



# pentagram

Lectorium Rosicrucianum

Why there is a modern Rosycross

*J. van Rijckenborgh*

Per aspera ad fonts

*Wouter J. Hanegraaff*

The world looks like an overexposed photo

Change as impulse

Light from light

*Robert Grosseteste*

The energy of light

From the darkness to the light

Light in the colours of the rainbow

Books: I bow my head to love

*Arjo Klamer*

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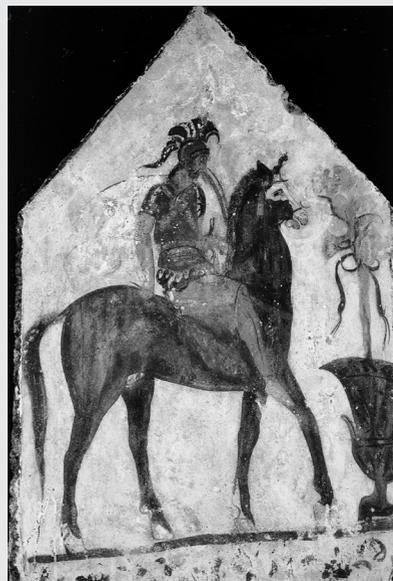
# pentagram

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Every issue of the magazine **pentagram** attempts to shed some light on the many aspects that characterise the way of life of the human being as a seeker for truth, beauty and Light. Also, the two-and-a-half-thousand year old fresco on the cover of this issue draws our attention in that direction. We see a deceased person, bidding farewell. He has been represented here as the conquering hero on his horse, found in a tomb in Paestum, Italy, from around 400 BC.

Of old, the noble horse is a symbol of the spirit-soul. In his *Phaedo*, Plato even speaks of two horses and a charioteer. The horses represent the powers of the soul and the charioteer the seeking consciousness. One horse has a straight figure, well-built, and raises its head proudly. It knows what respect is and also possesses moderation and modesty. It loves the truth. It does not need a whip; exhortation and common sense suffice for it. The other horse hardly obeys the whip and the prods, is recalcitrant and is inclined to overconfidence and licentiousness. 'If the charioteer beholds the love-inspiring countenance of the truth, and his whole soul becomes warm at this sight and he is filled with fervent desire, one of the horses will, as always, remain obedient to the charioteer, and is held in check by self-control. It does not jump at the beloved as the other horse does that violently jumps ahead, and causes the greatest trouble for its teammate and the charioteer.'

The hero in our illustration has tamed his unbridled horse, is master of his fate, and is now completely ready to enter the isles of the blessed ones. The magazine **pentagram** would like to report about the way there in 2012 AD.



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# why there is a modern rosycross

*Jan van Rijckenborgh*

The ordinary, dialectical method of following well-trodden paths or of covering up one's inner poverty is not what underlies the activities of the Spiritual School, already in existence for 88 years. Its main purpose is the realisation of a truth and a task that invariably remains the same, namely to guide fallen humanity back to the original fatherland, and to show humanity the one way, the one truth, and the one life, to which no alteration can ever be made.

**A**long with the changing times, the nature and extent of the sunken, human state changes, as well as the physical and spiritual state of being of humanity, as a result of which the Universal Teachings intelligently adapt themselves to the needs of the moment. We do not want to keep what is old alive, but rather what is universal. We do not want to use old methods, but universal ones, as to their rational-moral intention of this moment. This is also how we interpret the words of Christ: 'The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.' This seemingly contradicts: 'Think not that I have come to abolish the Law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them.' This is why it is necessary to understand how what is eternally immutable manifests itself in time, in accordance with the present.

If our spiritual work cannot meet this signature, it is dead. Any spiritual movement should understand the task of what is universal in the present. In this context it may, therefore, seem strange that we draw your attention to the past, namely to the heavenly

vessel from the Egyptian Book of the Dead. We do so in order, by a journey into the past, to try to explain its topicality for the present and to turn a possible deadlock in your course of life into a true journey home.

'The old has passed away, it has become new.' What has become new? If we look at the illustrations in the Egyptian Book of the Dead, we recognise in all of them the heavenly vessel, or the bark of the sun. One illustration shows Osiris embarking on the ship of the sun and we see his seven rays. In other pictures, the bark is often manned by seven oarsmen or is equipped with seven oars. Sometimes, we see Isis and Osiris sitting side by side, while the seven rays form the child Horus.

When Xisuthrus – or Xisuthros, the Chaldean Noah – is saved, we see how, apart from him, seven deities sit in the heavenly vessel. When the Chinese Yao embarks, we clearly see that seven other figures accompany him. We may also think of Manu and the seven Rishis who travel with him in his ark. In addition, we may draw your attention to simi-



*Jan van Rijckenborgh and Catharose de Petri were the founders of the Spiritual School of the Golden Rosycross. In this School, they explained and exemplified the path of the liberation of the soul to their pupils in all kinds of ways, often on the basis of original texts from the universal teachings.*



**He who walks the path is resolutely on the way through the forest of delusion.** © Saud al Attar, 1942



lar stories in the Puranas and, above all, to the Persian Vendidad, one of the oldest holy books. In the Vendidad, Ahura Mazda commands his servant Yima: 'Make a wara, an enclosure, and then build an argha, an ark, a vessel. Bring into it all original seeds of life, male and female, and pulverise the earth with your hands. Bring all uncreated lights to life.'

**THE ARK OF THE COVENANT** It is the same with Noah's ark. In his bark of the sun, with which he rises above the flood of nature, he takes along all seeds of life that are needed for truly divine life. In the Ark of the Covenant, standing in the innermost part of the tabernacle in the wilderness and also in the temple in Jerusalem, we see all the attributes for true, heavenly life stored away.

The New Testament speaks of seven angels and of seven trumpets. The seven angels consecutively blow their trumpets. And in Revelations 11, we can read that, after the seventh angel had blown its trumpet, great voices were heard. The voices rejoiced: all aspects of the planetary cosmos have become of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. Then God's temple in heaven is opened and in the midst of it, the pupil sees the ark, the bark of the sun that has arrived, the heavenly vessel. In this way, it is ascertained by our consciousness that the sun bark of Osiris, depicted in the Tabula of the Egyptian Book of the Dead, is the same as that of the seer on Patmos. And the meaning of these pictures remains always the same. In order to further elaborate this unchanging

**A group of researchers claims that they, with the help of military and CIA satellites, have located the ark of Noah on the slopes of Mount Ararat. Now, the Turkish government would like to place signs at the site (at an altitude of 5,059 metres), hoping to attract adventurous tourists.**

meaning, we take the heavenly vessel of Yima from the Vendidad, the book of Zoroaster, chapter 2, verse 25 and further, as an example. You know that Yima first made a wara, that is, an enclosure, a working place. In this wara, he built an argha, the new vessel, according to the law of universal life. The human being of the wara is the freemason, who works with the new hammer and the new word. He is the person who provides himself with a new working place, and who emphatically dissociates from dialectical life. He is the human being who enters the new field of life to build his argha there. The argha, the sun bark, the heavenly vessel, are mystical references to the divine human being, who sets out on his journey back to the original fatherland.

In order to be able to begin this journey and to build this construction, a wara, an enclosure, is needed. The human being is able to dissociate, fundamentally and structurally, from ordinary life. He can distance himself from a course and a way of life that are apparently wrong. Within his self-created wara, he will pulverise the earth, relinquish the I of nature and build a new personality, a heavenly vessel with which he can sail to the Temple of God. In this way, we end our journey through the past.

**THE OFFICE OF BUILDER** Regardless of the system of divine touch and awakening that we consider, the way home, mentioned in the

Egyptian Book of the Dead, is the same as that in the Book of Revelation. And if it is said of Jesus the Christ: 'Out of Egypt I have called my son', we will undoubtedly understand this. These words refer to an unchanging message of salvation, which remains the same yesterday and today, and to the same task, to the same way, to the same truth, to the same office of builder. The old has passed, it has become new.

How should we interpret this in the present? What is old always manifests itself according to time, task and circumstances of the human life wave in a new way, in accordance with many tremendous developments in this cosmos. Consequently, many apprentice freemasons prepare themselves to build their wara and, therefore, their argha. The time of veiled, symbolic values is over. The pupil of the modern Spiritual School is now confronted with the seven times seven aspects of his microcosm, with his seven fields of life. These seven fields of life with their nuclei of consciousness, these seven Rishis with their state of life, must be regenerated.

There is a power as well as an actual touch. We speak of the new field of life and, in the same context, of a new school of higher consciousness, with the help of which the seven-fold human being should build his wara. The pupil has an extensive and clearly described philosophy at his disposal, so that he can fully orientate himself.

Continuing on the new way, a clear division

must and will develop between people within and without the wara, within and without the workplace. This activity has immense consequences. One person remains standing in ordinary life, while the other embarks on his heavenly vessel, implying complete change. If this change is to succeed, it should take the spiritual, cosmic and atmospheric conditions of this time into account.

UNIVERSAL AND IMPERISHABLE This is why studying the old methods is useless; the old schools have had their day. The old has passed, it has become new. This is why we speak of the modern Rosycross, of the new philosophy and of a new school of consciousness. However, just as the son, these activities have been called out of Egypt, in other words, they have their origin in the Egyptian Book of the Dead. In a new era, they speak of what is universal and imperishable. However, being called 'out of Egypt' has still another meaning, and it is good to draw your attention to this, too. The word 'Egypt' may also be translated as 'darkness', and therefore, we might also read the familiar words from the Holy Language as: 'Out of the darkness I have called my son.' This explanation may contain an important lesson for every seeker, because if there were ever a time of darkness, it certainly is our time. Were there ever periods in world history with such total international upheaval and degeneration? Does abnormality in all fields of life not reach its

peak in our time? In this state of darkness, every 'son' of God is called. Every human being bears this true child of God in his micro-cosmic system. It is shackled amidst sham humanity and lies; it is chained by night and ignorance. This chained and shackled human being is now called by God Himself.

How must this divine call be interpreted? A divine call is not only a voice that moves our consciousness and awakens our pre-memory, but it is an actual force that touches the whole world and all of humanity, causing profoundly radical processes and developments. Therefore, the divine call means that we can and will react consciously, harmoniously and intelligently to the divine power of that moment. This is why reflection on the past is absolutely useless, if we forget the demands of this time. Only if the words 'Out of Egypt I have called my Son' also acquire real meaning for you, and the new freemasonry finds diligent builders, does this power become active in the human being. ✪

# the energy of light

## HEALING WITH BIOPHOTONS

Illness belongs to life. In many cases, healing is possible, but in just as many cases, it is not. Earthly healing is relative and subject to human shortcomings, to the world of opposites. Obviously, a person seeks comfort, healing and solutions. Therapy with light waves may offer relief, but only complete self-surrender to the Light is able to be a real help.

**W**ithout light, there is no life. Every living cell needs energy, not only for all its functions, but also for maintaining its structure.

Every human cell – and the human body has 60 to 100 billion of them – receives this energy via light as well as via the food that has grown through light. Without this light energy, life would immediately cease and the cellular structure would collapse.

It would mean the end of life on earth.

Last summer, the international magazine ODE reported on healing with biophotons, the weak light waves that emanate from cells. Is this the form of healing of the future? It is a fact that modern medicine, despite its chemical treatment of symptoms, is ultimately powerless against many chronic diseases, caused by our modern life style. Einstein explained that a problem could never be solved on the same level on which it was created. During the 1920s, the Russian Alexander Gurvitch proved that all cells of the human body radiate a very weak light that he called 'biophotons'. It is also true that all information, needed for controlling the extremely complicated, biochemical processes in every cell of the body, is present in the light. In the beginning of the 1980s, the German physicist, Fritz Albert Popp, showed that disturbances in the light disturb the biochemical processes, which subsequently may cause illnesses (think of winter depression).

**FREQUENCIES INDICATE ILLNESSES** The conclusion of the Dutchman, Johan Boswinkel, was that, if bodies consist of frequencies, it should be possible to measure these frequencies, to 'remove the illnesses from them' and to return the 'repaired light' to the body. In 1983, he built an instrument to measure and restore the emission of light of a body. Earlier, Popp had developed an ingenious amplifier that, on a microscopic level, showed that cells emit either a coherent, healthy light or a chaotic light that points to an illness. However, the human body consists of billions of cells and emits a varied spectrum of radiation. This is why Boswinkel used the fact that the electromagnetic tension at acupuncture points deviates from the tension of the surrounding skin. If we take measurements there, two results are possible: a straight line (caused by a strong, continuous tension) or a hyperbole, as proof of a decreasing tension

**'Much is asked of you:** a new mode of life, a completely different mode of life is proposed to you, a life according to the Sermon on the Mount! However, if you begin with this without making this light field the centre of your being, you will not accomplish the new mode of life. [...] The light field wants to manifest itself to you, and then the light field's activity makes the new mode of life possible: From a life of faith to a life of power; from a life of power to a life of Light; this is the course of development on the path. Isn't this logical, isn't this scientifically irrefutable? Life comes from light, and not light from life, not light through life.' (Gnosis in Present-day Manifestation, chapter 6)

## How do these eyes actually work? Is not the disposition from which we gaze much more important?

that indicates the weakness of such a point. Boswinkel linked Voll's electro-acupuncture method to an archive with potencies from homoeopathy. In substances that are processed (diluted) in this way, the frequency and information have been taken up into the medicine. This information – of approximately five hundred medicines – had been stored as 'counterfrequency' in Boswinkel's instrument. The resultant of disturbing frequency and counterfrequency should be zero for a demonstrable healing effect to occur.

Therefore, it is crucial that first the cause of a disturbance in the body is known. This concerns the real cause, for not until then will the working of the instrument offer the real solution. Boswinkel gives an example: 'In mainstream medicine, the bacterium *Heliobacter* is considered a familiar cause of ulcers. However, if I want to treat an ulcer, I treat the gall bladder and not the bacterial infection of the stomach. If organs or glands become exhausted, the immune system no longer works properly and a susceptibility arises in the body that is used by, for instance, bacteria.'

This is the remarkable story of Boswinkel's instrument, by which the patient's 'own light' is returned to the patient 'in reverse order' via electrodes in his hands and under his feet. For this to work properly, the right diagnosis is, obviously, essential. After thirty years of successful treatment, it seems that the first scientific recognition is coming in Austria.

IS ASSIMILATION OF PURE LIGHT POSSIBLE? Yet, this is only part of the story, because if the light that a person attracts (via the eyes, the skin, the chakras, the acupuncture points), which he transforms into biochemical processes and subsequently emits again, shows an interaction, the question still crops up as to *which* kind of light he attracts. For instance, artificial light represents only a part of the spectrum and, overexposed to it, it is also the cause of disturbances of the biochemical processes. Quite recently, research was reported in the papers that showed a relationship between nightshift nurses and breast cancer.

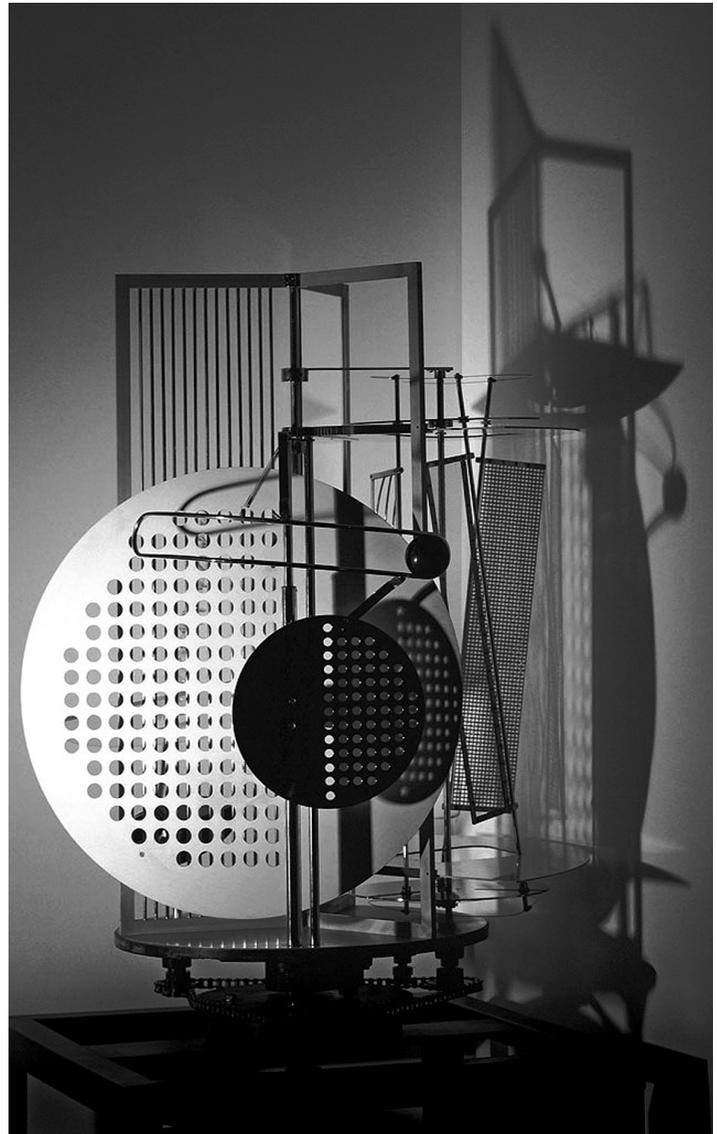
There are many examples of imperfections in everyone's living environment. Is assimilation of pure light by our cells still possible in our western civilisation? In other words, to which light do people open themselves? Does pure light exist? Are we sufficiently objective to be able to judge this? And what can we ourselves do about it? Can we even perceive it? Isn't it true that there is confusion, and opposites, in this respect: what one person experiences as positive, someone else will find awful.

On what should we then focus our eyes, and with what light should we then link ourselves? How do these eyes actually work? Is not the disposition from which we gaze much more important?

The ancient writings, too, speak of the Light. 'In the word was life, and the life was the

Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.' Jan van Rijckenborgh says: 'In other words, the manifestation of the powerfield is followed by the manifestation of the Light field. The most characteristic feature of this Light field is that it is also a life field, in the true sense of the word. By the manifestation of the Light, the powerfield becomes a true life field.' Therefore, here too: light is life, but which light and which life? Because we apparently do not have an organ that is susceptible to this Light and is, therefore, unable to 'seize' it, it has not been granted to us to live a life of increasing joy, in perfect, divine harmony, while every joyful event is followed by the return to everyday reality.

**GATHERING LIGHT INFORMATION** Perhaps there is only one way of opening ourselves: complete self-surrender to this other Light that is a help for the human being. Earthly healing is relative and subject to human shortcomings, to the world of opposites. Via an inner organ, a higher energy is able to reach our soul. However, this requires unremitting concentration on a stream of photons with pure information, during which we gradually neutralise blurring ego frequencies. This Light information accomplishes another type of healing, of another order. The soul that becomes strong and conscious with this Light, maintains itself in its own field of life, thus surpassing physical death. ✪



**Moholy-Nagy. Installation**

# the world looks like an overexposed photo

Without light, there is no life. However, the human world has begun to look like an overexposed photo. The basis energy of life has become blurred as primordial image of man, particularly due to the overexposure to too much information. In a harsh light, people shout down each other and, above all, themselves, in order not to be forced to lift the veil of Isis and then see themselves.

All human beings need light. Every creature depends on light for its growth and preservation. Seen spiritually, light is another word for life. Pure light was the beginning of the whole of creation. It is the power that maintains it and the basis of everything that exists.

In ancient cultures of, amongst others, Egypt, the Incas and the Mayas, the light was represented by the sun, the highest object of worship. This is why they built sun temples. The sphinx on the Gizeh plateau, too, which might be interpreted in this way, looks yearningly and with a look of understanding knowledge to the east, where the sun rises above the horizon every day. This stone guardian, the spirit man arising from the animal, symbolises the reborn life that appears on the eastern horizon, just as the royal tombs of Egypt on the western bank of the Nile, where the sun sets, are symbols of the past, earthly life.

**CONSCIOUSNESS TURNED OUTWARD** The sunlight, Amon-Ra, symbolised the eternal, life-giving energy. It is able to nourish the earth, century after century, because the light vibration of eternity keeps it embraced. In it, the reflective person may find his inspiration, his spiritual light and the nourishment for his soul that he does not find in artificial light. Our body, too, is a form, composed of light; it is condensed light energy. It is modelled matter, modelled from solidified light energy!

Every particle of our being is pervaded with primordial light – but it does not easily allow itself to be known. If the consciousness is turned outward, the light remains locked up in matter and is unable to manifest itself. Then the composition of the atoms becomes ever denser. By increasing externalisation, by becoming fixed in matter, we ever more lock up light in atoms. This situation continues until a human being begins to seek. If this quest penetrates his being deeply enough, the ensoulment also changes, and causes an inner change. Pure ensoulment that sets the being ablaze also changes the quality of our atoms, which now approach the originally ensouling fire.

**BASIS FEELING** However, how often do we not seek the light outside ourselves? How often is it not shown that what we found is sham light or that we are blinded by it? Yet, we could promote consciously the original, spiritual light that every atom of our being bears. All of us know the expression: ‘The kingdom of God is nearer than hands and feet.’

The basis feeling of someone who seeks is a continuous lack of spirit and of knowledge about the spirit. This is the reason that he is so often worried and restless, yearning for the reunification with the spirit, and that his inner being is like a void that wants to be filled, because only the spirit is the fullness that is able to fill this void.

Is it not true that we always immediately fill this void with all kinds of things? Encapsu-

**Marino Marini's numerous rider-and-horse sculptures represent all possible, emotional states of the human being. This one, in the gardens of the Smithsonian Castle in Washington DC, emanates a strong, complete surrender to life.**





## To be able to unveil the statue, deepening, purification and self-knowledge are needed

lated in the hard shell of our outward being, nourished by external things, it is as if we die or suffocate if we remain deprived of spirit. To escape from this cocoon, we should lift the veil of Isis, the veil of illusion and ignorance. Not until the veil of Isis has been removed can the wedding with Osiris, the spiritual principle, be celebrated. From the union of Osiris and Isis, the sun child Horus, the inner Christ, is born.

In the temple of Sais in Egypt, the mysterious statue of the veiled Isis stood, with the text: 'I am who was, who is and who is to be. No mortal has ever unveiled me.' Why was this Isis veiled and why is she still veiled for many people?

**DEEPENING, PURIFICATION AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE** He who unveils the statue, will die – as to his old state of being. To be able to unveil

the statue, deepening, purification and self-knowledge are needed. There is always a veil between the consciousness of the human personality and the true knowledge of the soul. This veil conceals a truth that is too great, too exalted, to be assimilated by the small ego, regardless of how big this ego might be. The ancient wisdom of India speaks of Maya, the veil or the curtain that the I-consciousness draws between itself and the absolute reality.

For the human being, in whom the divine consciousness is alive, reality is unveiled. This unveiled reality is to be found in the human being, though deeply hidden. If the seeking human being, yearning for the solution of the mystery of existence, looks into the inner kingdom, everything old disappears and the illusion of the life of separation will be dissolved in the Light that pervades all of life.

The image of the veiled Isis is a beautiful symbol. It manifests the secret of the original soul, provided we are not 'seeing but do not see and hearing but do not hear'. A consciousness, focused on matter, will not discover the secret behind the veil. For the human being who longs for the solution of the riddle of the veiled Isis, the veil will yield. He who lifts the veil to see who is underneath, will die. After all, he who pulls up the veil, thus surpassing the I-consciousness, will come face to face with the divine spirit.

Then his individual and separated existence as human being has come to an end. He looks in the dead eyes of the statue and recognises within himself the original soul living in him, unveiled, waiting for the unification with Osiris, the Spirit. The veil has been removed, because we ourselves are the key to the mystery of the veiled Isis.

Only the original soul is able to unveil Isis, because she is Isis herself. Thus we also understand the text on the statue: 'The fruit that I have created is the sun.'

It is the divine light in the human being that does not need the world of illusion. Do we feel the pain of the abundance of artificial light, of the light of desire, in our heart? The 'serpent' of desire is a stream of energy that actually exists in the human life system and which maintains the struggle between head and heart.

Head and heart can only achieve a unity if this serpent in the old 'serpent fire' – the

**Let your Light shine** These words sound familiar, but we are inclined to project them into a distant past instead of in our current life. 'Let your light shine.' Our physical body is unable to understand this. The nucleus of Light in our heart awakens the memory of our spiritual ideal, our task in life. In this way, we become aware that we cannot continue denying our origin. Rather, we are asked to demonstrate it by our deeds. 'Blessed are they who hear God's word, keep it and turn it into deeds.'

spinal fluid – has been extinguished. Head and heart can only achieve the unveiling of Isis, and the wedding with Osiris can only be celebrated, if the serpent of human desires, in the old 'serpent fire', has been extinguished. Not until then does the Light – the original, universal and all-embracing spirit radiation from the primordial source of the All – whirl through the life system in a new circle of unity.

Then the serpent bites its own tail; eternity breaks into time. The ancients said: 'The inner Christ, the spiritual sun, has been born in the heart.' The Light has pushed the turbid astral curtains aside. The darkness, the motivation from which we live or are lived, has been unmasked. The light that was locked up drives away all darkness. We have allowed ourselves to be girded again with the light vesture. ✪

# light in the colours of the rainbow

Water that is touched by the sunlight reveals a rainbow. The Light that the rainbow reflects is life, with a sevenfold structure. Seven magical colours of construction, of liberation.

It is said that God is light, and we experience the light of the sun as a visible sign of this. However, we do not see the light itself, until it unfolds in the rainbow with a spectrum of colours.

Viewed from a higher perspective, for instance in a plane or on the top of a mountain with the sun behind us, we even see this optical effect of spectral colours reflected in the misty clouds as a complete ring with us as its centre. Observing our shadow in the midst of this colourful aura in the mist might give us the idea that the divine not only refers to a bridge or a gate, but also to something that is already around us.

Perhaps you walk or climb across a mountain ridge, wandering astray in the mist, and then, if the mist is lifted for a moment on the sunny side, this mysterious figure appears on yonder side, surrounded by this colourful ring. The figure stays with you, follows your every step, until the mists have cleared and you see the road clearly before you again.

This figure that accompanied us in the mist as a guardian, seemed to point out something to us. An ancient name for this halo phenomenon is 'holy appearance'.

**EVERLASTING COVENANT** Another form of this prismatic effect, which may very much amaze you as an observer, occurs if you are standing on the shore or in the water and the rainbow touches the water's surface near you. The rainbow appears not to be flat, but

round, like a tube or a pillar, arising from the water. With a low sun, you can then see a virtually vertical pillar of spectral colours. A mysterious, supernal pillar of light seems to touch the earth. Isn't it remarkable: a rainbow is not a physical reality, but an optical effect that appears to the human eye that is sensitive to colour. For instance, you cannot really approach a rainbow. And although it is not a physical reality, it has nevertheless a large and joyful effect on the human mind, which is expressed by many authors and poets. Since the earliest times, the rainbow has been a sign of hope. In the book Genesis, chapter 9, verses 14, 16 and 17, we can read the words: 'When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds [...]

*When the bow is in the clouds,  
I will look upon it  
and remember the everlasting covenant between  
God and every living creature [...]*

*God said to Noah:  
This is the sign of the covenant  
which I have established  
between me and all flesh  
that is upon the earth.'*

The light itself is perceived by your eye, but it is not seen consciously. Only by the prismatic refraction of the light in a raindrop or through reflection by an object, does your brain recognise the light.



Illustration page 15: **In the Chassidic stories, recorded by Martin Buber, the horse-and-carriage play an important role: it is the mysterious vehicle, in which the teacher travels to bridge physical distances as well as different dimensions.** Illustration H. Werkman

Apparently, the light needs something to make itself known to us, something by which it can be reflected. The light can be reflected by so-called solid matter and in this way, we become aware of both matter as well as the light and also of ourselves, because we also consist of these aspects.

However, if the Gnostics speak of 'God is light', they do not refer to our familiar sunlight nor is it the light of our consciousness on which they are focused. The divine Light

is of a completely different level of vibration, a level that is wholly different from our consciousness. This divine Light is not directly reflected in us, simply because there is virtually nothing that can reflect it and this is why we do not perceive it.

**THE MYSTERY OF THE ARK** If we are unable to perceive the divine Light, what could then be the meaning of the story of Noah, to whom God gave this divine sign? Noah is the build-



## The unknowable light is split into seven knowable colours of a wholly different level

er of the Ark, 'the protected place' or 'the mystery school', which arrives on the holy mountain Ararat, the divine realm, after seven months of sailing, or after seven stages. We see how the Ark sails until the dove, the divine Spirit itself, informs Noah that the solid ground of the new life has been reached. It is this Noah human being who reflects the divine light in the Ark that he builds to save the group of souls that is entrusted to him. He is the one who sees the rainbow, as if reflected in a mirror, because he has passed through the serene silence.

The Light that he reflects is the renewing life, with a sevenfold structure. And while the Ark is built, the white light is systematically split into seven helping rays, seven magical colours of construction. This spectral split confronts us with the seven stages of the process of transfiguration. Thus, Noah builds his Ark and, by the compass of the light that touches him, he sails for seven months to the certain goal. If during the process of transfiguration of the group that forms the Ark, that is, during a process of rebirth, the unknowable light is split into seven knowable colours, this certainly no longer refers to the colours that we perceive, but to a completely different spectrum of activity.

**THE NEW HEAVENLY ARC** The special, bright red of the subtle, first touch in the microcosmic heart spreads in the blood via the heart and is linked with it.

Next, the orange of a new lightness, a new joy, pervades the being and the divine prana begins to flow through the nerve fluid.

If this new prana has found its course in a being, we see a bright yellow, the colour of a new consciousness, a new thinking faculty develop that turns the increasingly direct inspiration by the Spirit into reality. The green colour of a new faith, on the basis of deeper insight into the new, developing situation pervades the system, and the increasingly experienced grace brings a strong hope, based on the truth: the blue of an ever more clearly perceived perspective on the horizon of life. This blue also represents the new sensory perception.

The whole Ark, the group, radiates in an indigo powerfield that rushes forward with dynamic energy in this wondrous course of the genesis of the Spirit-Soul, in which supernal violet ether values show the liberation as a reality.

This sevenfold light mystery is the mystery of liberation, and while the seven stages of the construction of the Ark are accomplished, a new heavenly arc is stretched in the human being and in the group: a living sign of an eternally radiating covenant between God and man. ☸

# per aspera ad fontes

For many years, the areas of study on which the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica concentrates, no longer have a marginal status. On the contrary, they are in the very centre, in the avant-garde, of a number of the most exciting and renewing developments that currently take place in international research of the humanities. This is what Wouter Hanegraaff, professor of the History of the Hermetic philosophy, stated in his lecture on the occasion of the re-opening of the library on 16 December 2011.

*Wouter J. Hanegraaff*

A library is a memory. Because of the existence of libraries, we are, as culture and as society, able to remember who and what we ever were. However, libraries do much more than only look back on what was, but that no longer exists. Only by keeping the memory of our past alive, do we know who we ourselves are. Just as everyone's personal identity is based on our memories of our earlier life, so that loss of memory means that we literally no longer know who we are, in the same way, our collective memory is based on shared memories of how we have become who we are now, and how we arrived at the place where we are now. And only on this basis – that is, on the basis of a firm notion of our identity and its foundations – are we, as individuals and as society, able to make responsible decisions concerning the future. Therefore, the preservation of libraries is a matter of eminent cultural, social, and even political importance. From this point of view, the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica fulfils a very special and rare function: after all, this unique collection focuses specifically on dimensions of our collective past that, until recently, were elsewhere seriously threatened to fall prey to oblivion. This is why many people have problems imagining anything when confronted with the concept of 'hermetic philosophy.' (I have often heard well-meaning colleagues say: 'Do you perhaps mean hermeneutic philosophy?') And the media mainly associate con-

cepts such as 'Rosicrucians' and 'theosophy' with marginal, sectarian or otherwise suspect phenomena that work alright in bestsellers by authors of the Dan Brown type, but with which serious people do not occupy themselves. This popular perception of the field of study, on which the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica concentrates, rests on little more than ignorance. Or stated more precisely: it is a symptom of profound, collective loss of memory, occurring since the eighteenth century, with regard to the foundations of our own culture and society. However, this perception is well underway to becoming obsolete, because for a few decades, academic specialists on the cutting edge of the humanities have been busy correcting this widespread amnesia. This concerns research surpassing the borders of all relevant disciplines, in other words, this occurs in the study of religion, philosophy, science and the arts, which should be considered in their mutual coherence if we are to do justice to the role of hermetic philosophy and related movements in western culture.

**Opening picture of the exhibition 'Infinite Fire' in the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica. It is an illustration from a Jakob Boehme edition of William Law, with coloured diagrams by Dionysius Andreas Freher (1649-1728) that represent the relationship between God, cosmos and man, or macrocosm, cosmos and microcosm – man as a small world.**

THE FOUNDATIONS OF OUR MODERN IDENTITY WILL BE REVISED





**Wouter Hanegraaff**  
in conversation with  
**Esther Oosterwijk**,  
director of the BPH  
during the opening.

**SLOW REVOLUTION** The results of fundamental scientific research usually only slowly filter through to the consciousness of society at large. However, he who is aware of the developments knows that currently something like a slow, international revolution is taking place that will ultimately have far-reaching consequences for the way in which we look at the traditional ‘great stories’ of western civilisation and modernity and, therefore, at our own identity as culture and society. What, then, exactly is the importance of Hermetica? To give a concrete example of it, I would like to start with a seemingly hardly prominent person, namely, George Sarton. In 1912, this originally Belgian chemist and historian, often referred to as the ‘father of the history of science’, founded the magazine *Isis*. Until this day, it is published by the History of Science Society, and is considered the leading scientific journal in this field: what *Nature* is for the sciences, *Isis* is for its history. Sarton was a typical representative of the positivistic view of science, who considered topics like astrology, alchemy and *magia naturalis* depraved ‘pseudosciences’: only by escaping from this superstition had the true

scientist been able to develop during the seventeenth century. Sarton therefore described the scientific revolution with dramatic words like ‘a growing light eating up the darkness’.<sup>1</sup> He spoke about the ‘darkness’ of what he saw as superstition and magic. He wrote: ‘Science is essentially progressive, while magic is essentially conservative. There can be no compromise between them; they cannot possibly walk together – for one is going forwards and the other backwards.’<sup>2</sup> Too often, society at large, and also the academic world, still think in this way. Quite recently I heard a prominent Dutch physicist innocently state that Isaac Newton must have suffered from temporary insanity when he occupied himself with alchemy. However, this insanity must have lasted for a very long time, if we realise that Newton left behind more manuscripts about alchemy than about physics and optics, and devoted more than a million words to it. Sarton made a fatal mistake which scientists would actually be better off not making: although himself a historian, he believed he was able to pass judgement, *ex cathedra*, without having to delve into the history of this detested ‘magic’. He also said so explicitly: ‘The historian of science cannot devote much attention to the study of superstition and magic, that is, of unreason [...] Human folly being at once unprogressive, unchangeable, and unlimited, its study is a hopeless undertaking.’<sup>3</sup> A contemporary of Sarton, the American historian, Lynn Thorndike, had a

## What particle accelerators are for physicists, libraries are for students of the humanities

different idea about it, that is: research should come first, and judgement later. He spent his life pursuing an unbelievably extensive and accurate archival research into these very topics and published, between 1953 and 1958, an eight-volume standard work.<sup>4</sup> This irrefutably demonstrated that at least until the eighteenth century, the limits between magic and science were so vague that it is simply impossible to study the history of science without thoroughly fathoming topics like magic, astrology and alchemy.

By the way, Thorndike himself was also still standing with one foot in the positivistic mentality, but his work nevertheless opened the doors to a much more differentiated and correct idea of how the history of science is interwoven with hermetic topics.

**HERMETIC TRADITION** Within the discipline of the history of science, the controversy between Sarton and Thorndike is in the meantime undoubtedly decided in favour of Thorndike. Since the 1960s, an increasing number of historians have gone deeply into the hermetic tradition, particularly under the influence of the English pioneer, Frances Yates.<sup>5</sup>

In this context, a great deal of attention was paid to the role of alchemy in the work of, indeed, Isaac Newton. This did not happen without a fight. The great historian of science, Richard Westfall, author of the very impressive standard biography of Newton<sup>6</sup>,

presented his research into Newton's numerous alchemical manuscripts during a big conference in the 1970s. The historian, Margaret Jacob, was among those present, and remembers what happened: 'There were audible gasps and under a barrage of hostile questioning, Westfall retorted in exasperation: 'I did not write these manuscripts, or words to that effect'.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, it was Newton – one of the greatest geniuses in history – who had written them, but many of Westfall's colleagues found it very difficult to face these facts, and thought that they knew better than the great man himself.

Fortunately, science works in such a way that in the long run, objective arguments and empirical proof almost always defeat prejudices. The sources do not lie, and this is why not only does every serious historian of science nowadays know that Newton was indeed intensely occupied with alchemy, but it has also become ever clearer that he, within the scientific context of his time, had excellent reasons for it. In this way, we have acquired an eye for very important dimensions of the history of science, about which earlier generations were still completely blind. The case of Newton is in this respect only the peak of a great iceberg, notwithstanding how sensational it is. For instance, it also appears that the central pioneer of chemistry, Robert Boyle, did not turn away from alchemy, as has been unquestioningly accepted for a long time, but that he did exactly the opposite: as he grew older

## We become increasingly aware that the ‘great stories’ of traditional historiography have been far too selective

and his knowledge increased, he began, as a scientist, to be occupied ever more intensely with alchemy.<sup>8</sup> This does not at all correspond to the long-held image of Boyle and scientific progress, but it has been shown by irrefutable sources. Newton and Boyle were in this respect no exceptions, but wholly representative of the scientific practices of their time: the study of alchemy was indeed an integral part of ‘normal science’ in the period of the scientific revolution and before.

**IMPORTANT AND ABSOLUTELY NORMAL** The developments go fast. Until ten years ago, the leading Current Bibliography of the History of Science, published annually by *Isis* still contained a standard category (ever introduced by Sarton), titled ‘Pseudosciences’. However, ten years ago, in 2002, the editors decided that such a reference was no longer compatible with new scientific insights. This is why the Bibliography has been adapted and now contains separate categories for ‘Occult Sciences and Magic’, ‘Astrology’ and ‘Alchemy’, without any pejorative connotation. This example gives rise to at least three conclusions. Firstly, that these topics, so ‘unscientific’ in the eyes of outsiders, are in the meantime considered important and absolutely normal topics by the experts. Secondly, that rigorous study of sources in these fields gave rise to wholly new insights about how fundamental foundations of science and, therefore, of our modern culture and society,

came about. And thirdly, that this revolution began only a few decades ago, and is currently in full swing. This means that the fields, on which the *Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica* concentrates, certainly do not have a marginal status, as is sometimes thought here and there; on the contrary, they are in the very centre, in the avant-garde, of a number of the most exciting and renewing developments that currently occur in the international research of the humanities.

I used the example of the history of science here, as similarly, a comparable development occurs in all disciplines of the humanities, and not only with regard to the early modern period, but for all periods until this day. We become increasingly aware that the ‘great stories’ of traditional historiography have been far too selective, because it was decided, on the basis of a prejudiced ideology, what should and what should not be studied seriously. For instance, think of a philosopher like Marsilio Ficino, the first translator of, amongst other things, the *Corpus Hermeticum* and the complete dialogues of Plato. Platonism that pervades the Italian Renaissance, from the arts and literature to philosophy and religion, is virtually unthinkable without his work. Nevertheless, Ficino appears in the traditional historiography of philosophy only as a footnote, because he deviated too much from what, since Descartes, has been considered ‘true philosophy’. It is only in the last few decades that Ficino and his many

kindred spirits have begun to be taken completely seriously. Although there are still quite a few historians of philosophy who resist it, this trend has resulted in fundamental, new insights about how the history of philosophy works, and what its relationship is to related disciplines like theology and the sciences. Something similar also applies to Giordano Bruno, one of the first defenders of the Copernican worldview and the infinity of the universe, who was burned at the stake as a heretic in Rome in 1600, and who is nowadays acknowledged as one of the most original thinkers of his time. Like almost all (larger or smaller) thinkers, whose work is collected in the *Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica*, it is also impossible to confine Bruno within the limits of one discipline, recognising that he can only be understood by paying equal attention to all dimensions of his work: religion, philosophy, science and even the arts.

**AMAZING THE WORLD** The number of examples can effortlessly be increased, not only with regard to the early modern period, on which the *Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica* mainly concentrates, but also with regard to the nineteenth century until this day. The cumulative effect of new research in all fields of 'hermetic philosophy and related movements' is that the outlines of a new image of the history and culture, from which all of us originated, become visible. This ultimately

means that we should radically revise the foundations of our own, modern identity. What particle accelerators are for physicists, libraries are for students of the humanities. Revolutions in the sciences that change the world originate in the difficult, time consuming and often extremely technical work of researchers in white coats, who are busy with exact measurements, observations and calculations that can only be understood by other specialists. In the humanities, it is no different. New insights that amaze the world almost always have their origin in the work of highly trained and diligent specialists, who are occupied with often very detailed study of written and printed sources (the equivalent in the humanities of research into fundamental particles): hence the correct motto of the *Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica*: *ad fontes*. In this context, the winged words 'The good Lord lives in details' is wholly true. Thus, about ten years ago, I was occupied in this library with a study of the wrongly forgotten, hermetic philosopher, Lodovico Lazzarelli, who lived in the second half of the fifteenth century. Great scholars like Paul Oskar Kristeller, Daniel P. Walker and Mosche Idel, racked their brains searching for the significance of Lazzarelli's main work, the *Crater Hermetis*. For those who have never been involved in this kind of work, it is hard to imagine, but the key ultimately appeared to be found in a few Latin words. Arriving at the core of his discourse, Lazzarelli quoted

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a famous (and notorious) passage from the hermetic *Aesclepius*, about which the church father, Augustine, had become excited in his time, but in which Lazzarelli inserted a few, at first sight minor, changes.

However, if we take these variants seriously as well as the reasons underlying them, all panels appear to shift before the researcher's eyes and ultimately, it becomes crystal clear what Lazzarelli's work is really all about.<sup>9</sup>

The implications of this discovery ultimately proved to be much more far-reaching than only Lazzarelli's changes would imply. They force us to a radical revision of our existing image of Renaissance Hermetism as such.<sup>10</sup> For instance, they led to an entirely new perspective on one of the most influential, hermetic authors of the Renaissance, Cornelius Agrippa, to whose work even Goethe's *Faust* refers.<sup>11</sup> This change in our image of Renaissance Hermetism has, in its turn, considerable implications for general matters concerning the question of the sources of modernity.

For this kind of detailed research, it is often necessary to compare a large number of relevant sources and study them as to their mutual coherence. This is only possible in a library like the *Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica*, which is based on a coherent concept and, therefore, strives for a collection in which all relevant sources are available in one place, combined with the relevant specialised literature. Some years ago, I was working in the reading room doing an exact comparison,

on a word-by-word level, between as many fifteenth-century and sixteenth-century translations and editions of the *Corpus Hermeticum* as possible. It is the type of research that cannot be done anywhere else in the world other than here in Amsterdam, because it is only here that all sources and various editions are physically available, so that you can put them side by side on the table and then walk to the bookcase to seek all relevant specialised literature.

**DRY AND DULL** Such a text comparison is another example of the kind of detailed, technical research that sometimes seems dry and dull to outsiders (just as the work of those physicists in white coats in a particle accelerator), but in reality it is the necessary foundation which ultimately enables far-reaching conclusions with a great impact. All great scientific revolutions have started in this way: with someone who, somewhere in a laboratory or a library, racked his brain about seemingly incomprehensible details, the importance of which others did not see, and finally discovers that the search for explanations leads to new insights that he initially could not have surmised. This is how science works – Robbert Dijkgraaf, amongst others, has often rightly repeated this of late – and, by the way, this is also why the current obsession with 'valorisation' in fundamental research is ultimately a dead end. The 'use' of research often appears after you have done



An overview of the exhibition room during the opening.

the research. For years, The Netherlands has been internationally envied because of the presence, in Amsterdam, of the most complete collection by far in the field of the history of hermetic philosophy and related movements, combined with a unique chair, a curriculum and a research group in this field. Such a combination cannot be found anywhere else in the world, not even approximately. This is why numerous experts have over the years found their way to the reading room of the *Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica*. Every year, I receive letters from foreign students, in which the presence of the library, in addition to our curriculum at the University of Amsterdam, is mentioned as the main reason for coming and studying here in Amsterdam. However, since the beginning of 2010, I have instead received countless emails and letters, in which bewilderment, dismay and disbelief were expressed about the sudden, unexpected, and seemingly impossible closure of the library, followed by a division of the collection into two locations. Students who would otherwise have come to Amsterdam, decided to register elsewhere, and the existing inter-

national and Dutch students felt 'homeless', not to mention my colleagues in the research group. The year 2011 was a disastrous year, during which the nightmare of a complete and definitive decline of the *Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica* sometimes came so close that it seemed almost inescapable. Fortunately, it ultimately did not come to this.

It is true nonetheless that the library has suffered very painful blows. In this context, I think of the dismissal of the unsurpassed team of library staff who knew the collection so well and were so sympathetic to the library, the loss of a valuable collection of manuscripts and incunabula, and the actually incomprehensible and counterproductive division between the state-owned part that is now in The Hague and the rest of the collection here in Amsterdam. However, against the expectations of many, today we find ourselves nevertheless here in the Bloemstraat again, surrounded by books, celebrating the new start of the *Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica*: *per aspera... ad fontes*, through distress and oppression, the way to the sources has been opened again.

**La Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica** is a private library with an outstanding collection of over 21,000, mostly very rare philosophical books and manuscripts. It is considered the most important collection in the field of Christian-Hermetic and esoteric philosophy. One third of the collection has been bought by the State of The Netherlands and has the status of National Art Collection. Important books in the collection are the Corpus Hermeticum from 1471 and the first illustrated edition of Dante's Divina Commedia from 1481.

The library is located on Bloemgracht in Amsterdam.

The address for visitors is Bloemstraat 13-17 in Amsterdam.

**VIEW INTO THE FUTURE** I began my story with the library as a memory, in which our collective past is stored, but I would like to end with a view into the future. I hope to have made it clear that the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, although certainly unique, is not an isolated phenomenon in the least. After all, it plays a special role within a much broader, innovative development in international academic research, which is also underway in many places in the world. Of course, numerous hermetic sources can also be found in many other libraries in the world, fortunately! However, compared to other collections, the special nature of this collection is to be found in its coherent concept, also underlying the chair at the University of Amsterdam. This is why a close cooperation between both Amsterdam institutions is so obvious: 1 plus 1 makes 3. The key to the future is to be found in the further development and expansion of 'hermetic Amsterdam' (if I may say so for convenience sake) into a central hub within an open and dynamic, international network, maximising the use of technical aids that are nowadays available. The time of introverted institutions that keep everything for themselves has passed and a library, too, is no longer just a building which you enter through the front door in the morning and leave many hours later. A library should be a meeting place and a dynamic centre from where lines of cooperation and interaction with many places elsewhere in the world are

established. This is why the new motto of the library, 'Hermetically Open', has been chosen very well.

Briefly, the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica stands at the beginning of a new stage in its existence and is confronted with new challenges. It will certainly not be easy because the library has suffered heavy blows and much will have to be rebuilt from scratch. However, as we can see in the exhibition that has begun today, the fire has been kept burning and certainly we do not intend to allow it to be extinguished. Fortunately, the hermetic philosophy has experience with these processes of 'philosophy through fire'. Indeed, alchemical transmutation is not possible without the 'Hermetic Black' (as expressed by Marguerite Yourcenar): the difficult stage that is known as the nigredo, in which what exists is demolished, leaving only the fundamental essence in order that subsequently what will be rebuilt on this basis will be better and even more beautiful. On behalf of my colleagues of the Centre of the History of Hermetic Philosophy and related movements at the University of Amsterdam, and also on behalf of our students and many colleagues who exert themselves everywhere in the world for this splendid discipline, I would like to express the fervent hope that the 'Hermetic black', the dark stage of demolition and destruction, has now wholly and definitively been left behind, and that 2012 will be the year of the rebirth of the Bibliotheca

## Philosophica Hermetica in a new form. ✪

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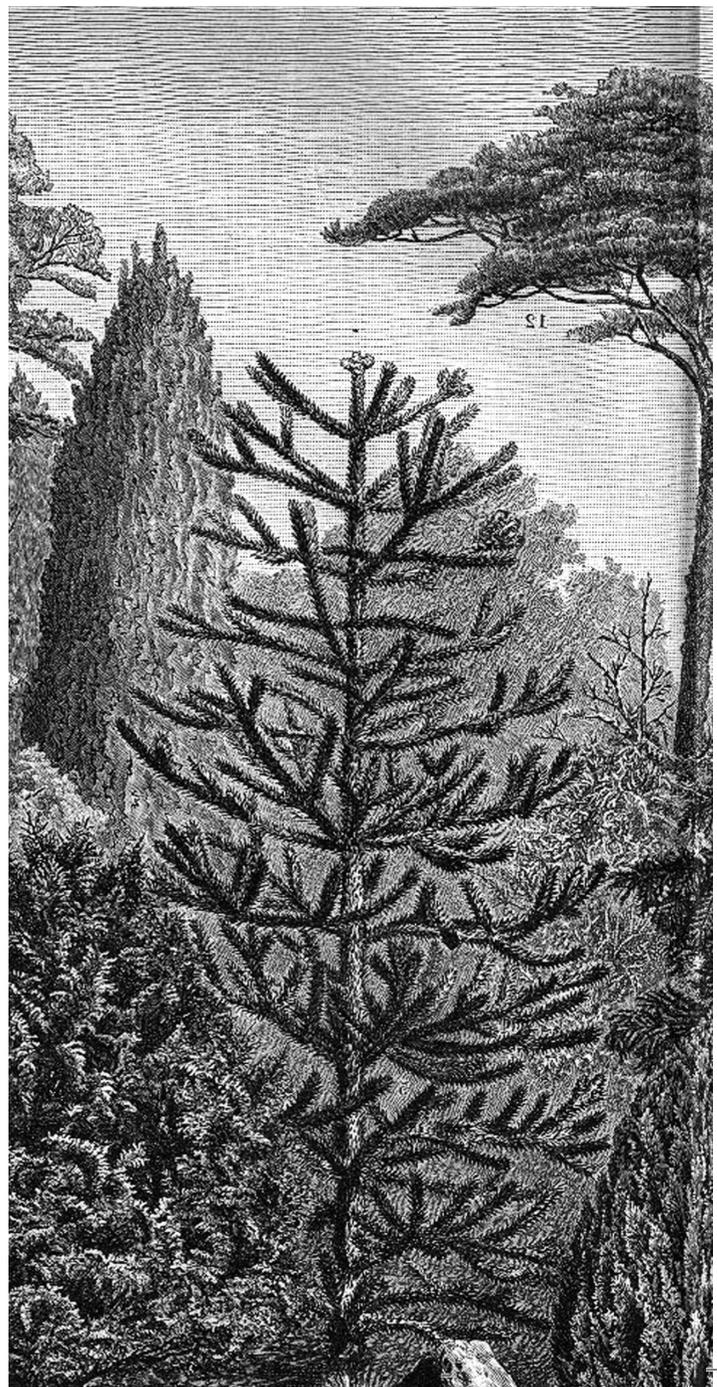
# light from light

The mediaeval scholar Robert Grosseteste saw that the hypothetical space, in which Euclid in 300 BC imagined his numbers, was the same everywhere and in every direction. Subsequently, Grosseteste postulated that this was also true with regard to the propagation of the light. About the light, he wrote *De Luce*: On light or the beginning of things. Below follow a few quotes from this treatise.

I am of the opinion that the first physical manifestation (that some call 'a body') is the light. For by its nature, the light spreads in all directions in such a way that a point of light immediately becomes a sphere of light of any size, unless some opaque object stands in the way. The expansion of such a body (light) is a necessary, incidental circumstance, despite the fact that both this body as well as matter are as such basic substances without dimensions.

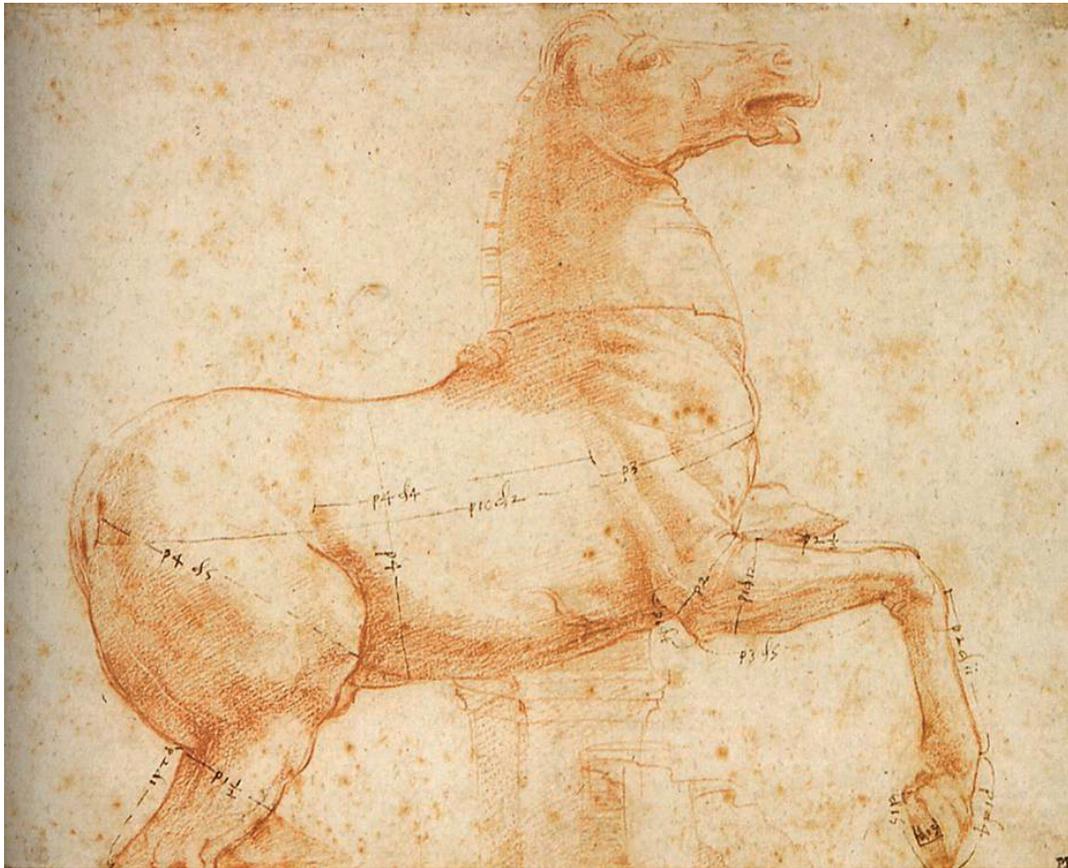
A body that in itself is a basic substance cannot attribute measurements or dimensions in space that is itself immeasurable and dimensionless, unless it multiplies itself and immediately spreads itself, thus expanding the body. For the form or the body (that is the light) cannot leave space, because it is inextricably linked with it and matter cannot be separated from the form.

However, I have postulated that it is the light that, by its very nature, possesses the quality to multiply itself and to spread in all directions. Whatever it may be that performs this activity, light or another agent, it acts by virtue of its sharing in the light, to which this activity essentially belongs. The body (the manifested form) is, therefore, either the light itself or the agent that performs the aforementioned activity and attributes dimensions in space (because it shares in the light and acts with its power). But the first form cannot create dimensions in space by the effect of what is manifested after it. This is why the



A MEDIAEVAL TREATISE ABOUT  
THE GENESIS OF OUR WORLD





Rafael Sanzio de Urbino, study for a sculpture of a horse, around 1516.

light is not a phenomenon that comes after [or in] space, but it is this physical space itself.

**FROM INFINITE TO SPHERE** Grosseteste continues by explaining the first phenomenon, the essence of which is more exalted and more excellent than all the phenomena that come after it. He postulates that the light has a greater resemblance to the realities existing outside matter, the immaterial ones. Therefore, the light is the first tangible or concrete phenomenon. The light that is the first phenomenon in the first matter (*prima materia*) is by its nature multiplied an infinite number of times in all directions and spreads equally in all directions. If the light is multiplied infinitely, it must be much more extensive than space that, after all, has only a finite

series of dimensions. Then he says that the light, by the infinite multiplication of itself, exceeds the limits of matter everywhere, until it finally assumes the form of a sphere. In this way, the parts of matter that are closest to the centre of the sphere become coarser (!) than those that are farthest away from the centre. This is why the first phenomenon at the outermost part of the sphere, the phenomenon that is called the firmament, is perfect, because it consists of nothing else than the first matter and the first phenomenon. The first body, the firmament, spreads its light (*lumen*) from each part of itself to the centre of the universe. Because the light (*lux*) is the perfection of the first body, and naturally emanates from it, it multiplies with itself also the spirituality of the first body. Thus, light (*lumen*) proceeds from the first

## The form and perfection of all things is light

body that is spiritual or, if you want, a spiritual body (Spirit). If it is in motion, this light (lumen) does not spread the phenomena through which it passes, and this is why it immediately goes from the first heaven to the centre of the universe. This occurs through the multiplication of itself and the infinite creation of light (lumen).

Through innumerable events, in which the first sphere was wholly completed, and because there cannot be empty space, now a second sphere is created that is absolutely perfect and cannot be compressed further. The perfection of the second sphere occurs, because the light (lumen) is received from the first sphere and because the light (lux), which is singular in the first sphere, is doubled in the second.

**LIMITED EXPANSION** In the same way, Grosseteste continues, the third through the ninth heavenly spheres are created during the shrinking and expanding. Below the ninth and lowest sphere, the utterly compact mass, of which the four elements consist, can be found. This sphere, the sphere of the moon, also generates light (lumen), but its power is not such that it could make the outermost parts of this mass expand to its maximum. Due to the limited expansion of its mass, the fire was generated, although this still belongs to the basic matter of the elements. Although this element emanates light by itself and contracts the mass that is below it, its outermost

parts expand, but not as much as the fire and in this way, the air was generated. By the air, a spiritual phenomenon was created, a spirit, and just as with the fire and the air, the water and the earth developed. However, because the water retained more contracting than expansive power, it received just as the earth the quality of weight.

Grosseteste continues: In this way, the thirteen spheres of the sensory world were created. Nine of them, the heavenly spheres, are not subject to change or destruction, because they are absolutely perfect. The other four spheres are the opposite; they are subject to change, generation and destruction, as they are not completely perfect. It is clear that any higher body, by virtue of the light (lumen) arising from it, is the form (type) and perfection of the phenomenon that comes after it. And just as the one is potentially every number that follows, the first manifested form is, by the multiplication of its light, every form that follows. The earth consists of all higher bodies, because all higher lights are combined in it. The earth is the densest of all bodies because, although the higher lights can be found in it, they do not originate in the earth by their own activity, but the light (lumen) of each sphere can be activated in it.

The intermediate bodies have a dual relationship. They are related to the lower bodies as the first heaven is related to all other things, and they are related to the higher bodies as the earth is related to all other things. There-

**Robert Grosseteste (1168-1253)**

was of peasant origin, but was given an opportunity to study. He studied law, medicine, languages, science and theology in Oxford. From 1215 until 1221, he carried the honorary title of 'Chancellor of the University'.

In 1235, he was appointed Bishop of Lincoln, a position that he held until his death. He tirelessly agitated against the misconduct and idleness of prominent members of the clergy and was not averse of dismissing them, if necessary. He also insisted that his priests spend their time in the service of their people and in study. In 1245, he attended the Council of Lyon, where he vigorously condemned the abuse amongst the clergy. He also openly opposed the practice by which the Pope appointed Italians as

absentee clergy for English churches, collecting their salaries, although they never set foot in England.

Grosseteste studied geometry, optics and astronomy. He translated many Greek and Arabic writings into Latin, and wrote commentaries about many scientific topics, amongst other things also on the writings of Aristotle, like the *Analytica prioria* (his teachings about logic) and his *Physica* (his teachings about nature). In astronomy, Grosseteste claimed that the Milky Way was the fusion of light from countless stars.

He experimented intensively with mirrors and lenses. He believed that experiments could verify a theory and that its consequences should be tested extensively. In his work *De Iride* he

writes: 'This part of optics, when well understood, shows us how we may make things a very long distance off appear as if placed very close, and large near things appear very small. And how we may make small things placed at a distance appear any size we want, so that it may be possible for us to read the smallest letters at incredible distances, or to count sand, or seed, or any sort or minute objects.'

Grosseteste realised that the hypothetical space in which Euclid imagined his figures was the same everywhere and in every direction. He then postulated that this was also true of the propagation of light. He wrote the treatise *De Luce* on light (*On light or the beginning of things*).

fore, every thing contains to a certain extent all other things.

**THE MULTITUDE OF THINGS** The form and perfection of all things is light, but in the higher spheres this is more spiritual and simple (purer), while in the lower spheres this is more physical and composite. In addition, not all phenomena are of the same nature, although all of them originate from the light, regardless of whether they are simple or composite. Thus, not all numbers are of the same type, despite the fact that all of them developed, by a smaller or larger multiplication, from one. This consideration perhaps clarifies the opinion of those who say that 'all things are one through the perfection of the one light', and also of those who say: 'the multiplicity of things is caused by the multiplication of the light in various degrees.' Then Grosseteste explains that, since lower bodies are parts of higher ones, they are also moved by the same immaterial force that moves the higher body: 'This is why the immaterial power of intelligence or the soul, which daily keeps the first and highest sphere

in motion, also gives all lower heavenly spheres the same daily movement. However, this occurs proportionally. If the spheres are lower, they receive the kinetic energy on a weaker level, because the lower the sphere, the less the purity and power of the first light penetrates it. However, although the elements share in the form of the first heaven, the mover of the first heaven is unable to reach them every day. Although they share in the first light, they cannot be reached (directly) by the first motive power, because in them, the light is impure, weak and far removed from the purity that it possessed in the first body, and also because they possess the density of matter that determines their resistance and stubbornness.

Anyway, some say that the sphere of the fire rotates in a daily movement, which is, according to them, demonstrated by the comets. They also claim that this movement even influences the water of the oceans in such a way that it generates the tides. However, all sensible thinkers argue that the earth does not have this movement.

All the spheres, following the second one,

which, seen from the earth, is usually called the eighth one, share in the movement of the second one, because they are a part of its form. This movement, together with the daily movement, is indeed the right one for each of them, but because nothing is lacking in the heavenly spheres, they are not open to thinning or densification, while the light (lux) in them is not inclined to spread parts of it (by thinning) or to pull to the centre (by densification). This is why the heavenly spheres do not move up and down, but only develop by a spiritual force that, on the physical level, keeps the spheres rotating.

**PART AND WHOLE** However, because the elements are imperfect and subordinate to increase and decrease, their inner light (lumen) will lead then, through thinning, away from the centre or pull them through densification to the centre. In this way, they are naturally able to move upward or downward. The highest body, which is the simplest (purest) of all, consists of four parts, namely: form, matter, composition and the whole. Because it has the simplest (least complex) form, it is nevertheless one.

By its twofold quality, matter is dual, which is absolutely correct, namely because of its sensitivity and receptivity to impressions, and by the density underlying it, because this is first and foremost characteristic of something that is dual. However, in itself, the whole is threefold, because, firstly, ensouled matter and, secondly, materialised form appear in him and, thirdly, because of what is characteristic of its composition, and what we find in any compound. And what actually forms the whole that is placed above and beyond these three parts is referred to as foursome. In the first body, in which actually all others exist, we therefore find a group of four

and the number of the other bodies is essentially not more than ten, because the duality of the form, of matter, the threefold nature of the composition and the foursome of the combined aspect together form a total of ten. This means that ten is the number of spheres of the world, because the sphere of the elements, although divided into four, is nevertheless 'one' by its participation in the earthly, transitory nature.

From these considerations, it appears that in the universe, ten is the perfect number – because every perfect whole contains something that corresponds to form and unity, something that corresponds to matter and duality, something that corresponds to composition and threefoldness and something that corresponds to the whole and the foursome. It is not possible to add a fifth element to these four. This is the reason why each perfect number consists of ten.

This is the end of Robert Grosseteste's treatise about the light: 'Thus it is clear that only the five parts, which are found in [the whole and] the numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4 are suitable for the composition and harmony that confer stability to any whole. These five parts are the only ones that produce harmony in musical melodies, in physical movements and in rhythmic measures.' ❁

**Reference:**

**Based on: Clare C. Riedl,  
Marquette University Press,  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1942,  
who translated De Luce  
from Latin into English.**



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H.N. Werkman

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# from the darkness to the light

## FROM DARK LEAD TO LUMINOUS GOLD

For a long time, it has been assumed that there should first be matter, before it becomes possible to speak of spirit, first what is subconscious, and only then consciousness – and that darkness preceded the light. However, recently people have become increasingly convinced that rather the opposite is true: in the beginning, there was light. And this is what has always been said by all spiritual traditions.

In the beginning, even before we could speak of sun and moon, there was light; there was creative light; there was light energy. And this has not fundamentally changed; the original light energy is still active, always and everywhere. However, at the same time, this light has also, for whatever reason, shown itself to our sensory perception as having condensed into matter, as solid matter, perceptible as material things and as separate bodies. Thus, light seems to be locked up in matter-born bodies, which we also possess, or rather which we wrongly think they are. Seen from the perspective of the original light, these bodies are merely shadow figures, forms of illusion, of *il-lux-ion*, that is, of reversed light. And just as naturally as we continually deny it in our everyday life, there is still deep within us the divine light, as the origin of our being, equally radiant and indestructible as it is hidden and misunderstood. It is light that can only be present in us latently, doomed to be a hidden light – because it cannot go out and cannot radiate through us. It is a source of light that, sown as a seed of light in the soil of our soul, cannot germinate, because we are turned towards everything that, in the alternation of the day-and-night side of our existence, detracts from our inner light nature, while we ourselves are in the centre. However, just as fascinated as we are by the many wisps around us, we are afraid of the power of the darkness that surrounds us, but which also lies

dormant in us. Thus we live, trapped in the confines of the shadow play between light and darkness, still ignorant of the true divine light and still only aware of our own, darkened light, with which we believe that we have illuminated our minds, until a glimmer of the true inner light nevertheless succeeds in penetrating our consciousness, as in a twinkling of the eye, as in a flash.

**TROUBLED** We have seen light, but due to our dark being, we are simultaneously troubled by it. We have seen light, but we are as yet unable to stand in its fullness, and are now face to face with the dark abyss of our own being. For the time being, we lack any prospect and do not see a way out in order to escape the suffocating darkness. Unexpectedly, therefore, a real low always follows the beginning of the path to illumination and liberation. Now nothing will be of any help but the sharp searchlight of our own insight into the confusing situation in which we have arrived during the struggle between light and darkness raging within us. It is similar to Dante who, in the middle of his life, was lost in the forest of his life, Christian Rosycross, whose house was shaken by a storm on the evening before Easter, or Paul who, thrown from his horse by lightning, then was blind for days. Still longer ago, as happened with the sun hero Osiris, with whom we have the divine light nature in common, nevertheless something went wrong. Although he descended

from the Sun God, he reigned as king on earth in the land of Egypt. In this role, he is, like a true light-bringer, the protector of the fertile land, of the oars of golden grain that ripen in the bright sunlight. But this is not all. He is not only the representative of the divine, spiritual light, but he also symbolises those who, blinded by self-delusion, abuse this light. He wallows complacently in the 'luxury' of the light.

The results soon make themselves felt. Is it out of jealousy that his brother Seth, the dark one, wished to kill him in order to ascend the throne himself, or out of revenge, because Seth had fathered an illegitimate child with his wife Nephtys? In either case, Seth cunningly lures Osiris into an ambush. He locks him up in a coffin and has it sealed with lead and thrown into the dark waters of the Nile. Accompanied by Nephtys, the grieving Isis in her mourning garment (hence the name Black Isis), travels through the country, until she discovers the coffin with her lamented husband in a cedar tree. However, Seth thwarts her rescue plan, cuts his brother's body into fourteen pieces and scatters them throughout the country.

So goes the ancient myth. It tells us everything about the seemingly hopeless state in which we have arrived in search of enlightenment. It tells us how our light nature became tragically locked up, separated from any light and surrounded by deadly, dark forces, by the 'valley of the shadow of death' as the biblical image refers to it. Initially, we were led astray by the false light of our self-delusion, but now we stare into our own dark mirror, at the mercy of the avenging forces of our own, dark counternature. We are condemned, like any sun hero, to be swallowed up by the dark sea monster Tiamat, which deprives us of all our light. We have descended to the depths of

our existence, to the primordial chaos of the underworld.

**DARK LEAD** In alchemy, this delicate state is called *nigredo*, the dark stage or the black work, l'oeuvre au noir. It is not without reason that the corresponding metal is dark lead and the ruling planet is the dead Saturn. By the way, *Al-chymia* means the black one, just as Egypt was also called Kemet, which means exactly the same thing, and just as in the ancient mystery schools, the candidate was sequestered for three days in complete darkness. Here we reach the nadir of a difficult, downward journey, the descent, the descensus, which must precede the ascensus, the ascent. In this way, we are forced to absolute patience, unable to do anything ourselves. Now it is important to remain unmoved just as Osiris and not to resist this descent.

We should let go of the reins completely if we are not to intensify the counteraction. Initially, we have, by our vital urge, appropriated the light. Now, in the grip of darkness, we should beware not to associate with the dark forces of death, not to wallow in self-pity and dark thoughts of despair, not to try to escape the inner struggle with all our power, but to be prepared to experience this completely. The only way to overcome the darkness is by accepting it, not to look away, not to fight, but resigned to experience it, allowing ourselves to decline in complete self-surrender. It is only the experiencing of this nocturnal journey to hell that will ultimately bring us enlightenment.

Now the sun hero kindles a fire in the belly of the monster that brings light in the darkness. Only in the dead of night, if we no longer seek the light where it cannot be found, are we able to remember our origin, and realise that we ourselves are lightbearers.

## The only way to overcome the darkness is by accepting it

Not until then can the hidden spiritual light be discovered again. This requires that in the course of our journey into hell, the old lights are extinguished, the lights with the help of which we had illuminated ourselves and our life artificially. And if it seems that it is only the dark forces of our urges that still rage within us, we may yet awaken in confidence that behind all of this it is only the redeeming effect of the light that is hidden, the *Lux ex tenebris* (the light that shines from the darkness). In alchemy, this process of transformation is called *albedo*, referring to the white light that is also linked with the metal silver. We also know it as the Christmas light of the newborn soul. Not until now can the hermetic process of separation begin in which, with loving insight, a distinction can be made between light and darkness, between heavy and light.

In all of this, we have, for a long time, had the sensation that we were completely left to our own devices. However, this is not the case, for let us briefly return to our story, particularly regarding the role of Isis. In the true sense of the word, she is the life-bringing light force who is able to revivify the spiritual human being. She does not fight either. She lets Seth commit his acts of revenge and murderous attempts, exclusively devoting her attention to seeking her lamented husband, notwithstanding that she also has to experience several metamorphoses to this end. With the wings of a kite at her disposal, she searches in all

quarters, until she has assembled all the parts of Osiris' body, after which she is able to ensoul the dead body again with her wings. In this way, Osiris becomes the resurrected, spiritual human being, the luminous one from the beginning, the ruler of the underworld, who is able to lead the human being to the bright morning of the resurrection, called *rubedo* in alchemy, after the red-golden light emanating from it. From the spiritual re-union of Isis and Osiris, Horus is generated, who takes over the rulership of the world from Osiris. He is the one who will defeat the dark Seth in the final battle. And if he then loses an eye, it is Isis again who brings salvation. She gives him a new eye. This is a solar eye that enables him to behold the spiritual light, the all-seeing eye that not only catches light, but that itself emanates light. This is why such a person with an alert mind and a living soul is the bearer of the Spirit-Soul: Horus, represented as a golden solar falcon. As a new man, he is no longer a sham human being, but one who has truly awakened in the light. In the full regalia of a light body, in alchemy also called the diamond body, through which the spiritual light can shine unhindered, he has transfigured after all the transmutations of the alchemical process. He is himself again Light from Light, from the Light of the beginning. ✪

# change as impulse

'Yet I know that something meaningful exists. And I know that meaning is not something to make fun of.' These are the final words of a book entitled 'Nothing'. For ages, man has not taken the earth on which he lives seriously, he ridicules his fellow inhabitants, and he denies meaning. However, we are faced with a complete U-turn of 180 degrees. If we begin to partake of the cosmic resurrection, a completely formed consciousness will be generated in us. If only we are willing (and able!) to react to this impulse.

Some time ago, a book for young people was published, entitled 'Nothing', written by the Danish author Janne Teller. During a lesson, a boy rises from his chair and says: 'There is nothing that means anything. I have known this for a very long time. This is also why it is meaningless to do anything. I just discovered this.' He takes his school stuff, leaves and does not return to school. He spends his time in a plum tree. He throws unripe plums to the children and one day, he calls to them: 'Everything is the same, because it is nothing else than a game. At the very moment that you are born, you begin to die. And it is the same with everything.' And on another day, he says: 'The earth is four billion and six hundred million years old, but you will not become older than a hundred years. Life is actually not worth the effort. It is nothing else than a game that amounts to pretending and being the best at doing so.' When we bought this book for young people, the sales woman asked us, if we were inwardly strong enough to read it, or rather strong enough to deal with the humiliations that children inflict on each other, strong enough to remain confident that there indeed is meaning, and strong enough to remain confident in people. This story is not a joke, but it is as ruthless as people can be... Nothing means anything; it is nothing but a game. Everything that begins will stop again. This is a clear statement. He, who seeks the meaning of things, always walks a spiritual

path, irrespective of whether he is aware of it or not, and in this way, he gains experience. Then life can give him an answer. There is much sorrow in the world. Countless people lack the bare necessities. From birth, they experience poverty, hunger and cruelty – amongst which the ravages inflicted by people are often the most horrific ones, ultimately followed by ravages in the inner human being. Sometimes, these same people experience – sometimes even simultaneously – the great joys of life, such as love, fulfilment or recognition. What is actually going on? Why does this happen? Is it a game, a whim of evolution?

**NOURISHING FORCES** We may make a discovery: we are sustained by something. Whatever we do, whatever happens to us, we are embedded in something and we are part of something. The boy in our story is sitting in a plum tree. Nature supports him, comforts him and gives him the chance to throw unripe plums, but it cannot give him the meaning of life. Everyone can become aware of how he is sustained by nature. We are strengthened by the bright colours of a flower, the power of a tree, the surface of the water on a lake, and the flight of a bird. Trees, flowers, water, the majesty of heaven, and the animals, all of them have something to do with us and are part of us. They are our companions, our existence, and we live from them. The same may be said of other sources that give

# CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE INNER HUMAN BEING



us energy: religion, profound thoughts, values and flowery words, music, painting and sculpture. Here the spiritual aspect affects us, gives us courage to live and raises us above many things that we experience as difficult. It strikes us that something is active here, something that might give our lives meaning – yet we are unable to understand it automatically. Somehow, we are embedded in this sphere, which also represents our origin and our existence, but we are unable to observe it. In this way, we receive twofold nourishment: the energies of nature and those of the spiritual realm. We are characterised by this duality.

**IMPULSES** The boy in the plum tree sees the transient, fleeting and shadowy aspect of his life. He is right if he finds no meaning in it. He is not yet able to see in the kingdom of meaning, the kingdom of the spirit, in his other, deeper half. This is not yet completely active. This is where the impulses stem from that force us to seek the basis of our existence. It was such an impulse that forced the boy to step out of his normal life. However, he did not recognise the impulse as such. Partly influenced by such impulses, scientists have made the most ingenious discoveries during the past hundred and fifty years. However, how did we deal with them? We have built marvellous technical appliances that we use, in this way exhausting nature. We spoil the kingdoms of nature, contaminate them with radioactive radiation, make them infer-

tile and in this way, we destroy our help, what sustains us, our existence.

This casts light on our situation. We receive impulses from what is spiritual, from our inner being, in order to use them in our daily lives. If we use them in the right way, our inner being can be in complete harmony with our outward life. However, the way in which we interpret these impulses often does not correspond to the nature of the spiritual source, from which they stem nor with the nature that surrounds us.

**A GLANCE AT EVOLUTION** Evolution developed the human being as a (provisional) result of a development that has lasted for billions of years. Would it generate a being that destroys itself and harms the kingdoms of nature? Would it generate an entity that is inwardly divided? It is not very likely that this is what was intended. It might be that we human beings have entered a stage that may be compared to something like puberty. However, it is possible that hidden skills and talents, positive as well as negative ones, begin to manifest themselves. But by what tensions were these accompanied in our own youth? If we project this situation onto the development of humanity, we may say that we have not yet grown up and that we have not yet found ourselves. We have not yet forged the two sides in us, the spiritual-inspiring one and the natural one, into a unity. This is the fundamental cause of the great crisis

## In the spiritual atmosphere, we find the source of life; in the natural one, we find the expression of the vital energies

in which we find ourselves again in 2012.

Due to our still immature consciousness, we endanger our natural existence. Hegel called our consciousness an 'unhappy consciousness', but now the time has come to take a step.

Our natural side is the most developed, however, the side of the spirit-soul is developed still far too little.

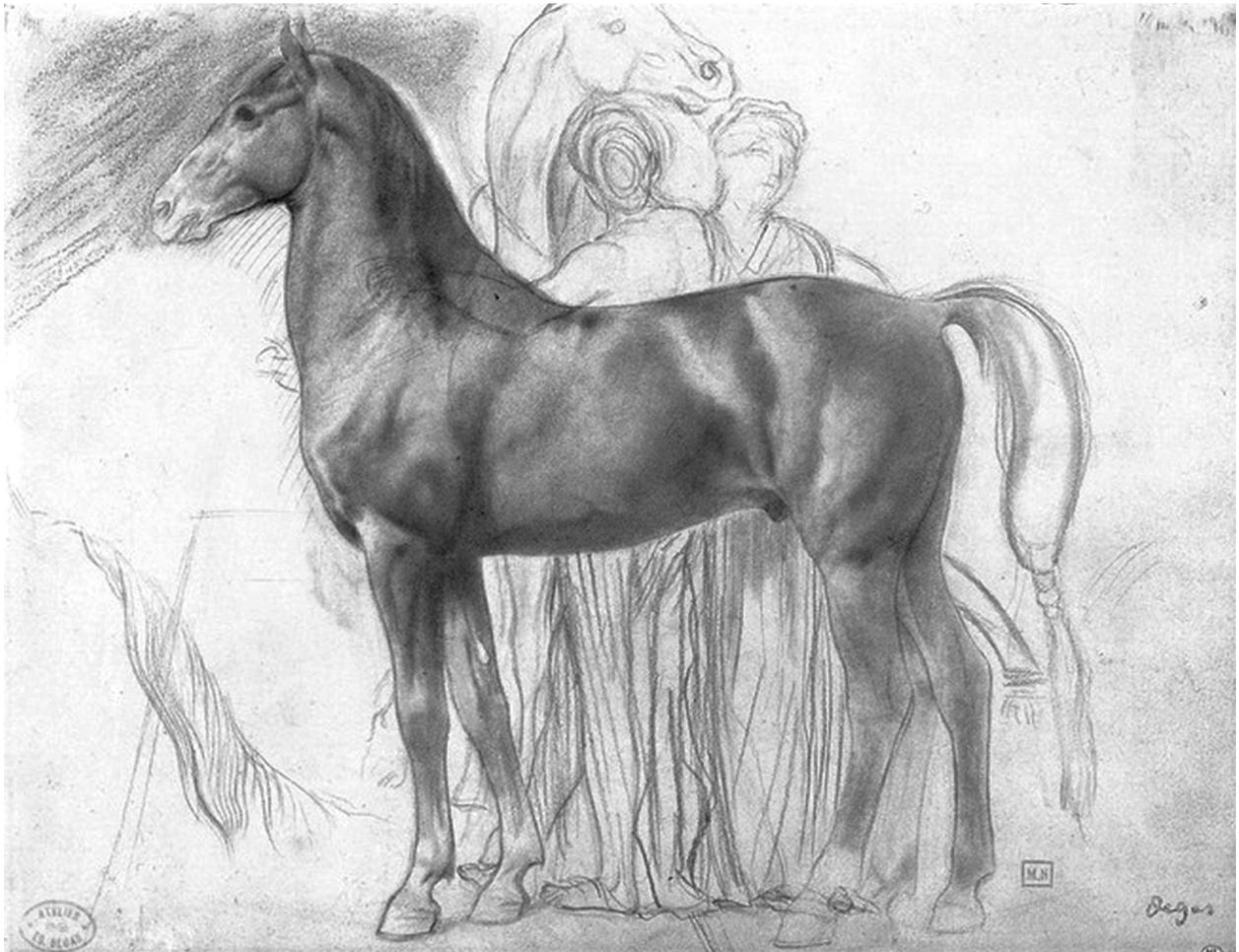
Let us look at the effect of evolution, seen from our current situation. At a certain moment in evolution, we see a tremendous diversity; every created thing is differentiated into a great wealth. First of all, many chemical elements were generated on the basis of hydrogen, until a certain saturation was reached. When seemingly nothing new was to be expected on this level, an evolutionary leap occurred in a relatively short period in the history of evolution. A synthesis became visible. From the primordial soup of elements and acids, the first single-celled organisms were created. They were something completely new. For the first time, there was life that knew an inside as well as an outside world. The whole, the single-celled organism, was more than the sum of its parts.

When this level had been reached, again a differentiation occurred. Multicellular beings developed and finally, the enormous wealth of plants and animals developed. Here, too, saturation occurred in a certain stage of development. A state was reached, in which another synthesis should follow. A being developed with an organ of thought that developed into

the cerebral cortex. The first hominids developed. A being was formed that was able to think about both itself and evolution and that ultimately developed a consciousness, an individuality. The essence of the vegetable and animal heritage was combined in a higher form in the human being and 'something' was added from the spiritual realm.

Again, the whole that resulted from it was more than the sum of its parts. Again, a differentiation occurred. Nations, languages, cultures, religions and finally, the interminable human individualisation developed. Everyone may consider himself a small world. And now, in our time, the signs of saturation in the development become clear again.

**ANOTHER EVOLUTIONARY LEAP?** Again, a synthesis is forthcoming and this has always signified an evolutionary leap. To those who find themselves in the midst of it, this is a process in which many small steps are taken. Of what can the current synthesis consist? In the past, the properties of the animal and vegetable worlds were linked into a higher unity within the human being. This natural development has ended. However, there still is the spiritual germ in the human being. The former has not yet been integrated; we are not yet one with it. This has not yet developed; the door to a spiritual level of life has not yet been opened in the majority of people. The spirit-soul level is another dimension of life than the natural one. In the spiritual atmosphere,



Edgar Degas (1843-1917). Figure study with horse.

we find the source of life; in the natural one, we find the expression of the vital energies. The natural one is a multifaceted projection of the spiritual and soul forces in an external space. Right between these two aspects, the individuality, the consciousness, the I, is to be found in the human being. We encounter what is natural in the materialised figure that is subject to death.

**A FIERY NEW STRUCTURE** Time has a dissolving, breaking effect in our dimension of life. The space of our existence is limited. Our

natural side means transience. The spiritual one makes itself known through impulses. We may call the soul aspect 'the living water' that flows through us. It does not know death. After all, it is what is still unembodied. If it is really able to flow through us, it changes us and raises our existence to a higher level. It transforms us into a new creature. We may call the spiritual aspect a purifying, renewing fire. If it flares up in us, it changes us. We should be willing to allow the fire to work in us. Then it will be able to form a new structure within the old body, a form that corre-

## All inner forces cooperate in renewing us from within

sponds to it. This is a tenuous form. What do we mean by tenuous? We are composed of streams of energy that pervade and envelope our different bodies. They maintain the form, control the processes in the organism and are the sustaining forces of our feeling, willing and thinking. Our inner and outer life develops in accordance with these energies. On a higher octave in the development of humanity, our inner being will certainly possess new qualities that better enable the harmonious merging of spirit and nature. Now it is not so that the current consciousness and bodily structures simply continue to develop. Once again, we are confronted with an evolutionary leap. The inner source of life, which more or less lies under the rubble, is released and forms a new figure, wholly according to its own nature. All inner forces cooperate in renewing us from within. A new ensoulment develops in us that will show this overly clearly. A consciousness is formed that is not rooted in the old ego, but that is part of the all-encompassing life.

**THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE NEW FIGURE** Is there an example of this new figure? There have always been pioneers in evolution. Two thousand years ago, a human being showed us this perfect, new personality, while we are mere beginners. Jesus, who brought the Christ, exemplified how a new, immortal body can arise from the natural body. He symbolically described the process as follows:

‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will build another.’

We may consider the different stages in the life of Jesus an allegorical representation of the stages of transformation. It is the gradual development of the spiritual, human body. The Bible calls its perfection ‘resurrection’. One day, Jesus appeared in the new figure, separate from the old body. Initially, his disciples were unable to see the new figure, as it was, after all, spiritual, tenuous. However, because they had made a first start on their spiritual path to achieve a new form of perception, the contours of the new figure of the Saviour began to emerge at a certain moment – just as the new element emerged in them. We may see the founders of all great religions as examples of a new stage in the development of humanity. They showed what would later be possible for many people. All of them said: ‘Follow me.’ This development, which reached its culmination in the resurrection, will one day be possible for every human being. Everyone is able to take one or more steps in this direction. In this context, it is irrelevant if and to which religion someone belongs. It is decisive whether a change is accomplished in the inner being, from living egocentrically to living for what is higher, in the service of all.

**THE CURRENT SITUATION** Currently, energies are released that surpass the spectrum of the energy of our current, tenuous vehicles.

## The driving force of the new synthesis is rooted in the serene state of the spirit-soul, which partakes of the rest of the universe

The earth is subject to an increase of vibration, and these enhanced vibrations affect everyone. However, they certainly do not always work in a liberating way. The increase of nervous and mental diseases rather testifies to the opposite. Also the sensation of speed and haste, with which we seem to be chased through life, certainly contributes to this. Not only have the earthly energies become more active, but also the spiritual ones. Our solar cosmos and the whole planetary system is also a field of existence of a higher, spiritual nature. Humanity is affected on both levels of its existence. The increases of vibration that occur on the level of nature as well as in the spiritual realm have been predicted by many spiritual teachers. The intense new, spiritual forces will, if possible, cooperate with the spiritual seed in our inner being. We may compare them with spiritual solar energy that stimulates this seed to develop. New tenuous structures unfold that also bear the memory of nature, the memory of the earth. Everything that once happened has been preserved in it like a matrix, and if we are ready for it, we may use this knowledge. Thus it is possible that, what was once exemplified by the Saviour as a miracle, may serve as a prototype for us. We may be integrated in this matrix and become part of it. We may begin to vibrate with it. Also the latest scientific insights confirm this in their own way, with their terminology.

**EFFECT ON THE NATURE KINGDOMS** Such a step in our development will have a great effect, because the human being is the synthesis of the principles of the animal and the vegetable kingdom. We are the 'sons of evolution', the quintessence, the peak of the developments in nature, nevertheless inseparably linked with the substructure of the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdom. We are one with the nature beings that follow us in our development. Everything we do affects what exists. Everything is waiting for our progress. In Romans 8:19, we can read: 'For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.' And in 8:21: 'Also the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay.' When the new inner matrix links us with our spiritual fatherland, with a higher nature order, the kingdoms of nature that come after us will be liberated from the yoke under which they labour. Now they suffer through us and are cornered and exploited. They give us our basis of life, while, in fact, we are able to open the gates to their further development. Man is the dominant factor in the course of evolution. If he develops further, he also enables the animal and vegetable kingdoms to take a step towards something new. What is tenuous is the bridge between living beings. The stream of life links plants, animals and people. Sensory and emotional streams link the human being with the animal kingdom and mental forces form the specific sphere

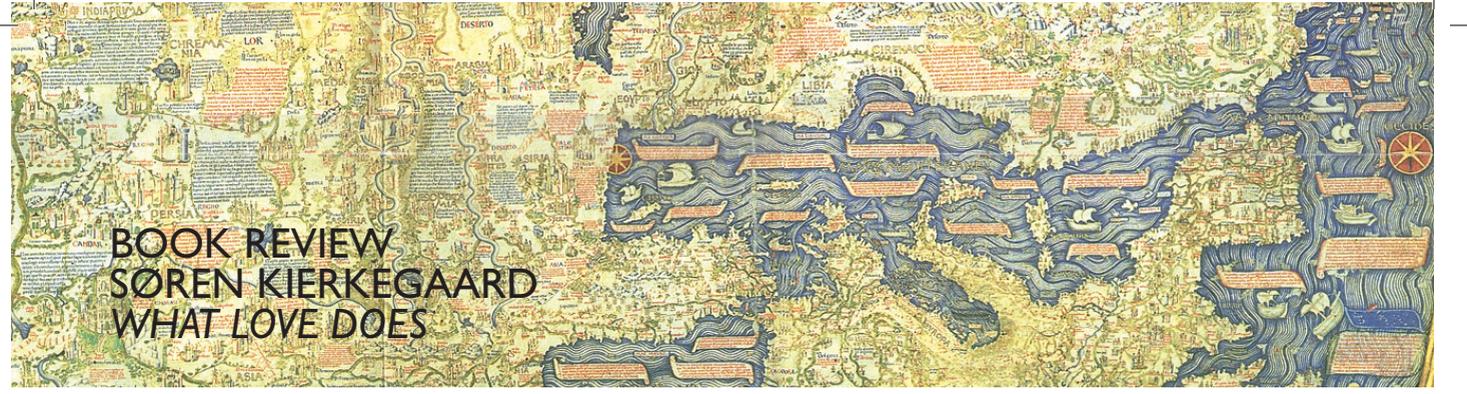
of humanity. The mental realm is a confusion of ideas, an academic sea, that is overwhelming and chaotic, and in which no rest can be found. The countless ideas bounce off each other and do not give the human being any rest.

However, the driving force of the new synthesis is rooted in the serene state of the spirit-soul, which partakes of the rest of the universe, and encompasses the whole of creation. If we begin to partake of the cosmic resurrection, a consciousness formed by the whole develops in us that joyfully reflects God, cosmos and man as well as the nature kingdoms. We now see the first impulses of this development, because everywhere people struggle for renewal of the consciousness. 'Why It Is The Whole That Matters' is therefore the title of a book by Hans-Peter Dürr, quantum physicist and for many years the director of the Max-Planck Institute for Physics in Munich, Germany.

**NEW FORMS OF CONSCIOUSNESS FOR THE WHOLE OF CREATION** These new impulses cause a new behaviour. All ecological efforts are heralds of this development. They have been formed by a responsible consciousness. If a human being allows this new unity to emerge structurally in him on a spiritual path of change, he will no longer be able to do anything else than to act in accordance with the whole, because that is what lives in him. Inwardly, he experiences access to the king-

doms of nature; he experiences their life and contributes to them by giving them renewing impulses. He experiences harmony with everything and everyone and feels co-responsible for the further course of development. The creatures of the kingdoms of nature are his younger brothers and sisters. Behind them, within them and through them, great spiritual energies are also active: see the beauty and genius of the forms and functions of plants, animals and minerals! In this way, the impulse emanating from the new synthesis between spiritual life and the human being of this nature will also affect all other kingdoms.

The universal teachings speak of a kind of self-consciousness that will be formed in the animal kingdom. Its beginning can already be perceived now. Which developments will occur in a human being cannot be predicted. However, it is certain that walking the path of change, which a human being can voluntarily decide to do, will cause a strong, healing impulse for the earth, because the powers of the consciousness of the one life will flow through it. In his poem 'The Chained Stream', Hölderlin says prophetically at the moment when the voice of the Son of God resounds '... joy stirs again in the breast of the earth.' ✪



BOOK REVIEW  
SØREN KIERKEGAARD  
WHAT LOVE DOES

Arjo Klamer

# I bow my head to

Reciprocity is a concept an economist can work with, even if it concerns immaterial matters: you do something for someone else, and the other one does something for you in return. However, the observations of Søren Kierkegaard about true love surpass this form of moral bookkeeping in a surprising way, at least, this is how the economist Arjo Klamer experiences it. 'It make me speechless.'

If anything gives a distorted image, it is the addition and subtraction of bookkeepers. Periodically, all of us are confronted with it, if we have to complete our tax returns or to compile financial statements. Revenue, expenses, assets and liabilities: adding and subtracting, and we know how much we have earned or how rich or poor we are. All these figures look solid and the results seem incontrovertible, but how realistic are these figures actually? Do they indeed do justice to the essential aspects of life? Does my income say anything about the quality of my family life? Does a balance sheet tell us anything about the inspirational power of an organisation? And what does the GNP say about the strength of a society? Did you ever calculate your happiness?

These questions are a bit peculiar for an economist. We economists are purportedly occupied with the profane, with everything that can be expressed in monetary terms. What matters to us

would be the exchange, this for that, quid pro quo. The world of economics is the hard world, far removed from everything soft, like feeling, beauty, love and holiness. This certainly applies to matters like a caring family life, an inspiring organisation and a strong society. Therefore, if an economist takes up Søren Kierkegaard's book *What Love Does*, you should not expect that he can do very much with it, at least not as an economist.

As the son of a vicar, this is different for me. Books of the Danish philosopher were regularly on the bookstand downstairs. Kierkegaard was the philosopher who confronted me with the value of truthfulness. If I wanted to know how hypocritical, hesitant and fearful my own life was, I read his obsessive struggle with the existential questions, his consistent attempts to fathom these questions and about his life that was, seemingly, consistent with his own conviction.

I was immensely intrigued by the fact that he wanted to break with the only great love of his life, the love for a woman, because of his struggle with true love that, according to his conviction, surpassed this other love. How could he, I wondered desperately during my





*S. Kierkegaard.*

# love

quest particularly for this worldly love? How far he went in his thinking about love appears once again from this book. His understanding of love was so complete that I begin to feel small compared to it. However, all of this has nothing to do at all with economics, one would think. But then it comes. It is Kierkegaard's language that makes me scratch my economic head. In chapter 5 of *What Love Does*, he refers to Romans 13:8: 'Owe no one anything, except to love one another.' 'Love,' he quotes an ancient wisdom, 'is a son of wealth and poverty.' No one is so poor as someone who is without love. Then follows his central statement: love creates a debt, an infinite debt. Wealth, poverty, debt: they are the concepts of economists.

If I read with this consciousness, I notice how much Kierkegaard thinks in terms of money. Just see this diary entry: 'I was born in 1813, in this year of corrupt money, when many a bad banknote came into circulation. My life can best be compared to this kind of money. Something great was hidden in me, but it had no value due to the business cycle.' My father would never have been able to say anything like that, averse as he was to anything to do with money. In the world of what is sacred, this fascination with the profane is not exceptional, as we see when we continue reading. Take the Bible. In this sacred text, the economist can delve to his heart's content. Sometimes, it seems as if you hear bookkeepers, even if it concerns moral bookkeeping

here. This means that profit will come in other forms, for instance in the form of grace and blessing. Sins are booked on the credit side. If I have inflicted something on someone else, I am indebted to this other person and my balance is negative. This person may seek retribution; this may occur in the form of money, but this is not necessary. Also the God of the Old Testament seeks retribution. We are still paying the debts, with which Adam and Eve left paradise. It appears that acting morally is nothing else than a form of moral bookkeeping. It is, therefore, a matter of adding and subtracting. It is not very difficult to recognise this insight in daily life. If someone helps me, this person is entitled to expect something from me in return. This is what is called 'reciprocity', and this reminds us of the exchange to which economists pay so much attention. However, the former interactions are a bit more complicated, because a clear means of exchange like money is lacking. Someone may do me an enormous favour by giving me a ride, sincere attention or a lucrative contact, but if and how I will repay him is problematic.

Usually, giving money in compensation doesn't work. It may even be insulting, so that my debt to this other person increases rather than decreases. It usually works better to reciprocate, for instance by writing a letter, by securing a job for the benefactor's child (we may, therefore, also reciprocate the favour to another person), or with a sincere: 'Thank you very much.' This last gesture is remarkable. You receive

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something big, perhaps something expensive, and the only thing you have to say is: 'Thank you very much.' These words are then counted as repayment of the debt.

This behaviour is actually nothing else than seeking the balance between profit and loss, between having a debt and being due something. However, the crucial difference with hard economic exchange is that you do not deal with hard cash, but with elusive quantities like words and gestures. My wife and I spend loads of money and lots of time (she in particular) on the upbringing of our children and we are grateful if they still look us in the eye and help wash the dishes once in awhile. We hope that they will later visit us periodically. My expectation that later, in exchange for our care, they might also look after us is jeered at as unreasonable and imposing. Children who nowadays care for their parents feel easily overburdened, despite the care that they received in the past. This used to be different; the balance has apparently shifted in their direction. Anyway, having a relationship is a matter of give and take. The trick is to know when giving and taking is in equilibrium.

However, this trick also applies in a larger context. The Germans, much more than the Japanese, experience World War II as a great debt that has not yet been fully repaid. After World War I, the French demanded retribution in the form of money, coal and steel factories. The bookkeepers calculated how much was needed of everything to compensate for the loss of French lives and economic capital. The Germans experienced this settlement as unjust and this is why they looked for compensation, resulting in the familiar tragedy of World War II. After that war, the Americans thought it would be better to help the debtors instead of punishing them, resulting in a great feeling of guilt by the Germans. This is why the Ger-

mans were, amongst other things, prepared to sacrifice their German mark. And still it is not enough. The debt seems endless.

And this brings me to the most intriguing observation that Kierkegaard made about love. As I already quoted above, according to him, love creates an infinite debt, indeed, even for him who loves. This cannot be right, I initially thought, as likewise everyone else thought when I confronted them with this. He who loves, gives his love to others. By receiving this love, the others owe him something. For don't we calculate in this way? No, according to Kierkegaard, it is exactly the other way round. Although he writes in a way that is not always easy to follow, after I had reread it a few times, I understood what he meant. Love that creates a debt cannot be true love. True love cannot be repaid. Someone who gives love does not become poorer by it and, therefore, need not be compensated. Rather, according to Kierkegaard, by giving love, his debt only increases, and ultimately becomes infinitely large. How is this possible? Well, this great thinker explains, love is a gift, a gift of God, he would say. He who has this love, is immensely rich and in this way is infinitely indebted to God. Therefore, he does not need anything in return for this love, because in this love, he is full of gratitude towards his God.

This makes me speechless. As a human being, this love seems humanly impossible – I don't know any person who lives in this love – and my inner bookkeeper doesn't know the first thing about it. However calculating we are in the reciprocity of our daily, moral life, in the end, acting in truthfulness is incalculable. I humbly bow my head to the love that Kierkegaard describes so graphically.

Right: **Crowned head, originally colourfully painted with Buddhist and Iraqi influences, stemming from East Persia, eighth or ninth century AD.**



If we have completely entered the kingdom of love,  
the world becomes – however imperfectly – rich and clean,  
because it consists of nothing else than opportunities  
to love.

Sören Kierkegaard