

5 LOGOTHERAPEUTIC THEORIES OF HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS

5.1 Viktor Frankl's theory of human consciousness

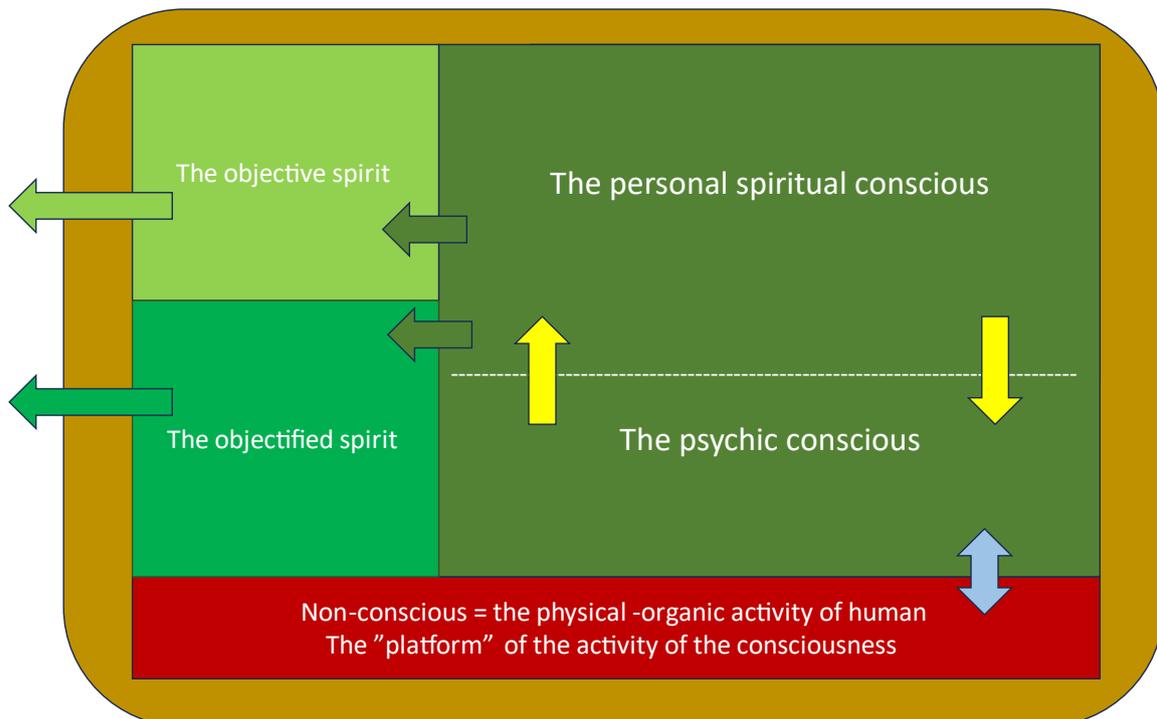
Viktor Frankl's understanding of human consciousness is based on dimensional ontology and the Diagnostics of mental disorders he developed (e.g. in 'On the Theory and Therapy of Mental Disorders', 2004). According to the aspect based on dimensional ontology, a person has different dimensions that must be explored, understood and explained from and through these dimensions. The Noological dimension in a person belongs to the same consciousness as the psychic dimension, but, in a person, they manifest in very different ways. Humans have the ability to distance themselves and the ability for self-transcendence, which are manifestations of the activity of the Noological dimension. Faith, conscience, will to a purpose and the Defiant Power of Spirit also belong to the Noological dimension, and are manifestations of it. The Noological dimension is superior to the psychic; according to Frankl, this is proven by the fact that a mentally ill person has a functional ability for self-distancing and the will to a purpose, even when the psyche is seriously damaged. The will to purpose already includes self-transcendence, i.e. the ability to orient oneself outside of oneself.

According to the aspect based on Frankl's diagnostics of mental disorders, mental disorders can be classified as somatogenic, psychogenic or noogenic disorders, depending on whether their cause is in the biological (somatic), the psychic or the Noological dimension (according to the dimensional ontology). The causes of the somatogenic disorders (e.g. iatrogenic neuroses) can be found in the biological factors, e.g. brain dysfunction. The causes of the psychogenic disorders (e.g. psychogenic neuroses) can be found in the psychological factors, e.g. conflicts of motives, anxiety or fear. The causes of the noogenic disorders (e.g. noogenic neuroses) can be found in the noological factors, e.g. a crisis related to experiencing a purpose or problems of conscience. In noogenic disorders, the cause can be found in other than psychological factors. In these disorders, self-distancing and self-transcendence do work, but their relationship to the reality outside the self is distorted. According to Frankl, this act of distortion is a (mentally) healthy reaction to a sick situation in which a person is.

In his books, Frankl did not accurately describe or make detailed distinctions between the field of the psychic and the Noological dimensions in consciousness, as he was not interested in studying consciousness from a philosophical point of view, but focused more on justifying the understanding and explanation of the different dimensions of the human being and justifying the medical benefit of logotherapy in the treatment of mental problems.

5.2 Lauri Rauhala's theory of human consciousness

Rauhala has studied human consciousness and the spiritual¹ in humanity (e.g., Rauhala's famous books: 'Henkinen ihmisessä' ('The Spiritual in human'), 'Ihmisen ainutlaatuisuus' ('The Human uniqueness'), and 'Tajunnan itsepuolustus' ('The Self-defense of consciousness')). According to Rauhala (Rauhala 2005), consciousness is one of the aspects of a person's essence, alongside with corporeality and situationality. A person's consciousness' essence consists of two main factors: the non-conscious and the conscious. Conscious, on the other hand, consists of awareness and unconscious. Consciousness is formed from the reciprocal process of these. Non-conscious means all such physical-organic activity that is not experiential and from which one cannot form any contexts of meaning, but it is still essential as a "platform" of the activity of the conscious. The unconscious and the awareness of the conscious are extremities of each other in consciousness. According to Rauhala, that means more about the variation in the degree of clarity of meanings than about two separate parts of consciousness. Consciousness works on the conscious' awareness-unconscious axis in such a way that it can be seen as the occurrence or non-occurrence of meanings in one's worldview. (ibid. 40-42.)



¹ which, in Rauhala's writings, refer more to Frankl's use of the term 'spiritual' as the Noological dimension of human consciousness than to a religious content of human consciousness; see also footnote 7.

Picture 4. A basic structure of human consciousness (surrounding brown colour) according to Lauri Rauhala's categorization. The yellow arrows present the awareness-unconscious process of the conscious.

Awareness and unconscious areas of conscious in consciousness cannot be separated, but consciousness is the process of both awareness and unconscious in conscious. In this process of consciousness, there can be distinguished the psychic and the spiritual (dimensions of consciousness), which have their own regulative situational circuit. In addition to the personal spiritual², there are two other levels of activity in the spiritual (dimension): the objective spirit and the objectified spirit. According to Rauhala, the objective spirit is realized in cultural phenomena, such as various institutions, fashion, science and art, values and customs and the legal system, and it functions relatively independently of the personal spiritual. The objective spirit—as opposed to the personal spiritual—is impersonal; it has no conscious and therefore no conscience or responsibility. The objectified spirit includes those products of science and art that have human cultural permanence. It stabilizes and preserves culture, and in its creation, the personal spiritual as the creator of the product is crucially important. However, the participation of the personal spiritual in the activity of the objectified spirit gradually decreases over time, because the permanent products of science and art no longer depend on the existence of the individuals who created them, but the products become part of our collective culture.

The psychic and personal spiritual level of consciousness form a whole, where the awareness and the unconscious are in a continuous process. The objective spirit and objectified spirit are - from the starting point- parts of consciousness, but become detached from consciousness over time. They do not include the process of awareness and unconscious. The psychic level of consciousness functions intrasubjectively (i.e. is connected to its own sensations and experiences) and is related to somatic reality (corporeality). The personal spiritual level of consciousness functions intersubjectively (is connected also to psychic experiences) and is related to situational reality. The objective spirit and the objectified spirit originating from consciousness are also connected to the situational reality, but do not function either intra- or intersubjectively, because they detach from their starting point and are relatively independent of consciousness. Their way of functioning could be called interobjective, as they shape each other's contents (societal values, the judiciary, concepts of beauty, idealizations, belief systems, the practice of science and art and their products, etc.).

² which can be understood as synonymous with Frankl's Noological dimension of consciousness.

According to Rauhala, personal spiritual level is a human structural property that is given to every person as a potentiality. It is then the task of each individual to actualize this spiritual potential in their own life. Due to its structural property, it's also unimportant, where the origin of the personal spiritual is actually derived from. Rauhala states that because the content or the origin of the personal spiritual can't be defined exclusively, only the principles of its functioning can be described. These principles are the higher meanings and values occurring in conscious, that are both common (in relation to knowledge and pre-moral understanding of values) and individual (in relation to the internal meanings and values in conscious, that include self-development). These experiences of higher meanings and values contain always the action of self-awareness, which is, according to Rauhala, the most distinctive character of the personal spiritual (level/dimension).

According to Rauhala, disorders that appear both in the personal spiritual and the psychic (dimensions of consciousness) should never be called mental illnesses or diseases, but rather unfavorable experiences and the worldviews resulting from them.

Rauhala does not distinguish between unfavorable experiences of the psychic (dimension of consciousness) and the personal spiritual (dimension of consciousness), because, according to him, both dimensions function in the process of constructing a worldview. Rauhala criticizes the understandings of the disciplines of psychiatry and psychology about how the disorders in consciousness are qualitatively seen, and especially how they are studied and understood. However, Rauhala sticks to the psychoanalytic framework, combining the disorders of the psychic and the spiritual (dimensions) as a function of the distortion process of contexts of meaning within the worldview. (Rauhala 2005. In English, Rauhala 1969.)

5.3 The Logotheoretic theory of human consciousness³

The Logotheoretic theory of (human) consciousness included in the logotherapeutic perception of the human is based on Frankl's dimensional ontology, Diagnostics of mental disorders and Frankl's ten theses about the person. In addition to that, Rauhala's holistic perception of humanity (especially his view about taking corporeality, consciousness and the situationality into account on studying and understanding the human) and some aspects of Rauhala's theory of consciousness supplement the Logotheoretic theory of consciousness. Rauhala's theory of consciousness and the Logotheoretic theory of consciousness both share the same

³ first presented in Anne Niiles-Mäki's article 'Miksi logoterapiaa tarvitaan: logoterapian asema ja merkitys osana länsimaista terapiaperinnettä' in 'Kärsimyksestä rakkauteen – Viktor Frankl Institute Finlandin tutkimuksia 2' 2017 (ed. Purjo, T.), 172-177. Peer reviewed.

basis concerning the situation and the dissimilarities in the Noological (the personal spiritual in Rauhala) and the psychic dimensions's operating principles. However, Rauhala does not separate disorders of the psychic dimension of consciousness and the (personal) spiritual dimension of consciousness (i.e. the Noological dimension) into their own qualities of disorders. Although Rauhala states that the psychic dimension of consciousness operates according to its own operating principles (desires, emotions, motives, intrasubjectivity) and the (personal) spiritual dimension according to its own operating principles (meanings being as subjects, understanding the possibility of their individuation, generalization and self-regulation, as well as understanding the personal responsibility of operating with meanings (Rauhala 2009, 92-93)), are the disturbances manifested in these, in simplified manner, disturbances at different levels of the worldview, where the essential point is the structuring of the contexts of meaning. What causes the disturbances, is, for Rauhala, related to negative interpretations of the facticity of a person's situation or the *horizon*⁴ in contexts of meaning. But if the contents of meaning containing contexts of meaning, are ontologically of different quality - i.e. if they differ from each other because they have arisen from the functioning of certain operating principles, and are structured according to these – can they be considered equal or similar? Furthermore, whether the contexts of meaning construed from them can be considered equal or similar? Could it then also be stated that all unfavorably interpreted contexts of meaning can be processed, studied and understood as equal and similar? If the answer is yes, it would be also assumed, that all disorders of consciousness can therefore be treated with similar manner. However, this assumption has already been rightly refuted in chapters 2.2 and 3.

According to logotherapy - as well as Lauri Rauhala - disorders of the psychic and the Noological (personal spiritual) dimension are disturbances at different levels of the human worldview. Although, according to Rauhala, these disorders are significant only to what kind of contexts of meaning they create in the contexts of understanding, and thus, what kind of (distorted) worldview does a person generate through these unfavorable or negative interpretations, wouldn't it then be essential to also understand and study how do these different levels of disturbances distort our worldview in different ways? In other words, what kind of distortions in the psychic dimension of consciousness and in the Noological dimension arises, why are the distortions of different quality, what are the effects of their different quality in generating a person's worldview, and why and how can these disorders of different quality be or cannot be treated? The reasons why psychiatry, psychotherapy or psychoanalysis are not effective forms of treatment in treating disorders of the Noological dimension of consciousness have already been elucidated in earlier

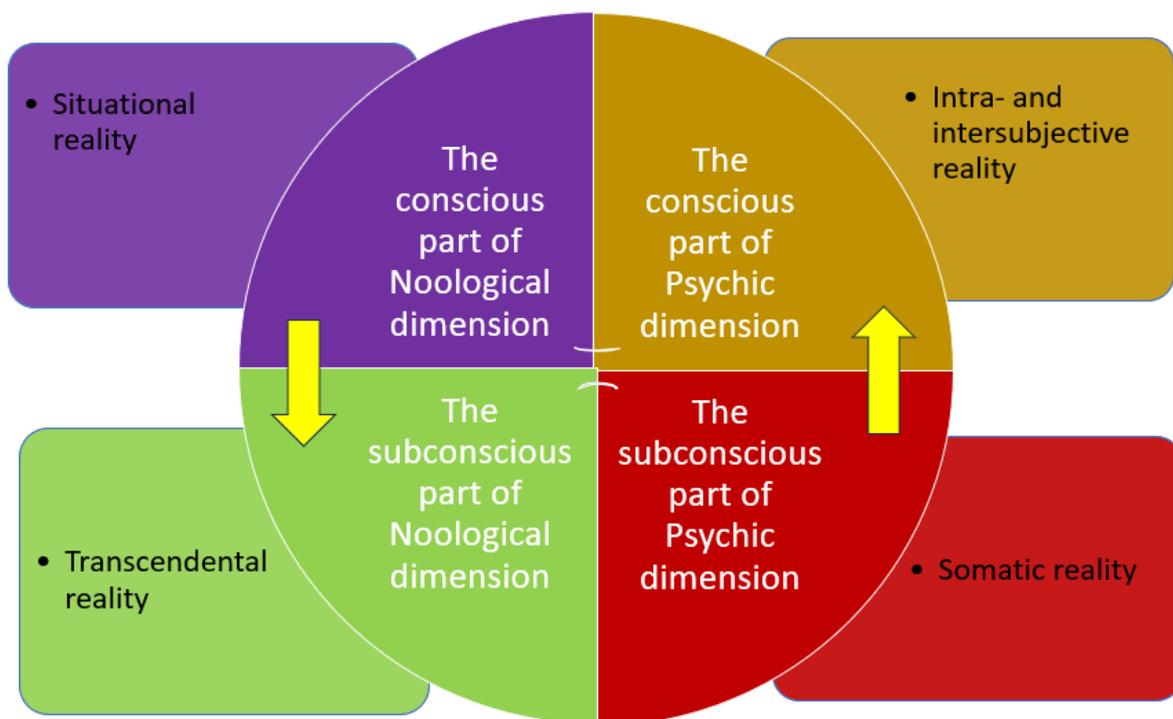
⁴ as a representative of phenomenological philosophy, Rauhala uses the term '*horizon*' according to phenomenological context; see e.g. Geniusas 2012.

chapters. To sum up: the types of treatments that are most effective in the treatment of disorders of the psychic dimension of consciousness belong within the scope of psychiatric and psychological research. Because the disorders of different dimensions are of different quality already on behalf of their contents of meaning, we have to start from the operating principles that generate the contents of meaning in the conscious part of the Noological dimension of consciousness. Through these operating principles – i.e. agents – it is possible to find out how the contents of meaning in the Noological dimension of human consciousness differ from the contents of meaning in the psychic dimension of human consciousness. Through this, disorders of the conscious part of the Noological dimension of consciousness can be distinguished from disorders of other dimensions' parts of consciousness (noological subconscious', psychic conscious' and psychic subconscious' parts).

Although human consciousness is a whole, from the framework of regional ontology we can still distinguish parts of consciousness that differ qualitatively from each other due to their operating mechanisms and properties. The parts of consciousness are always connected to each other in the same way as the aspects of a human essence are connected to each other, so that these parts (like the aspects of human essence) require each other's existence in order to exist themselves. There cannot be such case that human consciousness is missing, for example, the subconscious part of the psychic dimension, but the other parts of consciousness would function normally (or at all). The whole consciousness functions within the awareness-unconscious axis (see yellow arrows in **picture 5**) in such a way that from the unconscious, phenomena that require a necessary understanding in a particular situation, emerge into awareness. Correspondingly, phenomena that do not require a necessary understanding in a particular situation are transferred from awareness to unconscious. Although logophilosophy focuses on the Noological dimension of human consciousness and its functioning, a logotherapist must understand the structure and operating principles of the whole consciousness – both the psychic and the Noological dimension – in order to be able to separate psychological (or psychiatric) disorders from purpose-based distortions of the Noological dimension.

The biggest structural difference between the psychic and the Noological dimensions is probably that the parts of the psychic dimension are also in a mutual causal connection (in a direct cause-and-effect connection) to each other, while the Noological dimension is only in a downward causal connection to the psychic dimension: the activity of the Noological can affect the psychic and through the psychic can be connected to the somatic and intra- and intersubjective reality, but an activity of psychic does not affect the activity of the agents of the Noological dimension, and the psychic dimension is therefore not directly connected to situational or transcendental reality. The function of the Noological dimension is not causally bound but it functions according to the free will, where both parts of the

Noological dimension - conscious and subconscious⁵ - operate relatively independently. As an example of this we can consider conscience, which is a quality of the subconscious part of Noological dimension of consciousness and, as the content of the Noological subconscious, an ontologically (in its own existence) infallible "purpose-organ"⁶, but whose activity belongs to the area of the conscious part of the Noological dimension and can be fallible (in its activity). A person can therefore, according to their free will, decide to act ethically wrong; but the understanding of one's own wrong action tells a person about the ontological infallibility of their conscience.⁷ The logothetic theory of consciousness, which describes the whole of the human consciousness and separates its parts, is presented also in 'Introduction to logophilosophy'.



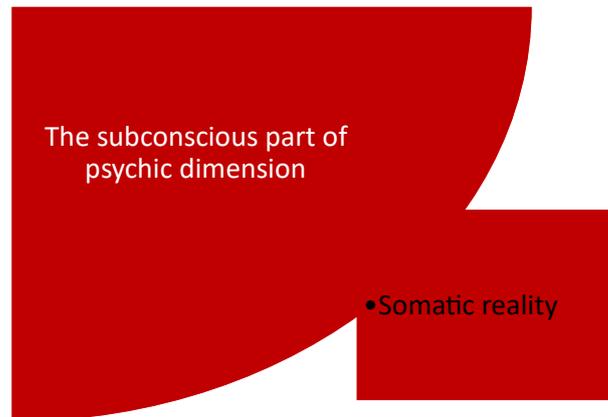
Picture 5. The Logothetic theory of human consciousness. Niiles-Mäki & Sadeaho 2022, 27.

⁵ When we operate purely in the dimension of human consciousness and try to clarify the structures and functioning of its parts, the term 'subconscious' serves the purpose better than using the term 'unconscious', for 'unconscious' refers to various levels of functioning in the mental life of a human in relation to somatic reality, the situation or to transcendental reality. The yellow arrows in **picture 5** depict the ever-going process of awareness-unconscious axis; in this case of consciousness' functioning, using the term 'unconscious' is only justified.

⁶ the term used by Viktor Frankl (origin. *Sinn-Organ*), see e.g. Frankl 2014, 87.

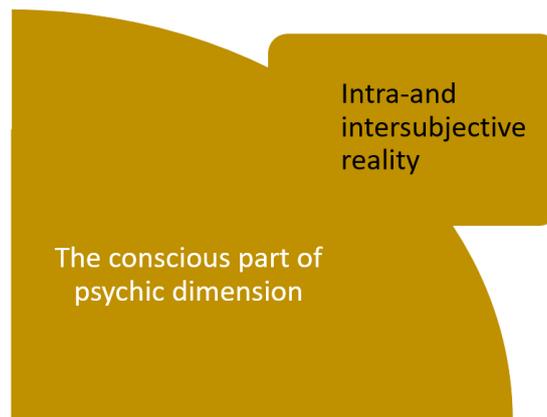
⁷ The activity of a conscience can also be distorted due to a weakness or lack of a pre-moral understanding of values, or in a situation where the purpose is distorted. A conflict of values, on the other hand, is a healthy reaction of a conscience to a sick situation.

The psychic dimension of human consciousness is divided into a conscious and a subconscious part.



Picture 6. The subconscious part of the psychic dimension of human consciousness.

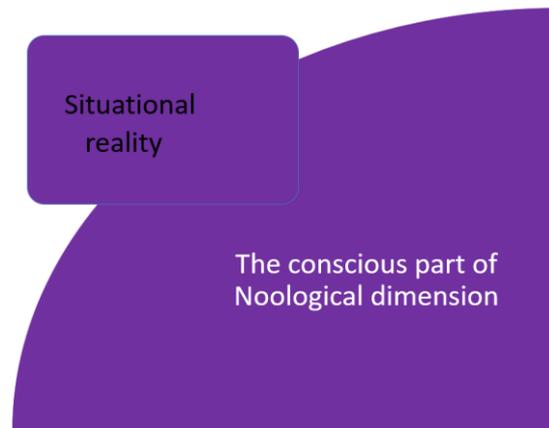
The subconscious part of the psychic dimension belongs to the regional ontological field of psychiatry (medicine) and psychoanalysis. The subconscious is always related to somatic reality through our own body and its functions (i.e. corporeality). Even now, we understand only a little about the activity of the psychic subconscious, because its own area is in the interaction between itself and physicality. It therefore has no mechanisms to reach out of the physical-psychic self (Niiles-Mäki & Sadeaho 2022, 27-28). A person themselves is "blind" to their psychic subconscious until some entity from the unconscious strives to awareness in order to bring some phenomenon into the necessary understanding connection in a particular situation. For example, an inexplicable strong behavioral reaction - a reaction that could not be consciously understood and explained as part of a particular situation - reveals, in a specific situation, an as yet unknown psychological reason behind the reaction, a reason which caused the reaction (consequence). The effort to uncover this unknown cause is a part of psychoanalytic treatment. The starting point in psychiatry can also be different: the starting point can be considered a (still unknown) brain chemical reaction (cause), which caused a behavioral reaction and a psychological symptom (consequence).



Picture 7. The conscious part of the psychic dimension of human consciousness.

The activity of the conscious part of the psychic dimension belongs to the regional ontological field of psychology and psychotherapies. The psychic conscious and subconscious have mutual inner causal connection to each other, so when it comes to mental disorders it is difficult to distinguish when the origin of the cause is found in the somatic-subconscious, when in the intra- and intersubjective-conscious dimension. For this reason, in the case of mental disorders, the consequences, i.e. reactions that can be studied empirically (abnormal expressions of behavior, understanding/thinking or emotional life), are often treated instead of the causes. The conscious part of the psychic dimension is related to intra- and intersubjective reality. Intrasubjective reality means a psychic dimension with its own qualitative contents and operating mechanisms (e.g. psychic self-regulation) that do not extend outside the psychic. Intersubjective reality is an interaction where a person receives verbal and non-verbal feedback and modifies their thinking and behavior based on this feedback (e.g. Ulrich Neisser's Perceptual Cycle, theories of emotion and developmental theories). Much more is known about the properties and operating mechanisms of the conscious part of the psychic dimension than the unconscious, but compared to many other disciplines, psychology is still a fairly young science, and new interesting research results are published frequently.

The Noological dimension of human consciousness is divided into a conscious and a subconscious part.



Picture 8. The conscious part of the Noological dimension of human consciousness.

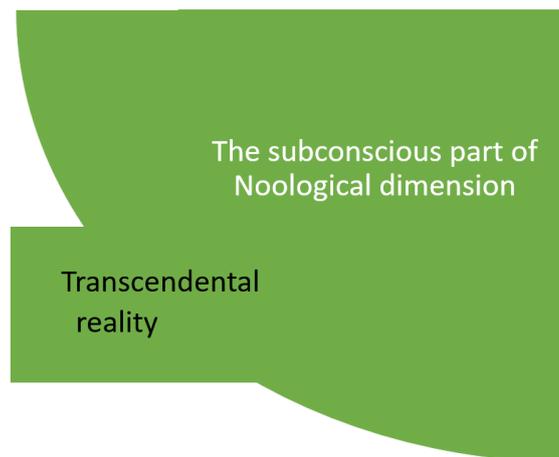
The activity of the conscious part of the Noological dimension belongs to the regional ontological field of philosophy and logotherapy. The agents of the Noological dimension – self-distancing and self-transcendence – act only in relation to the situational and the transcendental reality.⁸ This means that, e.g., in self-distancing, a person does not understand themselves and their own state/situation without orientation outside of themselves, towards others (humans and other beings): by turning towards other beings and other phenomena (e.g. values, the ultimate purpose of life, God), a person can understand their own place of being-in-the-world. If a person only operates in the "bubble" of intra- and intersubjective reality, they do not get the perspective needed to understand their own being-in-the-world and their own essence. Self-distancing implicitly includes self-transcendence, i.e. orientation towards others, as can be concluded from Frankl's 10th thesis in 'Ten theses about the person'⁹. Because of this, the action of self-distancing is always primary in the Noological dimension and serves as the basis for Existential analysis.¹⁰ The relationship between the agents of the Noological dimension and the situational and the transcendental reality differs from the relationship between the operating mechanisms of the psychic dimension and the somatic and the intra- and intersubjective reality. The relationship between somatic and intra- and intersubjective reality and the psychic dimension and its difference to the functioning of the Noological dimension can be clearly stated: the psychic remains in its own somatic-psychic without reaching outside of itself. The difference between the

⁸ The subconscious part of the Noological dimension has the same operating mechanisms, i.e. agents, as the conscious part, but the qualities differ from the conscious part; see the section 'subconscious part of the Noological dimension' in this chapter.

⁹ 10. "The person can only achieve self-understanding through transcendence. More than this: The human being is only a human being to the extent that it understands itself through transcendence." (Translation by Franz Vesely and David Nolland, May 2021; Source "Der Wille zum Sinn", Hogrefe Verlag 2016, [Ten Theses about the Person \(viktorfrankl.org\)](https://www.viktorfrankl.org/).)

¹⁰ presented in chapter 11.

relationship between the psychic conscious dimension and intersubjective reality and the situational and transcendental reality of the Noological dimension can be more difficult to grasp. Since the psychic does not reach outside of itself, intersubjective reality penetrates the psychic dimension in interaction with others and other beings, when encountering something stays in the psychic dimension but is experienced as external to oneself. This verbal or non-verbal penetration can affect favorably or unfavorably on the activity of psychic dimension, e.g. through the quality of the attachment styles (according to the attachment theory), upbringing or receiving feedback. Instead, the Noological dimension reaches outside of itself, i.e. it functions in relation to the situation: the effort to understand one's own place of being (how I am in-the-world) and the will to purpose (why I am in-the-world) are already pre-set prerequisites for the functioning of Noological dimension. A person is always intertwined with their situation, and understanding this intertwining both from the point of view of themselves and others creates connections of meaning that shape thinking and action. A person *does not* find purposes, unless they already have a predetermined - at least as a potential - ability for a will to find a purpose, and the ability to reach outside of themselves to find purposes.



Picture 9. The subconscious part of the Noological dimension of human consciousness.

The activity of the subconscious part of Noological dimension belongs to the regional ontological field of philosophy and other sciences¹¹ that study the relationship of human to the transcendent, as well as logotherapy, but also to the field of pastoral care. The agents of the subconscious part of Noological dimension - as well as the conscious part's ones - are self-distancing and self-transcendence, while the qualities are faith and conscience. Like the subconscious part of the psychic dimension, the Noological unconscious is also a "blind area" for itself. For example, let's take conscience, which has already served as an example. Conscience is a quality of the

¹¹ e.g. religious studies, theology, anthropology, cosmology.

subconscious part of the Noological dimension. A person is only aware of the existence of this quality in themselves in a situation where they act in the area of Noological consciousness either against their conscience or in accordance with it. Conscience therefore manifests itself in aware actions when a person uses their Noological dimension, i.e. *exists*. If a person does not act in the area of their Noological dimension, but only in the psychic realm, their activity, *vegetation*, is characterized by causality: a person acts on the cause-and-effect principle so that a previous stimulus (cause) triggers a reaction (consequence), regardless of whether the stimulus is external or internal (conscious). In this case, conscience has nothing to do with the stimulus-reaction activity in question, either ontologically (in the Noological subconscious) or in its action (in the Noological conscious), because the Noological dimension has fundamentally different operating principles and properties than the psychic one.

Pastoral care and pastoral logotherapy help a person in need of faith or conscience when the client has a strong religious conviction or a crisis affecting this conviction, a so-called crisis of faith. It should be kept in mind that in the framework of logotherapy, faith does not mean any religious belief, but the belief that there is a purpose in the fact that something (exists) rather than nothing (exists). This purpose can be connected to God or divinity, but it can also be a belief in *logos*, the principle that unites everything in the world and creates a purpose for being-in-the-world. The experiences of the sacred and the influence of holiness in one's own life also belong to the subconscious part of the Noological dimension. The experiences of the sacred or holy are connected to faith in logotherapy, but the sacred/holiness and faith, especially when faith means faith in *logos*, can be completely different things and require completely different logotherapeutic perspectives. Only when the logotherapist has the same religious conviction as the client, can the logotherapist help the client in a purely religious or spiritual crisis. A logotherapist can discuss faith-related questions with the client, but they must also clearly express their own view on faith, especially when it differs from the client's view. On the other hand, a disorder of the activity of conscience, i.e. a conflict of values, falls within the scope of logotherapy. The conflict of values is discussed in connection with distortions related to experiencing purpose in chapter 7.

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