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Chapter 9
Building a Typology for Intentional Transformative Experiences: Louis-Alphonse Cahagnet's Experiments with Magnetic Somnambulism and Hashish

> I wished to see with my own eyes, and to be able to say to mankind, I have seen that; you may see it as well as I; such a thing has been revealed to me; ascertain if the reply is the same to you. Experience is the soul of faith. *Louis-Alphonse Cahagnet*[1]

The above words of Louis-Alphonse Cahagnet (1809–1885), a French animal magnetizer, were written in a book that dealt with the spiritual nature of hashish experiences.[2] Cahagnet spent most of his writing career trying to investigate life after death. Originally, he did this through putting others into the state of magnetic somnambulism—a phenomenon akin to hypnosis, which Cahagnet deemed to be a sacred experience. He believed magnetic somnambulists could be put into contact with angels and spirits, or even travel in spirit to heaven.[3] Therefore, Cahagnet's original spiritual research consisted of comparative interviews with magnetic somnambulists, whose answers were carefully verified. The approach changed when after writing two books, Cahagnet had failed to harvest more than a handful of direct followers and various negative book reviews.[4] Hashish was his new method to build a spiritual science, as it promised to completely remove the necessity of somnambulist intermediaries; it was in this context that the opening quotation was written. Yet it did not take long for Cahagnet to return his focus on somnambulist interviews. It turned out hashish experiences brought

1 Cahagnet 1851c, 63. Translation by M. Flinders Pearson. Translations in this chapter are by myself, unless stated otherwise.

2 I want to thank Markus Altena Davidsen, Sarah Perez, Piotr Sobkowiak, and several members of the Leiden Working Group on Fundamental Problems and Methods in the Study of Religion (Sarah Cramsey, Albert de Jong, Tom-Eric Krijger, and Arjan Sterken) for valuable comments on this chapter. The research on which this chapter is based was funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation.

3 When writing about the thoughts of Cahagnet or animal magnetizers more generally, I portray *their* positions and beliefs; yet for stylistic reasons, I use qualifiers such as 'allegedly' sparingly.

4 Despite Cahagnet's lack of following, several of his books were internationally relatively well read within Spiritualist and occultist circles.

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their own set of problems with them, and Cahagnet deemed them harder to use to convince his readers than the somnambulist state. Hashish still played a role, but at least in his written work much less than before.

The case study of Cahagnet is interesting because he, throughout his career as spiritual researcher, had recourse to two distinct intentional transformative experiences: magnetic somnambulism and hashish-induced states. Three interrelated research topics will structure this chapter. First, historically, I will analyze Cahagnet's works from his early somnambulist research, through his hashish investigations, back to his later work focusing once more mostly on somnambulism. In doing so, I will explain why Cahagnet initially thought his somnambulist research would convince a wide audience that he could scientifically prove life after death, how he subsequently saw hashish as a better way of doing this, and finally how problems with hashish narratives forced him to return to somnambulism research. Second, theoretically, I take up the somnambulist state and hashish experiences and posit them as the central tools around which Cahagnet built two different paradigms of spiritual science. Whereas magnetic somnambulism lent itself well to comparison, repetition, regulation, and verification, and could therefore be put into an (in Cahagnet's eyes) scientific and experimental frame, hashish proved to be particularly effective in convincing users because it allowed for personal experience. Third, conceptually, I will show how the two research paradigms of Cahagnet can be divorced from their context in order to form the basis of a useful subdivision of the broader concept 'intentional transformative experience.' *Intentionally induced self-transformative experiences* will represent those experiences that are done by oneself, on oneself, and for oneself, as they have transformational qualities that are not extractable from the experience itself and are persuasive exactly because they are personally experienced. Opposed to this are the *intentionally induced states of knowledge*,[5] which represent those experiences that provide knowledge that is valuable first and foremost to *others*, rather than to the experiencer, and which must subsequently be verified—often in (what the practitioners deem to be) a scientific framework. This typology is then shown to add new insights to our understanding of intentional transformative experiences.

The chapter is built up as follows: after the introduction, a general overview of animal magnetism is given. Then, biographical information on Cahagnet himself is presented. After that, the three periods in Cahagnet's writing—from som-

5 The term 'states of knowledge' is derived from Wouter Hanegraaff's (2022, 3n6) use of state-specific knowledge, which he took from Charles T. Tart. See the penultimate section of this chapter for further elaboration on the term. Hanegraaff (forthcoming) further develops this concept elsewhere with regard to a different type of psychoactive agent: ayahuasca.

nambulism, to hashish, to a somnambulism-focused synthesis—are described based on an analysis of five of his books. In the following theoretical discussion, the aforementioned somnambulism and hashish centered paradigms are built up using concepts from various other authors in philosophy, history, and the study of religion. Lastly, the conclusion will draw up the abovementioned typology and draw out what the case study of Cahagnet can teach us about intentional transformative experiences.

1 Animal Magnetism: From Fluids to Spirits

Animal magnetism refers in its broadest sense to a healing technique originally developed by the German physician Franz Anton Mesmer (1734–1815). Initially, it did not include the aspect of somnambulism so important to Cahagnet, nor was it supposed by Mesmer to have anything to do with religious elements such as angels, spirits, or the afterlife. Instead, the treatment and underlying theory of animal magnetism was rooted in an iatrophysical[6] and purely material framework.[7] The name 'animal magnetism' refers to a subtle fluid—that is to say, an invisible and weightless substance—that Mesmer theorized to be spread out throughout the universe. He believed it analogous to mineral magnetism, from which it derived half of its name. Yet as this magnetism was also theorized to be present in living beings, Mesmer designated it as *animal* magnetism. The correct circulation of the animal magnetic fluid corresponded to health, while a lack of this fluid would result in illness. In the early years of the practice, physicians utilizing animal magnetism primarily used their hands and gaze to transmit the animal magnetic fluid towards the patient. The fluid should then overcome disharmony by correcting the inner movement of the body.[8] The basis of the treatment goes back to Mesmer's dissertation on the influence of the planets on the harmony and health of humanity due to the effect of the former's gravitational forces on the fluids (e.g., the nervous fluid) in the bodies of humans.[9] Yet it was in 1775, while

6 Iatrophysics was a branch of medicine that interpreted body and health in physics-based principles (Eckart 2015). This school of thinking was prominent in Vienna, where Mesmer studied, due to the presence of Gerard van Swieten (1700–1772), who in turn was a staunch follower of the famous iatrophycisist Herman Boerhaave (1668–1738).

7 Baier 2019.

8 The exact nature of the animal magnetic fluid and its workings evolved during Mesmer's career. The overview given here is a simplified depiction from various of his writings (Mesmer [1775] 1778a; [1775] 1778b; 1798–1799; 1814).

9 Mesmer 1766; cf. Pattie 1956.

Mesmer worked as a physician in Vienna, that his first full theory on the matter was published.[10]

Mesmer had originally tried to propagate his new healing method in Vienna, but he left for Paris in 1778 after various controversies surrounding himself and animal magnetism.[11] There, animal magnetism found support among the wider populace in the city,[12] but not with the scientific or the medical elite Mesmer had hoped to impress.[13] Nevertheless, until 1784 Mesmer steadily increased his popularity within the city while also teaching others to become animal magnetizers. It was in that year that two events happened in France that changed animal magnetism drastically. These changes eventually enabled the spiritual use of animal magnetism by magnetizers such as Cahagnet.

The first event that shaped animal magnetism's future in 1784 was the appearance of a report by a French commission of scientists and physicians set up by King Louis XVI. The commission included illustrious names such as Antoine Lavoisier, Benjamin Franklin, and Joseph-Ignace Guillotin. After multiple series of experiments, the commission was content to announce in its report that the animal magnetic fluid did not exist and that its apparent effects were instead due to imagination, imitation, and normal touch.[14] From the appearance of the report onwards, animal magnetizers have had to respond to its method. One way was to downplay the importance of experiments.[15] However, the larger response was that animal magnetism could be defended through the same method of experimentation.[16] A continuous theme of experimentation therefore runs through the history of animal magnetism.[17] Cahagnet, too, would inherit this drive for experimental verification, as shall be seen below.

10 Mesmer [1775] 1778a.

11 For Mesmer's side of his pre-Paris controversies, see Mesmer (1779). These events are also amply related in the many biographies of Mesmer, such as Pattie (1994), and Florey (1995).

12 Cf. Darnton 2015, 40: "Mesmerism corresponded so well to the attitudes of literate Frenchmen that it probably inspired more interest than any other topic or fashion during the decade before the edict of July 5, 1788, concerning the convocation of the Estates General."

13 Mesmer described his Parisian debates in detail in Mesmer (1781). See also his biographies (footnote 11).

14 [Bailly] 1784. See Riskin (2002) for the most elaborate review of the commission's work.

15 Especially the highly influential magnetizer Joseph Philippe François Deleuze downplayed the importance of experiments ([1819] 1836, e.g., 22; 60–61; 114). Yet even Deleuze had to allow for certain types of experimentation: e.g., Deleuze 1813, 53–80.

16 Van Rijn 2023.

17 Even though experiments are not particularly emphasized in this account, see especially Méheust (1999, 1:351–469) for the situation in France.

The second crucial event in 1784 was a discovery by one of Mesmer's own students: Amand Marc Jacques Chastenet, Marquis de Puységur (1751–1825, henceforth: Puységur). At his estate in Buzancy, Puységur magnetized one of his servants. As a result, the servant fell into a state between wakefulness and sleep akin to sleepwalking. This state was therefore called magnetic somnambulism, and it was quickly believed to only affect certain persons. So-called somnambulists often did not just talk during their state, but also allegedly acquired extraordinary abilities such as seeing without their eyes, the ability to read the thoughts of their magnetizer, clairvoyance, and more. Particularly interesting for Puységur and his followers was the ability of some somnambulists to see the insides of their own bodies, as well as those of others, thereby allowing them to diagnose illnesses and prescribe treatments for them. Even the personalities of the somnambulists suddenly changed as they were often described as being more eloquent and wise. However, the changes to the somnambulists were temporary: once they woke up, somnambulists no longer had their abilities or their changed personality, and most could not recollect anything that happened during their sleep. It did not take long for Puységur's somnambulism focused animal magnetism to eclipse Mesmer's fluid focused version. As animal magnetism spread throughout Europe and to the United States, different countries developed different focal points, yet all were fascinated with somnambulism.[18]

Most importantly for present purposes, some somnambulists quickly started claiming to be in contact with spirits of the dead, as well as with angels.[19] Therefore, animal magnetism was perceived by some to be a bridge between Heaven and Earth; this group will be designated as spiritual animal magnetizers, as opposed to medical animal magnetizers who opposed spiritual interpretations.[20] As a spiritual animal magnetizer, Cahagnet combined his belief in the spiritual impli-

18 Monographs—to say nothing of articles, book chapters, and edited volumes—can be found on the development of animal magnetism in France (Méheust 1999), the Netherlands (Vijselaar 2001), the United Kingdom (Winter 1998), and the United States of America (Fuller 1982; Ogden 2018). See Gauld (1992), Crabtree (1993), and Vijselaar (2001) for explicit comparisons between various countries.

19 The first phase of spiritual animal magnetism was in France prior to the French Revolution; Bergé (1995, 13–53) and Edelman (1995, 19–39). Afterwards, influenced by Romantic interests, spiritual animal magnetism became important for certain German animal magnetizers in the first half of the nineteenth century; cf. Gauld (1992, 141–62); Hanegraaff (2001). In the 1830s, spiritual animal magnetism once more became a topic in France; Viatte (1935); Crockford (2013); Jeanson (2023).

20 Spiritual [animal] magnetism was a self-designation. Medical animal magnetism is my analytical counterpart.

cations of Puységurian somnambulism with the post-commission mentality of experimental verification.

2 The Life and Work of Louis-Alphonse Cahagnet

Louis-Alphonse Cahagnet was born in Caen in 1809. Not much is known about his life, except for what he himself wrote down in his books.[21] What is known is that Cahagnet took up various manual labour professions such as chair turning and collar cutting, and throughout his life he would call himself 'a simple workman' [*ouvrier*]—a fact that featured in his calls for an accessible and democratic science as will be discussed below. In 1848, Cahagnet's first book was published: *Magnétisme. Arcanes de la Vie Future Dévoilés* [*Magnetism. Mysteries of the Future Life Revealed;* henceforth, *Arcanes I*].[22] In this book, the topic was already centrally on proving the existence and content of the afterlife,[23] a trend that continued in Cahagnet's further writings. During the rest of his career, Cahagnet kept writing on spiritual and animal magnetic topics. In doing so, he gathered a humble following of like-minded individuals,[24] won the bronze medal of the French magnetic society[25] and received the title of honorary member of the Theosophical Society.[26] Cahagnet died in 1885, but his followers kept in contact with his spirit, a practice that has continued up until today.[27]

For the purpose of this chapter, five books of Cahagnet are of importance. Chronologically, these are the *Arcanes I* of 1848; its follow-up, the second volume of the *Arcanes*[28] (henceforth *Arcanes II*) of 1849; *Sanctuaire du Spiritualisme*[29]

21 See for the most comprehensive overviews of Cahagnet's life Pierssens (1993) and Hanegraaff (2016).

22 Cahagnet 1848.

23 Cahagnet's view of the afterlife followed generally the ideas of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772), but with notable divergences as well. The afterlife, for Cahagnet, is a progressive place in which souls continue to develop spiritually to get closer to God. Hell does not exist, rather, souls punish themselves due to their own mindsets for a given time. The inhabitants of heaven spend their time doing what they love, forming communities of like-minded individuals, as well as guiding still-living humans.

24 Pierssens 1993, 357–62.

25 De Malherbe 1856, 272.

26 Theosophist 1881, 104–6.

27 For his historical appearances to his immediate followers, see Pierssens (1992, 358). For a contemporary medium that alleges to be in contact with Cahagnet, see Emmanuela (2018).

28 Cahagnet 1849.

29 Cahagnet 1850.

[*Sanctuary of Spiritualism*, henceforth *Sanctuaire*] of 1850, which contained the hashish experience of Cahagnet and others; the third volume of the *Arcanes*[30] (henceforth *Arcanes III*) in 1854; and finally the unofficial fourth volume of the *Arcanes* entitled *Révélations d'outre-Tombe*[31] [*Revelations from Beyond the Grave;* henceforth *Révélations*] of 1856. *Arcanes I* and *II* will form the corpus of the 'somnambulism period,' *Sanctuaire* that of the 'hashish period,' and *Arcanes III* and *Révélations* that of the 'synthesis period' (see Table 9.1). The reason for this selection of books is that Cahagnet took the reader through his complete process of investigations, reasonings, and interpretations. They therefore function well to gain insight in how he thought correct investigation into the afterlife should function.[32] Furthermore, the *Arcanes* and *Sanctuaire* were also Cahagnet's most popular works, perhaps exactly for the fact that he involved his readers earnestly.[33]

Table 9.1: Cahagnet's research periods.

Periods	Years	Works
Somnambulism period	1848–1849	*Arcanes I* *Arcanes II*
Hashish period	Ca. 1850	*Sanctuaire*
Synthesis period	1853–1856	*Arcanes III* *Révélations*

The magnetizing career of Cahagnet should be seen in the larger context of French animal magnetism, especially with regards to the importance of experimenting and the prominence of somnambulism discussed above. When Cahagnet took up the practice—which was according to himself around the latter half of the 1830s[34]—animal magnetism's fate within the medical establishment was still undecided, and experiments played a crucial role in the debate.[35] Furthermore,

30 Cahagnet 1854a.

31 Cahagnet 1856.

32 Works of the same period in which Cahagnet does not reflect on his knowledge production have more of an encyclopaedical style (e.g., Cahagnet 1851a; 1854b).

33 The general importance of experimenters involving readers is highlighted by historians Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, who use the term 'virtual witnessing' (Shapin and Schaffer 1985, 60–65; coined in Shapin 1984). This term will be taken up in more detail in the discussion below.

34 Cahagnet 1848, 82.

35 Méheust 1999, 1:351–469. It was in 1842 that animal magnetism was decidedly rejected by the medical establishment. Shortly summarized, after various attempts by physicians sympathetic to animal magnetism in the 1830s to formally recognize the practice as efficacious, opponents of the

the magnetizing community itself was torn between a majority of medical animal magnetizers and a minority of spiritual animal magnetizers. The medically inclined magnetizers often accepted somnambulistic abilities, but drew the line at contact with otherworldly entities, while the spiritual magnetizers saw a purely medical interest in animal magnetism as narrowminded and instead wanted to explore religious topics through the phenomenon.[36]

Cahagnet had started practicing animal magnetism so that he could reach the state of magnetic somnambulism. However, he soon learned that he did not seem to be susceptible to it. In the meantime, he had used his abilities as a magnetizer to heal people and as a result had a circle of somnambulists available to him. Originally these somnambulists were used to diagnose the illnesses of others, but when one of them—Bruno Binet—reported that he had come into contact with his guardian angel, Cahagnet gradually focused his research on questions surrounding life after death.[37] Cahagnet thought his work could convince his readers (including the more materialistic medical animal magnetizers) to accept a spiritual view of life and death. So, although his research was conducted with the direct aim of gaining knowledge of the afterlife in a scientific manner, this knowledge was itself primarily useful to teach others to see life and death in a new and more positive way. The following quote is one of many that makes this goal abundantly clear:

> I write these lines, to teach you how to die, to calm the fear that gains upon you. If I succeed in gaining this victory by the experiments I recommend you to make, you will not treat me as a madman; you will believe in God, in a better life, and you will know how to prepare for this departure with calm and courage—ay, more—with joy![38]

To truly understand Cahagnet's work, this goal needs to be kept in mind. The experiments of the above quotation were replications of his guided interviews with somnambulists; these are key to Cahagnet's original somnambulist period research.

practice were able to capitalize on various negative (semi-)official verdicts from commissions and voted to ban any further official investigation into the practice by the Royal Academy of Medicine in 1842.

36 See for the medical versus spiritual animal magnetism debate especially Monroe (2008, 64–94), although he focuses on a slightly later period.

37 Of course, the account given is Cahagnet's version of events. He also portrayed himself as a staunch materialist that only through the evidence of his somnambulists became a spiritualist. However, this was (and still is) a widely used rhetorical technique which should be taken with a healthy amount of scepticism.

38 Cahagnet 1851b, 2:152. Translator unknown.

3 The Research Logic of Cahagnet's Somnambulism Period

Cahagnet was keenly aware that his type of spiritual animal magnetism was under close scrutiny from both non-spiritual magnetizers and enemies of animal magnetism altogether. That, combined with his wish to unearth the *true* truths of life after death—unfettered by religious dogma—made him resort to various verification practices that would ensure, in his eyes, the veracity of his information.[39] Only then, as opposed to using historical and religious sources, he said in the introduction of *Arcanes I*, could he hope to be trusted by his readers: "in a century where proof is needed to believe, and not stories more or less tainted by political or religious speculation, I would consider myself the most despicable man on earth if I speculated on lies!"[40]

In order to understand the logic of the verification practices Cahagnet used, a closer look is warranted at the alleged abilities of the somnambulists with whom Cahagnet worked. It was their capability to get into the somnambulistic state that rendered them useful for his research; a state that Cahagnet described as "sacred and divine."[41] These somnambulists had three ways through which they could use their divine state to get their information. First and most frequent, they talked to spirits of the dead and to angels: somnambulists communicated the questions from Cahagnet to the spirits, and reported the answers back to him. Second and more rarely, somnambulists were able to travel in spirit to heaven and observe it directly. Third and more generally, the somnambulist state elevated the mind, thereby making it possible for somnambulists to comprehend some truths directly. These three ways may be compared to scholar of esotericism Antoine Faivre's categorization of 'kinds of clairvoyance.'[42] Faivre makes a distinction between three levels of clairvoyance. The first level is extra-sensory perception as it pertains to this world; this level was well integrated into somnambulism from the time of Puységur. The second level is contact with spiritual entities such as angels or spirits; this, in the case of animal magnetism, was only endorsed by spiritual animal mag-

39 For a complementary analysis of Cahagnet's work based on concepts that I together have called 'the experimental culture of afterlife research,' see Van Rijn (2023, chap. 5). The main difference is that the current analysis focuses on the value of transformative experiences in Cahagnet's work, while the aforementioned other analysis looks at how Cahagnet's view on scientific and experimental practice changed over time and formed a link in the chain of a larger experimental culture focussed on proving the existence and content of life after death.

40 Cahagnet 1848, vi.

41 Cahagnet 1849, 78.

42 Faivre 2008, 192–93.

netizers such as Cahagnet. The third level is a direct access to ultimate realities; this level, too, was mostly reserved for spiritual animal magnetism, as somnambulists were able to travel to elevated places such as heaven.[43]

Cahagnet made use of the various abilities of somnambulism in his attempts of verification. The cornerstone of his approach was to compare his findings in as many ways as possible. First, he did not rely on just one somnambulist. He took the accounts of many different ones, to be able to compare their answers on spiritual questions[44]—but also to be able to test his somnambulists in very concrete ways: for example, by having them describe at the same time a spirit who was supposed to be present.[45] Second, the spirits and angels talked to were also frequently swapped out. Therefore, answers between spirits—who sometimes were more ambiguous than one would hope—could be compared.[46] However, Cahagnet knew that because all of these somnambulists were under his care, others would object and argue that they were influenced by him, either generally or through thought transference, and therefore not truly independent.[47] This is why he resorted to various other kinds of comparison as well.

Being a follower of Emanuel Swedenborg, Cahagnet often called upon Swedenborg's spirit to obtain answers to especially difficult questions. But more than that, Cahagnet also compared the earthly writings of Swedenborg with the revelations of his somnambulists. If somnambulists who had never read Swedenborg before, would come to the same conclusions as he, that should be further independent proof of their observations according to Cahagnet.[48] Furthermore, Cahagnet also compared what he found with the utterances of somnambulists of other magnetizers. Here, there would be no possibility of an influence from him

43 The third level of Faivre could possibly be split up into a strong and a weak version. The strong version would be ultimate realities such as heaven; while a weak version might entail ultimate truths on a 'this-worldly' scale, such as seeing the mathematical order in everything. In this case, somnambulists' elevated minds could be construed as the weak version of the third level; which then would have been present from Puységur already as well. For my purposes, however, it will suffice to speak only of the 'strong' version of the third level.

44 Cahagnet's use of comparison for verification already becomes clear in the title of *Arcanes I*, which mentions eight somnambulists and thirty-six spirits as the basis of the book's claims on "the existence, the form, the occupations of the soul after its separation from the body."

45 Cahagnet 1848, 62–65.

46 Cahagnet 1848, 122–40.

47 Thought transference was considered as an established fact by both spiritual and medical animal magnetizers. It therefore served as an important argument against claims of otherworldly contact by the medical animal magnetizers (Van Rijn 2023). This was a point of contestation that would continue to haunt spiritually-inclined spiritualists, psychical researchers and parapsychologists for generations to come.

48 Cahagnet 1848, 210, 238–44.

towards them, further solidifying for Cahagnet the chance that the results were actually true.[49]

All of these sources together painted a convincing picture for Cahagnet. At the end of his first book (*Arcanes I*), he was convinced he had found out that there was no hell, and that spirits remained individuals with the option to do whatever they pleased in heaven while eternally progressing closer to God. More radically, Cahagnet also claimed that astronomy was wrong to think the sun a physical object, as it was actually the rays of a spiritual sun—God—bursting through into the material world. All of this was the result of an—in his eyes—careful comparison between many informants and different sources that independently of each other had glimpsed the truth about what comes after death.[50]

Yet even though some of Cahagnet's sources were outside the scope of his influence, he was still anxious to prove that his main source of information, *his* somnambulists, were also unaffected by him. Especially with the somnambulist ability to read thoughts, Cahagnet had to show that this was not where they got their information from. This is why he attempted to verify his somnambulists as well: he wanted to heighten the trustworthiness of them by testing their claims on a level where direct, empirical verification of facts was still possible in order to strengthen their indirect, superempirical claims. (Scientific) predictions were one way to do this. A salient example from his later work is when Cahagnet described his favorite somnambulist Adèle Maginot's journey to the moon and her description of the landscape and people there. He did this explicitly with the aim of making scientific predictions. If these turned out to be correct, then it would imply that his somnambulists were a scientific force to be reckoned with—also on other matters. In Cahagnet's words, he did this "in order to put science in a position one day to control our assertions and finally to pronounce how we were able to know these still unknown places, if not by the incomprehensible power of the spirit."[51]

Another kind of proof to verify the trustworthiness of Cahagnet's somnambulists was to talk to spirits and have them give information that not even the still-living family members of the spirit themselves could verify until after the information was given. Multiple anecdotes had Adèle describe deceased family members to surviving relatives in ways that those present did not remember, for example with respect to a certain birthmark or scar. Only after gathering addi-

49 Cahagnet 1848, 226–29.

50 Cahagnet 1848, 208, 229–30. For a list of truths all Cahagnet's somnambulists allegedly agreed on, see Cahagnet (1849, 29–31).

51 Cahagnet 1854a, 5–6. Even though this example is from Cahagnet's synthesis period, it follows his somnambulist period logic.

tional witnesses, or even procuring old portraits of the deceased, was the somnambulist's account validated—making thought transference impossible and luck highly unlikely according to Cahagnet.[52] Such verifications of somnambulists could then be used as rationale for accepting their claims about afterlife matters as well—especially when those claims were already verified through comparison.

These methods of verification, together with procedures to exclude error, bad or uncooperative spirits, and imagination, had Cahagnet convinced that he had written down in *Arcanes I* and *Arcanes II* the surest information one could get about heaven and a great many other things. It was from this position that he urged everyone to themselves consult with somnambulists to corroborate the truths Cahagnet had found out on a personally convincing level; giving them instructions on how to interview and what questions to ask.[53] This was another type of verification that might not add new data (it being an act of replication), but would reverberate due to the involvement of the reader turning into an experimenter themselves. In this way, Cahagnet believed himself to have created a spiritual science that proclaimed a positive view of life after death, and one that was open for everyone, as when he proclaimed against his religious and materialist opponents: "Remain, I say, clad in doctoral ornaments, seigneurial or royal ones, in your niches, which are the emblems of the *status quo*; we will practice science without you, and a more consoling science than yours."[54]

4 The Research Logic of Cahagnet's Hashish Period

Cahagnet's proposal for a spiritual science as formulated in his *Arcanes I* and *II* soon encountered a substantial setback. The influential animal magnetizer Denis Dupotet (1796–1881), founder of the equally influential *Journal du magnétisme* (1845–1861), wrote a scathing review of volume one of the *Arcanes*, with one of the main objections being that "first of all, it is an intermediary who sees."[55] After the first review of *Arcanes I*—which had even been dedicated to Dupotet—Cahag-

52 Cahagnet 1848, 143–47.

53 Cahagnet, for example, set up a list of 75 questions to ask somnambulists and informed about proper etiquette when dealing with spirits as to keep them cooperative, as well as to test whether they were not bad spirits with the intention to deceive (1848, 282–96).

54 Cahagnet 1851b, 2:12. Translator unknown.

55 Dupotet 1848, 89.

net had hoped to convince Dupotet and others by introducing even stricter measures of verification. This had not worked, as became obvious from Dupotet's even worse review of the second volume of the *Arcanes*. To add injury to (Dupotet's) insult, Cahagnet had learned first-hand that somnambulists might not always be cooperative or truthful. For example, at one point, the aforementioned somnambulist Adèle had lied to Cahagnet because she was annoyed by the tests she had to undergo (i.e., in that case she was supposed to transmit a question to a spirit in Latin, a language she did not understand).

Criticism from others,[56] imperfect experiences with somnambulists, as well as Cahagnet's original drive to personally reach an ecstatic state together made him turn to hashish. Early on in *Sanctuaire*, his book on hashish experiences, Cahagnet was clear about his reasons. Parts of the quotation were already used in the opening of the chapter, but it is nonetheless worth repeating in full:

> The statements, nevertheless, of a third party, are never so positive as one's own; the questions that are submitted to spirits by the intervention of [somnambulists] may be badly reproduced, and their responses altered [. . .] I wished to see with my own eyes, and to be able to say to mankind, I have seen that; you may see it as well as I; such a thing has been revealed to me; ascertain if the reply is the same to you. Experience is the soul of faith.[57]

This was quite the shift. *Arcanes I* and *II* were predicated on the implicit (and at times explicit) role of Cahagnet as impartial observer and experimenter who was professionally distanced from the tools (i.e., somnambulists) that he used to get his results. But now it seemed that the evidence produced by somnambulists was not as good as evidence *experienced* by oneself. Hashish had, according to Cahagnet, the benefit that it avoided the problem of imprecise data collection, while it also seemed to just inherently be more convincing to experience something directly, unmediated by others.

Therefore, the main part of Cahagnet's *Sanctuaire*—after a lengthy theological overview of his beliefs in the form of a dialogue between a spiritualist and a materialist—was the narrative of his own hashish experience, and those of ten others who had taken hashish in the company of Cahagnet (their reports in many

56 The review of Dupotet only appeared in print after Cahagnet started experimenting with hashish. It should therefore only be seen as an additional motive, rather than the only one, for Cahagnet to turn towards hashish.

57 Cahagnet 1851c, 63. Translation by M. Flinders Pearson slightly altered: Flinders Pearson used the word 'clairvoyants,' whereas I opt for somnambulists. The original *lucides*—those who are lucid—was up until that point only used by Cahagnet to refer to somnambulists. Only in *Sanctuaire* did Cahagnet expand the meaning to include hashish experiencers too.

cases written down by the experiencers themselves).[58] These experiences proved helpful for Cahagnet, who compared them to a light "by which I could perceive and resolve a thousand and one phenomena of somnambulism which until then had not been explained."[59] Just like in the *Arcanes*, Cahagnet in this book urged others to follow in his footsteps, among others by giving the address of his hashish seller in Paris, as well as giving recommendations on how to prepare the substance (e.g., in coffee), and how to prepare the environment (e.g., keeping it dry and warm; absolutely no doctors allowed). After all, Cahagnet reasoned: "[it is] a duty on my part to reveal nothing that I cannot prove by experiments within the comprehension of every one."[60]

Compared to the somnambulist interviews, there now no longer was an intermediary. Cahagnet and other investigators became direct experiencers. Additionally, unlike the temporary transformations of the somnambulist state, hashish led to consciously experienced and well-remembered states. Consequently, changes in knowledge or worldview could be retained. The reader also would now read about the experience from a second-hand (rather than a third-hand) perspective; and if the advice of Cahagnet was heeded, the reader would turn into a first-hand experiencer as well. Furthermore, Cahagnet assumed the hashish induced state to be one and the same state as that reached by somnambulists.[61] It therefore seems that Cahagnet's hashish experiences were a definite improvement: they cut out the intermediary and gave spiritual experiences with long-lasting effects to whoever wanted them.

However, Cahagnet's *Arcanes III* and *Révélations* once again returned to the use of somnambulists as experiencers, and hashish would play but a small role in them; this begs the question of why. After all, Cahagnet had made a big point out of the improvements of this new approach—and implicitly this approach also refuted arguments made against Cahagnet's *Arcanes* by Dupotet and others. Returning to less optimal circumstances through more indirect means hardly seemed to be in Cahagnet's interest. I believe at least four factors contributed to his decision to depend once again mostly on somnambulists, rather than hashish experiences.

First, when comparing the fifteen accounts of hashish experiences by eleven experiencers to the dialogues Cahagnet had and continued to have with his numerous magnetic somnambulists, big differences appear. Returning to Faivre's three levels of clairvoyance—this-worldy extrasensory perception; contact with

58 For secondary literature on Cahagnet's hashish use, see first and foremost Hanegraaff (2016), but also Partridge (2018, 126–35).

59 Cahagnet 1851c, 133. Translation by M. Flinders Pearson.

60 Cahagnet 1851c, 2. Translation by M. Flinders Pearson.

61 Cahagnet 1850, 354.

spiritual entities; and access to ultimate realities—the contact with spiritual entities almost completely disappeared with hashish experiences: only one hashish drinker was able to talk to spirits at all. This left out an immense source of authoritative information for Cahagnet, as well as a major variable for comparison; no longer could impressive figures such as the spirit of Swedenborg be called upon, nor could spirits in general be compared to one another, or be identified (and thereby verified) by living relatives.

Second, and closely related to the first point, was the type of description given by hashish experiencers. Compared to the somnambulists, the content of hashish experience narratives in general was much more confused. Descriptions were filled with puzzling analogies that, according to the various experiencers, could only be understood within the state itself—the message therefore was in large parts no longer understandable by readers unfamiliar with similar experiences. Take the following statement of Lecocq, a friend of Cahagnet, who wrote: "I understood myself—I comprehended God! Why? I know not; but I had this conviction, which I still perfectly retain, that we may arrive at a knowledge of God [. . .] I then understood the happiness reserved for humanity after its spiritual purification."[62] The past tense of the quote signifies that Lecocq only had the knowledge *during* the experience, while its significance stayed after the event as well. But for readers that had not taken hashish, it would be difficult to take such vague statements for comforting truths. While somnambulists also occasionally would report that the experience had to be underwent in order to truly accept their messages, this was rarer and accompanied with more understandable language in general.

Third, there were issues with repetitive use of hashish as well. Cahagnet thought it fit to use it only three to four times a year.[63] A well trained somnambulist, on the other hand, was available daily. Therefore, it was hard to get a continued dialogue going with any specific hashish user, as well as to get a large enough number of experiencers in general whose messages could be compared with one another. Combined with the above observation on the incomprehensible nature of the messages, this makes it understandable that Cahagnet would value the continued service of certain somnambulists.

Fourth, while Cahagnet valued diversity, he also valued discipline. Somnambulists could for example be selected on their inability to read thoughts or remember past episodes.[64] Adèle was a good example of such as 'trained' somnambulist who

62 Cahagnet 1851c, 122–23. Translation by M. Flinders Pearson.
63 Cahagnet 1850, 369.
64 Cahagnet 1848, 85, 91–94.

over time had built up a working relationship with Cahagnet that both seemed happy with—aside from the occasional professional disagreement.[65] This disciplining was not possible to the same degree with the hashish drinkers; not only was using hashish not conducive to disciplined behavior, there also was no time for a working relationship to be built up due to the aforementioned limited times one was allowed to use it.[66] Furthermore, certain control measures such as a somnambulist's inability to remember what had happened simply were not possible with hashish experiencers.

Summarized, the main problems were the general lack of hashish users due to limits on its use; the lower level of information gotten from them due to the lack of spirits and disciplinary measures; and, perhaps most importantly, the bad translation from experiencer to non-experiencers. The relatively private nature of the knowledge obtained through hashish made it harder for readers to accept the message and apply it to their own lives, which was the aim of Cahagnet in the first place. It seems that in his hashish period, Cahagnet had overvalued the personal gain of hashish, and had underestimated the problems the substance brought with it.

5 The Research Logic of Cahagnet's Synthesis Period

Cahagnet wanted to transform society: to change how people thought about life and death. That goal led him in his somnambulist period to set up a democratic, spiritual science open for anyone able to read his books. Yet the problems of communication that hashish experiences brought with them were a major obstacle to that dream. I believe that Cahagnet was practical enough to understand that he had little hope of convincing everyone to take hashish. Therefore, his

65 At one point, Cahagnet (1848, 119, 294) believed Adèle attempted to commit suicide by staying in heaven for too long, after which he created a rule stating that no somnambulist was to visit heaven for more than ten minutes at a time. On another occasion, Adèle had attempted to throw herself out of a high-story window as the result of Cahagnet's ill-advised attempt to subdue her with a gift of magnetically-comfortable stockings—only the spirit of Swedenborg could return her to a state of reason, according to Cahagnet (1849, 103–11). On the whole, however, the two worked well together.

66 Of course, in the intermittent periods between hashish use, Cahagnet could hypothetically try to train the users. However, this would still seriously hamper the speed at which he would do research compared to the daily availability of certain somnambulists.

hashish research was simply not as pragmatic as his somnambulist research. After all, the pool of potentially changed minds would drop from anyone able to read books, to those willing to take poorly understood substances such as hashish.

Therefore, Cahagnet's *Arcanes III*, as well as his *Révélations*, once again followed mainly the research logic of the somnambulist phase. Magnetic somnambulists were once more the preferred tools through which spirits were contacted. Cahagnet in his synthesis period put the emphasis on verification again. Sending Adèle to the moon was one novel way of doing this, as has been mentioned above. Another prediction that would have proven the abilities of his somnambulists pertained to Franklin's lost expedition—the famous disappearance in 1845 of a British Arctic exploration voyage. Here, too, Cahagnet sent Adèle in spirit to find the crew, and he reported that she had conversations with the spirit of the still-living captain, Sir John Franklin.[67] Cahagnet also once more leaned on the authority of famous spirits, as *Révélations* as a book was mainly built on the conversations of one of his somnambulists with the spirits of Benjamin Franklin, Hippocrates, and Galileo Galilei.

Yet hashish had not vanished completely, although its role had diminished greatly—at least in Cahagnet's written works. Sporadic references were made to experiences induced by the substance.[68] I believe Cahagnet still had his uses for hashish experiences. In his own hands, hashish accounts were one more type of narrative to use for comparison. The various drug experiences of his reporters were—according to his interpretation—in perfect accordance with the outcomes of his earlier work.[69] The experiencers were, moreover, not magnetized by him and therefore not under his influence. Subsequently, Cahagnet could use them as evidence against the thesis of thought transference—the notion which had already shaped much of his somnambulist period research but was nonetheless raised against Cahagnet's works from that period. On themselves, single hashish reports might not have much persuasion power, but as part of the larger whole, they could still add another level of independent verification through comparison.

67 By the time Adèle allegedly had her conversation with Franklin, he had already perished. Cahagnet was not the only one who used magnetic somnambulism to try and locate the expedition, but as far as I am aware, he was the only French animal magnetizer to do so (cf. McCorristine 2018, chap. 3, for similar attempts within the British Empire).

68 E.g., Cahagnet 1854a, 261–68.

69 E.g., Cahagnet 1850, 174.

Furthermore, in the hands of Cahagnet's readers, hashish could be a more effective tool than recruiting somnambulists to replicate results. The spiritual experience resulting from hashish would directly show them that Cahagnet's method was efficacious. It would turn them from second-hand non-experiencers into first-hand experiencers. Even more so than the somnambulist method, it was a very intimate type of personal verification that could potentially lead to an opening up to the whole corpus of Cahagnet's teachings, even if the experience was only of value to the experiencer.[70] Hashish therefore had a niche role in Cahagnet's synthesis period's research logic, even if the main focus of his written work was once again magnetic somnambulism.[71]

6 Magnetic Somnambulism and Hashish as Two Distinct Research Paradigms

Ultimately, Cahagnet's transition through his somnambulist, hashish, and synthesis periods was predicated on a simple—yet difficult—choice between two research paradigms.[72] On the one hand was the use of magnetic somnambulists to interview spirits about the afterlife and verify the answers. On the other hand, there was the direct experience induced by hashish, thereby removing the intermediary altogether, but also the consistency, communicability, and verifiability that magnetic somnambulism brought with it. Both somnambulism and hashish amounted to transformative experiences, and both were intentionally sought after by Cahagnet. In this section, I want to use concepts from various authors in

70 Cahagnet's hope that hashish would provide the same experience for all was tempered by the fact that he acknowledged that not everyone interpreted the drug's effects as spiritual. Nevertheless, he found this a matter of interpretation; the fault of the consumer rather than the substance.

71 It might seem that this analysis assumes a too favorable stance on Cahagnet's part towards hashish, given the few references to hashish after *Sanctuaire*. This is so because the corpus of the current chapter consists of written works only. There are reasons to believe Cahagnet continued using hashish more prominently outside of his writings: Hanegraaff shows that it was during what I call the synthesis period, that Paschal Beverly Randolph and Emma Hardinge Britten—two influential figures within nineteenth century esotericism—were likely introduced to hashish by Cahagnet (Hanegraaff 2016, 117).

72 The word paradigm is chosen because of its association with the notion of incommensurability (Kuhn 1996). As the historical overview of Cahagnet made clear, and as will be emphasized in the current section, the differences between hashish use and magnetic somnambulism were fundamental enough to not truly fit well together, despite Cahagnet's attempt to do so.

order to draw out even more clearly what was at stake in this decision for Cahagnet. It will be shown that within his system, hashish research can be seen as a paradigm resting on the legitimizing power of personal experience, while somnambulism research can be seen as a paradigm relying on the legitimizing power of scientific measures such as comparison and verification. Both paradigms were used to investigate spiritual matters such as what comes after death, but their differing qualities made them eventually take on different places within Cahagnet's democratic, spiritual science.

Originally, both the use of hashish and magnetic somnambulism were only of instrumental value to Cahagnet. The knowledge and perspective these tools provided was meant to change the attitudes of some experiencers long after the immediate experience ended, as well as readers who had never even had the immediate experience in the first place.[73] In using hashish and magnetic somnambulism, the goal of Cahagnet was therefore to induce 'state-specific knowledge.' This term, recently introduced into the study of religion and esotericism by Wouter Hanegraaff, denotes the idea that "different modalities of consciousness imply different types of knowledge."[74] In the specific case of Cahagnet, he believed that the material state enabled the study of matter, while the spiritual state (through somnambulism or hashish) enabled the study of spiritual topics: "man must divest himself of his envelope, and render himself homogeneous to the state of the thing with which he desires to become acquainted [. . .] we can explain laws only in the state in which we are."[75] Hashish and magnetic somnambulism can therefore be described as *states of knowledge* for those who interpret them spiritually.[76] As a subdivision of immediate experiences more generally, such states of knowledge can be seen as revolving around the acquisition of information unique to those states. In the case of Cahagnet, the term helps to keep in mind his view that the experiences were tools to obtain information only.

Yet even though they were strictly a means to an end, the hashish- and somnambulism-induced states of knowledge were crucial to obtaining the relevant information exactly because of their transformative character. It is useful at this

73 The term immediate experience is used here to denote a specific, time-limited experience with a clear beginning and ending. The analytic counterpart would be the long-term experience, which takes place over a long period and is in itself the accumulation of many smaller, immediate experiences. See also the introduction to this volume.

74 Hanegraaff 2022, 3n6.

75 Cahagnet 1851b, 1:7. Translator unknown.

76 A spiritual interpretational framework is decisive, otherwise hashish experiences could simply be seen as drug-induced hallucinations and magnetic somnambulism as hypnosis with a heavy component of hypnotic suggestion. It is therefore crucial to posit immediate experiences within a longer frame; see the chapter of Sarah Perez within this volume for more on this issue.

point to introduce a distinction made by Laurie A. Paul on two different levels in which an experience can be considered transformative in order to see where the differences between hashish and somnambulism as inducers of states of knowledge emerged.[77] L.A. Paul distinguishes between epistemically transformative experiences, which give new information that might only be recieved through the experience, and personally transformative experiences, which change one's core preferences and self-identification. She denotes experiences that have both the epistemic and personal elements as 'transformative experiences' in the full sense of the word.

Cahagnet believed magnetic somnambulists could talk to spirits, apprehend truths more generally, and potentially even travel to heaven (including all levels of Faivre's 'kinds of clairvoyance' as discussed earlier). Furthermore, such magnetic somnambulists had a different understanding of themselves while in that state of knowledge; they realized their different opinions on matters, their heightened knowledge, and they saw themselves more directly interwoven with others and with the various levels of existence (i.e., Earth and Heaven). Likewise, hashish users under Cahagnet's care—including himself—reported new ways of apprehending cosmic and religious truths and noted new ways of seeing their place in the grand scheme of things (including levels I and III of Faivre). Following L.A. Paul's division, then, both magnetic somnambulism and hashish enabled for Cahagnet epistemic and personal transformations. Yet where L.A. Paul's argument hinges on the idea that the experiential nature of such transformations makes rational decision making extremely hard—after all, one can only truly know whether a potentially transformative process will be positive or negative *after* having personally underwent it—Cahagnet believed the implications of the hashish- and somnambulism-induced transformations could change the worldviews of his *readers* too.

To understand Cahagnet's point of view, I will elaborate on L.A. Paul's distinction between epistemic and personal transformations. As mentioned above, she argues that for certain decisions, no outside evidence can prepare the decision maker for the actual impact of the outcome.[78] The transformative experience, for L.A. Paul, is not communicable to others. I will designate the uncommunicable

77 Paul 2014. See for a larger introduction of her ideas the introduction to this volume. For other analyses that directly integrate L.A. Paul's terms in this volume, see again the chapter of Perez.

78 To illustrate L.A. Paul's argument further: she starts her book with the evocative thought-experiment of having the choice to be turned into a vampire. Neither thinking about how it will be to be able to fly or having to drink blood will actually enable one to appreciate how that would really be. Likewise, the opinions of other vampires would be ambiguous at best. Lastly, even if one were to go through with it and enjoy being a vampire, that would not necessarily entail that it was the best choice for the decision maker pre-transformation; they might have been horrified by what their post-transformational self enjoys (Paul 2014, 1–4).

aspects of experiences as belonging to the *private* domain of such experiences. Cahagnet, however, had a different epistemology. All the books analyzed in this chapter share the fact that they were filled with statements by magnetic somnambulists and hashish users exactly because Cahagnet believed their knowledge to be transferable. At least parts of somnambulist and hashish experiences, therefore, were open to communication according to Cahagnet. I will designate these communicable aspects of experiences as belonging to the *public* domain of such experiences.

As Cahagnet's spiritual research relied on states of knowledge, it should not come as a surprise that he valued the *epistemic* transformations inherent in magnetic somnambulism and hashish experiences as more important than the *personal* transformations. After all, interviews with spirits and descriptions of heaven could be written down and the (allegedly) objective information retained after the experience ended, subjective reinterpretations of an experiencer's self-view less so. To put it concretely: personal transformations were private, whereas epistemic transformations were public. Communicable (i.e., publicly available) information could be detached from the specific experiential context in which it was received and written down in Cahagnet's books. From there, readers could potentially become convinced by the outcomes of the experience narratives and the verification strategies of Cahagnet. In technical terms, Cahagnet aimed to enable a 'virtual witnessing' of his research. Virtual witnessing, coined by historian Steven Shapin, denotes the important strategy to convince readers that written down experiments were truly done the way they were described, by virtue of being retraceable step-by-step in the imagination.[79] After becoming persuaded by the information on life after death through such virtual witnessing, Cahagnet's readers should then start to see matters such as life and death in a less materialistic—and for Cahagnet more optimistic—manner, including their own role in this world. Readers could even take up Cahagnet's invitation to replicate his results by themselves, but that was hardly to be expected of everyone. It was therefore primarily the publicly communicable knowledge gained mostly through the epistemic transformations of magnetic somnambulists and hashish users, that should change how persons saw matters closely interwoven with their worldview and their specific place within it. Consequently, there was a reversal in hierarchy: whereas Cahagnet valued the epistemic transformation of his subjects more than the personal, this was only so because these epi-

79 Shapin 1984; Shapin and Schaffer 1985. Virtual witnessing became especially important in circumstances where replication was improbable (e.g., due to expensive or delicate machinery) and where direct witnessing was limited (e.g., due to an international audience). Virtual witnessing is still a cornerstone of academic writing as replication remains an ideal rather than common practice in many branches of academia (cf. Collins 1992, 19).

stemic transformations would ultimately lead to non-experiential (personally transformative) changes in the self-understanding of others—the readers. Cahagnet therefore intentionally induced temporary transformative experiences in his subjects (and himself) in order to change the perspectives of his readers.

The above analysis might seem to apply well to Cahagnet's somnambulism and synthesis periods, but less so to his hashish period. After all, a large part of the current chapter has been spent on explaining the problems Cahagnet had in making the results of hashish experiences valuable to others. While he originally saw hashish as a direct improvement over somnambulism, it was only when Cahagnet realized the trade-offs inherent in hashish, that he faced the difficult choice between a hashish-based or a somnambulist-based paradigm. Therefore, a translation of the advantages and disadvantages of hashish experiences (as described in earlier sections) into the conceptual scheme developed here will show the fundamental differences between the two paradigms.

The state of knowledge that hashish brought about was less communicable to others—i.e., it was more private—and therefore had less epistemic value to non-experiencers than the magnetic somnambulist state of knowledge. Furthermore, the through hashish generated knowledge seemed to have been tied up with the private personal transformation inherent in the experience: unlike with somnambulists, there were no spirits to deliver information in a clear conversational style. Rather, the knowledge seemed imprinted onto the experiencers in a non-linguistic or ineffable manner, which was exactly why communication was so difficult. Therefore, information was not detachable from the direct experience and thus never became truly publicly accessible. As a result, virtual witnessing was much less possible with regard to hashish narratives as compared to somnambulist ones. Yet similarly unlike somnambulists, hashish users did *not* forget their immediate experiences. Consequently, the epistemic *and* personal transformations that hashish brought with it could potentially immediately convert the users to Cahagnet's cause, without the further intervention of intermediaries such as somnambulists. That hashish proved capable of such a result can be shown beyond Cahagnet's own writings, such as when the famous occultist Paschal Beverly Randolph (1825–1875), after likely being introduced to the substance by Cahagnet, wrote that his hashish experiences convinced him of the immortality of the soul.[80] Concisely put: whereas magnetic somnambulism only provided useful (and verifiable) knowledge for *others*, hashish experiences seemed to only provide useful knowledge for the experiencers *themselves*.

80 Cf. Hanegraaff 2016, 177; and footnote 71 of the current chapter.

The two states of knowledge central to Cahagnet's work—hashish experience and magnetic somnambulism—therefore led to vastly different results. On the one hand, there was the scientific promise inherent in the repeatable, comparable, verifiable, and publicly available information given through spirit interviews (and sporadic otherworldly visits) as performed by magnetic somnambulists. On the other hand, there was the promise of the overwhelmingly persuasive power of personally experiencing the hashish-induced state of knowledge. Science and personal experience are, I argue, the key terms to differentiate the somnambulist and hashish paradigms of Cahagnet. Olav Hammer has shown that personal experience and science, together with tradition, have been the three major ways through which the epistemologies of religious movements in late modernity could be legitimized.[81] It is therefore not surprising that Cahagnet initially tried to combine the (in his eyes) scientific strength of somnambulism research with the personally convincing nature of hashish research. Only when the problems of hashish research became clear, could Cahagnet try to make a synthesis in a new way. His solution was to focus in his writing on the virtually witnessable science-based paradigm of somnambulist research, as that could reach the widest possible audience. The experience-based hashish paradigm was still utilized for the strongest manner of personal verification in specific cases such as with friends and acquaintances, but it understandably fitted less well in the medium of the written book.

Table 9.2 summarizes the differences between the two states of knowledge central to Cahagnet's two paradigms: magnetic somnambulism and hashish experience. The bottom two rows show the outcome of the qualities described in the other lines of the table.

Table 9.2: The differences between magnetic somnambulism and hashish experience in the work of Cahagnet.

State of knowledge	Magnetic somnambulism	Hashish experience
Types of knowledge	Faivre's levels I, II, and III	Faivre's levels I and III
Intermediary	Somnambulist (second-hand)	None (first-hand)
Type of transformation	Personal & epistemic	Personal & epistemic
Retention of experience	None	Partial through memory
Communicability of knowledge	High (public; virtual witnessing possible)	Low (private; no virtual witnessing possible)

81 Hammer 2004.

Table 9.2 (continued)

Verifiability of knowledge	High	Low
Repeatability of State	High (Daily)	Low (Few times per year)
Useful for:	Others only	Experiencer only
Legitimizing factor:	Science	Personal experience

7 Conclusion: Intentionality, Transformation, and Experience in the Two Paradigms

The case study of Cahagnet was used to build up two different paradigms of using transformative experiences for spiritual research, aided by various concepts borrowed from others. However, the scheme can be divorced from the specific states of knowledge Cahagnet used—hashish and magnetic somnambulism—in order to serve as a more general framework in which to place similar phenomena outside of spiritual animal magnetism. After generalizing the two research paradigms, it will be shown that they have a direct bearing on how we can analyze intentionality, transformation, and experience from new perspectives.

The personal experience-based hashish paradigm Cahagnet utilized contains many similarities to the more abstract and widely known 'mystical experience' term. Despite lacking a clear consensus on its usefulness, the term mystical experience usually denotes an ineffable and incommunicable religious experience that changes how one sees the world—often through direct union with the divine. In this sense, the hashish experiences described by Cahagnet are intentionally induced mystical experiences that (reportedly) transformed those who took it. Whether such a mystical state is sought through drugs, meditation, sensory deprivation, prayer, or otherwise does not make much difference, as the logic stays the same: an experiencer deliberately seeks out a transformative experience that holds relevance only to those who have reached the desired state. Furthermore, the experience is inherently persuasive precisely because it happens directly and unmediated to the practitioners themselves. I believe a useful term to give to such experiences, as a subdivision of the more general intentional transformative experience, would be *intentionally induced self-transformative experiences*. The emphasis is thereby rightly placed on the goal (and simultaneously the limit) of a transformation of the experiencer only.[82]

82 Most of the experiences discussed in this volume would fall under the category of intentionally induced self-transformative experiences.

The science-based somnambulism paradigm that was so important to Cahagnet in most of the books under consideration in this chapter, was an attempt to subjugate experience to science. Cahagnet hoped to turn somnambulists and their states of knowledge into tools to compare and verify spiritual truths in a way that was convincing for everyone, rather than just the experiencers. Such an instrumental use of transformative experiences has been less emphasized in scholarly literature, yet there are other instances to be found. For example, near-death researchers have tried to operationalize the out-of-body experience in such a way that can prove consciousness to exist independently from the body; trance mediumship and channeling has likewise been used to obtain information that is useful primarily for others, rather than for the experiencers themselves; and even older divinatory techniques such as the purportedly ecstatic states of the Pythia at Delphi were only valuable to the requesters.[83] The logic here is that experiencers are used to obtain certain information that is of relevance (also) to those who did not reach similar states, and the experience itself is indeed only of instrumental value. Such experiences are only persuasive when the information obtained can reliably be verified, often—but not exclusively—through what the practitioners deem to be scientific means. In order to stress the extrinsic value of the transformative experience, I propose to give this subdivision the name *intentionally induced states of knowledge*.

The two subdivisions can be used as a start to form a typology of the wider concept of intentional transformative experiences. Important to note is that intentionally induced self-transformative experiences still give access to state-specific knowledge, while intentionally induced states of knowledge are still (often temporary) transformative experiences. (After all, Cahagnet too initially attempted to use hashish research following the logic of intentionally induced states of knowledge.) The choice of terminology is purely one of emphasis. I believe that many more instances can be found of both subtypes,[84] which can schematically be represented as follows:

83 Of course, the fact that some experiences are thought to provide valuable information only to non-experiencers does not mean that the experiences themselves were without value to the experiencers. Often, such practices are structured as economical exchanges, where information is traded for money.

84 A next step would be to hypothesize which types of contextual factors would make one opt for one subtype or the other. For example, I would expect that path cultures as Karl Baier describes them in his chapter in this volume would value the individual nature of intentionally induced self-transformative experiences due to their focus on self-cultivation in general. On the other hand, groups that want to scientifically investigate spiritual matters—such as certain subsets of psychical research, parapsychology and near-death experience research—can be expected to prefer intentionally induced states of knowledge, coupled with methods of verification.

Table 9.3: Intentionally induced self-transformative experiences and states of knowledge.

	Intentionally induced self-transformative experiences	**Intentionally induced states of knowledge**
Nature of Knowledge	Private	Public
Type of Value	Intrinsic	Instrumental
Basis of Legitimacy	Personal Experience	Verification / Science

From the basic typology presented above (table 9.3), various concerns that are at the core of the edited volume can be discussed from a different perspective. If one takes the constellation 'intentional transformative experience,' the adjective 'intentional' implies rather straightforwardly a wish for a certain transformative experience. Yet if the different aims of intentionally induced self-transformative experiences and intentionally induced states of knowledge are taken into account, it becomes clear that further questioning is necessary. The sought-after experiences can themselves be either intrinsically valuable and persuasive, as in the case of self-transformative experiences, or they can merely be tools to get at knowledge that is useful beyond the immediate experiencer, such as with states of knowledge. Intentionality, following this typology, goes beyond the first divide of induced versus 'random' transformative experiences and includes a second level of looking for the *goal* of the intentionally induced transformative experience.

Similarly, the typology has consequences for the category of transformation as well. The common understanding of terms such as 'religious experience,' 'mystical experience,' or even 'intentional transformative experience' will be that the experience is induced *by* as well as *for* the experiencers themselves. This will generally be found to be true for intentionally induced self-transformative experiences, as they are often done by individual practitioners for their own spiritual growth.[85] However, intentionally induced states of knowledge might very well be induced by others than the experiencers. Cahagnet, for example, was the inducer

85 One exception to the self-inducibility and private nature of intentionally induced transformative experiences would be therapies focusing on regression or hypnosis. There, while the aim is to help the practitioner, the experience is induced by the therapist. However, the retrieved information is still of a rather public nature as the therapist would otherwise have a hard time to incorporate the findings in subsequent sessions. It is therefore more productive to see this type of experience as having characteristics of both intentionally induced self-transformations *and* states of knowledge. Similarly, when Cahagnet gave hashish to others to write down their experiences, he was operating under the logic of intentionally induced states of knowledge, which broke down exactly because Cahagnet could not extract enough useful information out of the hashish experiencers.

of the somnambulist state in his magnetic somnambulists—although other examples of this category, such as trance mediums, do not need outside help. Furthermore, it could be hypothesized that intentionally induced states of knowledge often do not have any long-term effects attached to them (e.g., somnambulists forgot what happened to them afterwards; likewise, trance mediums have no post-experiential transformations), while the transformation inherent in intentionally induced self-transformative experiences is predicated on the wish that the transformation is permanent. The typology created here therefore allows us to ask who the intentional agent is (the experiencer or someone else) and whether the transformation is supposed to be temporary or permanent.

Finally, the difference between intentionally induced self-transformative experiences and intentionally induced states of knowledge can be used to investigate the conceptual role experiences play in the whole. L.A. Paul's differentiation between epistemic and personal transformations paved the way to investigate how practitioners evaluate the communicability of experiences. Many intentional transformative experiences will have elements in them that are deemed communicable and publicly useful, as well as elements that are deemed incommunicable and therefore only privately useful. Yet the focus will be lain upon either the private or the public parts—and it is that choice that decides whether the experience is mostly intrinsically valuable (as in intentionally induced self-transformative experiences), or mostly instrumentally valuable (as in intentionally induced states of knowledge). The typology in this sense adds a dynamic level of analysis to intentional transformative experiences, by helping to ask the question precisely which parts of the experience the practitioners are interested in, potentially at the expense of other parts.

The French spiritual animal magnetizer Louis-Alphonse Cahagnet has proven a fruitful subject to use in the investigation of intentional transformative experiences. His evolving thoughts on whether to induce transformative experiences in intermediaries in order to objectively verify their sayings, or to have persons experience spiritual states directly, has formed the basis of a typology of intentional transformative experiences. The typology, in turn, can be used to further analyze similar phenomena with new conceptual terms, as well as from new perspectives and with new questions. Cahagnet himself had hoped to transform the way society sees death—as a gateway to a better, eternal life. He soon realized that achieving this goal was harder than it seemed, and he did not gain many converts to his cause. However, Cahagnet's creative and ever-evolving system is a useful lens through which the concept of intentional transformative experiences can be studied.

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