Magic: Reconsidering the Grand Dichotomy

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AFTER THE COLLAPSE of the Grand Dichotomy, as J. Goody with an over-all concept styles the dichotomies that have diffused science from the evolutionists of the nineteenth century up to Lévi-Strauss,[1] also the category of 'magic' has suffered greatly. But still, the *study* of magic seems to prosper as ever. In the latest collective treatment of our theme, *Magika hiera* (Faraone and Obbink 1991), a splendid exposition of the state of the art, many aspects of magic are treated, but the category 'magic' itself is mainly devoured by the category of *religion*, a category which admittedly is almost as ill-defined as magic. This is, as stated in the introduction, also the programme of the book: 'to ask *whether the traditional dichotomy between magic and religion helped in any way to conceptualize the objective features of the evidence examined*' (vi–vii). The question might also be asked if it still *helps*, not only whether it *helped*, because—in fact—in *Magika hiera* the arguments are still based on the selfsame dichotomy. And again: 'All these practices border ostensibly on the sphere of *religion* (perhaps of a personal or familiar sort) insofar as they document attempts on the part of the individuals to influence factors in their environment that are beyond their immediate control. In many cases these private, "magical" rites have clear parallels with well-known forms of corporate and civic cult. Yet the relationship between magic and religion with respect to such practices has historically been, and continues to be, a very problematic one' (vi).

Indeed the relationship between magic and religion, in both practice and theory, is problematic, but this still seems to be the dynamics of the study: unproblematic categories are seldom studied. The quotation also has implicit definitions of magic, which are very much in the tradition, over a century old, of studying

1 Goody (1977:146f.) gives lists of such dichotomies both of the evolutionists and Lévi-Strauss, (*cf.* also *ibid.*:4–8), scientific/mythical, scientific/magical being among the items. He (3) also refers to the Grand Dichotomy as the Great Divide, that of the ethnocentric 'we' and 'they,' which 'pushes us once again into the use of binary categories and while it introduces developmental perspective, it attempts to look for a single breaking point, a Great Divide, though whether this jump occured in Western Europe in the sixteenth century, or in Greece in the fifth century BC, or in Mesopotamia in the fourth millennium, is never very clear.'

magic as a phenomenon, to the discussion of which we shall return. It is also contended in the same paragraph that many now study magical practices as 'nondichotomous variations in ritual procedure' and that 'the antithesis between magic and religion arbitrarily separates a continuous spectrum of interlocking religious phenomena.' If such arbitrariness is characteristically exercised by the religious themselves in establishing the demarcation-line between religion and magic, or even truth and magic, or true and false ritual, there is every reason not to give up the understanding of this dichotomy—on the contrary, such conflicts are very important objects of study. If, which is rather the intent of the quotation, the arbitrariness is on the part of the students of magic, there is of course reason for attention, for, as is stated *ibidem*: 'Many continue to cling, consciously or not, to the standard dichotomy.' The unconsciousness and the clinging are of course not worth saving, but one may contend that the conscious use of dichotomies in the study of magic, as well as in a whole range of other religious and anthropological phenomena, is very fruitful, if not basically necessary in any science, because it is built, as we all know, on the principle that things different cannot be the same. This is of course a long discussion which we will not enter into here, but personally I would rather stick, if not exactly cling, to a conscious set of dichotomies and oppositions by means of which we may try to explain the phenomenon of magic—if there *is* such a phenomenon. In fact, the authors or the *Magika hiera* suggest that this last is to be doubted, for they seem rather to describe non-magic, or the nonexistence of magic—but negative descriptions, fortunately, establish phenomena often as well as do positive descriptions.[2] Religion/magic is not the only dichotomy into which to place our topic: both in the material on magic and in its interpretation magic is often dichotomously placed with science, and in some cases also with other opposites. To see magic, then, in the perspective of 'the Grand Dichotomy refined' (Goody 1977:147) seems to me a fruitful starting point, and, notwithstanding the abuses by Darwin's imitators, such dichotomies are inevitable in describing human existence both diachronically and synchronically: change involves differences, as do societies and human psychology. In the words of G.E.R. Lloyd—referring to the terms 'primitive,' 'civilized,' and to 'prelogical,' 'prescientific' and their opposites—'the manifest unacceptability of the terms in which some aspects of the problem were debated in the nineteeth and early twentieth centuries does not

2 Arguments for the dichotomous nature of magic have recently been produced also by H.S. Versnel (1991:177): 'rejection of the term "magic" will soon turn out to be unworkable' (this should even be expressed in the present tense, since in fact most students of magic use the category and the dichotomy), and 'it would be utterly unpractical to completely eliminate religion as one of the obvious models of contrast.' He gives further examples of the attempts to discard the dichotomous, derogatory, and allegedly culturally dependent category of magic, with bibliography on the later discussion on the problem.

mean either that there was no problem or that its resolution has now been agreed' (1979:1).

Goody, however, in denying the well-known but 'bad' dichotomies of the 19th century, is still wrestling with the dichotomies as if he wishes to atone for past imperialist cruelties: his refinement consists in launching literacy/nonliteracy as the basic dichotomy to replace the dichotomies of historical and anthropological research from the evolutionists up to Lévi-Strauss' lists of binaries, to replace 'R. Horton's characterization of the difference between the "open" and the "closed" situations' which 'might be better explained in terms of the potentialities of literacy' (Goody 1977:147).[3] Indeed I do respect both these great writers for contributing their fruitful dichotomies to anthropological and religious studies, but I cannot agree that the one pair of dichotomies should have a more universal validity than the other. Dichotomies should be coined to represent a certain context: they should be formulated in the process of working with a certain material where they explain certain aspects of the phenomena we have chosen to study. Thus I find no reason for dispensing with either the dichotomy magic/religion or magic/science, correlated with other dichotomies where desirable, if only because these words are deeply rooted in most modern and many ancient languages. Thus I have, with a small change, chosen as the title of this paper that of Chapter 8, 'The Grand Dichotomy reconsidered,' of Goody's book—being basic to human understanding and the production of opinions and statements, both the Grand and the small dichotomies, it seems, are still in need of reconsideration.

After Goody's (1977) and Lloyd's (1979) books, we have had a another strong wave of what a historian of religion might even term monistic philosophy, *viz.* the philosophy of Jacques Derrida and all the followers of the deconstructist fashion, in many respects a reaction against the Grand Dichotomist himself, Claude Lévi-Strauss. Though even Lévi-Strauss did not necessarily project magic only onto far away tribes: where there is religion there is magic and *vice versa*—he states in the binary way. And, 'there is no need to invoke the exercise of vanished faculties or the employment of some supernatural sensibility to understand the penetration which so-called primitives show in their observation and interpretations of natural phenomena', he says (1966:220f.) on the topic of *The savage mind*, the title of his book (1962, 1966). Thus he seems well aware that the category of magic too often has been used to describe 'outside' and inferior thought when compared to our scientific thought and as such subjective and open to any meaning we might wish to give it—even though also the Lévi-Straussian exercises may seem unnecessarily re-

3 Robin Horton (1967), who, 'applying Popper' (Goody 1977:2), contrasts the open systems of thought—where hypotheses are proved or disproved—with the closed systems, where the results are only tested against the culturally accepted world view, criticizes and develops Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's concepts of the prelogical, prescientific and mythopoetic worldviews.

ductionist and ontologically unfounded today. It is of course very true that magic is usually described, throughout history, as something belonging essentially to the Other. The various allegorists of the Grand Dichotomy, such as E.B. Tylor and James G. Frazer with their ingenious but somewhat mechanistic theories, placed magic very much with the Others, *viz.*, the primitives in far-away colonies never visited. But as for Greece, she is generally regarded as Ourselves, especially when one is discussing the beginning of logic, philosophy, science, etc.; and Dodds' 'irrational,' even Eitrem's, which has been shown to be an organic part of Greek culture, has often been deemed a disturbing element in classical culture and has had to be explained away. But after the two Great Wars in our century, we are, however, more willing to accept the Others among ourselves, and we even study classical Greece as the Others, or 'them,' as L. Bruit Zaidman and P. Schmitt Pantel have done systematically in their recent book on Greek religion (1992).[4] The solution of the riddle of Ourselves and the Others does not lie in projecting the unpleasant (or idealized) parts of Ourselves onto the Others, and this has also been gradually more difficult in recent decades, especially after such books as E.W. Said's work on Orientalism (1978), on how Western Science has set the agenda and has defined the Others. Thus, when the Others speak and even write themselves, they are no longer that easy to define by means of any opportune and arbitrary category. The awareness of this difficulty has long ago come to characterize social anthropology and most humanistic studies.

Studying the Others is sometimes a projection of a phenomenon in one's own society or culture onto another medium: this has been taken up in the analysis of Margaret Mead's work (Freeman 1983; *cf.* Orans 1996), and there is another somewhat provoking example, Gananath Obeyesekere's contention (1992) that cannibalism as a phenomenon mostly is a projection of the English sailor's fear of eating his fellow sailor when shipwrecked and without food and water. Now this has been shown not to be true—indeed cannibalism is documented—but cannibalism is usually cultic, and as such something 'Other' even in these cultures themselves. Thus studying the Other may in certain respects be studying Ourselves, or, rather the darker side of Ourselves, unless the Other is idealized: even then it is very much a projection of our own needs and wishes. At the time magic became a fashionable word, there were many movements that included activities of which some quite correctly could be called magical; the most influential was the Theosophical Society, the leaders of which often posed as thaumaturges and magicians, especially the founder Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831–91), who as a member also of the spiritualist movement persuaded, or perhaps seduced, masses of people to join an or-

4 *Cf.* the balanced remark of H.S. Versnel (1991:188): 'Ancient Greece was a non-Western culture. Ancient Greece was the first Western culture. Both statements can be defended.'

ganization that also has played an important role for popular religious and pseudo-scientific activity throughout the 20th century; there was also her esoteric predecessor Eliphas Lévy (1810–75) with his neo-cabbalistic ritual magic. From the turn of the century on there were also many others who aptly could be called, and did call themselves magicians; suffice it to mention the hero of the present-day satanists Aleister Crowley (1875–1947), and the popular magical writer Dion Fortune, all of them, with Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925) and his Anthroposophical Society, contemporaries of James Frazer and precursors of the present-day 'New Age,' the beliefs of which in many respects could be styled magical. My point is that such persons and movements, frequently magical even by self-definition and reasonably called thus by historians of religion, were very much present in the time of the great discoveries of science of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Thus the dichotomies which we are discussing were present in Western culture itself, only it was much easier and more convenient to project such views onto peoples of other cultures and other epochs. It is remarkable that only today is one beginning to write the histories of Theosophy and related very influential movements, not to mention Freemasonry with its huge and influential following throughout the last two and a half centuries. Thus Dodds and others have demonstrated to us that Greek antiquity admitted room for the irrational; we should acknowledge, which indeed recent research freely does, that there is also room for it in Western culture.

Now Lévi-Strauss was not in favour of the Grand Dichotomy when concerned with magic, and even his precursor Lucien Lévy-Bruhl—notwithstanding his famous, or rather infamous, grandly dichotomous *mentalité primitive*—contributed, in his old age, to bring the Other home: 'In every human mind, whatever its intellectual development, there subsists an irradicable fund of primitive mentality.... It is not likely that it will ever disappear.... For with it would disappear, perhaps, poetry, art, metaphysics, and scientific invention—almost everything, in short, that makes for the beauty and grandeur of human life.' It 'represents something fundamental and indestructible in the nature of man' (Lévy-Bruhl 1949, quoted at Tambiah 1990:92f.). Also Ludwig Wittgenstein would bring the projections of James Frazer back into our own backyard; in his somewhat oracular but witty criticisms of Frazer he concludes that Frazer is more primitive than the primitives he studies: 'Frazer is more savage than most of his savages, for they would not be so far removed from the understanding of a spiritual matter as an Englishman of the twentieth century' (quoted *ib.* 62). 'Frazer can imagine no priest who is not basically an English parson of our time, with all his stupidity and dullness' (60). Wittgenstein also attacks the view of Frazer and others that magic necessarily is an *error*; it is not part of human *opinions*, and therefore not erroneous or true: it is rather, as part of symbolism and language, an expression of a wish: 'I believe that the characteristic of primitive man is that he does not act on *opinions* (in opposi-

tion to Frazer)' (56). Thus Wittgenstein makes a strong dichotomy between Frazer and the 'primitives,' which indeed Frazer did himself (*cf.* Frazer's legendary 'God forbid' when he was asked if he wanted to visit his objects of study), but Wittgenstein is much more sympathetic to understanding magic as part of our own, even Frazer's experience: 'Yes. Frazer's explanations would not be explanations at all if they did not appeal ultimately to a certain tendency in ourselves' (60). 'But why does Frazer use the word "ghost?" Therefore, he very probably understands this superstition, since he explains it to us with a superstitious word which is easy to him. Or better, he would have been able to see from it that something in us speaks for those modes of actions of the savages' (61). 'Nothing shows our relationship with the former savages better than that Frazer has at hand a word that is familiar to him and to us, such as "ghost" or "shade," to describe the views of these people. ... Yes, this peculiarity is related not only to the expressions "ghost" and "shade" and we have made too little fuss over the fact that we count the word "soul," "spirit" as part of our own educated vocabulary' (63). Wittgenstein is also willing to accommodate magic within everyday life even our own time: 'When I am angry about something, I sometimes hit with my stick on the ground or a tree, etc. But certainly I don't believe that it is the fault of the ground or that hitting can help. "I can release my anger." And all rites are of this kind' (56). 'Religious actions, or the religious life of the Priest King, is of no other sort than any genuinely religious action today, perhaps a confession of sins. This can also be "explained" and cannot be explained' (56). These rather commonsensical reflections on magic, represent quite another kind of treatment than Frazer's complex schemes of Theoretical Magic and Practical Magic, and of Homoeopathic Magic and Contagious Magic as subsets of Sympathetic Magic (Frazer 1911–5:1.1 52ff., 111ff.). Frazer does not reflect on in whose minds these theories of magic are found, but of course the scheme is in Frazer's mind, not in the savage's. Following Wittgenstein, we may agree that Frazer builds a kind of magical metaphysics which suits both his time, one of economic and industrial growth, empire, and the 'great conquering races of the world' (*ib.* 218), and the Grand Dichotomy, but scarcely involves the metaphysical thinking that was connected to magic in antiquity, *i.e.* neo-Platonic συμπάθεια, a concept Frazer took over without understanding its philosophical background. While Frazer puts magic with the primitives, Wittgenstein makes room for it in his own life in stating that 'I can release my anger.' That many magical rituals may act as a channel for a release of anger is, if one would like to interpret magic psychologically, easy to document: in *Magika hiera* or the present book there are many examples of magical acts that may surely have had that therapeutic effect for those who performed them. Usually it is the losers, the weak, who resort to magic, people who are angered, but do not have means and power to take revenge or have satisfaction in an ordinary way. The therapeutic value of symbolically representing one's anger is

also very much exploited in modern group psychology, where one ritually kills all 'enemies' ('I hate my father, I hate my mother, I hate my husband,' etc.), to free oneself from traumatic experiences in childhood and elsewhere, and the concealed aggression accompanying them. I would assert that the psychological effect of such practices might be close to the effect of the magic we study in antiquity and elsewhere among the Others.

Wittgenstein, then, makes three important points that are relevant to a methodical approach to magic: Frazer is far from understanding magic when he explains it on the basis of metaphysical concepts for which we do not even have satisfactory explanations and definitions ourselves; when we explain a phenomenon such as magic it would not mean anything to us if it did not correspond to something in ourselves; the phenomenon of magic may well be explained by our everyday experience. Seen in this way the dichotomies, grand or trifling, are as much part of our society and our own time as of history; in Tambiah's words (1990:60): 'Wittgenstein is claiming that "civilized" man has within him the same symbolizing and ritualizing tendencies as the "primitive."' Roland Barthes (1957) has given us an understanding of phenomena which in our culture may be termed mythological; the same kind of study of *magical* structures in Western society would surely also be very rewarding.

As I have tried to exemplify, we make dichotomies in our arguments and writings to suit our strategies of policy, research, and thinking, generally. But, there are also arguments that dichotomies basically belong to our apparatus of concepts, that concepts provide meanings only in oppositions. Thus the challenge of a meaningful scientific set of concepts should be to define them as in tension with oppositions and not to dismiss them. In this way one may say that the Grand Dichotomy is something belonging also very much to our interpretative faculties, and as such should be investigated also in terms of basic epistemology, not only in the perspective of cultural sciences. Indeed our interpretative faculties contribute great numbers of dichotomous interpretative concepts and categories, but these dichotomies must be analyzed and established as a meaningful set of opposites. What is of paramount importance, though, is to differentiate between the dichotomies in the material studied itself, and the dichotomies created in the name of science. The last ones should be discussed and defined so that we do not 'continue to cling, consciously or not, to the standard dichotomy,' in the words, quoted above, of the editors of *Magika hiera*. If discarded as meaningless they may easily be taken up and filled arbitrarily with any meaning, because, as it seems, many wish to discuss and use the concepts still. This is true both of magic and myth, both being sometimes mentioned in the same contexts as certain kinds of *Weltanschauungen*. The challenge, then, would be to put the category of magic into a meaningful and communicative set of opposites, and not to discard it.

Another reason why one should keep magic as a research category, especially if one's concern is antiquity, is the fact that this word is coined within the context of antiquity itself, as Fritz Graf has made a point of discussing (1994:27–9) in his splendid overview of our topic, *La magie dans l'antiquité gréco-romaine*. Its connotations in antiquity are, however, somewhat undefined, and there is reason to put this 'emic' concept into a broader discussion when we wish to use it as an 'etic' concept, as we know the concept also acquired new meanings throughout the history of Western thought, and, to be able to use it for other cultures also, we are still in need of reflections on definition.

So, after these arguments for keeping magic as a category, there remains the unpleasant question of how it is to be defined. I am afraid that I do not have a complete answer, nor a new definition. I would, however, contend that much of the research done on magic implicitly defines it, and, that much which is tentatively classed as non-magic in the discussion in *Magika hiera* still must be classed as magic or closely related to magic. In trying to give 'magic' a specific meaning we face at least three problems: firstly, the fact that 'magic' is a polemical category in the guise of being scientific; secondly, that the meaning of the word has changed greatly throughout its history; and thirdly, that the word is used in such an inaccurate way in common language. Thus, when we treat the history of the word, it denotes quite diverse phenomena—when we treat it in the perspective of *Begriffsgeschichte*, we have difficulties in deciding what phenomena we should subsume under the category.

Magic, then, and I would like to include myth, are rhetorical and polemical concepts in common and even scientific language. Such categories are not in need of definitions; in fact definitions are detrimental to their effect, for their intent is persuasion and it is their rhetorical force that causes them to be accepted as true. As such they even approach the phenomenon of magic itself. To bring them from their monological into a dialectical context should be the goal of any academic treatment and use of the concepts.

Like myth, however, magic has in periods also had very positive connotations. The word '*mythos*' was given superbly positive connotations during the so-called German romanticism, from Herder on, a tradition which has had great importance for the discipline of religious studies through Walter Otto, who made *mythos* into the holistic expression of truth—in opposition to *logos* which only expressed the contextual truth—and Mircea Eliade, to mention only two. This has not happened to the same extent in more modern times with 'magic,' a word that had its zenith in the Renaissance with all its admiration for antiquity, Neoplatonism and Theurgy. Now Proclean Theurgy (see below) also had great influence on the very influential church father pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, but the principles of heavenly hierarchies, the mystery language, and the divine names, bearing clearly

the marks of Theurgy, were integrated into Christianity, which after its triumph soon turned its back on its old friends and termed such practices, now well integrated into its main stream, magic in the negative sense. Thus in the Middle Ages, dichotomizing Christianity, with its intention of monopolizing ritual, could make the magic arts inherited from Theurgy into something diabolic and in the name of Christ could define them out of the true Christian faith (see now Flint 1991). With the Renaissance, and such personalities as Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, *Magia*, *Cabbala* and *Astrologia* were again part of essential *Scientia*; Paracelsus reintroduced alchemy; and Marsilio Ficino, translator and heir of Proclus, Iamblichus, and Porphyry, made magic again very influential with his *magia naturalis*, using the very word positively. Paracelsus is of course regarded as one of the fathers of modern chemistry, which so to say was extracted from the alchymistical speculations, and the speculations themselves slowly died out during the Enlightenment. Ficino was careful not to involve any demoniacal powers in his system of magic, which was a complex system of correspondences where the astrological and planetary influences were present in all the elements in the world. With his *vis imaginativa* the magician could to some extent manipulate these powers, and express them through visual arts as well as talismans, in oratory and poetry as well as incantations, in music as well as proportion and number, which themselves express the spherical harmonies by *sympathetic* magic (in the neo-Platonic sense, not the Frazerian), and in the elements with their occult qualities. Thus he could produce effects both on his own psyche and other's, as well as on the inanimate objects, with his imaginative power—in all of this, though, he carefully confined himself to the material universe, thus keeping the whole Christian angelic hierarchy out of his magical system (see Walker 1958:36ff., Yates 1964). That the Great Magician lived on for some time as a very popular figure is easily documented by Shakespeare's Prospero (Yates 1973:85–107, *passim*) and Marlowe's Doctor Faustus (Peuckert 1956, index *s.v.* Faust). Within the disciplines of social anthropology and religious studies one does not use 'magic' in this positive sense, although several writers in the history of ideas do, such as F.A. Yates and D.P. Walker.

In the modern common use of our word, these positive connotations have been somehow retained: we easily talk about the magic of poetry and there is a *genre* of modern South American fiction called magical realism. Thus the word has been retained with positive connotations within the esthetic arts, indeed part of the agenda of Ficino. As for astrology with its teachings of correspondences it is very much alive in so called New Age religions, with all their cures and practices aptly called magical, practices inherited possibly from Ficino and other renaissance magicians through the medium of Theosophy, etc. Other modern usages are of course the 'magic' of the entertainer whose smart tricks shock his audience, and the 'magic' of the exceptionally successful sports star, etc.

We have mentioned the pair 'emic' and 'etic,' which is an important distinction for humanistic and anthropological studies. Clifford Geertz (1983:56f.) has introduced another pair that is very close in meaning, *experience-near* and *experience-distant*. The distinction is very important for the study of magic: as we have seen in the material of Frazer, the category of magic is very much of the 'etic' or the 'experience-distant' type, and instances of practitioners of magic (whatever their language) calling *themselves* magicians or the like are extremely scanty. The category of magic of Frazer and the evolutionists is also somewhat polemical in nature, and this is also very much the character of the word in much of our material; usually the magicians are among the 'Others'—be they, as we have seen, in the lands of the savages or in a sect or religious movement close in place and time. Thus, in connection with the concept of magic emics and etics, experience near or distant is of great importance, also because magic is to that extent a polemical category.

This has led me to reflect on a *threefold* interpretative scheme, and I would like to suggest the triad of intra-textual, inter-textual, and extra-textual levels of understanding of, *in casu*, magic: The first kind, intra-textual, should denote the magic which is acknowledged as such by the individual(s) practicing it; the second, the inter-textual, is the context where someone, often in a polemical way, is *said* or *declared* to practice it or is *accused of* doing so, and the magic described accordingly, and where the magic may be a topic of discussion or polemical contest. In the third, extra-textual, context, then, magic would be described disinterestedly, analytically and in a historical perspective.[5] Thus, there exist magic and magicians by (1) self-definition, by (2) polemical definition, and by (3) scientific/historical definition. And then there is the use of the word 'magic' where a phenomenon, or activity, is called magic from the outside as a descriptive practice or merely as an *analogy* or *allegory*, which is strictly not magic at all, but which still may have an extra-textual, even inter-textual, flavour to it and contain views on magic, and as such be important information on the phenomenon itself as experienced at the time. The use of the word in the sciences of anthropology and history should belong to the extra-textual level, but as it describes the two other uses one should develop a dialectic relation between this extra-textual level and the intra- and inter-textual level. If such a definition of magic is to be produced, it certainly must take into consideration the historical meanings as well as the modern usage—if the category is to have meaning in the modern world—and the vocabulary of the material itself must be considered.

5 The concept 'inter-textual' was coined by Julia Kristeva in 1966 in connection with her reading of Mikhail Bakhtin (*vide* Kristeva 1986:37). Since then it has been an important concept for the study of literature used in various contexts. For the development of the concept with the prefixes *intra-* and *extra-* in the context of magic I am responsible myself.

Now, hopefully, the distinctions between the categories suggested are fairly sharp from a theoretical point of view, but the actual borders within the material to be subsumed under them may not be that sharp. In the following I would like to examine a few examples which from one or another viewpoint is called magic, where there may be some reason for doubt if something should be called magic or not, *i.e.* to what extent it can or should be called magic as such in the context of anthropology and history, and whether it is possible to subsume this material under the categories we have suggested.

Some case histories

(a) Empedocles

In his recent book on Empedocles Peter Kingsley (1995), by placing him in a broader cultural and literary context, and, not the least, in a *magical* context (esp. 215ff.), rescues him from the readings—the tentacles, we may say—of the doxographic tradition that began with Aristotle. So, what are our reasons for calling Empedocles a magician? Kingsley centers on the much-debated passage (DK 31 B 111) where our philosopher-magician—if that is what to call him—shows his nearest pupils remedies (φάρμακα) for suffering and old age and explains how to stop destructive winds from destroying the fields, how to unleash them for revenge, and then, for the good of agriculture, how to manipulate the rains. Last but not least he tells his students how to bring back or invoke (ἄγειν) the dead man's soul (μένος) from Hades.

So already in Empedocles we encounter, in its full force, the figure of the learned magician, and the apparent paradox of a prominent early philosopher with a somewhat magical tinge requires an explanation: the passage may be explained away as spurious, as does B.A. van Groningen (1956, *cf.* Kingsley 1995:219) or Ava Chitwood (1986), 'simply by making it [the fragment] disappear,' (Kingsley 1995:227ff.)[6], and Diels himself, who is not quite willing to accept the conjunction of magic and science and explains the disturbing fragment allegorically: as a whole it 'suggests nothing more than what science promises to give its adepts today: information about the laws of nature which will enable one to become their master' (quoted *ib.* 219). Thus the modern reception of Empedocles, apart from Kingsley's fresh contribution, is characterized by careful denial of the magical aspects of

6 In fact Chitwood (1986:181–3) treats the fragment, but she is not prone to see it as an expression of magic, *cf.* also: 'The importance of Empedocles lies in his philosophy, taken as philosophy and not as biography.' (191)

Empedocles' personality, but still he fully presents us with the dichotomy philosophy/magic in our interpretation of him.[7]

Now Empedocles was perceived also by his immediate successors as a magician: Gorgias, reported to have been Empedocles' pupil, is even quoted as claiming 'to have been present while Empedocles was performing his invocations' (D.L. 8.59 = DK 82 A 3: λέγειν ὡς αὐτὸς παρείη τῷ Ἐμπεδοκλεῖ γοητεύοντι; *cf.* Kingsley 1995:220, n.9). Those who, like the mythical Telchines, who were able to control the weather, rain, clouds, hailstorms, and snow, were properly called γόητες and even μάγοι, as Diodorus Siculus says (5.55.3), and, as having this ability, Empedocles too would deserve these designations and would be what we might call a full-fledged magician in this capacity.[8] But this understanding of the magician-philosopher seems not to be unequivocal even in antiquity: Timaeus of Tauromenium (356–260 BC), in his usual sober style, gives quite another explanation (D.L. 8.60 = DK 31 A 1 = *FHG* 566.30; *cf.* Suid. *s.v.* Ἐμπεδοκλῆς), rationalizing completely the fact that Empedocles was called κωλυσανέμας, 'wind-obstructor:' Empedocles, to wit, arranged that asses should be flayed so that their skins might be stretched out on the hills as protection against the annual storms that destroyed the crops—not very magical, but perhaps an early rationalizing attempt to purify Empedocles from irrational beliefs?[9]

Perhaps significantly, immediately after his description of Empedocles' preoccupation with wind, Diogenes Laertius tells us of the episode of ἡ ἄπνους 'the *breathless* woman' or rather 'the woman in trance.' For thirty days Empedocles had observed her, evidently as part of medical and at the same time shamanistic research, and was called 'not merely physician (ἰητρός) because of this, but also a diviner (μάντις)' (D.L. 8.61 = DK 31 A 1).[10] He is also reported to have written an epigram to his lover and pupil, the physician Pausanias, in which the latter is depicted as 'bringing back many men pained with dreadful toils from the innermost shrine of Persephone' (D.L. 8.61 = DK 31 A 156 ['unechtes']?)[11]—clearly 'Orphic.' This information, seen in conjunction with the last line of fragment 111, clearly

7 *Cf.* G.E.R. Lloyd's view on Empedocles, *infra* p. 39.

8 Λέγονται δ' οὗτοι καὶ γόητες γεγονέναι καὶ παράγειν ἅτε βούλοιντο νέφη τε καὶ ὄμβρους καὶ χαλάζας, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ χιόνα ἐφέλκεσθαι· ταῦτα δὲ καθάπερ καὶ τοὺς μάγους ποιεῖν ἱστοροῦσιν. ἀλλάττεσθαι δὲ καὶ τὰς ἰδίας μορφάς, καὶ εἶναι φθονεροὺς ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ τῶν τεχνῶν (Kingsley 1995:225).

9 Further ancient interpretations of Empedocles' epithet κωλυσανέμας, both rationalistic and magical: DK 31 A 14. Kingsley does not report these counterarguments against his case.

10 Empedocles' 'shamanistic' features: Kingsley 1995:225f. Rather than 'shamanism' in Empedocles' case I opt for the emic term 'Orphism,' now accepted after the finds at Olbia and Derveni. An important part of Orphism was evidently the practice of travelling to the other world, symbolically, or experienced as an actual fact.

11 ὃς πολλοὺς μογεροῖσι μαραινομένους καμάτοισι φῶτας ἀπέστρεψεν Φερσεφόνης ἀδύτων.

points to some kind of practice of communicating with the other world, and here it seems that it is the dead man's soul that one is to bring back—to communicate with it for magical purposes? To ask about the future? To heal it, even? All these are possible and are also connected with what may be called magical from one or another viewpoint. Pausanias' bringing back the tormented souls from Hades may, however, rather be a kind of therapeutic practice—the men were still alive, but their souls had gone to Hades temporarily—especially as this is reported in a context in which both Pausanias and Empedocles are called physicians, and which includes the account of the woman in the trance.

One of the great themes in, or even premisses for, 'science' in Empedocles' and the Pythagoreans' milieu was the doctrine of the microcosmos-macrocosmos correspondences between the individual and the 'all,' the 'kinship of all nature.' The universe, *i.e.* the universal soul, is 'breath,' the first act of the Unlimited in the creation of the cosmos is to breathe; the Unlimited is thus called πνεῦμα (Arist. *Ph.* 213b22 = DK 58 B 30;[12] *cf.* Guthrie 1962:277–8). This wind or breath is also apparently the uniting principle of the whole cosmos for the Pythagoreans and for Empedocles: 'The followers of Pythagoras and Empedocles, and most of the Italian philosophers, say that there is a certain community uniting us not only with each other and with the gods but even with brute creation. There is in fact one breath pervading the whole cosmos-like soul and uniting us with them' (S.E. 9.127 = DK 31 B 136).[13] The nature of the human soul is also described by several philosophers as air or wind.[14] The words denoting soul, spirit, etc. are also often etymologically related to 'wind' and 'breath.'[15] Thus it was very natural to talk about the souls of the dead, the women in trance, and the travels to the underworld, in terms of wind and breath, and in being able to control the winds, one was able to control the soul, and vice versa. This of course prefigures the Theurgic and neo-Platonic views on

12 Εἶναι δ' ἔφασαν καὶ οἱ Πυθαγόρειοι κενόν, καὶ ἐπεισιέναι αὐτὸ τῷ οὐρανῷ ἐκ τοῦ ἀπείρου πνεύματος ὡς ἀναπνέοντι καὶ τὸ κενόν, 'the Pythagoreans also said that the void exists, and that it enters the universe from infinite breath, the universe being supposed to breathe in the actual void ...' (transl. Guthrie).

13 Οἱ μὲν οὖν περὶ τὸν Πυθαγόραν καὶ τὸν Ἐμπεδοκλέα καὶ τὸν Ἰταλῶν πλῆθός φασι μὴ μόνον ἡμῖν πρὸς ἀλλήλους καὶ πρὸς θεοὺς εἶναί τινα κοινωνίαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς τ' ἄλογα τῶν ζῴων. ἓν γὰρ ὑπάρχειν πνεῦμα τὸ διὰ παντὸς τοῦ κόσμου διῆκον ψυχῆς τρόπον, τὸ καὶ ἑνοῦν ἡμᾶς πρὸς ἐκεῖνα (transl. Guthrie 1962:278; *cf.* also 200 n.2).

14 So Anaximenes, DK 13 B 2: Οἷον ἡ ψυχή, φησίν, ἡ ἡμετέρα ἀὴρ οὖσα συγκρατεῖ ἡμᾶς, καὶ ὅλον τὸν κόσμον πνεῦμα καὶ ἀὴρ περιέχει, 'as our soul, which is air, is controlling us, thus the whole world is kept together by wind (~ spirit) and air;' *cf.* Guthrie 1962:128: 'In making his air selection, an air in perpetual motion, Anaximenes also was respecting an age-old and still flourishing popular belief which associated, and in fact identified, breath and life' and Guthrie 1959:135ff.

15 Πνεῦμα, ψυχή, *spiritus, animus*, etc., also in Semitic languages. Further in Onians 1951.

συμπάθεια which became the ontological explanation of why Theurgic magi worked. It also, however, prefigures the kind of correspondence-thinking which i fact also is basic in natural science, be it mathematical or experimental.

So, is Empedocles a magician? Kingsley argues strongly for his being one in th intra-textual sense, *i.e.* that he understands himself to be one. And certainly he wa not a modest man in his claims: 'I come to you as an immortal god, no longer mor tal, honoured by all' (D.L. 8.62 = DK 31 B 112),[16] but does this make him a magician Not necessarily, for he may have perceived himself chiefly as the Great Sage, as such also believing himself capable of what we ourselves would call magical feats—bu for him these powers would only be part of his ability to cure sickness and contro the breath and merely a corollary of his world view: as we have seen, in controlling the microcosmos one also controls the macrocosmos, the winds, the weather etc., as well as the breath-souls of men. Also, Empedocles' work as a whole—the doctrine of the elements, which he was credited with inventing, his general 'mythophilosophical' cosmology, and rhetoric, another of his 'inventions' (D.L. 8.57 = DK 31 A 1)[17]—is not mainly magical. He seems then to have looked upon himself as a Great Sage—and in fact we may 'read' him as an expression of early scientific optimism. Indeed Empedocles' age flowered with all kinds of explanations for both *physis* and for what later philosophy would call the spiritual part of man. Empedocles even thinks himself divine.

Notwithstanding all the good qualities of his book, Kingsley seems too categorical in insisting on Empedocles' perception of himself as a magician.[18] Although parts of the material on him may, in certain contexts, be described and understood as magical, this aspect must have been at most only part of his self-perception. But Empedocles *was* reported to have practiced γοητεία with Gorgias as the witness—here, however, we are moving into inter-textual interpretations—and the statement of Gorgias, Empedocles' pupil, just may refer to the fact that the teacher

16 Ἐγὼ δ' ὑμῖν θεὸς ἄμβροτος, οὐκέτι θνητὸς πωλεῦμαι μετὰ πᾶσι τετιμένος. *Cf.* Kingsley 1995:223.

17 Ἀριστοτέλης δ' ἐν τῷ Σοφιστῇ φησι πρῶτον Ἐμπεδοκλέα ῥητορικὴν εὑρεῖν, Ζήνωνα δὲ διαλεκτικήν. Further references to Empedocles as the first rhetor, *vide* DK 31 A 19.

18 *Cf.* Kingsley 1995:228 on the views of Ava Chitwood on Empedocles: 'We do not have to be told that Diogenes Laertius 'says that Satyrus believed that Empedocles laid claim to the powers mentioned in fragment 111;' we know that Empedocles laid claim to the powers in question from the fragment itself.' And (249): 'This is the historical reality of Empedocles as a magician—not just any magician but a magician who claimed to be able to use his magical powers to descend to the underworld.' As for the secrecy of his message of magic to his pupil (DK 31 B 111, Kingsley 1995:221 n.12), it does not, however, make the message exclusiely magic: secrecy was of course a part not only of the mysteries but even of the sciences: *cf.* Timaeus' report (D.L. 8.54) that Empedocles was convicted of stealing discourses from Pythagoras, and was excluded from taking part in the discussions after this.

made speeches 'like an enchanter,' a case of 'magic' that I shall discuss below. Other inter-textual material on Empedocles, that of Timaeus *apud* Diogenes Laertius (*cf. supra* p.32), would speak against his being perceived as a magician, although he is admired by Heraclides Ponticus as 'not merely a physician, but also a diviner' (D.L. 8.61; *cf. infra* n.34)[19] As for the extra-textual interpretation of Empedocles, much of his activity would indeed today qualify as 'magic' in a dichotomy magic/science: he may have been an important thinker for 'proto-science,' but his claims in matters of cosmology, healing, or psychology would scarcely be accepted by science. As such his world view might aptly be classed, with Marett, as 'magico-religious' or even 'magico-mythical.' But like Paracelsus, Ficino, and the Renaissance magicians, Empedocles appears to us a paradox: both scientific and magical, both logical and mythical. He is thus quite an important figure for the study of magic, since he indeed presents a border case.

(b) Gorgias

My next case will be the great sophist and orator Gorgias, himself a pupil of Empedocles. Gorgias, as we have seen, was reported as claiming 'to have been present while Empedocles was performing his invocations.' Since, however, Gorgias himself used the language and imagery of magic to describe the able speaker and orator, it is possible that this statement of his refers to Empedocles as a 'speaker of magical dimensions,' in the same way as we also may use this image: Empedocles is in fact credited with being the inventor of the 'enchanting' art of persuasion. This somehow weakens Gorgias' testimony that his teacher was as a full-fledged magician: Gorgias would have heard Empedocles speaking as a 'magician'—in quotation marks.[20] This brings us to a case of magical language which in fact is *not* necessarily magic *per se*, 'magic' used to describe another phenomenon, namely rhetoric. Magic and rhetoric may have certain features in common, but one would be wrong to identify the two. But Gorgias' use of the magical imagery, however, shows that he was well acquainted with magic, especially since his use of the imagery of magic is so complete—most of the basic terms of magic in the technical sense are present in his description of rhetoric; thus we may presume that magic as an activity and as a phenomenon was well known in his milieu and his time. As

19 Then comes Empedocles' statement (DK 31 B 112) that he is immortal. Another important 'Presocratic' close to Empedocles' milieu and reported to practice magic (Tertullian, *An.* 28.5) was Pherecydes.

20 *Cf.* even Kingsley 1995:220: 'It is very possible that by Empedocles' "magic" Gorgias himself had been referring primarily to his teacher's uncanny rhetorical powers and mastery of the spoken word, ...'; also 220 n.10, 248 n.53.

such Gorgias' *Encomium of Helen*[21] is important as a witness to the magical terminology of 5th-century Greece and as inter-textual material for a definition of its magic, even though the analogical or allegorical use of magical terminology really should qualify it as extra-textual. But Gorgias' statement almost *defines* what magic is in a classical Greek setting, enumerating its main constituents and their workings and showing that belief in magic certainly was enough part of the horizon of his audience for him to use its imagery to describe the art of rhetoric. Thus we find in his description (10ff.), in addition to μαγεία itself, also γοητεία ('witchcraft,' 'sorcery,' 'magical practices') (ἐπ)αγωγή ('invocation,' 'manipulation'), ἐπῳδή ('incantation,' 'enchantment,' 'charm'), and θέλγειν ('to bewitch,' 'to charm')—only the term κατάδεσμος seems to be missing. 'When the power of enchantments mingles with the concepts of our soul, it charms us, persuades us, and changes us by means of its witchcraft. The double craft of sorcery and magic has been invented for the sake of deceiving our soul and cheat our views' (10).[22] Here μαγεία has nothing of its connotations of 'wisdom of the East' (as *e.g.* in Plato *Alc.* 1, 122a) it refers exclusively to the *manipulative* art of magic. Speeches, then, are like the φάρμακον, the magical means, or the drugs, since they infatuate and bewitch by means of persuasion (14).[23] Indirectly Gorgias also compares *poetry* with magic, much like Ficino (who, however, might contend that poetry *is* magic and part of magical discipline), in stating that poetry is only metrical speech (23),[24] rhetorical speech being then compared with magical incantation.

Gorgias does not say that rhetoric *is* magic: it is rather *like* magic, speeches are *magical*, in the way one might say of a cunning speaker even today, who influences and manipulates like a powerful master (8).[25] The aims of the orator and the magician are close: both wish to manipulate others by means of trickery and symbols, the one through persuasion, the other through rituals and other magical means. Gorgias presents us with an early example of this *allegorical* use of 'magic,' al-

21 Ἑλένης Ἐγκώμιον; references are to the text of Immisch 1927. For a full treatment of magic and rhetoric as based on this work see Romilly 1975.

22 Συγγιγνομένη γὰρ τῇ δόξῃ τῆς ψυχῆς ἡ δύναμις τῆς ἐπῳδῆς ἔθελξε καὶ ἔπεισε καὶ μετέστησεν γοητείᾳ. γοητείας δὲ καὶ μαγείας δισσαὶ τέχναι εὕρηνται, αἵ εἰσι ψυχῆς ἁμαρτήματα (ὁρμήματα Immisch) καὶ δόξης ἀπατήματα.

23 (Immisch §10b): Οἱ δὲ πειθοῖ τινι κακῇ τὴν ψυχὴν ἐφαρμάκευσαν καὶ ἐξεγοήτησαν. 'Some (speeches) intoxicate and bewitch the soul with an evil kind of persuasion.'

24 Τὴν ποίησιν ἅπασαν καὶ νομίζω καὶ ὀνομάζω λόγον ἔχοντα μέτρον.

25 Λόγος δυνάστης μέγας ἐστίν. The *allegorical* character of Gorgias' description is clear from §14 (Immisch §10b): *ὥσπερ* γὰρ τῶν φαρμάκων ... *οὕτω* καὶ τῶν λόγων.... Demosthenes also uses the image of the γόης and his activity in describing the cunning and seducing speaker: 19.102, 109; 18.276: Δεινὸν καὶ γόητα καὶ σοφιστὴν καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτ' ὀνομάζων; 19.32: Εἴ τις ἂν ὑμῖν ἢ ῥήτωρ ἢ σοφιστὴς ἢ γόης οὕτω θαυμάσιος δοκεῖ γενέσθαι καὶ λέγειν δεινός....

though he also, indirectly, provides us with rich information on the beliefs in magic in his ambience, and especially its terminology.[26]

(c) *On the sacred disease*

With the treatise *On the sacred disease*,[27] written in the full bloom of the classical period, at the end of the 5th or in the beginning of the 4th century, we are back into the discussion of 'real magic,' with no talk of poetical imagery and allegories. The text is pivotal in describing nascent critical science in antiquity, and is as such employed by G.E.R. Lloyd (1979:15–58) as his main evidence for how critical, rational, and cause-oriented natural science departed from magic—the text systematizes in a very explicit way the dichotomy magic/science in the classical period. But, since its main object is to show that the 'the sacred disease,' epilepsy, is in no way more sacred than any other disease but is to be explained by natural causes (*Morb.sacr.* 1.2f.),[28] the text also treats the dichotomy science/religion, and thus also strongly dichotomizes magic/religion, in order to show that the deceivers, soothsayers, and rouges, who claim to deal with the sickness in fact practice what the author of the text inter-textually describes as deceptive magic, etc., and are in opposition not only to true science but also to true religion. And the causes of illnesses are not some unclear godly figure with a faint symbolic relation to the ailment, such as the Mother of the gods if the patient cries like a goat or a lion, or Poseidon if he makes a shrill sound, etc. (1.32ff.). The author is very polemical specifically against 'magicians, purifiers, vagabonds, and impostors, who pretend to be especially religious (θεοσεβής) and to know more than others,' since such cheaters are the ones 'first to make the ailment into something sacred,' just to hide their helplessness in actually curing people, so that they can go on with their ma-

26 Although there are views presented in the dialogues of Plato which take magic literally deadly serious, describing it dichotomously with religion in a complete set of magical terminology (*Laws* 10.909a–c, 11.932e–933e, *Republic* 364b–c), there are many instances of his use of magical imagery as allegories, *e.g.* Socrates is allegorically—and positively—referred to as a magician being an admirable teacher and dialectician (*Phaedo* 77e–78a, *Meno* 79e–80b), Callicles likens—negatively—to magic the conventions and traditional views that destroy the independent and good young people with the incantations of traditional thinking (*Gorgias* 483e–484a).

27 Περὶ ἱερῆς νούσου, *De morbo sacro*; references are to the text of Grensemann 1968. The date: Lloyd 1979:15 n.32. Reference to the dichotomous terminology of the text: Versnel 1991:191.

28 Οὐδέν τί μοι δοκεῖ τῶν ἄλλων θειοτέρη εἶναι νούσων οὐδὲ ἱερωτέρη, ἀλλὰ φύσιν μὲν ἔχει καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ νοσήματα ὅθεν γίνεται, φύσιν δὲ αὕτη καὶ πρόφασιν. 'I do not believe that the sacred disease is any more divine or sacred than any other disease but, on the contrary, just as other diseases have a nature from which they arise, so this one has a nature and a definite cause' (transl. Lloyd 1976:16). Grensemann thinks the sentence possibly should be deleted, because it appears in a very similar form at 2.1f. Anyway this is the very clear message of the text.

gical purifications (καθαρμοί) and enchantments (ἐπαοιδαί) (1.10–2),[29] without really taking any real responsibility for the patient (1.23): 'and I do not think that even those who try to treat those ailments in that way think the ailments are particularly sacred or divine. ... With such utterances and methods, they pose as having some kind of superior knowledge, and they deceive people proposing to them all kinds of purifications and cleanliness, though most of their talk is [not on medicine, but] on the divine and the spiritual' (1.24–7).[30] This is not science, and this is not religion: the author of our text is sympathetic to religious sentiments, but he does not at all wish to grant the magicians he is attacking a genuinely religious attitude: 'at least I mean that their talk is not on religion, as they themselves may believe, but rather on the non-religious and on the inexistence of the gods—their religion and their kind of divinity is rather non-religious and blasphemous, at least as I teach it' (1.28).[31] 'If a man practices magic and offerings to take down the moon, obscure the sun or making winter or summer, I do not believe anything of that to be divine—it is rather human indeed, if the power of the divine can be dominated and enslaved by some human knowledge.' Our author here clearly distinguishes between the submissive and the coercive attitude towards the divine, prefiguring the dichotomy echoing through the whole modern discussion of ma-

29 Ἐμοὶ δὲ δοκέουσιν οἱ πρῶτοι τοῦτο τὸ νόσημα ἱρώσαντες τοιοῦτοι εἶναι ἄνθρωποι οἷοι καὶ νῦν εἰσι μάγοι τε καὶ καθαρταὶ καὶ ἀγύρται καὶ ἀλαζόνες, ὁκόσοι προσποιέονται σφόδρα θεοσεβέες εἶναι καὶ πλέον τι εἰδέναι. οὗτοι τοίνυν παραμπεξόμενοι καὶ προβαλλόμενοι τὸ θεῖον τῆς ἀμηχανίης τοῦ μὴ ἔχειν ὅ τι προσενέγκαντες ὠφελήσουσι καὶ ὡς μὴ κατάδηλοι ἔωσιν οὐδὲν ἐπιστάμενοι ἱερὸν ἐνόμισαν τοῦτο τὸ πάθος εἶναι, καὶ λόγους ἐπιλέξαντες ἐπιτηδείους τὴν ἴησιν κατεστήσαντο ἐς τὸ ἀσφαλὲς σφίσιν αὐτοῖσι καθαρμοὺς προσφέροντες καὶ ἐπαοιδάς, λουτρῶν τε ἀπέσχεσθαι κελεύοντες καὶ ἐδεσμάτων πολλῶν καὶ ἀνεπιτηδείων ἀνθρώποισι νοσέουσιν ἐσθίειν. 'It is my opinion that those who first called this disease 'sacred' were the sort of people we now call mages, purifiers, vagabonds and charlatans. These are exactly the people who pretend to be very pious and to be particulary wise. By invoking a divine element they were able to screen their own failures to give suitable treatment and so called this a 'sacred' malady to conceal their ignorance of its nature. By picking their phrases carefully, prescribing purifications and incantations along with abstinence from baths and from many foods unsuitable for the sick, they ensured that their therapeutic measures were safe for themselves' (transl. after Lloyd 1972:16).

30 Οὕτως οὖν ἔμοιγε δοκέουσιν οἵτινες τῷ τρόπῳ τούτῳ ἐγχειρέουσιν ἰᾶσθαι ταῦτα τὰ νοσήματα, οὔτε ἱερὰ νομίζειν εἶναι οὔτε θεία. ... τοιαῦτα λέγοντες καὶ μηχανώμενοι προσποιέονται πλέον τι εἰδέναι καὶ ἀνθρώπους ἐξαπατῶσι προστιθέμενοι αὐτοῖς ἁγνείας τε καὶ καθαρότητας, ὅ τε πολὺς αὐτοῖς τοῦ λόγου ἐς τὸ θεῖον ἀφήκει καὶ τὸ δαιμόνιον.

31 Καίτοι ἔμοιγε οὐ περὶ εὐσεβείης τοὺς λόγους δοκέουσι ποιεῖσθαι, ὡς οἴονται, ἀλλὰ περὶ ἀσεβείης μᾶλλον καὶ ὡς θεοὶ οὐκ εἰσί, τὸ δὲ εὐσεβὲς αὐτῶν καὶ τὸ θεῖον ἀσεβές ἐστι καὶ ἀνόσιον, ὡς ἐγὼ διδάξω.

gic (1.31):[32] in his dichotomy the verbs κρατῶ 'dominate' and δουλεύω 'be enslaved' are even stronger than in Plato, where the same dichotomy is expressed through πείθειν, 'persuading' the gods.[33] Our author is as uncompromising when it comes to magical rites: they are different from religious offerings and prayers (1.41), just as the mentality of those practicing magic is different from that of the truly religious.

One would presume that those described as magicians in *On the sacred disease* would not like to be characterized as such: their intra-textual description would presumably be different. Those earning money from their tricks might be an exception, though. This leads us to the question: who were the persons so polemically criticized in the text as magicians and mystery mongers? What were their milieus? Or, in the terms that I have proposed above, what is the intra-textual description of those so deprecated by this inter-textual description? Lloyd (1972:37ff.; *cf. supra* pp. 31f.) tries to free Empedocles of the charge of magic—but the latter's claim to control the weather and the episode with 'the woman in the trance' places him squarely among of our author's opponents. Indeed Empedocles seems to have had an interest in 'other states of mind,' which is something clearly related to epilepsy and possibly linked to the belief that one can get knowledge of other worlds in epileptic trance. The author of *On the sacred disease* does not seem attack any particular persons; rather he argues against mentalities and with attitudes towards medical cures other than his own—a stance not of course infrequent in the use of 'magic' to describe the sinister activities of 'them' and 'the Others.' If he had individual offenders in mind, it would have been easy enough to name them. Several of the views of Empedocles, and of the Pythagoreans and Orphics, are much like those under attack. Now science, if we may call it thus, developed greatly in the hundred or so years between Empedocles and *On the sacred disease*. Our author seems to criticize not so much the past as the present; it is therefore likelier that he is attacking the intellectual heirs of Empedocles and Pythagoras around 400 BC rather than opponents living a hundred years before. From our other descriptions of magic in his period, we know that there were such groups, and some of them might easily have sailed under the banners of Orphic and Pythagorean 'mysteries'—in fact the τελεταί are often part of magical terminology, and there are also indications that 'Pythagoreanism' and 'Orphism,' after a hundred years, were de-

32 Εἰ γὰρ ἄνθρωπος μαγεύων τε καὶ θύων σελήνην καθαιρήσει καὶ ἥλιον ἀφανιεῖ καὶ χειμῶνα καὶ εὐδίην ποιήσει, οὐκ ἂν ἔγωγ' ἔτι θεῖον νομίσαιμι τούτων εἶναι οὐδέν, ἀλλ' ἀνθρώπινον, εἰ δὴ τοῦ θείου ἡ δύναμις ὑπ' ἀνθρώπου γνώμης κρατεῖται καὶ δεδούλωται. Added to this list of tricks are 'making rain and drought, making sea and land impassable' in 1.29.

33 *Laws* 10.909b, *Rep.* 2.364c: θεοὺς ὑπισχνούμενοι πείθειν. The difference between persuading and manipulating the gods became a theological problem with the Theurgists in their efforts to distance their soteriological teachings from magic, *cf. infra*.

signations attached to activities and mentalities not at all as sophisticated as those of the earlier Pythagoreanism.[34]

The text distinguishes magical fraud from religion and also from science, for the defrauders have no real understanding of the causes of illness: its polemical and inter-textual description of magic clearly establishes the three possible dichotomies between science, magic, and religion, and uses the main terminology of magic. But what about the extra-textual description of the points of view in the text? From the view-points of the modern humanistic and anthropological sciences one has no trouble in agreeing that what the author describes as magic is exactly that, even if there may be some disagreement about his view of religion. Even though the text ends with the proud claim (18.6) of having no recourse to 'purifications or magic or any such craft (ἄνευ καθαρμῶν καὶ μαγίης καὶ πάσης τῆς τοιαύτης βαναυσίης)' and shows a fairly rational understanding of causes, still, an extra-textual comparison with modern science would reveal a strong magical tinge in its doctrines of the temperaments (14.5f.), the wind (17.9), and the dependence of epilepsy on weather conditions (18.1). Also the recommended cures seem much like those of the kind of healers which the text itself is criticizing, and even to be related to the microcosmos-macrocosmos speculations referred to above.[35]

Still the *Sacred disease* gives us a well-established understanding of magic, science, and religion and makes distinctions among them that should also be taken into account in our extra-textual definitions. The treatise is also very interesting inter-textually, as it illustrates how the accusation of magic is relative to the views of those who describe it, and reminds us that we should be aware of which positions we take in describing the phenomenon also in a modern context.

(d) Apuleius

Next we shall try the case of Apuleius (2nd century AD): was he a magician? He was acquitted in court, in his own lifetime—but posterity has never dissociated him from the phenomenon. Thus his writings are today important evidence for magic in antiquity and were even read as such in his own time. The charge of magic against him lived on in Augustine's writings from an inter-textual position: from his Christian viewpoint he attacked Apuleius as the *typus* of the magician.[36] So, in

34 As another of the type, however admittedly more philosophically minded, we may again mention Heraclides of the 4th century, a great admirer of Empedocles and interested in trance, winds, bringing back souls, etc., and thus probably in the states of epilepsy, *cf.* pp.32f.

35 The author even states (17.9) that thinking comes from the air: ὥσπερ οὖν καὶ τῆς φρονήσιος τοῦ ἠέρος πρῶτος αἰσθάνεται ...

36 Augustine evidently had good friends in Madaura, Apuleius' birthplace, and he even writes them letters, one of which is preserved (*Ep.* 232); they might easily have given him opportune advice on the matter.

the *City of God* there is no room for magicians: in his polemical and inter-textual Christian position against magicians and those dealing with demons Augustine is intransigent. Augustine at length (*Civ.D.* 8.14–22) denounces Apuleius' positive view of demons as exposed in *De Deo Socratis*, declaring that 'all men, or nearly all, have a horror of the name of demons ...' (8.14),[37] producing arguments that men, as rational beings, are superior to the demons. The demons, says Augustine, describing Apuleius views, 'are also the source of the miracles performed by magicians' (8.16).[38] It is absurd that in order to communicate with the gods upright men should make use of such beings, which 'cherish the magicians' thousand injurious arts in their sorceries, which innocence detests;' beings concerned with the 'criminal acts of magic,' from which the Christians stay aloof (8.18).[39] Thus Augustine warns against these beings, but at the same time he calls them 'poetic fictions and theatrical entertainments' (8.18)[40] and shows the same attitude towards magic as we met in *On the sacred disease*: at the same time seriously warning against the destructive power of magic and calling it childish foolishness—the doubleness is characteristic of the polemical inter-textual approach to magic. Augustine is averse to any use of magic, and as he says, the *artes magicae* are not only denounced by the Christians: by common people, and by Virgil as well, and by Cicero, quoting the Twelve Tables, the old laws of Rome.[41] Now, although Apuleius' judges acquitted him in the trial,[42] Augustine still treats him as guilty and says he should have abided by his faith and not have been so cowardly as to deny it—if he had been executed, his demons would have richly rewarded him in the next world for his loyalty to them, just as the Christian martyrs have been rewarded (8.19).

So in the eyes of Augustine Apuleius was a magician, and his accusers in the trial, from which his wonderful speech of defence is preserved, wanted him intensely

37 *Omnes vel paene omnes daemonum nomen exhorrent.*

38 *Ab his quoque esse miracula magorum.* Apuleius, however, refers to Plato as the authority (*D.Socr.* 6): *per hos* [*daemonas*] *eosdem, ut Plato in Symposio autumat, cuncta denuntiata et magorum varia miracula omnesque praesagiorum species reguntur*; certain of Plato's doctrines are respected by Augustine as well.

39 Quoting Verg. *Aen.* 7.338: *amant in maleficiis magorum mille nocendi artes, quas non amat innocentia*; ... (*ab*) *artium magicarum sceleribus* (*alienus*).

40 *Non est quod iste poetica figmenta et theatrica ludibria iustificare conetur.* At the end of 8.22 Augustine treats the demons as real but fraudulent; *cf.* also 18.18, where he refers to the *Asinus aureus*, as he calls it, and discusses whether the change of humans into animals for a period is possible or not: He has heard of more instances as well and is sceptical but does not quite deny the phenomenon.

41 Cicero is not known to have referred to the Twelve Tables, although Pliny, *HN* 28.4.17f., quotes them in his treatment of magic: *Non et legum ipsarum in duodecim tabulis verba sunt: qui fruges excantassit, et alibi: qui malum carmen incantassit?*

42 *Cf.* Valette 1924:xxii: 'Eut-il au moins gain de cause devant la justice? On ne saurait en douter; la suit de sa carrière le montre.'

to be one. He had married Pudentilla, the widowed mother of a friend of his at Oea; she was considerably older than he, and her near relatives resented the remarriage as probably lessening their chances of inheriting her money. So what was better than an accusation of magic, a crime to be punished under the Cornelian law *de sicariis et veneficis*? Certainly he could not have won the lady by *honest* means! The accusation, an important part of which was that he had dissected fishes for their use in magical rites and love magic against the widow, shows that magic was very much part of the society, and that the accusers were aware of the art (Abt 1908:67, index *s.v.* 'Fische'). 'My accusers Aemilianus and Rufinus should state in which interest, even if I had been the greatest of all magicians, would I force Pudentilla into marriage by means of incantations and potions' (*Apol.* 90).[43] Magic seems to have been, to judge from Apuleius' *Apology*, one of the standard accusations of the petty bourgeoisie of a provincial Roman town in the 2nd century against any intruder into their small community, but such an accusation evidently was credible enough to make its way to court. Even then, though, magic had no proper definition, with the result that it must have been very difficult to convict someone of the crime. Thus Apuleius brilliantly humbles his accusers in his speech, portraying himself not at all as a magician but as a Platonist and a philosopher, and to impress the judge and the audience quotes an array of philosophers; 'I congratulate myself on being numbered among such persons' (27),[44] he says, having referred to the fact that according to vulgar misunderstanding the old philosophers sometimes were designated by the word *magus*. 'Such are the anecdotes [about magic], among others, and about boys [involved in magical operations as described above] which I have read in a number of authors, but I am doubtful if I should say such things are possible or not. But I do believe, just as Plato, that there are certain divine powers placed between man and the gods when concerned both their nature and their location, and that these govern every divination and magical miracle' (43).[45] Apuleius does not fail to mention too that 'I have also participated in several initiations in Greece'—mystery cults being somehow related to magic, but still accepted generally. He also shows his *interest* in magical phenomena, and dichotomously ascribes to the simple or childish soul the ability to forget the present under the influence of incantations and vapours and to tell the future

43 *Venio nunc ad ipsum stirpem accusationis, ad ipsam causam maleficii. Respondeat Aemilianus et Rufinus, ob quod emolumentum, etsi maxime magus forem, Pudentillam carminibus et venenis ad matrimonium pellexissem.*

44 *Gratulor igitur mihi, cum et ego tot ac tantis viris adnumeror.*

45 *Haec et alia apud plerosque de magiis et pueris lego equidem, sed dubius sentientiae sum dicamne fieri posse an negem; quamquam Platoni credam inter deos atque hominum natura et loco medias quasdam divorum potestates intersitas, easque divinitationes cunctas et magorum miracula gubernare.* This is the subject of his *De deo Socratis*; *cf. supra.*

(55).[46] And of course Apuleius explained the business with the fishes, so pivotal in the accusation, as a part of natural investigation, which it possibly was.

Now, the *accusers'* inter-textual point of view is quite clear, Apuleius is a magician. But Apuleius himself is denying the charge, his intra-textual statement is negative. Apuleius *did* declare himself a believer in the demons, as beneficent beings between gods and humans, and he cited the Platonic tradition in their support. He strongly reiterated, though, that he was *not* a magician—but no wonder, since he wanted to avoid the death penalty. Certainly he was interested in magic: in his delightful *Metamorphoses* he describes so many kinds of magic, that the book itself might even have had him convicted.[47] Its descriptions of magic must rather be interpreted as an allegorical autobiography—in youth he had no doubt been fascinated by magic as a phenomenon—and their humorous style does not suggest the serious magician wishing to practice the *ars magica* in earnest; it is more an innocent mockery of making fun of the whole magical business. There are, then, quite good reasons to believe that Apuleius was the victim of provincial narrow-mindedness, as he himself asserts in his *Apology*, notwithstanding 'que les explications d'Apulée ne sont pas toujours entièrement convaincantes, et que d'autre part le philosophe tel qu'il le conçoit est presque nécessairement doublé d'un magicien' (Vallette 1924:xxii n.2).[48] Apuleius' being a magician, then, again was probably only a rumour but was seen as a possibility and a threat in his time and milieu. To see how widespread the practice was, we need only consult the Greek and Latin magical papyri.

(e) Bhavya

G.E.R. Lloyd once called for Chinese comparanda for the Great Dichotomies (1979:8 n.28) and later (1996) he contributed such himself. This procedure is very helpful, for although the Chinese may be the Others, they are not so wholly Others as some unknown African, Melanesian, or Australian tribe, onto which we may and do freely and arbitrarily project, positively or negatively, our own cultural dichotomies. After all, Chinese thinking, being the product of a complex society and system of administration, treats problems intellectually in a way more like the

46 *Sacrorum pleraque initia in Gaecia participavi ....;* and 43: *quin et illud mecum reputo posse animum humanum praesertim puerilem et simplicem, seu carminum avocamento sive odorum delenimento soporari ....*

47 There is, however, every reason to presume that the book was written *after* the trial, especially because it would have been part of the accusations as evidence, as well as of the defence, if it was written before.

48 The problem of *Metamorphoses* as source for the biography of Apuleius: Valette 1924:vi. The date relative to the Apology: xiv sq.; *cf.* also Valette 1908.

Greeks than the Àzande or whatever.[49] For the purpose of exploring how one party sees as magic and irrelevant nonsense what another sees as rational, I shall adduce an *Indian* example—Indian culture being also a complex culture with a long tradition of intellectual history. But Indian religions, and even what we may call science or 'science,' are full of incantations and *mantras* of all kinds: for personal salvation, for killing enemies and cursing rivals, for protection against wild animals and spirits, for the inducement of sexual desire, for getting children, for putting them to sleep, for producing the right weather, for healing and thaumaturgy, and most of all, for producing concentration and states of mind conducive to the development of man, for his escape from suffering and human existence. Thus some *mantras* have a more religious and 'rational' use, others clearly magical uses.

More or less the same dichotomies as in our examples from Western antiquity are also present in our Indian example. The Mādhyamaka Buddhist philosopher and apologist for the Mahāyāna faith Bhavya, who worked in the 6th century AD as an historian and systematizer of his religion, was to defend its sacred scriptures, the Mahāyāna Sūtras, which are full of the so-called *dhāraṇī*—or *dhāraṇīmantras* (Braarvig 1997). These strings of partly linguistically and semantically unexplained gibberish, interspersed with a choice of technical terms from Buddhist philosophy and ethics, originated probably as aids to memory as containing technical terms of Buddhist teachings (the meaning of the word *dhāraṇī* is 'supporting,' 'containing' *i.e.* the teachings). Indian sciences of grammar, music, philosophy etc., have a long tradition of using short symbols as annotation and mnemonic devices. Since, however, they embraced the complete teachings of Buddhism in symbolic form, the *dhāraṇī* soon became a matter for chanting—and enchanting—for by chanting or murmering them one could ultimately cure all suffering and sickness. The mnemonic syllables soon came to be chanted not only as aids to concentration and meditation, which above all is the means of salvation in Buddhism, but also for their magical effect—cure, protection, success, even the destruction of enemies.[50]

Bhavya, then, tried to defend a part of the Mahāyāna texts which was only reluctantly accepted by the intellectual elite of his time, for whom it was difficult to reconcile the great intellectual achievements of the Mahāyāna with the belief in mantras and magical rituals. Confronted as he was with religiously authoritative texts claiming the mantras to be the Words of the Buddha, Bhavya's main solution to the problem was to try to save the mantras as *foci of concentration*, which, of

49 This is not to say, of course, that magical phenomena of very simple societies are irrelevant; they are, however, not treated intellectually or philosophically to that extent in societies with simpler cultures.

50 There is also an argument that if one concentrates on the meaninglessness of the syllables in the mantras, one will also realize the meaninglessness and emptiness of existence as a whole, this being a basic tenet in Mahāyāna Buddhism.

course, was very much in accord with the different traditions of yoga. Thus, in doing this, he tried to take out the irrational part of his religion and stressed that the magical use of mantras was not on the Mahāyāna agenda. So while his opponents, adherents of the traditional non-Mahāyāna Buddhism, which were called *śrāvakas* by the Mahāyānists, attacked him by denying that such outlandish talk was in any way conducive to salvation and freedom from the everlasting round of rebirth, Bhavya set out to give the magical syllables a rationale.

Both Bhavya and his opponents, the *śrāvakas*, established their dichotomous positions towards magic: Bhavya accepted the mantras as a means to salvation but denounced their magical use, thus rejecting their 'darker' side. The *śrāvakas* contended that such mostly meaningless syllables, even if indeed in foreign languages, do not at all help for anything and reject the whole business of mantras, including the use which Bhavya favours—what is conducive for human development is only the moral and ascetic practices described in the 'true' Buddhist scriptures, *i.e.* those scriptures accepted as such by the *śrāvaka* party.

Where the dividing line between magic and religion is placed *is* arbitrary, both in the present and even in 6th-century India, but the dynamics of the study of magic, be it from a scientific descriptive view or from some kind of apologetic endeavour, is closely related to the dichotomous situation in which magic as a phenomenon always seems to present itself. As such, again, the dichotomy should not be given up but discussed and refined: the whole phenomenon of magic, with its derivatives, is suffused with otherness and dichotomies, not only from an extra-textual position, where research often too soon has labeled a phenomenon magic, but also inter-textually, which the Bhavya-*śrāvaka* controversy exemplifies, and intra-textually, in the way that Bhavya himself makes a sharp dichotomy between the soteriological and magical use of mantras. The idea (*cf.* Versnel 1991:180 n.8 for bibliography) that dichotomies should be a product of Western culture must be discarded as nothing but another popular myth of social anthropology: among other related dichotomies, that aptly called magic/religion is also present in Buddhist and Hindu traditions—space limits us to this one example.

(f) Theurgy

This takes us back to Theurgy, which will be our last example of the problem c the applicability of the category magic.[51] A few remarks on the dichotomous na ture of this important and very complex movement in late antiquity will howeve have to suffice. Now Theurgy presented the scholarly world, the evolutionists a well as the Philhellenes, with a great paradox: how can pure Platonism develop o1 rather, degenerate into such a confused mass of magic, with even Plotinus vener ated as one of the fathers of the philosophy which is its basis—Plotinus, who wa the pure contemplative mystic, and, as he has been looked upon, a lone rationalis in a superstitious age? And indeed at the end of the period Proclus practiced The urgic rituals and had visions of Hecate (Marin., *Proc.* 26) even though, it must b admitted, he was an admirable systematizer of neo-Platonic philosophy. Toda these questions are not that relevant anymore, thanks to great advances in Theur gic studies: Samson Eitrem and E.R. Dodds have contributed to the gradual freein of Theurgy from the grasp of magic, although both of them were still prone to sub sume it under that category. I quote Eitrem (1941:49): 'L'evolution de la philoso phie grecque dans sa derniere phase est caractérisée par l'influence toujours croissante de la magie.' Then F.V.M. Cumont, Hans Lewy, Jean Trouillard, Andrew Smith, and recently Gregory Shaw and others have continued this work to resolve the enigma of Theurgy.[52] The work of the distinguished classicist Dodds, 'Theurgy and its relationship to Neoplatonism' (1947 = 1951:283–311) has become standard and has apparently the greatest influence on the study of Theurgy, even though it is quite a short and incomplete treatment. Dodds deals with mainly two pheno mena, the mediumistic trances of Theurgy, and its magical animation of statues. Dodds' views on Theurgy was clearly formed in his own milieu: he was a life-long member of Britain's Society for Psychical Research and attended many mediumis tic séances personally. In fact he commendably acknowledge his interest in such phenomena in his own times, and, unlike Frazer, also the existence of the Others

51 For the comparison of Tantrism and Theurgy, *cf.* 'Instead of the popular religion being spiritual ized by the contemplative ideal, there is a tendency for the highest religion to be invaded and contaminated by the subrational force of the pagan underworld, as in Tantric Buddhism and some forms of sectarian Hinduism' (Dawson 1948:192f., quoted at Dodds 1951:302 n.35, on Por phyry). Bhavya's views on mantras is generally that of the Tantric religion, the most important religious practice of Tibet, with mantras playing a key role in all kinds of ritual activity. Theurgy, as intertwined with neo-Platonism, may superficially be categorized as magic in the same way as Tantrism, as both religious systems are concerned with invocations of 'powers.' Both systems, however, have mainly a soteriological purpose, but still the Juliani, the introducers of the *Chal dean Oracles*, were credited with great thaumaturgical powers, just like the Tantric 'Fathers.'

52 For a problem-oriented history of reseach, as well as of the controversies in antiquity about Theurgy, see the valuable overview and biblographical at Shaw 1985, esp. 'ii. The Theurgical debate,' 2–13.

in his own society. He was, however, as also might be expected, a sceptic: 'This branch of theurgy is especially interesting because of the evident analogy with modern spiritualism: if we were better informed about it, we might hope by a comparison to throw light on the psychological and physiological basis of both superstitions.'

We have mentioned some of the 'magoi' of the late 19th and the 20th century, like Aleister Crowley. Here are the words of another of them, Israel Regardie (in his *The tree of life*, quoted at Shaw 1985:4 n.12): 'I hope to show that the technique of Magic is in closest accord with the traditions of highest antiquity, and that it possesses the sanction, expressed or implicitly, of the best authorities. Iamblichus, the divine Theurgist, has much to say in his various writings about magic ....' But Dodds (1951:288) ranked Theurgy as only a lower kind of magical religiosity: 'As vulgar magic is commonly the last resort of the personally desperate, of those whom man and God have alike failed, so theurgy became a refuge of a despairing intelligentsia which already felt *la fascination de l'abîme*.' Writing about antiquity but rather referring to his own time, he described Theurgy as a strategy to manipulate the gods in a magical way. 'The creator of theurgy was a magician, not a Neoplatonist. And the creator of Neoplatonism was neither a magician nor—*pace* certain modern writers—a theurgist' (285). Thus Dodds still placed Theurgy safely on the magic side of the dichotomy, and Plotinus' 'rational mysticism' on the other, from which Theurgy had degenerated (288; *cf.* Shaw 1985:5).[53] With his monolithic mystical ideal, Plotinus was, of course, totally unsparing towards the *artes magicae* and any sort of γοητεία.[54] Some of the more recent writers mentioned above have put Theurgy, however, also into other dichotomies, as if defending it against the charge of magic. Jean Trouillard argues that Theurgy is a development, not a degeneration, of neo-Platonism: it was a discipline to bring the practitioner further than mere reflection and intellectual activity could bring him—thus Theurgy is a development of the negative theology of neo-Platonism, leading from moral practices and contemplation into Theurgy, the fruit of which was the *unio mystica*. Thus Trouillard (1972; 1973) describes Theurgy in terms of negative theology in a

53 F.V.M. Cumont (1949:374) is more lenient: 'la magie se flattait d'obtenir des effets semblables, mais la théurgie se présente comme l'antithèse de cet art réprouve;' and (362): 'mais le point essentiel est que la théurgie était une forme honorable de la magie, une sorcellerie clarifiée, et elle ne se donnait pas pour autre chose.' On the 'forme honorable de la magie' *cf.* Augustine as quoted *infra* n.58.

54 In Πρὸς τοὺς γνωστικούς, *Enn.* 2.9.14, he describes, full of contempt, magicians, who, among other things, try to treat illnesses with their fake means, using the usual magical terminology. At *Enn.* 4.4.40, however, he uses magic in a neutral and also allegorical way (Plotinus often use mythological allegories to explain his philosophical truths), *cf. infra* n.62. Dodds (1951:285) quotes Wilhelm Kroll's apparent view of an heroic attitude of Plotinus, who 'raised himself by a strong intellectual effort above the fog-ridden atmosphere which sourrounded him.'

dichotomy with positive theology and theoretical philosophy, but to be sure as a non-manipulative discipline as different form magic. Andrew Smith, following Laurence Rosan, introduces a dichotomy *within* Theurgy to account for r activity, which he regards, like Dodds, as inferior to Plotinian θεωρία: he cont that there is a higher Theurgy, and a lower variant for the simple with rites 'sin and 'regrettable' (Shaw 1985:7–9). Shaw, then building on Trouillard, also str a similar, but inverted, inner dichotomy of Theurgy, that of pious ritual per mance to achieve unity with the highest reality, in tension with theoretical ph oph y, which is organically the theoretical side of the ritual which are the wor the Gods, and which make man divine, 'he takes on the shape of the god,' and t the soul *becomes* the ritual. This interpretation is built also on Iamblichus' c viewpoints on the matter (26, *passim*).[55]

So far we have presented a number of extra-textual, modern scientific interp tations of Theurgy.[56] There were, however, ancient forerunners. Thus even wit the fold of neo-Platonism we have Damascius' statement in his commentary the *Phaedo* (§172 Westerink): 'Now Plotinus, Porphyry and many others hon philosophy more highly, while Iamblichus, Syrianus, Proclus, and the other Th urgists give more honour to the hieratic art'[57] (*cf.* Shaw 1985:2). Porphyry wou contend that only the lower part of the soul was purified by rites, a position tak by Andrew Smith in his interpretation of Theurgy. But these divergences do not all compare to the clearly polemical inter-textual positions of some of the Chr tian apologists. Augustine (*Civ.D.* 10.9.10f.) condemned the Theurgists in the sam spirit as he condemned Apuleius: 'that which they call magic, or with a more d testable word sorcery, or a more honourable word Theurgy.'[58] And Eusebius—no

55 He quotes Iamb. *Myst.* 184.8 des Places: ὃ δὴ δύναται εἰκότως καὶ τὸ τῶν θεῶν σχῆμα περ τίθεται.

56 One may, however, even say that Dodds' interpretation is tinged with inter-textual perspective since he in fact is polemizing against a phenomenon in his own time, in which he had a lifelon interest. And Trouillard's standpoint may be read as an apology for Theurgy, indeed he as bee critizised, both positively and negatively, since his sholarship is similar to Neoplatonism itse (see Shaw 1985:6 and n.30), and as such he is really writing from an intra-textual perspective. I may also be true that a completely extra-textual standpoint is a construct, since one is alway influenced by the material on which one works, having some sort of *Vorverständnis*. This is o course the classical hermeneutical problem, which we will not discuss further here, but the cate gories of the humanistic and anthropological sciences should indeed be extra-textual, though they are of course built up in dialogue with the tradition of research in which they should be used, as well as the material treated by them, so as to be able to explicate it.

57 Ὅτι οἱ μὲν τὴν φιλοσοφίαν προτιμῶσιν, ὡς Πορφύριος καὶ Πλοτῖνος καὶ ἄλλοι πολλοὶ φιλόσοφοι· οἱ δὲ τὴν ἱερατικήν, ὡς Ἰάμβλιχος καὶ Πρόκλος καὶ οἱ ἱερατικοὶ πάντες. Quoted also by Dodds 1951:301n.25 to substantiate his dichotomy between Plotinus and the Theurgists, *cf. supra* p.46.

58 *Quam vel magian vel detestabiliore nomine goetian vel honorabiliore theurgian vocant.*

an important source for Theurgic oracles—made Theurgy one of his main objects of attack in his Christian crusade against demonology and magical practices (*PE* 3.14–5.30), and 'he quotes the ritual injunctions with a view to demonstrating the absurdity of magical polytheism' (Lewy 1978:65).[59] On the other hand, by irony of history, the pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, with all his influence on both ritual and mysticism in the Christian churches, might almost be called a Theurgist himself: even from his inter-textual position as a Christian, he would, to judge from his writings, be very sympathetic to Theurgy: he may even have seen the practice of the Christian sacraments as Theurgy—the word θεουργία appears 47 times in his extant writings (Saffrey 1982:72)—and he was clearly influenced by Proclus and other Theurgists. Thus Theurgy was not at all base magic to the great church father, though he clothed it in a Christian garb.[60]

And how did the Theurgists understand themselves? Not at all as magicians: Iamblichus, as its spokesman, stated that Theurgy had nothing to do with either sorcerers (γόης) or their wonderworking (θαυματουργία): it was a ritual discipline that started where theoretical philosophy ended, and had the soteriological aim of attaining Theurgical union with the ineffable and the divine, both of them immanent in its rituals. Through these last, the soul is lifted up into immortality, leaving this world (Iamb. *Myst.* 161.10–6, 175.13ff., 96.13–97.9, 270.14–9).[61] Thus it would seem, as argued by Trouillard and Shaw, that Theurgy is best understood by its inner, *i.e.* intra-textual, dichotomies philosophy/ritual—or rational theorizing contrasted with ritual action—rather than the dichotomy rationalism/magic.

Theurgy, though, is often called magic both in antiquity and in modern times. Christian apologists were of course prone to call magic everything that was not Christian, but still, Theurgy, because despite its soteriological aims it had its set of magical terms (Eitrem 1941, Lewy 1978:56f., 440f.), was careful to defend itself against the accusation of magic. And even though modern interpretors would absolve Theurgy of the charge, the general late-antique interest in magic would as-

59 *Cf.* also Lewy 1978:246 and references in n.67 for Hippolytus' criticism of magic.

60 The classic on Dionysios' relation to Proclus and the other Neoplatonists is Koch 1900; further in Saffrey (1982) with references, who also (72) concludes that Dionysios was trained under Proclus, in his school; on the ritual continuity between Theurgy and Christianity *cf.* Shaw 1985:11, Trouillard 1968–73:582.

61 *Cf.* Lewy 1978:275, *passim*, for the use of the the novel English word 'goët,' as the opposite of the Theurgic practicioner; the resultant dichotomy is broadly equivalent to magic/religion—with Theurgy on the religion side; *cf.* also Dodds somewhat unfair review of Lewy (Dodds 1961, reproduced in Lewy 1978:693–701), in which he makes fun of Lewy's 'highly idiosyncratic English' (694) containing the word *goët*. That Lewy's book is 'an extraordinarily difficult book to use' (so Blumenthal 1993:1n.1) may be true, but it is very rewarding, being the first systematic attempt to show that Theurgy is a consistent religio-philosophical system; *cf.* now Majercik 1989:1–46, on the problem of magic, Theurgy and Christian sacramentalism 22–25, with further references.

sure the popularity of any religious message related to magic, if only in form. But there is more to it than mere language: the practice, even the theoretical basis, of the ritual has a relation to magic. Proclus would explain that by the serial manifestation of the divine, divine power was present in the kind of material, plant, animal, soul, or spirit of which it was the cause: thus the soul might be elevated by Theurgic ritual to the divine because of the divine presence in everything (*Theol.* 145; *cf.* Dodds 1963 *ad loc.*). This doctrine is related to the Plotinian συμπάθεια,[62] but Proclus stresses that the sympathy is between the soul, etc., and the *divine*, not the 'horizontal' sympathy between different material and psychical things, which would be the principle of magic as performed by a human magician (*cf.* Shaw 1985:22). This is the basis of Theurgic rituals: they lead the soul from the material world upwards to the divine through the divine 'vertical' *series*, and thus different objects, like stones etc., especially in amulets and talismans, may symbolize the divine, as do also the verbal 'symbols'[63]—which was close to magic in appearance though not in self-declared theory and intention. The central position of Hecate in Theurgy as the universal feminine power or cosmic soul also is reminiscent of magic, in whose operations she was, after all, a main helper.[64] The neo-Platonic Theurgical writers are careful to stress that it is not the practitioner but the god, being the ritual itself, who performs the ritual (Shaw 1985:28). Iamblichus denies that the spells of Theurgy are coercive: the gods show themselves by their own will, αὐτοφανής, κατὰ τὴν ἰδίαν βούλησιν.[65] Thus there is no question of manipulating or *coercing*, and man's union with the divine in the ritual must be most of all total *submission* to the divine nature. Since Theurgy thus is explicitly *non-magic*, we are evidently compelled to subsume it under 'religion' in the magic/religion dichotomy. But still Theurgy is made clear to us through its opposite both historically and doctrinally, and our extra-textual description profits greatly by seeing it in

62 *Cf. Enn.* 4.4.40, where Plotinus explains that magic works because of natural accord between the similar and enmity between the dissimilar, but, apart from using general magic terminology, he stresses that 'the true magic is the attraction and enmity in the whole universe' (ἡ ἀληθινὴ μαγεία ἡ ἐν τῷ παντὶ φιλία καὶ τὸ νεῖκος αὖ), using 'magic' universally and allegorically rather than in its strict sense. This is evidently the source of Frazer's version of 'sympathetic magic'.

63 *Cf.* Lewy 1978:471: 'The theurgist who utters the "symbols" (*i.e.* the magical names) of the gods, causes the invoked gods link themselves with him through the "chain" of the demons attached to each of them, who draw him upward to the desired goal.' On the magical names as the 'verbal statues' of Theurgy, *vide* Saffrey 1982:67ff.

64 *Cf.* Lewy 1978:52: 'We may conclude form the similarity of the literary form that the Chaldaeans imitated the style of the normal type of Hecatean oracles. Thus this relationship reflects the competition between Theurgy and the lower forms of magic.' Hecate as the cosmic soul: *ib.* 47.

65 As says Iamblichus in *De mysteriis Aegyptiorum*; *cf.* Lewy 1978:467–71, Excursus v, on the Theurgic discussion on invocation as decided not by the practitioner , but by divine will: the ritual is the 'call' of the godhead; and Majercik 1989:23.

the dialectical perspective of the dichotomy religion/magic—that also enables us to understand the origin and popularity of the phenomenon sociologically.

Conclusion

Many of the examples we have presented are connected not to magic, but rather the accusation or rumor of it, and its use as an allegorical term. It *is* difficult to get intra-textual material on magic, as we have seen in most of our excerpts from the more sophisticated antique literature. Magic is usually the activity of the Others, and whoever practices it is not prone to admit it, since it in fact concerns a private, not easily acknowledged or even recognized, darker side of the personality.[66] We *are* lucky, then, to have the lead curse tablets and the magical papyri as studied in *Magica hiera* and in the present volume, for most of them give evidence of what I would contend magic really *is*, and present it in an intra-textual way, with no theoretical reflections or any metaphysics of the Frazerian or even Theurgical and Ficinian type. Magic, among most serious writers, is something the Others do, but the lead tablets and papyri of antiquity clearly prove that the Others were among the Greeks themselves.[67] The message that they transmit—hate, lovesickness, jealousy, the spirit of having lost the game, greed, pettiness and stinginess—is related to a part of human nature that we are not ready to admit in ourselves, and we are not prone to admit it for a culture we admire as much as the classical Greek. But still it is there, ready to be understood, as I argue, through a set of dichotomies that establish such activity as a phenomenon most aptly called *magic*—because the phenomenon is there in the material when interpreted, because the word and its cognates are found in the literature in antiquity, and because the phenomenon is also found in many other cultures both as a rumour and a self-defining reality.

Thus Frazer's dichotomies may still be fundamental to the study of magic: 'By religion, then, I understand a propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and human life. ... It is true that magic often deals with spirits, which are personal agents of the kind assumed by religion; but whenever it does so in its proper form, it treats them exactly in the same fashion as it treats inanimate agents, that is, it constrains or coerces instead of conciliating or propitiating them as religion would do' (Frazer 1911–15:I 222, 225). But, even though such dichotomies exist in human existence it-

66 Although the self-defining magician of Theurgy and Renaissance magic later, the Grand Magus, may be excluded from this picture as being prestigious in the positive sense. (In antiquity the word *praestigiae* had no positive connotations, it only meant deceptions, jugglers' tricks, illusions, and secret strategems, but has undergone the same change as the word magic.)

67 We all maybe are even our own Others, though we never admit it in public.

self and thus in all cultures, it is important to deduce these dichotomies within these cultures themselves, where they belong—be it within our own, within Greek culture, or within any other—and not to build a dichotomy 'us'/'them:' thus we keep ourselves in an extra-textual position, outside the dichotomy. We can very well do if we eschew Frazer's pride in the British Empire or his emotional view of the hostility between the 'priest' and the 'magician,' of 'the haughty self-sufficiency of the magician, his arrogant demeanour towards the higher powers,' and of the priest 'with his awful sense of the divine majesty, and his humble prostration in presence of it' (226). Thus we may refine (in Goody's sense) the dichotomizing tools of science—when the intra-textual and inter-textual descriptions of magic are suffused with dichotomies, there is no reasons why not to employ these last in our extra-textual descriptions of the phenomenon, and build our understanding and definitions on them.

Thus we are left with many of the classical dichotomies in the study of material classed as magical, even as extracted from the material treated above: In contrasting *religion* and *magic* there is (*a*) the attitude of a *submissive* vs. *coercive* mentality (*cf.* Versnel 1991:178§2) where the religious submits himself to *divine will* through the ritual and acts as a suppliant, while the magician demands the that demonic or divine forces shall perform the *magician's will*, which is manifested in ritual actions, verbal, physical or mental. One might say that this points to a basic dichotomy in human life: feeling subordinate to other powers *vs.* being in control oneself. This attitude also entails (*b*) different goals or intentions in the two, the religious would have a longer-term or *collective* aim, or, in the religions where salvation, especially in the other life, is the principle aim, a collective or personal *soteriological* aim, while the practitioner of magic would have mostly a *personal* and pragmatic, this-worldly aim (*ib.* 178§1). The social correlative to these intentions and attitudes is that (*c*) religion is *morally and collectively accepted* by society as a common expression of all, while magic is not prone to be admitted by even the ones practicing it, being strongly condemned as *immoral, subversive and destructive* by society at large, being socially marginal and as such often ascribed to strangers and despised groups (179§3). This marginality, however, may result in not only condemnation, but also an admiration for the strange and exciting: thus the imagery of magic is used allegorically in poetry and art, and generally in depictions of the extraordinary in general. The magical imagery of language and expression is, however, only distantly related to magic in the strict sense. The positive use of magic in the Renaissance, defining itself (intra-textually) as such, with its admiration for the Great Magician, would not quite suit this dichotomy, and would have to be treated as a special case.

In relation to science, the fundamental dichotomy is that magic is based in the belief that magical actions and the willpower of the magician work by its own force

to bring about the desired result, while science would empirically and systematically search in nature for causes of the events that it would control. Thus the dichotomies magic/science and magic/religion share the dichotomy (*d*) *untruth/truth*: magic is content with persuading those seeking its services that it works, be it by deceit and fraud, while science would seek a true description of nature, and while religion would contend that its scriptures are true, the magician would be content if his texts and rituals could impress and produce a certain result even by fraud: the enchantments and rituals would not be effective through their meaning, but through their alleged power to invoke spirits for a specific often harmful purpose, or by their alleged direct influence.

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