talking to him, is what Schmidt also finds among the Daimistas of Céu do Mapiá: they are 'following the Daime', meaning that they follow the advice they receive and lessons they learn during the ceremonies, without necessarily explaining motives for it other than the wish to 'follow the Daime' (Schmidt 2007: 20). The act of 'following' can be a more or less extrovert activity. Schmidt argues that anthropologists have to broaden their view on 'action' and 'agency', away from 'instrumentality' and 'transactions' (Barth 1966) and 'practice theory' (Bourdieu 1977). From the 'instrumental' view 'action' and 'transactions' are seen as 'instruments' to maximise their goods and capitals, in line with the above mentioned 'practice theory' of Bourdieu and others (Schmidt 2007: 46). 'Agency', Schmidt argues, should not only be seen as an 'instrument' to reach an end goal, but as broad as "the socioculturally mediated capacity to act" (Ahearn in Schmidt 2007: 45). Therefore, the drive behind actions, Schmidt argues, can be a 'moral practice', in which 'actions' do not have any other end goal than the moral action itself.

I will argue, that if 'practice theory' should be used for explaining the moral drive of OMJ, we would have to add the capital form of 'spiritual capital' or 'karma', to understand why so much other capital is invested in spiritual practice and in doing 'the good'. Karma is an emic concept of OMJ which derives from Indian philosophy and religion. The concept of karma is used in various ways but generally covers the belief that all actions create a positive or negative effect, which comes back to the individual in this- or another lifetime (Tull 2011). 'Practice theory' when accepting the emic/religious concept of karma could explain moral actions of OMJ as instrumental transaction with the underlying goal of maximizing 'karmic capital' with the self-interested goal of reaching enlightenment. Nonetheless, I find that this approach would only take the Daimista logic serious to a limited extent. The reason for this, I claim, can be found in the experiences and cosmological beliefs of OMJ, which are outlined in the previous chapters.

The most common type of experiences with altered states of consciousness in the ceremonies is, according to the data presented in chapter one, 'holistic experiences'. In these 'holistic experiences' the Daimistas experience that the boundary between the individual and the collective is dissolved. This kind of mystical experience, where the subject understands him- or herself as decentralised, tends to leave such an imprint on the Daimistas that they continuously keep the cosmological idea that everything is connected. The consequence of this is that when one person does something good, it affects the whole, both if the action is internal or external, hence Dawson's concept of the 'subjective turn'. Therefore, I will argue, the logic of 'practice theory' and 'transactionalism', in which the individual seeks to maximize his or her capital, does not apply fully to people who have believe in a 'holistic' cosmology in which the boundary between self and whole is blurred. Consequently, when a Daimista explains the reason for an action by saying that he or she is 'following the Daime', this logic also tacitly rests on the basic cosmological principle of the decentralised subject and a faith the intelligence of the Daime, and thereby the assumption that the Daime will give instructions that will benefit the whole, including the subject in its interconnected nature.

When a Daimista like Cesar wishes to purify himself and raise his own frequency through working on his inner condition, he believes that this work will benefit the collective whole. If he seeks to help others, such as by creating a communal garden, this positive action will also benefit Cesar personally because he is part of the bigger whole that he is helping. Therefore, all the Daimistas seeking to work together in the ceremonies to raise the frequency for the benefit of everybody in- and outside of the ceremony, cannot just be seen as an investment in 'karmic capital' alone, but also as communal work for the sake of the common good. This analysis of the work of the ceremonies and the moral practice of the Daimistas outside the ceremonies thus supports the viewpoint of Robbins that the urge to do 'the good' exists as an empirical fact, rather than just a self-interested want of maximizing personal capital (Robbins 2013: 457-9).

Raising the frequency

In OMJ, the 'lifeworld' of the Daimistas is, like in the Santo Daime Church, strongly characterised by the 'moral practice' of 'following the Daime'. This is the case for Cesar, as explained above, and is also reflected in relation to the endurance of unpleasant physical states during the ceremonies. Following the principles of the 'subjective turn', where inner work is seen as 'agency' that has a real effect on the world, endurance of nausea, freezing, rapid heartbeat and other physical effects during the ceremonies is also interpreted as meaningful for the Daimistas. Choosing to endure suf-

fering for a religious purpose can, according to Asad, be understood as 'agency' rather than passive submission to external power (Asad 2000: 45). In this way, sitting in silence going through tough inner processes can thus be understood as active 'work'.

Throughout my research, I continually asked the Daimistas about their thoughts on what I regarded as side-effects of the Daime, especially the occasional vomiting and diarrhoea which can accompany the ceremonial experience. The Daimistas refer to this as 'purging', underlining the cleansing effect of it. This way of perceiving the bodily cleansing as carrying energy out of the body, was also shown in the narration of 'C' in the previous chapter, where he insisted that the woman, who was radiating negative energy, had to vomit the energy out herself instead of transferring the energy to him. I learned that these unpleasant experiences are actually not seen as side-effects, but as part of the healing work of the ceremonies in which both physical and energetic pollution is removed from the body, hence the Daime is seen by the Daimistas as a 'medicine' instead of a 'drug'. In this perspective, purging is experienced as a meaningful 'action' when the Daimistas choose to go through the suffering in acceptance and morally driven. Because it is seen as having a positive effect on the surroundings when an individual cleanses his or her own energy, purging is not only a personal affair, but a moral action: of 'following the Daime' and raising the frequency in the world at large. The 'lifeworld' of the Daimistas is thus full of more or less visible moral 'agency', in both the inner and outer world.

The understanding of the process of following the Daime and raising the frequency can be illustrated as in Figure 1. I have created this illustration in order to help the reader visualise the work of the Daimistas undertaken both during ceremonies and in their daily life, by which they seek to raise their personal energy frequency in order to get closer to the divine. The illustration on the next page is one way of mapping of the conceptual 'lifeworld' that the Daimistas navigate in:

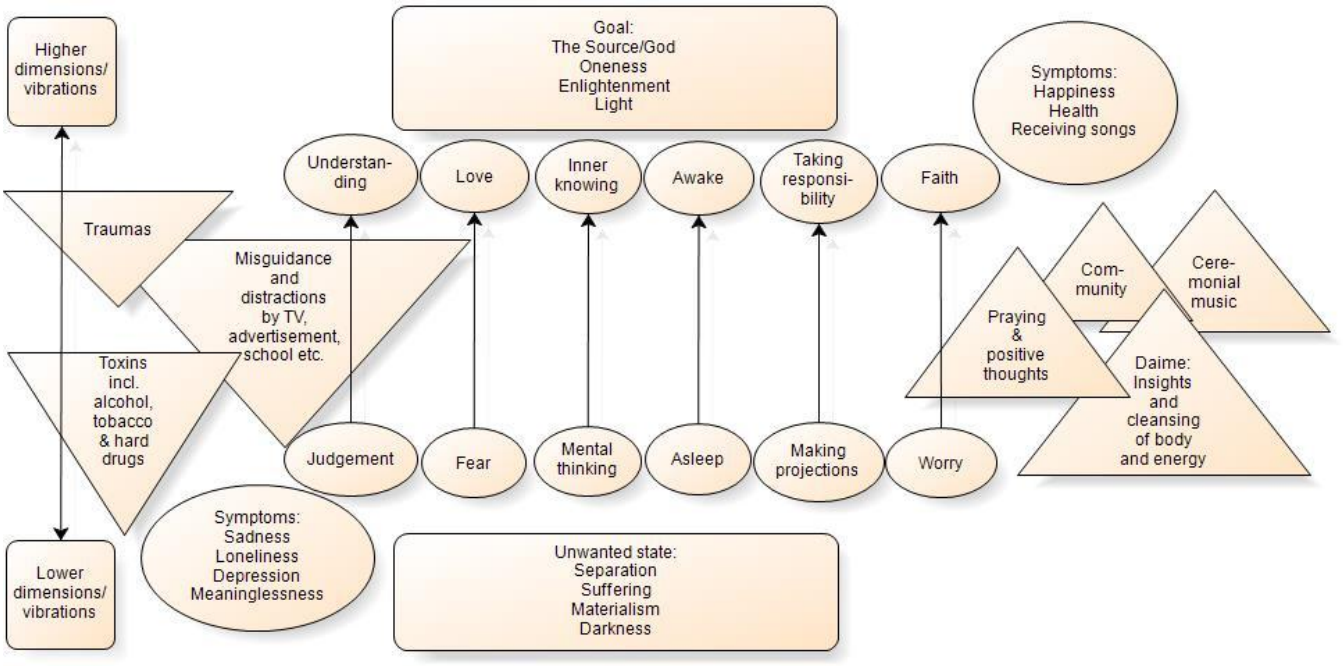

Fig. 1. *Illustration of the work of raising the frequency (created by the author).*

This schematized way of presenting the key points of the Daimistas and their spiritual work is of course a simplification of many diverse views. I have created the illustration as a condensation and fusion of numerous utterances and actions, which I analyzed as expressions of cosmological beliefs guiding moral behaviour. The arrows between the boxes are meant to indicate continuums rather than dichotomies.

The illustration shows how the ceremonies are understood as aiding in the spiritual pursuit towards a better life, and how the 'Ontmoeting met jezelf', the meeting with yourself, is created as a process of realising one's own divine nature. The Daimistas seek to move upwards in the illustration, and upwards in frequency, away from the low frequencies and its symptoms. This process of moving upwards is not a one-way process but a continuous process of moving back and forth, learning and failing, but gradually growing into higher frequencies. The triangles on the right show the tools they use to move upwards and the downward pointing triangles on the left show elements that are understood by the Daimistas to be bringing the frequency down.

The Daimistas see the challenges in life as lessons that teach people to lift their frequency and find their way back to their divine origin. The small oval shapes in the middle show concrete feelings, thoughts, and mental states that the Daimistas seek to change for the better. For

instance, should feelings of 'worry' be replaced by 'faith', and that is possible by avoiding seeing negative stories in the media, and ingesting toxins that pollute the pineal gland and 'third eye chakra' and thus disables the Daimista to see clearly. Instead, praying, positive thinking, and ceremonies by which the pineal gland is cleansed and the Daimista has visions, aids to see through the illusions of the physical world. Perhaps the Daimista has some ceremonial experiences of 'synchronicities' that support the belief that there is a hidden causality of meaning behind everything that helps to establish faith. All of this raises the Daimistas' frequencies towards the divine and their divine higher selves. Again, by raising one's own frequency the individual also helps raising the collective frequency.

The ceremonies thus function as arenas for learning these principles and the Daimistas consider lessons learned only when they are applied in daily life. Therefore, as many informants stressed in our conversations, the Daime is not a miracle cure that fixes the problems for people, but they have to do the work themselves. Frenk, a young Daimista explained this to me in an interview, when I asked him how often he attends the ceremonies:

> "There was a time I went four times in a month. But now it is important for me not to go that many times, because when you go to the ceremony you receive a lot of information. And this information you have to integrate in your life. So when you go every week, every week you get new information and you don't have the time to integrate it into your life."
>
> (Interview with Frenk, 23/2/15)

Frenk explained that now he attends the ceremonies approximately once a month, and that some of the experiences take several years before they are fully integrated in his understanding of himself and how the world functions. Just a few days before this interview, he realised the meaning of his experiences during his first ceremony, which took place two years earlier. The work of the ceremonies is thus not limited to the time spent in the ceremonial setting, but is a continuous work in progress.

A case of raising the frequency with a song

One ceremony in particular gave me an experience of how 'real' the phenomenon of raising the frequency can feel, and how much individual work can feel as affecting the collective energy within a ceremony. Cesar's brother Fabio had come over from Brazil with some fresh and extra strong

Daime and joined two ceremonies two days in a row. When the Daime is consumed on two consecutive days, the Daimista is more receptive to the Daime on the second day, and thus more strongly affected by it. Therefore, at the second ceremony, we were all very affected by the Daime and many were purging and having a hard time. At some point, Magda gave a common message in order to encourage the participants to work on raising their frequencies. She told me later on that she thought people were too much caught up in their fears at that point. These are my notes from the situation:

> "Magda said: 'Hey, we are creating this! We can change it and we can all have a good work!' Cesar pulled out a strong weapon to raise the frequency at this point: 'No Azul', the song he has received, which is kind of a 'hit' in the group and is usually used towards the end of the ceremonies where people stand up and reach a positive mood and high energy level. Now he pulled it out already before the concentration, which I took as a sign that he did all he could to raise the atmosphere."
>
> (Field notes, 11/4/15)

In the notes from this situation is clear how Cesar and Magda see the inner work as something that affects the whole atmosphere of the room. Cesar and Magda use the tools of positive thoughts, focus and ceremonial music to raise the frequency of the ceremony, but they have to appeal to the Daimistas to help them raise the energy, because it is a collective energy, which Magda and Cesar cannot pull up alone, and the Daimistas are also there to learn to raise the frequencies themselves.

Theory of mind and attentional learning

The concepts of 'attentional learning' and 'theory of mind', can help strengthen the understanding of the Daimistas' effort of refining their thoughts and learning to stay focused and see clearly. Consequently, I find that the concept of 'theory of mind' can help us understand the process of change in 'cosmology' and 'lifeworld' that many Daimistas go through when they start attending the Daime ceremonies.

'Theory of mind' is a concept which derives from Western psychology, where it is used for describing the theory children develop about the functioning of the mind, and which enables the child to make qualified guesses about what other people think and feel (Luhrmann 2011: 5-6). Luhrmann finds that anthropology can broaden the concept of 'theory of mind' from the

Western understanding, because ethnographic data shows that the model of the mind which developmental psychology has created through experiments is not universal. Rather, at least six different theories of mind can be found globally (Ibid.: 6-7). Luhrmann, along with other scientists, shows that the theory of mind that developmental psychology see as a sign of a child's healthy cognitive development is different from other theories of mind of different non-Western peoples (Ibid.: 5-6). Developmental psychology find for instance that children around the age of three should be able to rationalise about other's thoughts, but in the South Pacific and Melanesia even adults refuse to theorize about other's thoughts as the mind is understood as completely opaque (Ibid.: 7). Luhrmann also shows that the way we theorise about the mind influences which sensorial impressions are given attention, and the experience of these impressions feedback on the theory we then construct about the mind. She gives the example that practicing imaginative prayer causes mental images to have more vividness and salience. This effect comes when the mental images are ascribed importance and the ability to see it is cultivated and attention is paid to this imagery (Ibid.: 20). Luhrmann shows this in an ethnographic context of various Christian churches in the US, where she finds that her informants are being taught a new 'theory of mind' in church, through housegroup meetings, reading etc.: "They were being taught to treat some thoughts and mental images as not being their own, but generated by this outside being, God. They had to learn how to identify them" (Ibid.).

The 'theory of mind' that the Daimistas acquire can be understood as a part of the broader 'cosmology' that they gradually learn to adhere, and which also influences their experience of their 'lifeworld'. The research I conducted with OMJ showed that many of the Daimistas went through a change in how they experience the functioning of their own mind and its ability to interact with the world. An example of this is Inge, who has been part of OMJ for one year. She said:

> "The Daime shows me that your thoughts are really what make your reality. So what I see *in* the Daime is that if you want something in life and you are not really sure about it, then your intention is not really going the right way, it's going everywhere so there is nothing happening, but if you point your attention to something the universe can react on it. And those are things that can help you in your life, that you have to be more clear in your mind."
>
> (Interview with Inge, 20/2/15)

The way that Inge now understands her thoughts' ability to interact with the world, is an understanding that she has acquired through the use of the Daime. She now holds the 'theory of mind' that people's thoughts are manifested in their physical realities, practices being 'attentive' to this manifestation of her thoughts, and strives to be clearer in her mind in order to manifest the reality she wants to live in. Since Inge did not have this understanding about the mind before, this example shows that Inge has learned a new 'theory of mind' through participating in the ceremonies of OMJ.

Luhrmann uses a second concept called 'attentional learning' which is also relevant in relation to the Daimistas. This term covers practice that is deliberately undertaken in order to make inner sensory experience more significant, which then has real consequences for the subject's own mental experiences (Luhrmann 2011: 20). Luhrmann writes: "Culture makes a big difference. The details of the way the mind is imagined should shape the way people pay attention. For instance, which senses count? Or is the ordinary inner voice understood to be significant?" (Ibid.). This fact is not only recognized by Luhrmann. Antonius C. G. M. Robben has documented a broad variety of how cases of how senses are understood differently and ascribed different importance among various cultures globally (Robben 2012: 443 ff). Robben shows that being brought up in a culture where the 'theory of mind' is so much different from that of the Western, dualistic understanding of five senses and a separate mind, creates a different disposition towards sensing and interpreting these sensorial inputs, which again shapes one's 'lifeworld'.

Therefore, my argument is that interplay is going on between the 'cosmology' that the Daimistas adhere to and the sensorial inputs they pay attention to. The Daimistas conduct 'attentional learning' in the ceremonies where they learn to pay attention to their thoughts as Inge does, and also to sensorial inputs which they learn to ascribe importance and makes them attentive to similar sensorial inputs outside of the ceremonies. With the change in beliefs to a 'cosmology' where thoughts manifest and 'synchronicities' happen, the Daimistas acquire a different starting point for pre-cognitive experiences of the 'lifeworld'. They also have a new 'cosmological' analytical framework to inspire their interpretation of the experiences, which again opens up the perception to new experiences, which they would possibly not have paid attention to before the change in their 'theory of mind' and confirm their new beliefs. Inge, also exemplifies this 'attentional learning', as she explains that she has established contact with a deceased friend of hers and with Jesus through the ceremonies, and that she is now able to stay in contact with them outside of the ceremonies through the practice of prayer and through the intention of having the connection:

> "I also have a connection in the daily life. Daime also showed me that I should pray and [that] praying is making the connection. So when I lie in bed at night I just talk to them and pray. But also when I'm walking on the street or bicycling around in nature I'll think about it and try to make this connection through the day. And sometimes I forget about it and I'm just doing my daily things and throughout the day I think "oh yeah" and I'll come back and I'll make this connection again."
>
> (Interview with Inge 20/2/15)

Inge shows that she makes a deliberate effort to stay in contact with her non-physical acquaintances. Through paying attention to the idea that the contact is possible, she trains herself in sensing their presence. This practice, I argue, can be understood as 'attentional learning'. By increasing the attention paid to sensory perception that confirms the presence of her the non-physical acquaintances, Inge practices the ability to recognize the signs that she is not alone. With this new understanding of thoughts and sensorial inputs as possible means of communication from non-physical characters, Inge's 'theory of mind' creates a new 'lifeworld' in which she pays a lot of attention to her thoughts, as these thoughts are seen as a means to co-create her own reality.

The Daimista community

An important part of the 'attentional learning' process in which the 'cosmology' becomes an integrated part of the Daimista 'lifeworld' is the community around the ceremonies. Even though much of the experiences with the Daime are internal, the feeling of community, which, as mentioned in the previous chapter, arises as 'communitas' during the ceremonies (V. Turner 2008 [1969]), is also often highlighted by the Daimistas as a transforming power. The Daimista Hendrik said that he has never really wanted to connect with others, until he had an experience of "meeting himself" during a ceremony:

> "The second time, in Groningen, I met myself. Like I met God. I am not a religious person, I don't believe in God. I am trying to, but it's difficult. Ha ha! But it felt like I met God, but it was Ontmoeting met Jezelf. I met me. And it was that big. Like I met God. And probably it's the same, God and Me, or I. And it was also that big, the vision I had. It was overwhelming. Bigger than me, bigger than life. So I went to Magda and told her about it, and she said: 'Of course, I know, I know, I experienced it!' And I thought: 'Of

> course you did'. But it was so big for me. I knew. So after that, I knew I'm here in the right place, and I want to connect."
>
> (Interview with Hendrik, 13/3/15)

The experience of sharing this extraordinary experience with Magda created a feeling of 'communitas' that Hendrik had not found elsewhere in life before, and this in combination with connecting with himself, finally enabled him to seek connections to others, after having led an introvert life until that point. Frenk, who has a tough life story of poor family relations and drug abuse, also stated that the connections he has found with people of OMJ are deeper than what he has experienced earlier. He explained that instead of his former friends with whom he shared an unhealthy lifestyle, he now prefers to spend time with "the Ontmoeting met Jezelf family". This could perhaps give associations to sectarianism, which I naturally kept a watchful eye for signs of. However, with the constant stressing of the importance of keeping an "open belief system*"* and the importance ascribed to personal experience and personal freedom, I did not find evidence to substantiate such claims. On the contrary, OMJ appeared as a more individualized version of the Santo Daime Church with its less authoritarian organization and dress code. I found that the support, which the community provided, enabled the individual Daimistas to putting their newly acquired insights into 'practice' in their daily life. An example is the initiative, mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, of Frenk and Cesar who conduct classes in local schools writing songs about friendship and other values together with the children, with the pedagogical aim of creating understanding and compassion among them to reduce bullying. Observing these lessons, I saw how the insights from the ceremonies, were put into concrete 'action' in the physical world. Cesar and Frenk, both having the experiences from the ceremonies as a background for their actions, transformed the inner experiences of the ceremonies into concrete, external 'agency', creating a 'lifeworld' based on the virtues of their 'cosmology'.

Preliminary conclusion

The 'lifeworld' of the Daimistas is strongly influenced by 'morality as practice', which exists both as internal and external work, undertaken as two sides of the same coin, with the overarching aim of 'raising the frequency' individually and collectively. Because of the 'cosmological' ideas that thoughts 'manifest', and that the energetic vibration a person radiates has a concrete effect on the world, the 'subjective turn' makes the 'morality as practice' central to the internal work of the

ceremonies concerned with the purification of the self to create a high vibration. On the external level, many Daimistas live out values that are fundamentally based on 'holistic experiences' in practical actions, seeking to do good deeds in their daily life for the benefit of the individual and the collective simultaneously. Environmental preservation and philanthropy are popular focal points in this external action. The community of OMJ, which is firmly connected through the 'communitas' experience of the ceremonies, becomes an arena for practicing the group's virtues, and a network of support in following up new insights with changes in action. Moral action can thus not be seen as personal maximizing of symbolic capital, since the boundary between the individual and the collective becomes dissolved through 'holistic experiences', creating an impression of the subject as decentralised. In the process of integrating the 'cosmology' and its virtues into lived experience in the 'lifeworld', an 'attentional learning process' happens where new ways of processing sensorial inputs are integrated. With a changed 'theory of mind', which constitutes parts of the 'cosmology' of the group, the sensorial inputs and thoughts, to which the Daimistas ascribe importance, are expanded to incorporate signs of 'synchronicity' and other principles within the OMJ 'cosmology'.

Chapter 4 – Methodology

> ”If you decide to come to a ceremony, you drink also. This is because of the work. It is very important that everybody who is there resonates on the same frequency.”
>
> (Johan during access negotiation, 30/9/2014)

This chapter presents the methods applied in the fieldwork that this thesis is based upon, followed by an account of how I achieved access to the field, and considerations on the roles I took during the research. It is suggested here that the central concept of ‘synchronicity’ can be applied as a method, which anthropology can use in order to take the ‘cosmology’ and the ‘lifeworld’ of the informants seriously and ‘grasp the native’s point of view’ (Malinowski1984 [1922]), but without taking all the informant’s statements at face-value. ‘Synchronicity’ and a ‘leap of faith’ as methods are suggested to be valuable alternatives to ‘methodological atheism’, in the anthropological attempt at opening up towards a ‘post-materialist’ paradigm. The concept of ‘wonderment’ is presented both as a theoretical point of departure for research, but also as a valuable end point, rather than close-ended evaluations. By questioning what we take for granted about reality and consciousness, anthropology can provide a ‘decolonization of thought’ and produce ‘wonderment’, which can serve a purpose of humbling science in respect for ‘the other’. Finally, the chapter accounts for the ethical reflections of the fieldwork.

Methods, access and roles

The fieldwork behind this thesis consisted primarily of the described participant observation with ‘complete participation’ (Spradley 1980: 61) and of interviews (O’Reilly 2005: 112 ff). I conducted 21 interviews with 19 informants. The interviews were filmed and took place at the Daimistas’ own homes when possible. I also conducted two focus group interviews (Ibid.: 132-4), and a large number of informal field conversations. The participant observation took place at 11 ceremonies, 10 music rehearsals and at other occasions. I also received three Kambo treatments and assisted when others received treatments on three other occasions. Kambo is another practice of the indigenous Amazonians for cleansing the physical and energetic body by the aid of a frog secretion that is applied through the skin and causes purging. Treatments with Kambo were available through the network of OMJ, and popular among the Daimistas as a means of purification. In order to go in-depth with the study of the Daime, I chose not to go into analytical detail with the practice of Kambo. Furthermore, I used the ‘go-along method’ (Kusenbach 2003) of accompanying my informants in

many varying social events that were not directly relating to OMJ but were part of their everyday life, such as attending a public talk and demonstration of healing, attending a barefoot dance event, celebrating birthdays, visiting a crop circle, going to a concert, celebrating King's day, recording music in a studio, exchanging visits, and taking walks together in the nature.

I gained the initial access to OMJ through my 'gatekeeper' Johan, whom I had met in Bosnia in 2013. Half a year later he ran into my sister in South Africa where they ended up volunteering together, without having had any contact information on each other from Bosnia. As Johan recognized this as a case of 'synchronicity', which indicated to him that it was meaningful that he had gotten to know my sister and I, it was not difficult to persuade him to letting me come to the Netherlands. He negotiated my permission with Cesar and Magda, and I established the rest of the agreement with the latter two via email and in person when I arrived. As Karen O'Reilly writes, "access is not something you do once" (O'Reilly 2005: 88). Consequently, after getting the official permission, I still needed to negotiate the level of participation that each Daimista wanted to engage in. I introduced myself to the group in the end of two of my first ceremonies in two different locations. My role as a researcher created goodwill because I represented the possibility of getting a scientific account of the activities of the group, which could hopefully create a better understanding of the group's activities towards the outside world. They informed me that they were tired of critical journalism about Ayahuasca and that they had an interest in keeping a positive reputation, in order to keep the political will and thus the legislation in their favour. They were presumably hoping that I could produce a more positive or at least neutral account of their work, because I was also partaking in the ceremonies and thus showing that I was willing to 'take seriously' what they do.

The trust that was gradually built between the Daimistas and I was also the result of my 'commuting' between roles (Wadel 1991: 53-8): I both inhabited the role of researcher, but I also, because I drank the Daime myself, took the role of a beginning Daimista. In the role of Daimista I had to deal with personal issues coming up through the ceremonies, which I would discuss with the more experienced Daimistas while both learning about their beliefs, but also learning about my private self. Cesar expressed care for this private aspect of my experiences, as he cares for all the Daimistas' personal development, when he introduced me at my first ceremony, and said that I was "not only there to study, but also to evolve personally". Therefore allowing me to join was also justified in the logic of Cesar and Magda as a 'moral practice'. Accepting this role as a 'neophyte' would not have been possible if I had not been willing to get personally involved.

In Denmark, I had already studied spirituality and shamanism both professionally and personally before I initiated the research in the Netherlands. I consider myself a 'spiritual' person, not religious, with an open belief-system. I did not have any previous experience with psychedelics or other mind-altering drugs, so I did not have any strong opinion towards the Daime, and nor did the research project aim at providing a normative evaluation of whether the Daime is recommendable or not. This position of having one leg in the spiritual camp and the other in the camp of anthropology can be termed a 'halfie' position (Abu-Lughod 1991). As Athena McLean points out, a 'halfie' position can create a greater access, but also requires an effort from the anthropologist clarifying her position towards her informants in different situations (McLean 2007: 264, 275). This was for instance apparent when I asked my informants questions that they saw as basic spiritual knowledge such as when I wanted to clarify their ideas of concepts like 'chakras' or 'energy'. Here I had to clarify my position in order to avoid confusion, by reminding them that I was doing research, and not only undertaking a personal, spiritual journey. Adding to my argument that a previous interest in spirituality is no barrier to a good understanding of a field, Lila Abu-Lughod writes that "every view is from somewhere and every act of speaking is a speaking from somewhere" (Abu-Lughod 1991: 141). Therefore, rather than striving for an impossible neutral state, I argue that we should clarify our own position and then use theoretical grips such as 'taking seriously' and endeavour to take a 'leap of faith' to achieve as big an insight as possible into the 'perspective' of our informants.

Frameworks for studying divine experiences

The discipline of anthropology has a long history of approaching religion with a high level of scepticism. Some of the most influential anthropologists, who had a large impact on shaping the discipline, saw religion as an illusory phenomenon, which had to be explained by its functions and impacts on society. This was the case for Tylor (1958 [1871]), Frazer (1959 [1911]), and Durkheim (1995 [1912]), who all developed materialist explanations to phenomena of the so-called "primitive" societies, such as totemism and witchcraft, which they saw as irreconcilable with a scientific understanding of the world. Today, the inheritance from this tradition is still visible in the tendency to approach religion from a point of 'methodological atheism' (Berger 1973 [1967]: 106). Fortes (1980) argued that anthropologists must be agnostic while studying religion, which in his own case inspired him to create a functionalistic explanation to religious sacrifice as acts, conducted as self-defence towards feelings of vulnerability and helplessness (Fortes 1980: xiv). Gell later supported Berger and Fortes claims by arguing that 'methodological atheism', is the most neutral starting

point for studying religion. The approach implies, according to Gell, that the anthropologist should assume that there is no truth in the divine beliefs, and should thus look for other factors that create these beliefs (Gell 1999: 160).

A counterpart in this discussion is Evans-Pritchard (Evans-Pritchard 1937) who showed more openness towards 'taking the informants seriously' arguing that anthropologists have to believe in order to understand religion and to avoid reductionism (Evans-Pritchard 1950). Evans-Pritchard argued in 1950 that anthropology of that time was functionalistic and reduced human lives to theoretical social laws (Ibid.: 123). Instead of striving towards positivist explanations to the origins of religion and other social phenomena, Evans-Prichard pleaded in favour of an anthropology that was inspired more by history, philosophy, and art than by natural science (Ibid.). Therefore, Evans-Pritchard can be taken as an early example of the movement towards 'taking the informants seriously' through avoiding explaining away behaviour in manners that the informants do not agree with. Nonetheless, Evans-Pritchard, being a believing Catholic, was accused of letting these beliefs influence his analyses of Nuer religiosity (Jarvie 1969: 286-7). He is therefore also an example of the pitfall of letting personal religious beliefs affect analyses of religiosity, which might not be possible to conduct in a neutral manner, but which should on the other hand also not impose one kind of religious beliefs onto other religious contexts. The heritage of Evans-Pritchard thus adds to the arguments of Abu-Lughod and McLean that our preconceptions should be considered when undertaking ethnographic studies. As Evans-Pritchard states, there is no neutral perspective on – or explanatory model of religion. Therefore an atheistic or agnostic stand point of 'methodological atheism' is no more neutral than a believing standpoint. However, being willing to believe has the advantage that it makes it possible to 'take seriously what the people themselves take seriously' (Willerslev 2007: 181) to 'grasp the native's point of view' (Malinowski1984 [1922]) and it does not explain people's behaviour away with explanations that they do not agree with (Scott 2013: 863).

Wonderment and a leap of faith

Michael Scott recently argued that anthropology is better off when producing 'open ended wonder' rather than the 'occluded wonder', which he claims that science usually engages with (Ibid.: 861). Scott writes that the theoretical branch of anthropology, which he terms 'relational non-dualism', and which in this thesis is referred to as theories of the 'ontological turn' and 'perspectivism', rejects the Cartesian dualism and its project of explaining cultural phenomena on a basis of dualistic thinking (Ibid.: 862). Relational non-dualist anthropology of religion, Scott argues, should be un-

derstood as a "religious study of religion", rather than just a science of religion, since he finds that it should not create well ordered knowledge and full representations of others, but rather create ethnographic translations, which can generate new wonder (Ibid.: 859-65). Inspired by this approach of 'wonderment', I entered my field with a relational non-dualist approach to ontology, and therefore with openness towards letting my beliefs be challenged without necessarily creating a new, fixed understanding of the world of my informants, but hoping to reach a point by which my translation of their cosmological beliefs could be used for challenging the materialistic dualism of traditional western scientific thinking. This approach of 'wonderment', I think, serves the purpose of humbling science by producing a reminder that the scientific ways of thinking about the world in terms of logic and causality is only one perspective out of many possible understandings of reality.

I approached my field from this starting point of 'wonderment', and learned that the experiences I underwent during the ceremonies challenged my understanding of 'reality' so much that it forced me to take a 'leap of faith' (Willerslev & Suhr in Press). A 'leap of faith' is a concept coined by theologian and philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (Kierkegaard 1987 [1843]: 20), which stands for a leap into a "deeply insecure paradoxical mode of knowing" (Willerslev & Suhr in Press: 1), where the anthropologist has such an extraordinary experience that he or she loses his or her "conceptual grasp upon the world":

> "Anthropological insight cannot be achieved through reasoned discourse alone, but entails a qualitative shift in perspective, a 'leap of faith,' by which the fieldworker embraces what is known to be logically impossible or absurd. Anthropology, as an expansion of our understanding of life, is neither produced nor constructed, but rather 'given' when the fieldworker's conceptual grasp upon the world is lost."
>
> (Willerslev & Suhr In Press: 2-3)

In this statement Willerslev and Suhr argue for the necessity of a 'leap of faith' in anthropological research, which they both underwent during their fieldwork in extreme situations. Willerslev reached the 'leap of faith' during life threatening starvation in Siberia, where he, as mentioned in chapter one, was saved by a dream that told him when to go hunting, and Christian Suhr when he participated in Islamic exorcisms in which the possessed man started speaking Arabic, though he had never learned it (Ibid.: 11-16).

It became clear to me during my fieldwork, that this 'leap of faith' was a crucial element in making it possible to share the experiences of my informants during the ceremonies. Achieving anthropological understanding is, according to Willerslev and Suhr, not something the anthropologist can simply plan and analyze his or her way through, since the understanding comes from a sudden loss of "conceptual grasp upon the world". Rather, taking a 'leap of faith' can only be attempted, since it is the element of uncertainty that opens up to the new understandings. Thus, the 'leap of faith' can only happen through the immediacy of lived experience.

In the situation during my first ceremony described in chapter one, in the subsection "visions during altered states of consciousness", I saw what appeared as two spirits in my vision asking me to come along. At this point I was completely overwhelmed by how convincing and engulfing yet strangely cartoon-like the visions appeared to me. I did not understand who these strange spirits were, and if they were real at all. I had been told before the ceremony, that I should not be afraid and just go with the flow, while staying focused on my intention. Being faced with these spirits who gesticulated that they wanted me to come with them, I had to decide whether I wanted to reject them as a fragment of my imagination or whether I would come with them. I felt that I could only reach an understanding of what my informants were telling me about, if I would dare to try it fully for myself. As I made the decision to come along with the spirits, I had the feeling – to my great astonishment – of my consciousness or soul leaving my body: literally a 'leap of faith'.

The new understanding that followed my 'leap of faith' was not an unwavering belief in one understanding of truth, but rather a state full of doubt that follows the decision of taking the risk of believing (Ibid.: 15ff). When I chose to follow the guidance of the spirits, I lost my "conceptual grasp upon the world". This experience broadened my thinking about reality, consciousness, and the soul enough to make me start questioning assumptions about life that I would earlier have taken for granted. Thus I agree with Willerslev and Suhr that questioning our basic assumptions is necessary if we are to "expand our understanding of life". Viveiros de Castro calls this freeing of the mind a 'decolonization of thought' (Viveiros de Castro 2011: 128), which he sees as an important task of anthropology. Through a 'decolonization of thought' we can avoid the trap of 'ethnocentrism', in which 'the other's' worldview is considered irrational or unrealistic, Viveiros de Castro argues. Instead, we open ourselves to the relativism of 'perspectivism' (Ibid.: 130).

Taking seriously as an interdisciplinary approach

This approach of 'taking seriously' what the informants take seriously and thus performing a 'leap of faith' and 'decolonization of thought' has not only been shown effective for anthropologists, but also for other sciences in the study of the psychedelic compound of the Daime, DMT. Strassman, when interpreting the narrations of his volunteers in his mentioned studies, also found it necessary to accept the narrations of his subjects as a possible reality. He writes:

> "At a certain point I decided to suspend my reductionist, materialistic "I know what this is" approach. Not that doing so helped me feel any more comfortable with what I was hearing. But at least I no longer would risk making things worse by explaining away people's experiences as something else".
>
> (Strassman 2001: 201)

This quote by Strassman shows that he as a neuroscientist also experienced that he had to 'take seriously' what his research subjects told him of their experiences from being under the influence of DMT. When Strassman stopped explaining their experiences away as something else, he could start looking into how the experiences could possibly be meaningful. When using this approach of 'taking seriously', Strassman placed himself in a 'post-materialist' paradigm, because he stopped seeing the activity of the physical brain as the only possible source of the visions his research subjects reported. He did not reach any conclusions to whether the mysterious experiences of his subjects were evidence of interactions with a non-physical reality, but he did document that these experiences are common, and that they therefore deserve further exploration. Therefore, I argue that a shift towards a 'post-materialist' science is not only relevant for anthropology, but can be a multi-disciplinary shift, which can enable anthropology and neuroscience to cooperate in the study of consciousness inspired by the ideas of anthropology's ontological turn, such as the 'taking seriously' and 'perspectivism'.

The deliberate choice of taking a 'leap of faith' was not only a concept in my anthropological approach to the field. I experienced that my informants were doing the same as they were also working actively in trying to understand what they were experiencing in the ceremonies. Magda said to me after my second ceremony that "in religion you first believe and then you see. Science wants it the other way around that you first want to see, and then you believe. But you need to believe before you can see". These words inspired me to devote myself to listening with an open

mind to their narratives, even though what I heard sometimes could be very challenging for me to comprehend. Furthermore, it made me realise that I would personally have to aim for continuously having faith in the Daime and its spirit, when participating in the ceremonies, even though my first encounter with it, where I left my body, scared me.

Taking seriously – but without going native

Having argued against 'methodological atheism' and for anthropology as an almost religious project to create 'wonderment' through 'taking seriously' what the informants say and undergoing a 'leap of faith', it could seem that I was also arguing that we should take all our informant's statements at face value. Therefore, I wish to emphasise that I do not think that anthropologists should just convey ethnography without applying any theory or performing any translation. Such a stance would be to neglect the value of anthropological analysis. An example of this standpoint is Edith Turner who argued that anthropologists should purposefully 'go native' as far as possible during fieldwork. In the citation below she describes how she saw a spirit during a healing ritual in Zambia, which made her argue that we should take informant's statements literally:

> "...I saw with my own eyes a large gray blob of something like plasma emerge from the sick woman's back. Then I knew the Africans were right, there *is* spirit stuff, there *is* spirit affliction, it isn't a matter of metaphor and symbol, or even psychology. And I began to see how anthropologists have perpetrated an endless series of put-downs as regards the many spirit events in which they participated (...) they have been operating with the wrong paradigm, that of the positivists' denial."

(E. Turner 1993: 9)

I do follow Turner in regards to her argument that we should avoid the 'metaphor model' (Willerslev 2007: 181-3) and the 'positivist's denial'. Nonetheless, I will argue, in line with the logic of 'perspectivism', that we should not take the whole cosmology of the Ndembu people at face value, and regard their beliefs a cross-cultural fact, only because of the statement that Turner has seen a spirit during this ritual. Turner's sighting of the spirit was a reality in her perspective at that point, but the framework for understanding how this is possible still leaves many theoretical anthropological and philosophical questions open-ended. I cannot simply conclude that what the Daimistas see in the ceremonies is the truth, and that scientists claiming otherwise are in denial. Instead, I aim at providing framework that can aid scientists moving towards a 'post-materialist'

paradigm, in which we can progressively incorporate a broader spectrum of reality into our understanding of the human life in general.

Synchronicity as a method

One way, I suggest to incorporate this greater spectrum of experiences into our understanding, is to use the concept of 'synchronicity' deliberately as an approach to studying cosmologies like the one of OMJ. 'Synchronicity' can be taken as a mode of 'being-in-the-world' (Heidegger 2010 [1953]: 53), in which the borders between imagination, dream, physical reality, past, present and future are seen as merely illusory boundaries. In a similar manner as taking a 'leap of faith', I would argue that anthropologists can deliberately choose to open up towards the idea that it is possible that the distinctions we have set in the dualistic understanding of the world, might be boundaries without much actual substance. Because the concepts of 'synchronicity' can contain their worldview, taking the approach of attempting to "flow" with the 'synchronicities', the anthropologist can bridge the gap between theoretical and emic understandings that could have seemed impossible to be bridged. By opening ourselves up to this position that the 'world flesh' can fold in mysterious ways, we enable ourselves to better grasp the 'lifeworlds' of informants such as the Daimistas. An example of this from the beginning of my fieldwork was a day in the communal garden:

> "While we stood talking in the garden a white stork suddenly came flying in. I watched in awe since they are rare in Denmark, and I have never seen one flying. It flew in over the garden and circled just above our heads! Cesar said: "Cadeau (gift or tribute) to you, Julie!" stating that the stork flew over us to give me some kind of message."
>
> (Field notes, 17/2/15)

Here Cesar attributed the unusual behaviour of the big bird to my presence. This was one of the experiences, where I realised that to understand the 'lifeworld' of these people, I would have to go into their perspective by starting to use these 'synchronicities' as signs from the universe pointing me towards some hidden meaning behind the physical reality. From this point, I started to let myself be guided by these signs where the inner and outer worlds seemed to be connected. If the stork was giving me a message, I would have to pay attention and listen.

Ethics

During the fieldwork I had to take some precautions regarding the ethics of my work in order to provide as positive a process and consequences as possible for my informants, the discipline, and myself (AAA 2012). First of all, I made sure that all informants whom I quote participated in the study under informed consent and with the possibility of withdrawing their consent (Ibid.: §3). I informed about my project at two different ceremonies I participated in, and in an email that was send to all Daimistas on the group's mailing list (Ibid.: §2). Here I gave the Daimistas the possibility of rejecting being filmed or quoted and of staying anonymous (Ibid.: §3). I ensured confidentiality from my field conversations and therefore I only shared informants' stories with others if I had them on film, so that I was without doubt that I was allowed to share them. I filmed the interviews in order to create a film about OMJ, which I will do independently of the thesis. Therefore, I consider all that was told on camera public information, unless the informants have indicated regretting parts of what they said. I offered anonymity to all the informants I interviewed, but only a few chose it. I chose to only use the first names of the others in order to protect them from unforeseen consequences (Ibid.: §1). I only mention names from people who gave me permission to do so.

Drinking the Daime also gave rise to some ethical concerns regarding health risks of both the informants I engaged with and myself (Ibid.: §1). I read scientific research on Ayahuasca and found that it is well documented that there is no documented health risk, even not after long-term use (Guimarães dos Santos 2013: 71). I was careful not to make any normative statements, both in the thesis and in conversations, towards whether consuming the Daime is a good idea or not. Studying the culture around the Daime in the Netherlands where the consumption of it is legal made it possible to avoid legal dilemmas.

Preliminary conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methods applied in gathering the data behind the thesis. The methods are predominantly well-tested anthropological methods, which create a reliable basis for the analysis, even though the conditions for participant observation during the ceremonies were challenging. Furthermore, it is documented that the research was undertaken in accordance with existing anthropological ethical standards. The methodological discussion has shown that it is problematic to assume that there is a neutral point of view for studying religion, and in this case, spiritual experiences. Therefore, the approaches of the ontological turn are applied as alternatives to 'methodologi-

cal atheism'. This has given the analysis a theoretical basis in the concepts of 'taking seriously', 'wonderment', 'decolonization of thought', and 'leap of faith' – terms that acknowledge anthropology's affiliation to religiosity more than to positivistic science. Still, it is suggested that anthropology can inspire other scientific disciplines with this openness to 'wonderment'. As a refutation, it is also underlined that anthropology should not plainly take statements and observations at face value. It is suggested that the emic concept of 'synchronicity' can be applied as a methodological grip, which allows the fieldworker to experience the 'lifeworld' of the informant on his terms, "to realise *his* vision of *his* world" (Malinowski 1984 [1922]: 25). This is done through allowing the possibility that the 'world flesh' might be 'folding' so that what appears as coincidences might be related in a way that is not causal in our perspective. By accepting this belief as a possibility, the fieldworker can seek to emerge him- or herself into the 'flow' of 'synchronicity', and in a 'leap of faith', which gives a perspective from which these ideas can be experienced. Applying such an approach to the field is a post-materialist way of conducting fieldwork. Taking such a stance serves the purpose of showing science its need to stay humble with the acknowledgement that scientific logic of causality and duality is only one perspective out of many that people can take on what counts as reality. Therefore, it must be a valued goal of anthropology to produce 'wonderment' and not only close-ended conclusions.

Conclusion

This thesis has given an account of the spiritual group OMJ regarding their ceremonial practice, cosmological beliefs, and 'lifeworld'. This has served to provide an understanding of their beliefs regarding the questions: What counts as reality? What is the soul? How does consciousness function?

The picture of OMJ that has merged out of this research is a spiritual group, rather than a religious movement, with a non-dogmatic cosmology with traits of 'perspectivism'. Purifying oneself, acting morally, and thinking positive thoughts in order to raise the frequency on the path towards alignment with the divine, have been shown as central values for the group. This ceremonial work is seen as a collective endeavour, since the 'holistic experiences' and 'communitas' experiences of the ceremonies dissolve the idea of the subject as an autonomous, self-sufficient and detached individual. Instead, subjects are seen as fundamentally decentralised in the sense of being mutually constituted in relation to each other. Consciousness is understood by the Daimistas as existing not only in the brain, but as the real, eternal 'essence' of a person, to which the Daimista gains an expanded access to through the ceremonies. In this sense, the meaning of the term overlaps with the concept of 'soul', which rather than the perishable body is the primary point of identification for the Daimistas. This transformed understanding of the self is a main objective of the ceremonial activities, and it forms the moral basis for the 'lifeworld' of the Daimistas. The new cosmology the Daimistas acquire, including a renewed understanding of how consciousness and the mind works, is formed by experiences of altered states of consciousness along with the spiritual teaching of Cesar and Magda and songs and prayers. The Daimistas come to see the physical world as an illusion on basis of 'synchronistic' and mystical experiences in the ceremonies where they fall outside of the physical realm and the dimension of time, and experience being able to influence each other by means of thoughts and feelings alone.

I have argued that anthropology cannot come to grips with these radically different understandings through traditional approaches such as 'methodological atheism' and 'practice theory'. As an alternative, I suggest the methodological perspective of taking the people in study seriously on their own premises. This enables us to understand and translate cosmologies of 'the other', who do not share the basic premises of logic and causality as scholarship, into accounts that are understandable to scholarly logic, and without reducing their beliefs to metaphors. The way this thesis has attempted at doing this, is through the notions of a 'decolonization of thought' and a 'leap

of faith', and with the approach of incorporating emic concepts into our theoretical and methodological framework, such as the concept of 'synchronicity'.

Science ascribe to methods based in the principles of logic and causality. However, faced with people who claim the existence of 'synchronicity' or what I with Merleau-Ponty refer to as 'écart', implying that phenomena can be connected in acausal ways, it ultimately becomes an impossible task to translate such a world of mysticism, working on the limits of logic, into a causal and logical scholarly understanding of the world. This leaves some special challenges for anthropology, which cannot be solved and taken to a final conclusion through the use of one theory. Therefore, I have put together a variety of different theoretical grips and approaches from the anthropology of the ontological turn and phenomenology. Furthermore, I have reached outside our discipline to Kierkegaard and Jung with the aspiration of enlarging my conceptual toolbox for unpacking the reality of OMJ. Even when some concepts overlap between the emic reality and our theoretical ideas, such as with 'synchronicity' and 'perspectivism', we can never create a theoretical representation that fully encompasses all nuances of 'the other's' world, when its fundamental premises are based on mysticism and not logic and causality. We could then ask: is it actually worth the trouble of studying such phenomena where people claim that hallucinations are 'real' and that one person's thoughts can make another person vomit, if these ideas are outside of the logics of rationality anyway? I assert: "yes", it is necessary to take up the challenge, because anthropology is the discipline that holds as its primary goal to make cross-cultural translations. This is important because this endeavour serves to shake our established truths, which is again necessary if we want to enlarge our conceptions of what reality may entail. Studies like this consequently function as a means to bringing science back to a state of 'wonderment' rather than supporting a tendency to reaffirm existing paradigms. This thesis can be termed 'post-materialist' because of its openness towards 'taking seriously' the spiritual beliefs of non-physical realms. However, the most essential way to be open to new ideas, spiritual or not, for science in general, is through acknowledging 'wonderment' as its foundation, from which phenomena can be studied with respect and be taken seriously even if it is not possible to translate their mysteries into scientific logic on a one to one scale. Therefore this thesis does not end on a close-ended note saying that the cosmology of OMJ can be understood in one particular way only, but rather with the hope that the study of the mysterious reality – or realities – of OMJ has sparked a sense of 'wonderment' in the reader.

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