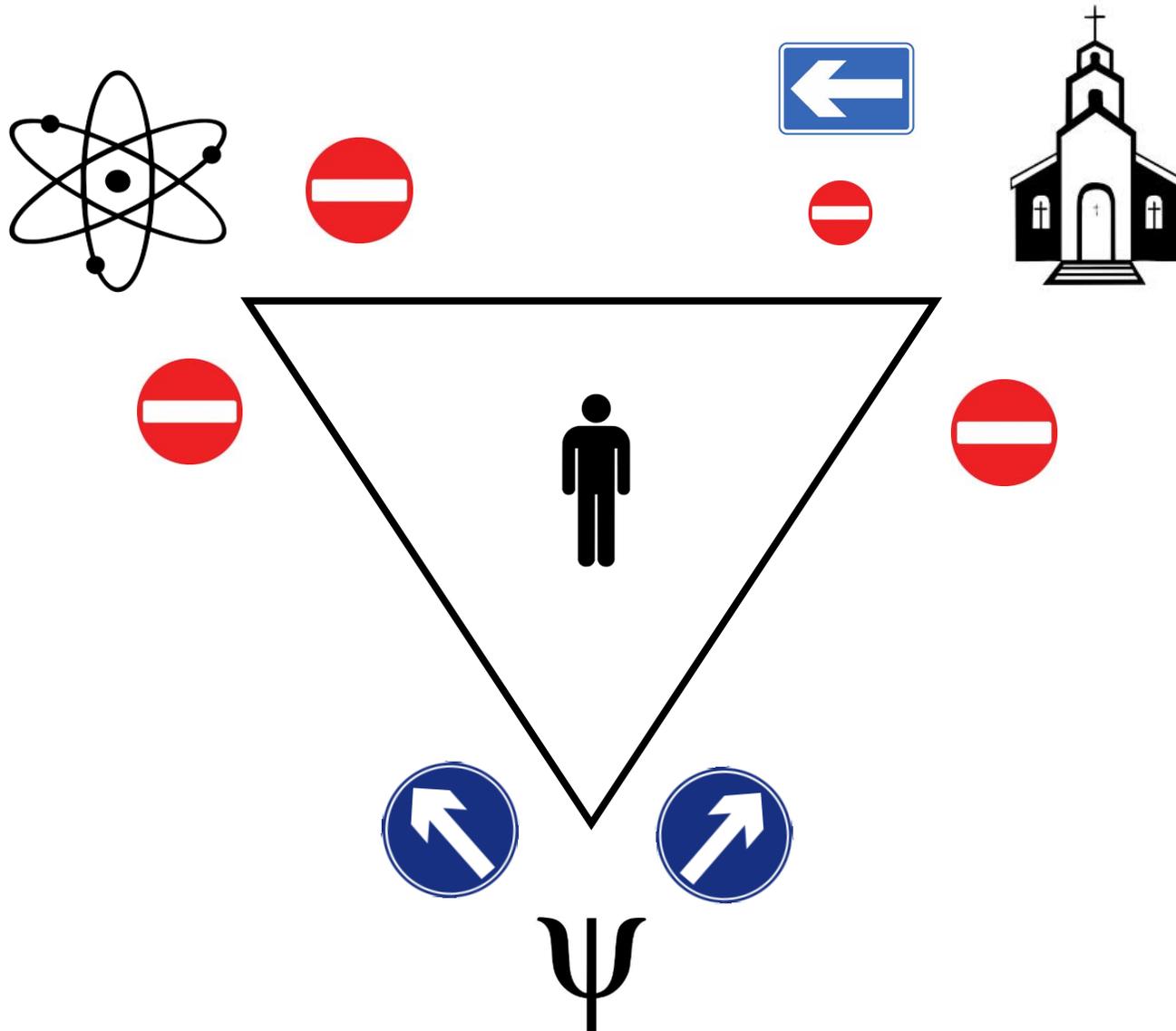


Psi experiences of Dutch Protestant Church members

- trapped between two reductionist worldviews -

Piet van Veldhuizen

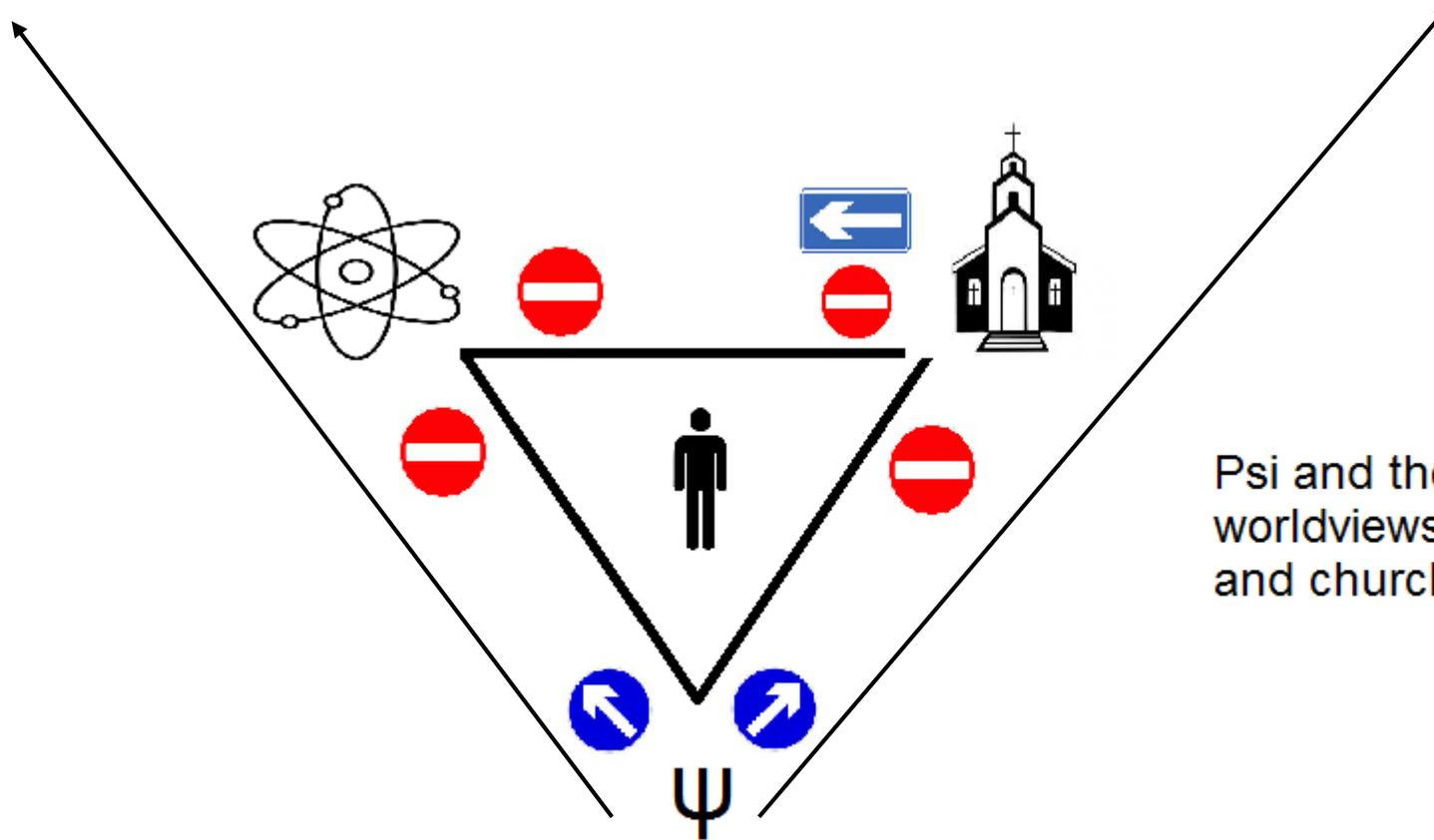


Psi and the reduced worldviews of science and church

Quantum physics pioneers

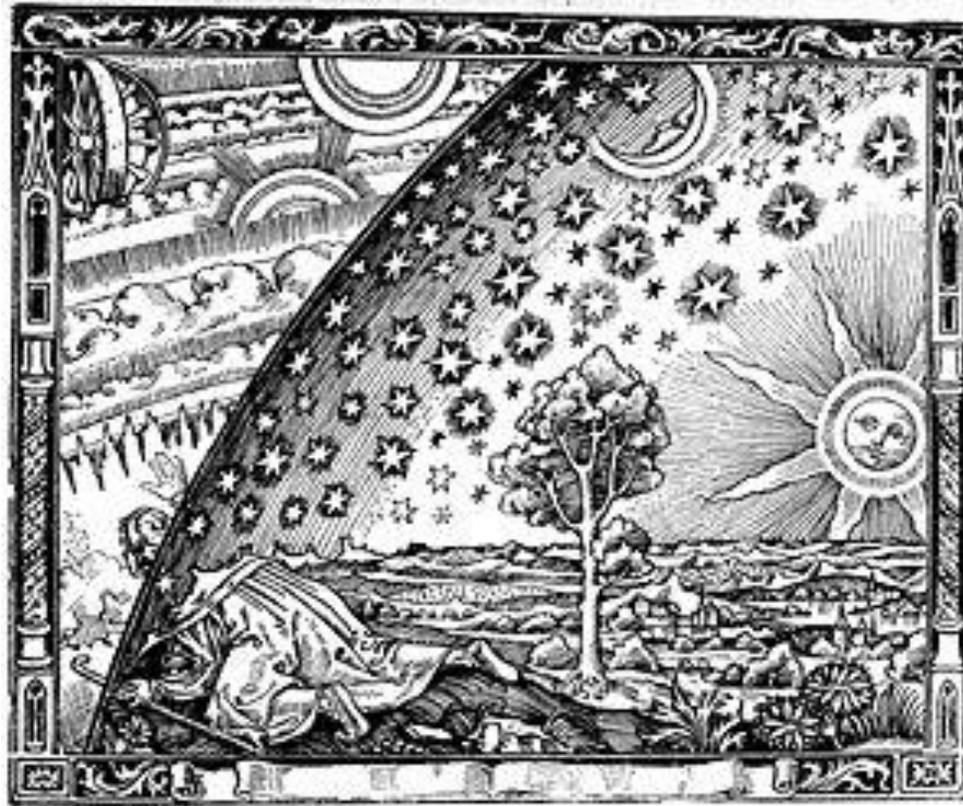


Mystical representatives of religion



Psi and the reduced worldviews of science and church

- Medieval church: the natural realm and the supernatural



- Scientific reductionism has greatly reduced the accepted natural realm (expanded the space but reduced the realm) – thus leaving vast area's of the paranormal

- Traditional church in modern times: a reductionist natural realm topped up by the creed (a reductionist supernatural realm)
- Lots of phenomena & experiences are left, barred from both realms but still there.
- How are these to be handled by religious communities? And how are they to be charted on the map of spiritual life? They are often treated as one single category (the impossible, the occult, the forbidden, the New Age stuff).
- I will provide some examples.

Example 1: Telepathic Call

- I feel an urge to contact Mr. C., but I resist it
- When I call him an hour later, he says: “I have been desperately looking for your phone number for an hour now”
- Interpretation from traditional faith: God gave me a sign
- Interpretation from traditional science: sheer coincidence
- My interpretation: this is how nature works – a normal contact via common unconscious (or a field otherwise defined)
- It is a ‘lower’ faculty rather than a ‘higher’ (no value judgment)

Example 2: Experience of light and unity

- Mrs FV is in a therapeutical centre to recover from a burnout. She has spent the first days there in exhaustion, crying all day and suffering from insomnia. Then one night, she is bathing in a warm and bright light. She sits up, though she does not know if that was real or part of a vision. There seem to be no objects around her – only this light and peace emanating from it. After that night she did not need her sleeping pills any more. Now, more than five weeks later, she still feels the encouraging strength of that light.

Example 2: Experience of light and unity

- Mrs FV's experience: One night, she is bathing in a warm and bright light. There seem to be no objects around her – only this light and peace emanating from it.
- Interpretation from traditional faith: God intervenes, revelation (if it isn't the devil playing with you and giving false hopes...)
- Interpretation from traditional science: brains intervene, crisis control
- My interpretation: this is a mystical experience of reality as it is 'above' our ego level
- It is a 'higher' faculty rather than a 'lower' (no value judgment)

Example 3: Prayer healing

- Mrs UZ appears clean from tumors in her jawbone after being touched by a faith healer during a healing service. Bone scans three days before and one day after show anomalous discrepancy, says doctor.
- Interpretation from traditional faith: God intervenes, a miracle (if it isn't the devil playing with you...)
- Interpretation from traditional science: -- (scan mistake)
- My interpretation: healer offered strong coherence (divine grace, love) activating self-healing powers in Mrs UZ
- It is a natural faculty rather than a supernatural (no value judgment)

Example 4: Poltergeist-like phenomena

- Around Mrs FP (45, teacher) many electronic devices break down, even when she only walks past, and she herself gets sick from digital blackboards and computers if she has to stay with them.
- Mrs PE (50) is seeing 'energies', light dots projected on walls, jumping and racing. Mostly in her sleeping room, but also in church and in her garden. Others see them when she points at them, I have seen video's she made with her cell phone.
- Mrs PE is convinced these phenomena want to tell her something – they must be signs from the realm of God. She came to me hoping I could help her decipher the message.

Example 4: Poltergeist-like phenomena

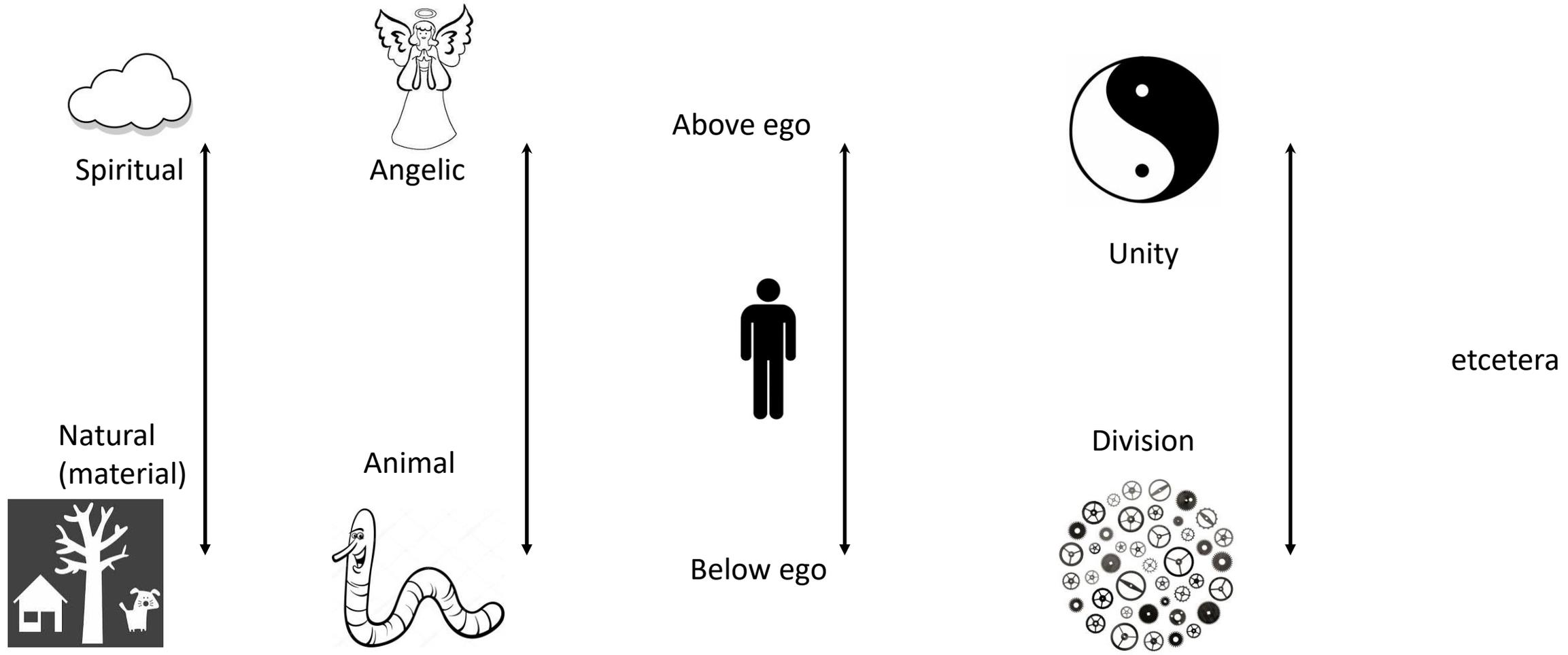
- Devices being ruined / Jumping & racing dots of light: what is going on?
- Interpretation from traditional faith: if it is real, it is dangerous, you should ignore it or pray God for it to stop
- Interpretation from traditional science: -- (coincidences and/or tricks)
- My interpretation: in both cases, strong internal tensions/conflicts are externalized (which does not solve the tensions)
- They are natural/subconscious rather than spiritual/divine phenomena

Diversity of phenomena & a unified image

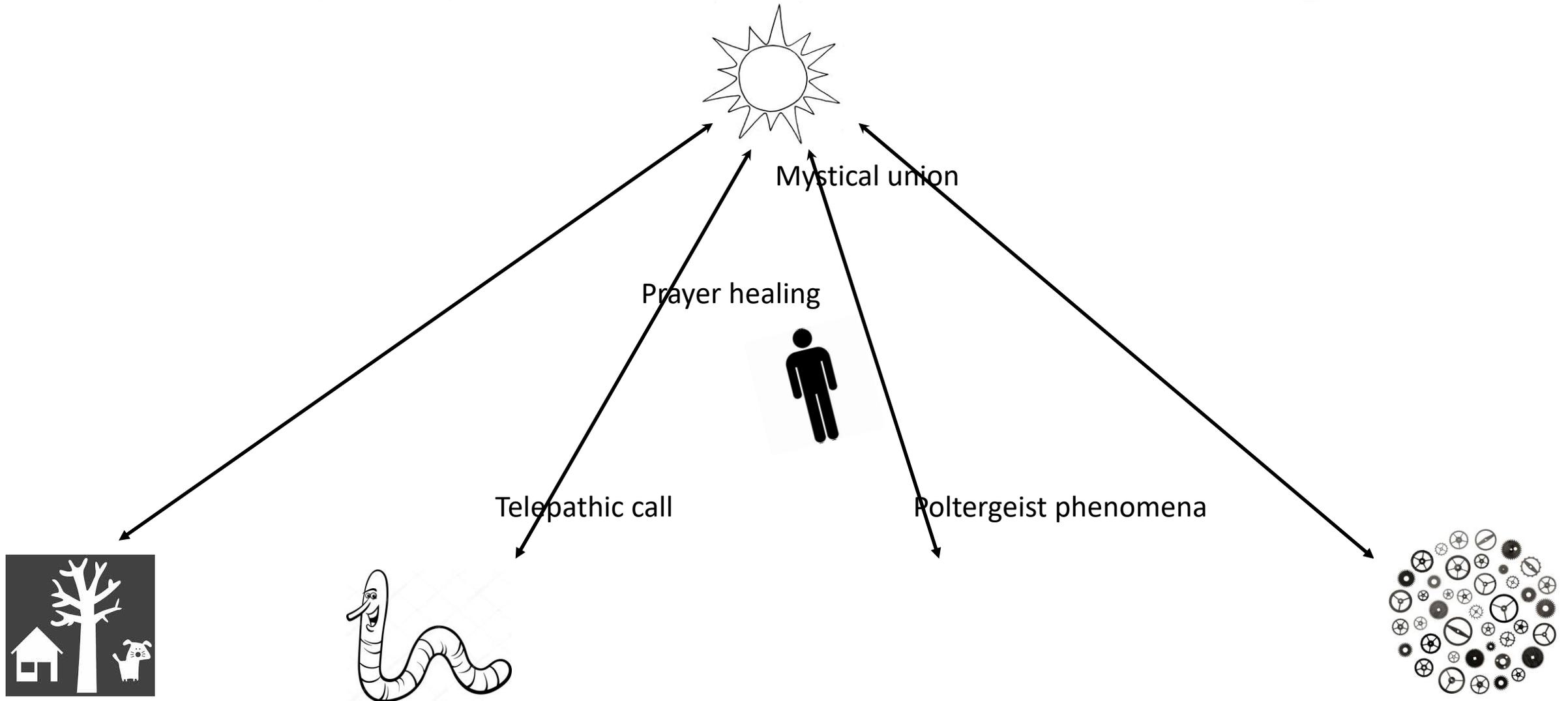
- What do these have in common:
 - Telepathic call
 - Enlightenment/mystical union experience
 - Prayer healing
 - Computers breaking down in someone's presence
 - Mysterious light dots appearing in someone's presence
 - The sense of being stared at
 - The clock stopping when its owner dies
 -
- They are all falling out of the grid of scientific reductionism

Diversity of phenomena & a unified image

- Ways of ordering them on a scale:



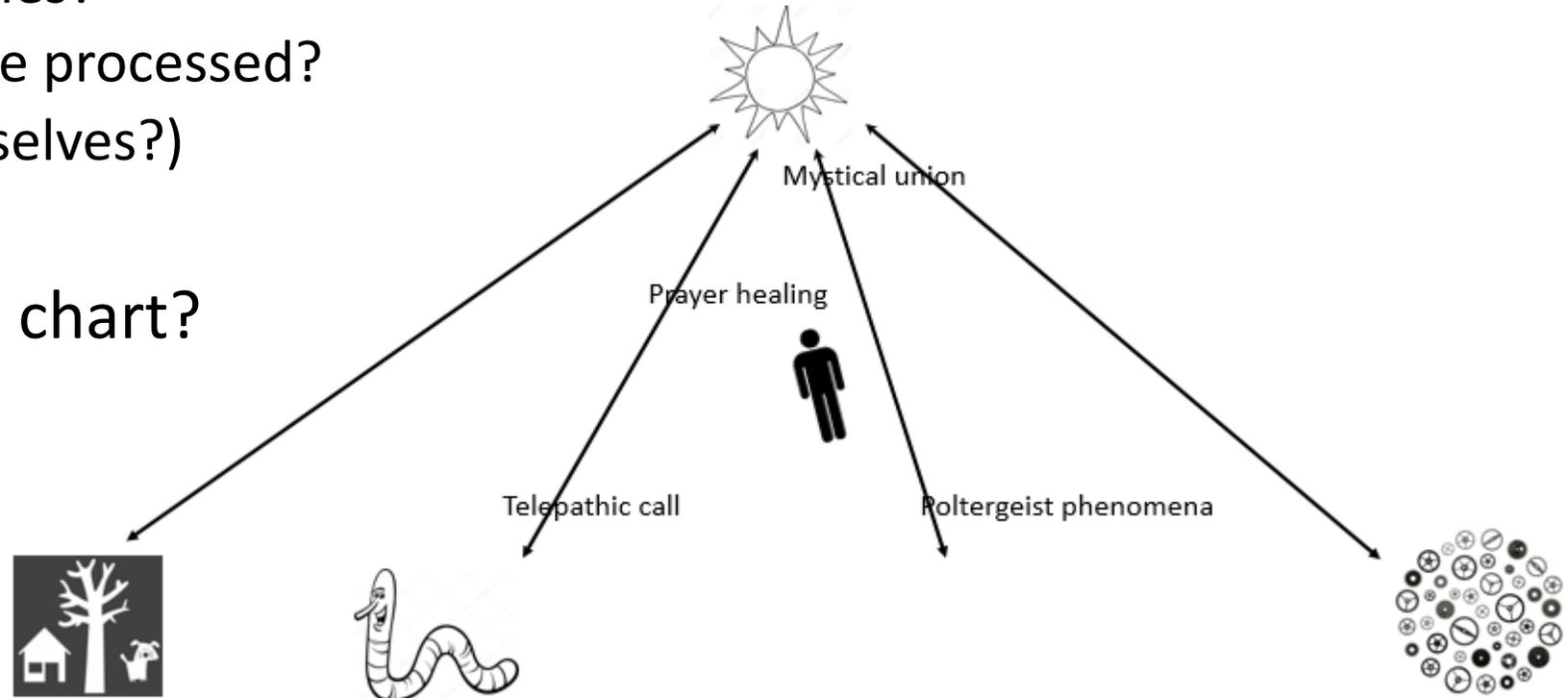
Diversity of phenomena & a unified image



Two questions that are haunting me

- Where are the deceased on this chart?
 - Not-yet-unified entities?
 - 'Loose ends' yet to be processed?
(by us all, by themselves?)

- Where is God on this chart?
 - Unity itself?
 - The sum of all,
or outside it all?



Conclusive remarks

- Church communities & their leaders often leave little space for experiences that do not fit into the combined grids of reductionist science and traditional faith.
- Oddly, then, traditional church tends to support the skepticism of reductionist science. The actual Christian worldview tends to be an 'enriched reductionism'.

