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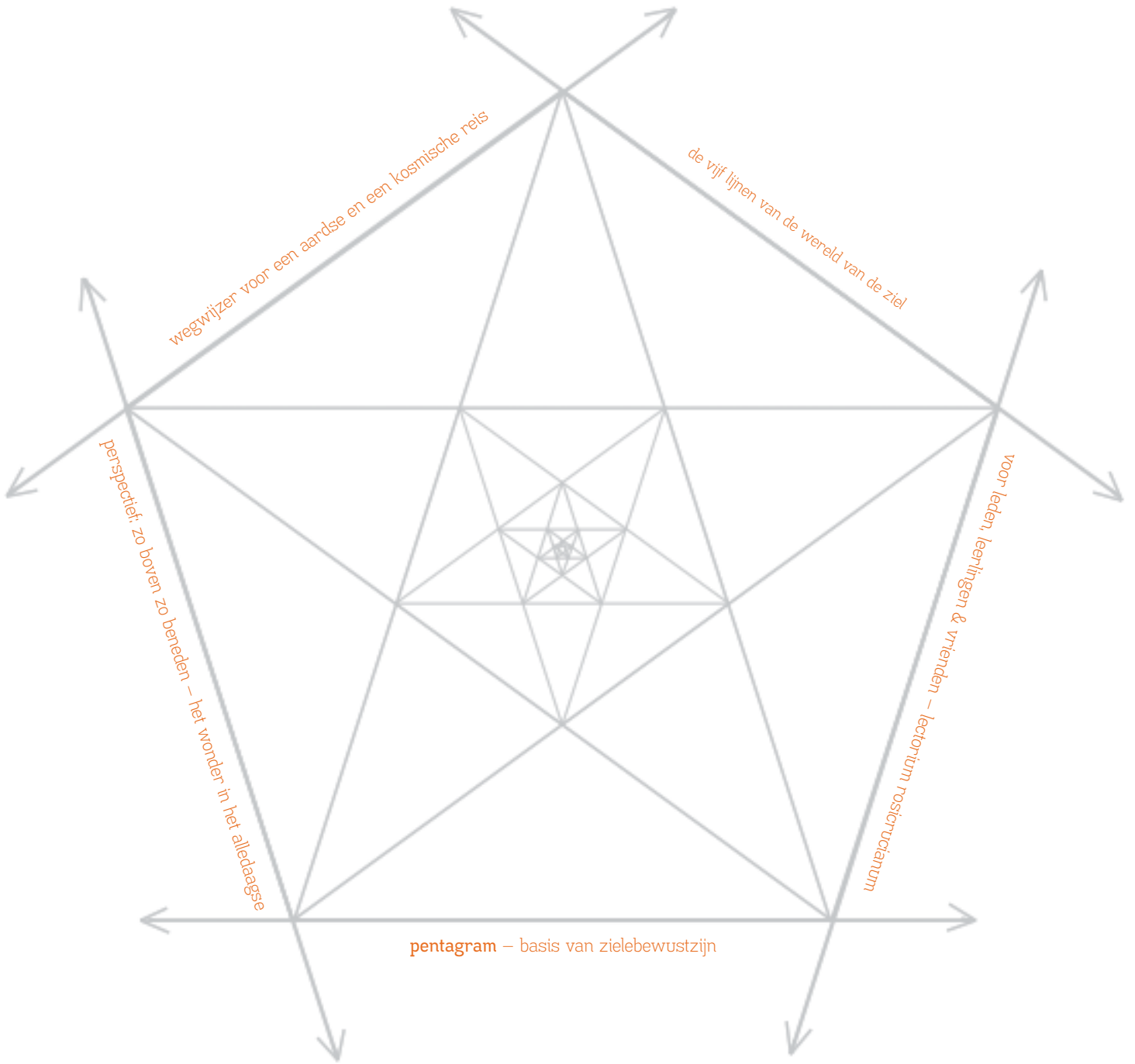


pentagram

Lectorium Rosicrucianum



A call from the solar heart;
the Path, truth in your life!



wegwijzer voor een aardse en een kosmische reis

de vijf lijnen van de wereld van de ziel

perspectief: zo boven zo beneden – het wonder in het alledaagse

voor leden, leerlingen & vrienden – lectorium rostrucianum

pentagram – basis van zielebewustzijn

pentagram

pentagram

On the basis of DNA-samples scientists are now able to reconstruct the detailed and very probable route that *Homo sapiens* have traversed on earth in the course of thousands of centuries. By comparing the DNA of different groups of people (genographics) they are not only able to ascertain whether you are related to someone else, but also from which part of the earth your distant ancestors originated. Our DNA indicates that about 200.000 years ago man started his wanderings over the face of the earth out of Africa. First he migrated eastward and later towards the west, continuously adding characteristics to his DNA.

This same fascination for another destination forms the basis for the search of the spiritual seeker: from where do I come? Where am I going? And ultimately: who am I? Gradually something becomes clear to us, so clear that it stares us in the face like a Medusa. What we as people do not seem to be able to learn along social, moral, and altruistic lines, stands here imperatively before us: *We are one.*

We share the same DNA, we have the same ancestor, *Homo sapiens*, who initially was smaller, darker and much more at one with nature than the car-driving mobile phone users that he is now. And not only do we share the DNA: we share *all* particles that make up a human being – every atom and every molecule. For these do not disintegrate but have been alive for billions of years. They have experienced the beginning of life, have seen the first fish creep onto land and the dinosaurs come and go. They have covered an enormous journey in order to find expression here and now, in you and me and will continue further on their travels through time and space – or even beyond time and space? In that sense we are indeed dust, but yet stardust!

Where do you come from? *From everywhere.* Whereto are you going? To anywhere. Who are you? One grand expression of the *One.* That's why we are dust from dust, spirit from spirit, and full of aspiration. Once it resounded: 'Dust you are, and to dust you shall return'. But for these present times we may also say: You are spirit, and you shall return to the Spirit! The more reason for us to be humble, and no reason not to embrace the grandeur of the creation.



cover

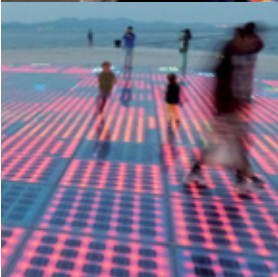
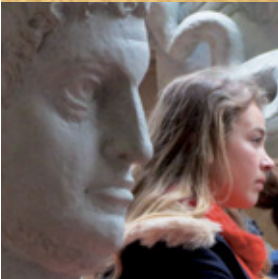
A local guide waves to a lost vehicle in the Sahara desert. Since 2005 the genographic project by National Geographic, through DNA-analysis and with the help of numerous native communities, tries to find answers to some fundamental questions for which mankind seeks an answer:

How did we come into existence? How exactly did we populate the earth? Where are we going?

Modern DNA-technology throws a new light on our collective past. Everyone is able to participate in this *real-time* scientific project and in this way may learn more about himself than he had ever thought possible.

© genographic.nationalgeographic.com

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The call goes out to the innumerable souls, microcosms - the fiery nuclei of the one Spirit, that realize the infinite universe out of the All-One light

On 12 June 2015 in Gorky Park in Moscow, an exhibition opened called 'The Theory of Infinity,' which concurred with the relocation opening of 'Garage' a museum designed by Rem Koolhaas, a Dutch architect, actor and writer. Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama installed an endless-mirror room with thousands of pulsating lights that immerse the visitor in a unique psychological and sensorial experience as if he were met by the light of a millions souls.

© www.spletnik.ru/buzz/59771-novoe-zdanie-muzeya-garazh-cto-zhdet-posetiteley.html

The lucid thinking of Jan van Rijckenborgh and Catharose de Petri and their great love for humanity brought them together to found a modern school for the development of consciousness, the Lectorium Rosicrucianum. They did so in the firm conviction that the elimination of the lack of knowledge about the background of human existence is a key factor in alleviating the worlds' suffering.



Sebastião Saldago, *The Salt of the Earth*. Still from the movie of that name from Wim Wenders and Juliano Ribero Saldago, 2014

The Salt of the Earth

Salt is an indispensable ingredient anywhere without which life is unthinkable. As an analogy we may also regard the mystic salt as a basic element of spiritual alchemy, essential for the alchemical wedding of Christian Rosycross.

Mystic salt is present in every human being and its degree of efficacy determines his spiritual power. The working of this salt either unifies or dissolves various values or forces that in the course of the process have been revealed as useful or superfluous. Besides, it makes it possible for a human being to continue his path of cosmic evolution in space and time. Suffering and purification of life brought about by this mystic salt interact to give birth to the soul consciousness, the soul body of the initiates, the Christian golden vesture that envelops those advancing towards the wedding with the objective to marry with the light of the divine spirit in them. In this way, the first phase of the alchemical wedding is fulfilled. This mystical salt is often latent in the human being. Although the call has resonated for a long time throughout the world, it has not so far been able to awaken the majority of humanity. Therefore, mystic salt may lose its flavor, thus

rendering it useless to mankind and so may disappear from the divine original plan.

The whole universe tells and teaches us that "God is Light". This is demonstrated in all aspects of life. It makes us conscious that we, creatures in his image and likeness, are carriers of the Light. In the same way that the Logos thrusts the solar system in the cosmos we, in the quality of authentic bearers of the Light, may discern our task and be a light to the world. *The salt of the earth and also the Light in the world!*

This is not an assignment for the "I" but for the "we". The mystical salt of which you are the treasurer must be put at the service of "we", that is the world. If you have acquired soul power you must distribute it in the world around you. In this way the mysterious mystical salt will be multiplied by virtue of its fabulous qualities. The more you give, the more capable of giving will you be and the more you will aspire to do so under the impulse of the heart.

From the very beginning until his last conferences, J. van Rijckenborgh has always placed the *Alchemical Wedding of Christian Rosycross* (1459) in the center of attention of his listeners and he gave them the keys to unlock the symbolism in this work of the classic Rosycross.



You can share the light that is in you, your divine spirit, with “we”, that is to say, with all human beings. This task is not given to the “I”, but to the “we”. You will never know rest until this light has penetrated the darkest places.

That is the good work that prevails! The only work that answers to a divine order and demands the real sacrifice: be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. And, following the example of Christ, you will never rest until the whole human life wave has reached its goal.

This proposal is full of implications, which confront us with the specific attitude explained to us in the Sermon on the Mount, which humanity has not yet assimilated as we see it daily confirmed around us. It is as if we are to climb a mountain, which may first give us great hesitation because Christ demands a total change of both human being and society.

If we would follow the directions of the Sermon on the Mount even minimally it would effect a radical change

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The serious seeker will understand that the key point to achieve something that is placed before him is not to talk about it but to act upon it. To do something adequately one needs first to know about it and then to understand the task.

So, when we are asked to be the salt of the earth as well as the light of the world, this means that there is a delineated path in Christ that needs to be walked. If we understood the intentions of Christ even slightly, the result would be significant on a world scale. If we applied the Sermon on the Mount even on a minimal scale it would cause a radical change not only in our inner being but also around us to the point that we would believe to have entered the kingdom of heaven and this would be unquestionable to every mortal and evident to the whole of humanity. ✪

Waving goodbye to the Teton Mountain Range at sunset near Jackson Lake Lodge (Wyoming, USA) © Dong Nan Xi Bei



Life from the earth or life from the solar body?
The solar life of course!

The Activity of the World

A WORD FOR THE NEAR FUTURE

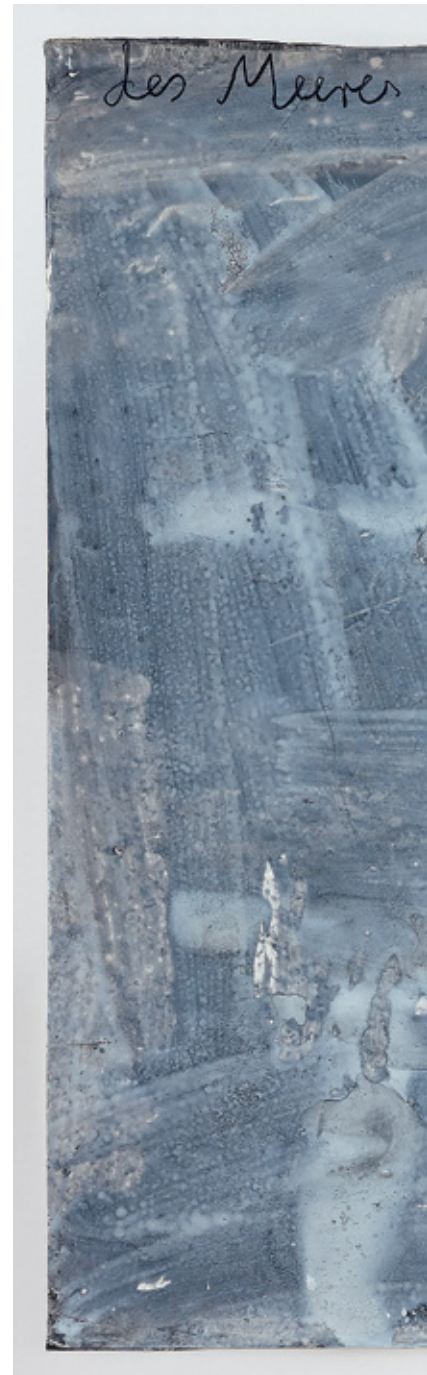
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‘What is happening at this moment? The state of the world and humanity presents an image that is far from reassuring,’ Van Rijckenborgh declared already many years ago. Continuing: ‘One would lose courage observing it’.

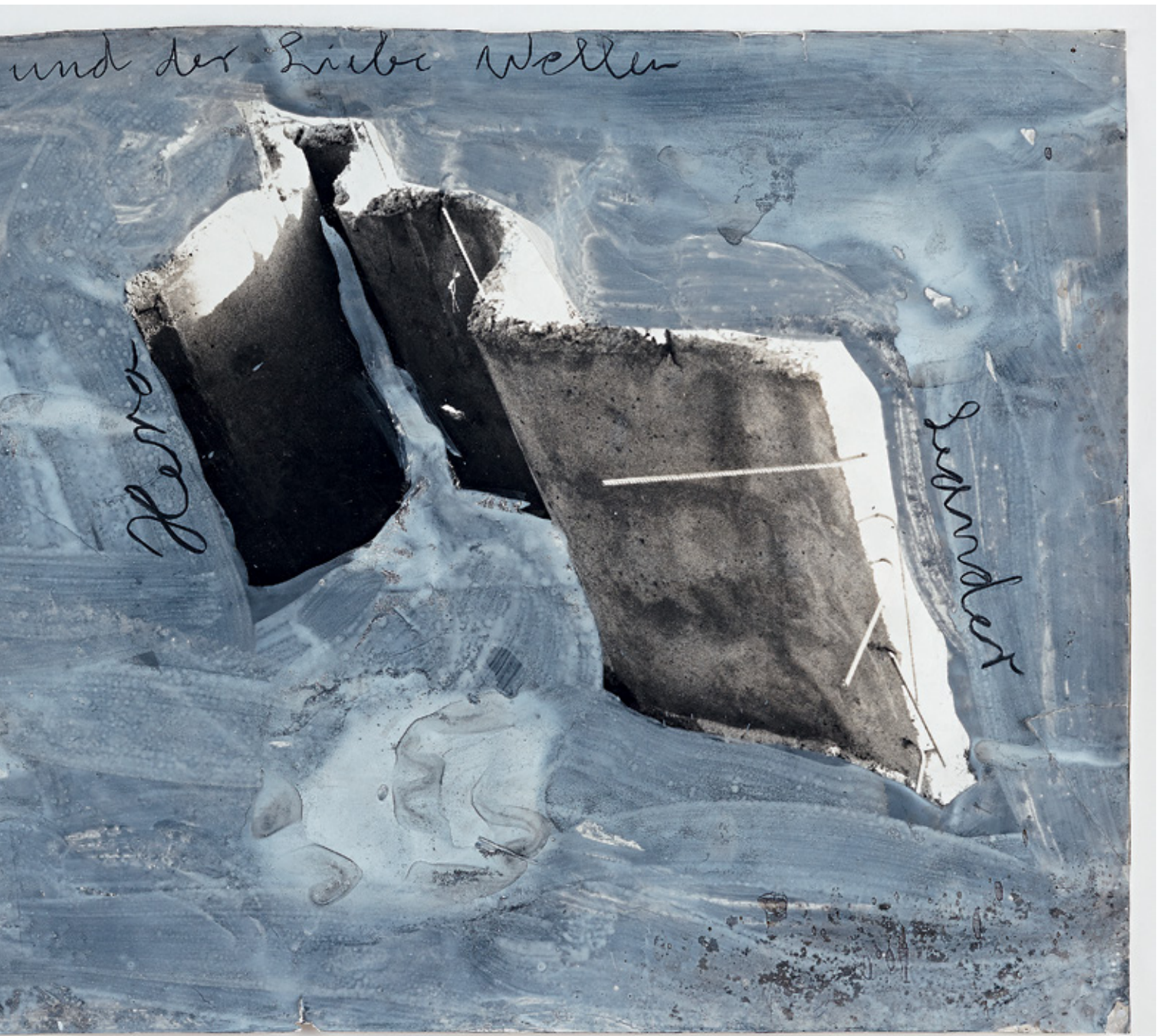
Since then, many things have happened which were indeed very discouraging. True untainted people of integrity are rare in this world and the majority do not pay them any attention or give them any credit because their psychic state does not allow it. Humanity has reached the lowest point of its voyage through matter. Art, science and religion as we have known them thus far, have lost their value as a valid sources of help or perspectives of life. What perspectives then, are actually presented to mankind? We are helplessly and hopelessly back against a wall and yet are we at the same time invited to self-realization; a task for which we may feel we have not at all been prepared. But the question must still be answered: what perspectives remain for man? How may he overcome the obstacles that limit him both inwardly and from the outside?

It is exactly in this situation of general helplessness that a new possibility comes up thanks to the work of the Sevenfold World Brotherhood.

Let us consider once again the important facts from an esoteric-gnostic point of view. To begin, we need to remember that, as J. van Rijckenborgh has explained, the lunar forces have been completely withdrawn. These forces, the Lunar Angels, belong to a previous live wave, which has gone ahead on the path of development but which does not belong to the human life wave. They accompanied humanity until its dark-



Brotherhood



'Das Meer und der Liebes Wellen' (The sea and the waves of love). An image of the classical drama of Hero who swam every night across the Hellespont in order to be with his beloved Leander. Anselm Kiefer, 2011

Boulder, Colorado in the morning January 6, 2015. © Tom Yulsman



New energies which deeply touch all humanity
provoke a deep reaction in everyone

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est times, to the nadir of matter, in which we find ourselves today. Therefore, the Sevenfold World Brotherhood of whom the Spiritual School of the Golden Rosycross is an extension has taken new initiatives for the upcoming future because a period of transition has truly begun.

This period is characterized by great confusion, a multiplicity of disasters and cataclysms. The School has elucidated this during the past years so that we might understand what was coming. Summing up: we are still on the wrong spiral of development. We care very little about the cosmic order, which calls for context, connection, kindness and diligence in all things and its important points are ignored and even denied. The result is the collapse of the social, economic, scientific and religious order, together with other factors that can prevent a disintegration of society. The present poverty of spirit clearly goes hand-in-hand with all this.

In the 'memory of nature' the first-hand experience that humanity not only represents a threat to the individual but also to the planet as a whole, has never before been experienced quite so directly. And through the modern media everyone is both a witness and a player on this field. What then is your answer when facing this scenario?

May a deep understanding guide us here!

See what the state of the world has to tell you. There is no political solution for it but only one for you, yourself, undertaken by yourself. Are you a judging person, afraid of what may happen to you and to your fine western security? Or are you willing to lend a helping hand? For you must experience it daily: all the evil subtleties, the lies, the slyness that have become commonplace in the interchange among individuals as well as among nations? In the light of the upcoming developments we proclaim that all the deceptions that you are confronted with will soon belong to the past, because everyone will find out what their true face is.

The initiative of the World Brotherhood is about: bringing forth the force of light that lies within you and making this positive force an active one. You will then respond to a powerful impulse of spiritual inspiration in the form of an atmospheric vibration that everyone, all humans of all races, will feel and experience.

All brotherhoods and thus also our Rosicrucian Foundation, respond to it and contribute each in their own way. Not ostentatiously, with powerful media campaigns, but with initiatives emanating from an inner attitude and an orientation towards the intense and imminent outpouring of a radiation of electromagnetic forces.

New energies that deeply touch all humanity provoke a deep reaction in everyone. Every human being will be confronted with himself and will thus have the possibility and the power to intervene in his own situation. It is akin to what the Spiritual School calls: the Spirit-Soul state.

This dimensional shift and change have been announced in our School and in many other groups that have been incorporated into the work of the World Brotherhood for many years. The new etheric reality unfolds through the upper layers of the earth and of our own inner atmosphere and chases the darkness before it. This is very manifest within those contra groups that work ever more openly and cynically for

Falsehood and deceit in any aspect will lose their fascination

their own benefit and own personal interests because they are weakened by fear, hate, self-interest and all manner of destructive actions.

A change of mentality of its members, who are also our brothers, is only possible by a great cosmic current of impersonal love sustained by thousands and thousands of open hearts of human beings like us.

In no way will this be the end of the world. What is happening today can be defined as the establishment of new starting points written in the ether, in harmony with the great law of love, with the cohesion of life. Millions of hearts envision it, feel it and are oriented towards it. Inwardly, they separate the veils from the solar vibrations and the terrestrial vibrations. Even though there may be a warming up of the planet, a climate change and possibly natural catastrophes. It is the Spirit, beginning with the Universal Logos and the Will of the Father, who maintains in balance these great magnetic changes within the terrestrial system. This is not done to serve our poor wobbly personalities but to serve the entire cosmic development in which our human life wave has its place.

A change in consciousness is forthcoming. It approaches in response to a cosmic necessity and also, and above all, it is brought up by the awakening of the authentic spiritual potential of altruistic love, reflecting the primordial image of the true human spirit. In this love, we shall perceive reality in a very different way.

The new aurora heralds a new dimension. Your heart is receptive to it and your intelligence can grasp the superior reason for it. With your sympathetic and willing actions you will contribute to introduce it in the world.

There was a time when a human being was linked to the divine primordial image of the truly celestial microcosm. The fullness of this image is now far from us. However, a memory, as a reflection in a mirror, slumbers in each human being in each heart, which wants to beat in the right way – for others.

This image of which we speak will become visible, as a certainty, as a consequence of the great cosmic initiative. Humanity will have a first-hand experience it to the point of penetrating the power of the original matrix, which we call the divine plan for the world and humanity. Perhaps the positive disposition toward the majority of ordinary people to host large numbers of refugee coming from the Middle East may be a first reaction to this hopeful experience, despite the incongruous, fearful and inefficient official politics? Given the new forces or etheric values coming to us because of the needs of our times, we understand, with a sigh of relief, that our work and our mission come from a deeper order: “Ensure the birth of the new soul “. At the same time, we can clearly see which consequences it would have if we would reject this mission.

We refer to one of the ways to open wide the door to the new life. Not only will we see how the psychic aspect of the individual can thus be straightened out as much as is still possible, but also that this experience and the powerful activities of the light will cause within him an impressive purification. This will affect not only all human beings but also all the spheres of life

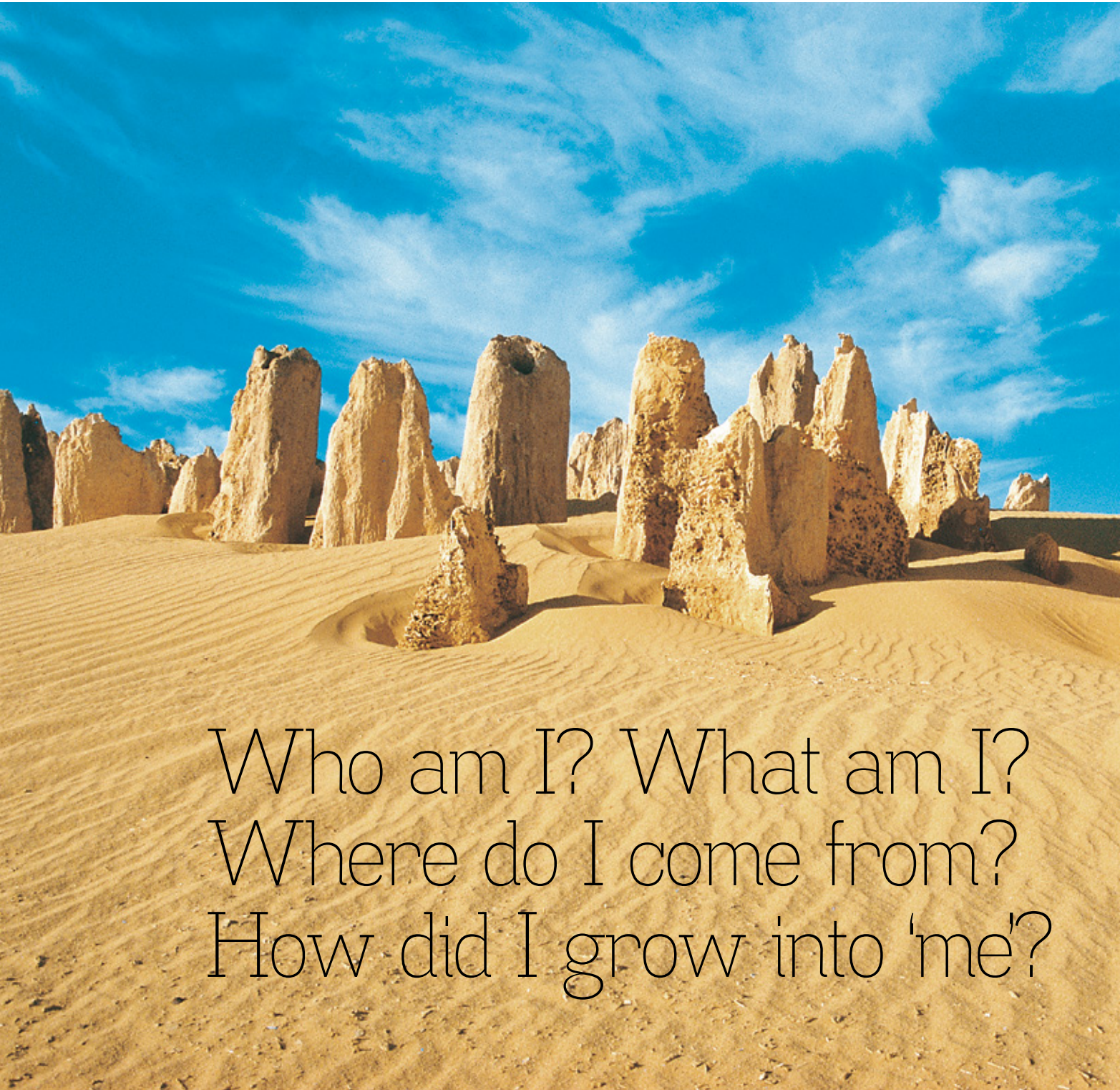
Then a true social transformation can be instigated – a grandiose and impressive new development that will follow seven paths. Everyone may participate, all races and all locations where people aspire to it. No aspect of our society will be untouched by the blissful influences of this revolution. It will be as if our present dimension dissolves and disappears. The original image of the human being, preserved in its entire purity in the highest spheres of life, will envelop you as the Spirit-Soul. It will grow in perception and discernment each day. Falsehood and deceit in any aspect will lose their fascination.

It is not difficult to imagine what this implies in terms of a changed morality and in the objectives of science. This is a wide perspective; a change in the depth of consciousness could provoke a formidable global revolution. Once in a while, the Spiritual School enlarges on these changes, be it in moderate terms. In this process we will all be more or less re-educated starting out from true departure points. In this way the new cosmic initiative that we discussed here will call up before our eyes a progressive perspective – different and harmonious. Each of us is called to participate in the development of the great divine plan for humanity and the world; in this way our own heart will encourage us towards it, our intelligence will make us understand it and our actions will show it.

This way Truth and a pure Reality will be manifested. The masks and illusions will be left without impact and humanity will see how harmonious structural changes take effect. When everyone is psychically led to new paths and when it will be abundantly clear to all what the pure image of true man is capable of, then the racial body will lose its density. The effects of the forces of gravity will change - do our young people not already practise this in their recreational pastime? - and society will finally show a totally new face.

Together with all the other ones who know of this, we will collaborate in self-surrender with the World Brotherhood. For the obvious reason that in the near future the attitude expected of us will be that of a true serving love. Therefore all who understand this call will make ready and dedicate themselves to the great work for a humanity that is in a desperate search for living examples - archetypes of the heavenly man. This requires a great number of contributors with an adequate understanding. ☉

Article by the editors of Pentagram. See also J. van Rijckenborgh, 'Alchemical Wedding', part II, Afterword II



Who am I? What am I?
Where do I come from?
How did I grow into 'me'?

The Pinnacles, Nambung National Parc, near Cervantes, WA, Australia



I am entering an entirely new place. Australia. People are so different here. I have never been so self-conscious as at this moment. Everybody here knows each other, except for me. I don't know anyone. They look at me, not disapprovingly but curiously. I have to be at my best behaviour and make a good impression. I am starting to ponder who I actually am; what I have experienced already. And why would I deserve their recognition? I could of course just pretend that nobody scrutinizes me. But I know they do, just as I do them. They probably try to guess my accent. Canadian? Irish? Ah, Dutch! At once I am seen as 'Dutch'. In the Netherlands I have never been seen as Dutch. The Dutch in the Netherlands actually don't have that much in common: there are so many different religions, differences in skin colour, traditions and dialect. One feels Dutch only at the world soccer tournament or when travelling to another country. And when travelling further than France, Italy or Turkey being Dutch suddenly changes into being 'European'.

But then, what is 'Europe' with its variety in cultures, history, and languages. Europe, where everything began, or at least we think so. We? Who is 'we'? We, the Dutch people? We as Europeans? We women? We twenty-year-olds? We Sagitarius signs of the zodiac? We vegetarians? So many identities. There is no, 'we' and no 'they'. If everyone would only understand this, the world would be a better place. Better than it already is. But I am still feeling singled out from all the people that are scrutinizing me in this room. They were born here and think less highly of the place where I come from. We as Europeans are convinced that we brought civilization to the world. For this reason we are, and probably rightly so, disliked in some other parts of the world.

When introducing myself, I can sense some contempt, even if it is only very slight. I am feeling like a stranger. It is not so much the feeling of

Australia focuses on creating
an national Australian identity.
This is a very difficult undertaking
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Youths during an outdoor 'Camp Doog' festival, WA, Australia

being ashamed of my nationality, but I am a minority here and therefore feel quite vulnerable.

In this situation I realize that back home, when within my comfort zone, I haven't always been open minded myself nor welcoming in my thoughts and actions either, but this is a thing of the past and there is nothing I can change about that now.

By the way, didn't everyone in this room originally come from Europe? The west-



ern takeover of this island only began some 200 years ago. Until then the history of our ancestors was more or less similar - for them and for me.

This is my chance to direct attention away from me. And so I ask someone about his origin. 'I'm 100% Aussie, mate' is the answer. With some uneasiness I look up at him. Doesn't he see that I am a woman and not a mate? There is no time to correct him. The answer is repeated. Then I ask him if his ancestors were aborigines. No, not that. But in Australia, European roots are preferably not mentioned. Why not? Because the first English settlers were prisoners? No, because the European identity does not really mesh with the Australian.

While European countries move towards each other and emphasize the similarities between them, Australia focuses on creating a national Australian identity. This is a difficult undertaking because in reality your 'typical Australian' does not exist, the same as there is not really a 'European'.

The introduction of the concept of a Europe-wide nationalism requires the individual countries to overcome their cultural borders and differences in politics. For this they were able to draw on centuries-old traditions and culture and emphasize those that promoted the unity of people.

The desire for unity is palpable on the Australian continent. The development of an identity is in full swing, although it is not an easy undertaking. Australians do not want to be 'deportees' or 'convicts' of Europe but there are no other old traditions and cultures to draw from. The Australians of today look at only 200 years of development of a collective culture.

They want to differentiate themselves from their European history and want to show that they form a part of the English-speaking world like the USA and New Zealand. But does this approach support the forming of an identity? Actually it does. The 'Australian dream' replaces the 'American dream'. Australia is the 'country of unlimited opportunities'. It is the country of iron-ore and mines; the country of self-made millionaires; there is no blue blood, no aristocracy or nobility. The rich are brokers, mine owners, casino bosses. Australians cannot refer to the great minds of the Renaissance, to timeless

philosophers or the wisdom of the East. Therefore they look somewhere else. Simplicity and easiness are rated very highly and put above the complexity of the human being. Everything is 'too easy, mate.'

The tolerance of Australians is highly praised, although mostly only by themselves. Everyone is welcomed and loved but only as long he/she can put the right check marks on his/her visa application. Just as your suitcases cannot exceed the allowed measurements when boarding the plane, so you can enter the sparsely

populated continent only when you are healthy, under 30 and from a western industrial country. A Coca-Cola culture with low tolerance. A highly praised mentality (although mostly by themselves) that says: 'I'm not a racist, but most Aborigines are criminals'. This reminds me of a quote by Voltaire: 'It is forbidden to kill; therefore all murderers are punished unless they kill in large numbers and to the sound of trumpets.'



The lonely tree in the dunes near Noverosa, Doornspijk, NL

All of a sudden I remember Noverosa. I focus on my inner being

Trumpets resound on this continent every year on the day when the English first arrived here with their fleet. The fact that on that very day an epoch of exploitation and genocide on aborigines began is fully ignored. Just to keep matters simple: 'Don't we all live peacefully together now? The one in a mansion, the other in a shack, but didn't everyone have the same opportunities? That's how it is – you can't change it!'

The atmosphere in the room has changed. I had assumed to find consent for my ideas about racial equality, gender equality or homosexual marriage. But instead it triggered a heated discussion in which I had to defend my ideas.

I realize that until now I hardly ever had to defend my opinions and that I took this for granted. I am overcome with a feeling of sadness and apprehension. I am afraid that I will forget where I am coming from or why I am ashamed and I look away because I am tired of it and don't want to start again to explain another time to the taxi-driver that skin colour does not affect the worthiness of a person.

I feel like withdrawing from all these new situations back into my comfort zone and go and search for like-minded people. I catch myself thinking: they are different!

Not to judge others has never been such a challenge, because I am still striving to see the light, the power of civilization in the form of the love in people around you. I end up in a bit of a panic,

because I can't see it. I close my eyes in desperation. All of a sudden I remember Noverosa. I focus on my inner being. I can hear the temple songs and under my feet I can feel the pebbles of the path leading to the temple. ('Don't run!').

There is the fragrance of the rose garden and suddenly I become aware that simplicity isn't so strange after all when I think of the description of the universal power, a simple spark, born of a great fire, present in every human heart.

The panic fades when I realize that we all have the same origin and everyone knows it with certainty from deep within. The quest for unity is a shared history. It is everyone's search.

Now I can feel it again. I know again who I truly am - what my true identity is. I know again where I come from.

This is a new chance. I did not even know that I had a need for it. Although I am on the other side of the world I truly feel connected and finally am at home again. It doesn't matter where I am. ★

International Young Rosicrucians Week –

Each summer hundreds of young Rosicrucians between the ages of 18 – 30 work at a conference centre for a whole week, last year at Renova in the Netherlands. As someone said: “A young Rosicrucians’ week is like a building-construction: “Together we will build a new construction with each other”.



Arriving

There are so many opportunities available each summer to the participants and therefore as many thoughts about going or not going to a young Rosicrucians’ working week. Yes, there is resistance, but there is also a call. Do you make this choice with your head or with your heart? It might be a matter of course that you go to this working week. There are even young people who have never skipped a single week. A matter of course doesn’t automatically mean that there is no need to make a choice, only that the choice is not that difficult. In the words of a one young person: “There was an opportunity, but not a choice. I had to go”. A call resounds through the

world and we answer it. It is a feeling, an inner urge that tells us that we just have to go to the young Rosicrucians’ week. And we do go. There is no need to unravel this feeling in detail with our head (Where does it come from? What does it mean? What reasons do I have to go?). It is actually impossible to describe the call in words.

“The call does not depend on space or time” as one young Rosicrucian said. “I have travelled for 14 hours in order to get to Renova, but I don’t mind, I had to go. If I had to travel for 24 or 34 hours, I would have still gone”. However, sometimes there certainly is some doubt - a little voice whispering that you maybe don’t want to go. Or there is a choice between go-

ing to the young Rosicrucians’ week or somewhere else. In such a case it is not so obvious and it becomes necessary to make a conscious choice. If for a moment you stop and think of the School and of preceding summer weeks then a longing will emerge and the inner certainty that unconsciously the decision to go has already been made.



- August 9-16, 2015 at Renova



That is why, they say, that the Sphinx, which was built in this era, was sculpted in the image of a lion. There are present-day archaeologists who state that its age is actually far older than was first supposed and that the sculpture was formerly adorned with a lion's head, receiving its pharaoh head only in later times.

The sculpture is aligned precisely to the east, the place where the sun comes up. But even more remarkable is the fact that in those times this direction was exactly aligned with the place in the firmament where the zodiacal sign of Leo appeared at night.

Through the ages people have attributed various functions to this prince of Light, all of them having to do with transmission, connecting.

To the Egyptians in the era of the pharaohs he represented Thoth, the ibis god. Thoth was the neter (the Power) who accompanied the deceased to the throne of Osiris. There it was revealed to the deceased how his life was judged and it was there that his soul was placed on the famed scales.

His heart was weighed against the weight of a feather – the feather of Ma'at – the cosmic order, the true equilibrium.

It could not be too heavy for that would show that the soul had dived too deeply into the sea of matter. On the other hand it could not be too light for this proved that this man or woman had not properly fulfilled his tasks on earth.

Only if the scales were in good balance was this soul allowed to fight in the phalanx of Horus, to work the heavenly fields of Jalu and later, when the Light was sufficiently strong in him, to take his place aboard the bark of Isis to undertake the journey to the Fields of

Consciousness of Osiris himself.

One of the names the Greeks had for Trismegistos was Hermes Psychopompos, Guide of souls, a name taken directly from the Egyptian system of thought.

As soon as a human being falls asleep or dies, Hermes with his two companions Hypnos (Sleep) and Thanatos (Death) accompanies him to those areas where he may best continue his development. For there is never a standstill and all things must follow the cosmic processes. Hermes accompanies what is divine to the Elysium Fields because one who has contributed to the Light on earth will rightfully be accepted there in the abode of Phoebus Apollo, the realm of the sun.

Hermes is the connector. His dwelling place is 'the abode of the blessed in the clear sunlight' as Homer expresses it poetically. 'It is the palace of Cronus' says the Greek poet Pindar, 'the isles of time eternal where the liberated original sons of God live, as well as all the heroes whose names are immortal. These islands are far distanced from gods and men' continues the poet. 'There is always a cool breeze and the trees are adorned with beautiful golden flowers that ornament those who listen to the words of truth, goodness and righteousness that are spoken there.'

Hermetic workers in later eras safeguarded the ancient hermetic formulae of the Tabula Smaragdina. With wisdom transferred from teacher to pupil they kept up the practise 'to bring the above in harmony with the below'. The gnostics of Alexandria and Saïs translated 'the many books of Hermes' into the Greek mode of thinking and phraseology and thus they have come to us, be it in fragments.

As well, excerpts had been preserved

by the learned poets and alchemists of Arabia Felix, Blessed Arabia as the Near East region was termed in the Middle Ages.

And we certainly have to thank the workers in the Middle Ages, now called the Dark Ages though it was a time in which the spiritual Light still did ascend to the spheres of the Spirit of Life. This ascending flow continued in many places, both small and large, by means of seekers devoted to the spiritual gold that had been lost in man.

In the Renaissance period Hermes was awakened once again when Ficino and his Academia Platonica rediscovered the Greek-hermetic text of the Corpus Hermetica following the sack of Constantinople in 1453. They thought that the writings were older than Plato and Pythagoras – which is correct in a sense for they go back to very ancient wisdom – and so Hermes gained in importance and was revered with the same veneration as were Moses and Jesus. The 14th and 15th centuries then became the era of Hermes for he made a glorious comeback though he lost his status again in the 17th and 18th centuries when rational and illuminative thinking gained momentum. It is only in the esoteric thinking of the Rosicrucians, the latter

”Seven stars, all different in their orbit, swirl round the threshold of Mount Olympus and with them, infinite time advances everlastingly.” He then names the seven known planets at that time. The Moon, shining in the night - fearful Cronus (Saturn) – the gentle Sun - the goddess of Paphos (Aphrodite or Venus)

Seven stars, all different in their orbit, swirl round the threshold of Mount Olympus
.....



of the bridal bed – brave Ares – Hermes of the fast wings - and Zeus, eldest and the source from which nature originates.

They are the Presences to whom the lineage of man has been entrusted and thus we find within ourselves also the Moon, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, Saturn, Sun



and Mercury. And consequently we find within ourselves, conceived through the Life Spirit, tears, laughter, anger, procreation, intelligence, sleep and longing. The tears are from Cronus (Saturn), procreation is from Jupiter, communication from Mercury, anger from Mars, sleep from the Moon, longing from the goddess of Kythera, Aphrodite or Venus, and the laughter derives from the Sun for thanks to him rejoice all sensible mortals as well as the infinite cosmos.“

This concept was universally accepted in those times. The planets gave us our communal human qualities and in that sense every human was a microcosm, for people did not see themselves as separate individuals as much as we do in our time.

A person’s characteristics were given him by the gods and he was therefore governed and directed by them and in this manner went through his experiences in life.

According to the hermetic philosophers all the planets exerted their influence on his life. They maintained that the world, the cosmos, was God’s body and man was an image of that body on a small scale since the soul is coerced into the body. And so the soul gathers experience and learns to be good and to yearn for the ‘Only Good’ which is: to be perfect. That is the reason for our existence and the goal for every human being. In Hermes’ own words: “As the body leaves the mother’s womb when it has outgrown it so the soul will leave the body when it has grown to perfection. For as the baby cannot live outside the mother if it is not yet full-grown so

the soul cannot live on if it leaves the body in an imperfect state.

Perfectness for the soul is to have full knowledge of what exists in all eternity. In the same manner as you will treat the soul when it inhabits your body, so the soul will treat you once it has left your body!”

Many philosophers through the ages are agreed on this conclusion: an essential quality of man is his ability to choose. This is due to his desire to be good, to do well, and to enter fully in that which is Exalted, Good, and True. This he has learned on earth through his bodily existence, due to the gifts of the gods within his soul and thanks to the eternal immortal Spirit who thinks in its vast Depth and Silence, pondering and reflecting, observing and perceiving, and in eternity creating because it is eternal Joy. Thus Hermes taught. ✨

Sunset at 348 km altitude above the Pacific Ocean. Photo taken from the International Space Station

A photograph showing a dense cluster of monarch butterflies on a plant with green leaves and reddish-brown stems. The butterflies are in various stages of flight and resting on the leaves. The background is a clear, bright blue sky. The text "Make a good start" is overlaid on the top right of the image.

Make a good start





KNOWING WHAT



TO DO

For heavens sake, go and do something!, many a mother has cried. And: 'Get off that sofa'. Doing nothing was just not an option for her. She

herself was raised with the saying 'the devil makes work for idle hands'. And work is still the necessary format in Europe. Unemployed older people have to apply for work that is just not available. Acknowledging that there is not enough work for everyone, unless it would be drastically redistributed, is not on the cards. Because of the expansion, especially in agriculture, the holy belief that 'whoever has no work shall not eat' no longer applies.

Our engrained work ethos should rather become an ethos of a fair distribution of work. Then free time could also be divided more fairly instead of wondering how we are going to fill in all this free-time.

We would then be free to fill it in to our own satisfaction. From feeding our Big Egocentric Me with its ingrained consumerism on the one hand of the spectrum to serving our fellow men on the other, or any gradation of behaviour in between these two opposites. Big Me is a term coined by the humanist Harry Kunneman. Big Me has the following three characteristics: he gets bigger all the time because of his gross consumerism – he blows itself up by making himself very important and he has a very thick skin.

Any moral condemnation of him bounces off this thick skin and these features relate not only to this symbolic individual but also to the economy, politics and ecology of our time. Mankind as a whole behaves like Big Me, says Kunneman.

At the same time there are also many people who choose the alternative, to serve others. This is often difficult to implement, as the needs are endless, both physically and mentally. Where do you start? A simple rule for this is: do what your hands find to

do. If we have this attitude the certainty of what you have to do will certainly manifest itself. We have so many talents to utilise.

The philosopher, Wilhem Schmid gives us this definition of work – 'Work is everything I do in relation to myself and my life, in order to lead a good and valuable life.' This statement it is not about paid or voluntary work, it is all about the intention with which my work is done.

In her book *The Intention Experiment* Lynn McTaggart gives countless examples of the influence of both an individual's and a group's conscious intentions in various situations and circumstances. In her book she describes many scientifically based experiments that show that our consciousness directly influences matter – a fact that traditional science hasn't as yet accepted. McTaggart states that everything around us is influenced by our thoughts and intentions, and that this essential influence is much greater than we imagine.

The Rosicrucians view on service to others is all about an inner service. and has its basis in a an inner state of peace and balance.

J. van Rijckenborgh describes this in the Chinese *Gnosis* chapter 15: "You will live in perfect tranquillity of soul, whether in the temple or outside of it, and you will enter the stillness, the silence, the great calm.

In the times drawing near, we will really need this state of being if we want to avoid being drawn into the fierce turmoil of the material world.'

Relating to this peaceful principle, we may now understand Lao Tzu's well-known verse better in which he states: "By not-doing everything is done". Only self-surrender to the inner silence gives us the right intention for the physical work.

The Voice of the Silence states "There is space in you for acting and for non-acting" and warns us at the same time: "Non-acting, as a result of selfishness, can only bear bad

fruit. Sow loving deeds and you shall harvest their fruit.' But of course it is also: 'For heavens sake, do something! Because if you remain passive where acts of charity are necessary, than you are in error and will fail.'

Do what your hands find to do. What you do does not matter all that much for unfortunately whatever we do in the material world is subjected to the law of opposites. The essence and the consequence of this is: act good and badness is near. The Only-Good is in this respect certainly our inspiration but we must continuously be aware that it is not a part of our material world.

J. van Rijckenborgh, in his book *Dei Gloria Intacta*, describes how this inner balance is reached in which the soul is enlightened by the spirit and adds: "I can imagine that there are even circumstances when a Rosicrucian may be a soldier." He who understands how essential service is just has to do something. Even if there is no clear solution at the start and everything seems meaningless. The required insight is that through the 'universe', as the modern phrase is, or through Gods plan, as the Rosicrucians state, we are repeatedly given insights to see the true meaning of life for humanity as a whole.

What are your own inner values? We are worldwide pulled out of our comfort zone. The atrocities are all around us and



its victims are knocking at our doors. So do what you have to do even if it seemingly brings you no results as yet.

The Bible states: “Should someone possess all the worlds goods and close his heart for his brother or sister in need, then where is the love of God?”

And in the Voice of Silence we read: “If you ever want to harvest sweet peace and rest, sow then pupil, with the seeds of service, the fields of the future harvest. Accept the sorrows of being born.”

If we accept life as it is, then from the resulting peace within the soul we will

receive the inspiration to act spontaneously from its centre via a ‘not-doing through which everything is done’. Then our humanness will shine through everything we do. We accompany our fellow men through life as human beings on the same road and we don’t hold ourselves aloof.

The Voice of the Silence on this respect admonishes us: “Do not believe that living in proud seclusion, far from the people, will lead you to the goal of the ultimate liberation.

In new understanding, brought about by our self-surrender, we are suffused by a

silent joy – the Light is always there!

It is there also when you experience the hurt that your compassion with humanity calls up within you.

It is a still joy, always present in the background.

This awareness gives you the insight to know what to do. ✨

* J. van Rijckenborgh and Catharose de Petri, *The Chinese Gnose*, chap. 15



Students of the Trinity College in Cambridge follow a lecture on how archaeology may help to understand today's climate change. 2013, England



Plato and his Doctrine of the Idea

TEXT BY W.K.C. GUTHRIE
FROM THE CLASSIC WORK
'THE GREEK PHILOSOPHERS, FROM THALES TO ARISTOTLE'

In the mature years of his eighty year life Plato felt more and more attracted to the world of pure Being: the consciousness, i.e. the consciousness of the world that lies beyond the limited world of sensory perception – and even beyond and above the world of the streams of thoughts or the quicksilver mind.

It is the world of that which does not move and is immutable, of that which neither dies, nor is born. It is assumed that he spoke of this world only to his 28 students, who belonged to the core of his school, and whom he received in his home. For the other students in his academy, he taught a more general system to acquire knowledge.

This essay explains the essential prerequisites for the liberation of the soul. The various dialogues to which the writer refers on the surface deal with the ideal design and set-up of the city-state, but they can certainly also be interpreted as the pure Gnostic archetype which also inspired the founders of the Spiritual School of the Modern Rosycross.

We shall probably understand Plato's philosophy best if we focus on the two related motives that occupied him. He wished first of all to take up Socrates's task at the point where Socrates had had to leave it, to consolidate his master's teaching and defend it against inevitable questioning. But in this he was not acting solely from motives of personal affection or respect. It fitted in with his second motive, which was to defend, and to render worth defending, the idea of the city-state as an independent political, economic, and social unit. For it was by accepting and developing Socrates's challenge to the Sophists that Plato thought this wider aim could be most successfully accomplished.

The doom of the free city-state was sealed by the conquests of Philip of Macedonia and his son, Alexander the Great. It was they who were the cause that that small compact unit of the city-state was swamped by the growth of huge kingdoms on a semi-Oriental model. But they did no more than complete, be it in drastic fashion, a process of decline, which had been going on for some time already. The causes were, of course, in part political. There were the disruptive effects of inter-state warfare, and the disastrous effect on Athens - where the city-state organization of society had achieved its finest hour - defeat itself and the moral collapse

and internal tyrannies, which followed defeat. Feeding on these discontents, the prevailing currents of philosophical thought - with which we are at the moment concerned - had played their part in undermining the traditions, the accepted conventions if you like, on which the smooth continuance of life in the little city-state to such a large extent depended.

To appreciate the situation, we must realize how completely identified were the state and its religion. It was not a case of making the Church subordinate to the State. There was no word for church at all, nor did such a thing exist apart from the state itself. The gods were worshipped at festivals, which were state occasions, and participation in them was part of the ordinary duties and activities of a citizen as such. Although many gods were worshipped at Athens, the patron of the city, and the deity nearest to every Athenian's heart, was of course Athena, and the coincidence of name is significant. Religion and patriotism were the same thing. It is as if the religion of Britain were the worship of Britannia. The Acropolis of Athens was Athena's own rock, and crowned by the temple dedicated to her. Her festival was the most important in the Athenian calendar. We may be reminded that the sanction of the law was rooted in the traditional belief of its divine origin. Laws had been given to the first law-makers, as the tablets to Moses in Jewish belief, by the god of the people, or to be

more specific, by Apollo, acting as the mouthpiece or prophet of the Father of all the gods, Zeus. Such a thing as personal and individual religion was unknown to the great majority of citizens. The sects which attempted to introduce it never achieved much influence so long as the city-state held together, and in so far as they had any success, they were subversive of the established order.

It follows that to question the established religion was to question the basis of the whole established order of society, and that no defense of the city-state could be adequate if it remained only on the political level. A reasoned defense of its laws and institutions must provide them with an absolute or transcendent validity, which could not be divorced from the theistic conception of the government of the Universe.

It was of course impossible to reinstate the old Homeric pantheon in all its glory of 400 years earlier. These all-too-human figures and naughty gods had had their day, and even apart from the

attacks of atheistic philosophers or Sophists, they could not recapture the allegiance of an intelligent and increasingly enlightened community.

But if gods in the old anthropomorphic form were doomed in any case, something must be put in their place to restore an element of order and permanence, which in the late fifth century was rapidly vanishing, both from the sphere of human conduct and from that of nature.

In the field of thought, the attack on the traditional bases of established institutions was threefold: from natural philosophy, from the sophistic movement, and from mysticism.

With the third we shall not be much concerned here, but we may note in passing the existence of independent religious teachers, of whom those who used the writings attributed to Orpheus were the most important, whose doctrine was subversive in that it taught that a man's religion might concern his own individual soul and not his duty to the State. The danger of natural philosophy lay in its lesson that the gods could not possibly exist in the form in which the city had inherited them from Homer; and that of the Sophists in their suggestion that the laws of the city had after all no divine sanction: they had been made by man and might as easily be unmade.

These various currents of thought had already been having their effect

for some time when Plato wrote his thoughts down. Since he was among other things a practical political thinker, who had renounced an active political career only to devote his life to the consideration of political ideas, he was bound to follow one of two courses. Either he must recognize (as he is sometimes nowadays blamed for not recognizing) that the city-state with all its institutions and convictions belonged to the past, join with the disruptive forces, and out of the different elements that had brought about its downfall build up a new society and a new religion to take its place. Or else he must use all his powers to uphold the city-state, refuting its opponents where they seemed wrong, and using them only to add strength to its framework where they were right and represented an element the lack of which was a weakness in the existing order.

In any case the two sides, political and religious (or metaphysical), must blend. No real reform of the fundamentals of political thought could take place without a corresponding reform of men's ideas about the whole nature of reality. All this was clear to Plato, and he threw the whole of his forces on the side of Hellenism and the city-state. The writing of the Republic in the prime of his life, and his

For the people of Athens, the first laws came from Apollo, acting as prophet for the Father of all the gods, Zeus

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It might indeed be impossible to
reinststate the old Homeric pantheon
with its all-too-human figures



Plato's grotto? Crystal cave in the Sequoia National Park, California, USA

return to the same subject at the end of it with the Laws, show that he was true to the same ideal throughout, the ideal of a reformed society based on the purification and strengthening, not on the abolition, of the city-state. Among the ruling classes in Plato's Republic the individual is subordinate to the common weal with what appears to our eyes an excessive relentlessness.

From these, the most valuable citizens of the state, property and family life is taken from them and is replaced with a communal supervision of their children and the (re) distribution of duties and privileges according to an almost inexorable system of class-distinctions. All this seems shocking to us.

One of the listeners in the Dialogues is moved to remark that those who in the new order are to be the masters of the state do not seem destined for a particularly happy life, since they will have no houses or lands or other possessions but live as if they were a garrison of mercenaries, without even drawing a mercenary's pay, as Socrates points out to make his friend's criticism even stronger than it was.

The only reply given is: 'Our aim in founding the city was not to give especial happiness to one class, but as far as possible to the city as a whole.'

The measures proposed were the logical conclusion of the city-state and Plato saw that it had no chance of survival unless it were pushed to its logical conclusion and deprived of the individual vagaries which, in the circumstances of the time, only gave room for the operation of the

destructive forces already at work within it.

Only if it preserved a homogeneity, or rather a harmony as Plato would have preferred to express it, based on the acceptance by each citizen of an allocation of function according to character and capacity, could it hope for salvation. No wonder that the saint of Platonism is Socrates, who sat in prison awaiting his death while his friends planned his escape and replied to their suggestions in statements like: 'Do you think a city can go on existing, and avoid being turned upside-down, if its judgments are to have no force but are to be made null and void by private individuals?'

The most pressing question arose directly out of Socrates's own teaching. In his simple endeavour to make men better, and persuade them, as he himself put it, to 'care for their own souls', he had tried to make them see that they

ought not to be content with noting individual acts of virtue - just, brave, kindly acts and so forth - but should do all that they could to understand and define the nature of the justice, courage or kindness, which lay behind them. It is not likely that the difficulty, which this involves was first raised by Plato himself. It was inevitable that the single-minded zeal of Socrates, who as Aristotle said, concerned himself exclusively with questions of conduct and not at all with the nature of things as a whole, should arouse questions and criticism in the lively and sceptical intellects of contemporary Greece.

The question is this. Your exhortation, Socrates, involves a large assumption; the assumption that such a thing as justice or virtue does exist apart from the acts in which it is manifested. But does absolute justice or virtue in fact truly exist? The truth is that a number of people have acted in different times and circumstances in a way which we call just. But none of these separate actions is claimed to be identical with the perfect justice whose definition is being sought. They are all thought to be only very imperfect approximations to it. Yet after all, what can be said to exist except the individual's just acts? And if your universal justice does not exist, what is to be gained by pursuing such a will-o'-the-wisp?

A second object of criticism was the exhortation to 'tend one's soul', and to do it by the very method of self-questioning on which Socrates insisted: for this suggestion too was one of extreme novelty. Most Greeks were matter-of-fact in outlook, with both feet firmly planted on the ground. The psyche was not something in which

they were greatly interested. They were content with vague notions, inherited from primitive belief and canonized by their acceptance in Homer, that it was a kind of breath or vapour which animated the body but in turn was dependent on the body for its efficacy. At death the body perished, and the psyche, left as it were homeless, slipped out into a pale and shadowy existence without mind or strength. Even for those who through the mysteries hoped for something better after death, it was a new and astonishing thing to be told that the psyche was the seat of the moral and intellectual faculties and of far greater importance than the body.

To uphold these novel views in the face of criticism, the two sides of philosophy with which we started, metaphysical and moral, had to be brought together. It was a task for which Plato was supremely fitted, for unlike Socrates he had a keen interest in the problems of the nature of reality for their own sake, as well as in those of ethics. In coming to a decision on the central question of what was real and what was not, Plato was deeply influenced by two earlier thinkers, Heraclitus and Parmenides.

The Heracliteans maintained that everything in the world of space and time was continually flowing, as they put it. Change never ceased to operate for a moment and nothing was the same for two instants together. The consequence of this doctrine appeared to be that there could be no knowledge of this world, since one cannot be said to have knowledge of something which is different from moment to moment. Knowledge demands an

Most Greeks were matter-of-fact in outlook, with both feet firmly planted on the ground. The psyche was not something in which they were greatly interested.



object to be stable in order to be observed and known.

Parmenides on the other hand had said that there is indeed such a stable reality, which can be discovered only through the activity of the mind working altogether apart from the senses. The object of knowledge must be immutable and eternal, exempt from time and change, whereas the senses only bring us into contact with the mutable and perishable.

These reflections, together with a deep interest in Pythagorean mathematics, were brought by Plato to bear on the questions of definition which Socrates had raised in the ethical field. For him two things were simultaneously at stake, not only the existence of absolute moral standards which was the legacy of Socrates, but also the whole possibility of scientific knowledge, which on a Heraclitean theory of the world was a chimera. Plato had a passionate faith in both, and since a sceptical answer was for him unthinkable, he did the only other thing possible. He maintained that the objects of knowledge, the things which could be defined, did exist, but were not to be identified with anything in the perceptible world. Their existence was in an ideal world outside space and time. These are the famous Platonic 'Ideas', so called by a transliteration of the Greek word for idea which Plato applied to them, and which meant form or pattern.

In one way then the English word 'idea' is about as unsuitable a rendering as could be found, for to us it suggests what has no existence outside our own minds, whereas to Plato the *ideai* alone had full, complete, and independent existence.

In another way, however, the English word will help us to understand what it was to which he attributed this perfect and independent existence. We say that we have an 'idea' of goodness or equality, which enables us to mean the same thing when we talk of good wine or a good cricketer, equal triangles and equal chances, although there may seem to be little in common between wine and cricketers, triangles and chances. If there is not some common ground of meaning when the same epithet is applied to different objects, then communication between man and man must be given up as impossible.

This common ground we call the idea or conception of goodness or equality. Most people would fight hard for their right to continue using the word 'good', and would claim that it has a meaning of its own. Yet its use involves a real intellectual problem, and in fact some philosophers to-day, when Platonic beliefs are rather out of fashion among our schoolmen, are very much inclined to question the claim that the use of general terms is legitimate at all. Certainly some of us who use them might be hard put to say what there was in common between the bodily skill required to bowl a straight ball or hit a difficult one, and the flavor of a wine.

Plato would maintain that they had indeed something in common and that this could only be accounted for by the assumption that both alike partake in the Idea of the Good. You are right to speak as you do of the idea of goodness or equality, he would say, but it is just these things which you call merely ideas, or concepts in the mind, which we must believe to be absolute entities

with an existence independent of our minds and out of reach of time or change. Otherwise knowledge is an idle dream and its object fantasy. With this faith one may reasonably go on to seek for a definition of the good, and one will then understand two different phenomena of our world - the cricketer and the wine, say - in their common character as good, by referring them to it as a common standard.

We must suppose then an ideal world containing eternal and perfect prototypes of the natural world. Whatever of quasi-existence our changing world possesses, it owes to an imperfect participation in the full and perfect existence of the other. Since this is an attitude which has something in it of an almost religious faith, even of mystical experience, and cannot be entirely explained by rational argument (though Plato would have maintained very strongly that rational argument proves that we cannot do without it), Plato has recourse to metaphor to explain the relation between the two worlds. Aristotle fastened on this as a weakness, but it could hardly have been otherwise. Sometimes he speaks of the ideal world as the model or pattern of the other, which imitates it as far as material

things can, sometimes of a sharing or participation of the one in the existence of the other. His favourite word to describe the relationship is one which suggests that between an actor's interpretation of a part and the part as it was conceived by the author of the play.

We have come to the doctrine, as Plato did, by way of Socrates. Consequently we have met first the Ideas of moral and intellectual concepts. But Plato widened it to include all natural species. We only recognize individual horses as members of a specific species, and have a concept which enables us to use and define the general term 'horse', because in the non-material world we have stored the ideal idea of 'horse', from which the individual horses in this world imperfectly and transitorily are derived.

When Socrates in the *Phaedo* states: 'This is what I cling to in my heart, simply and plainly and perhaps foolishly ... that it is by beauty itself that things become beautiful', (1) he means, if we translate his words into a more modern terminology: 'We cannot give a scientific explanation of a thing unless we can relate it to the class to which it belongs, and that implies knowledge of the class-concept.' That last statement is one with which a great many people to-day would have no quarrel, yet they would not agree with Plato in attributing to that class-concept an individual existence of its own, independent of the members of its class, or the constant and unvarying character which is the consequence of independent existence. If to Plato all this seemed to follow, then that was doubtless due to certain philosophical predilections of his own.

In the first place, he shared with Socrates those two fundamental characteristics, a faith in the possibilities of knowledge and a conviction of the need for absolute moral standards. And though it may seem to us that it is possible to share this faith without making the assumption that there are eternal entities outside the world of time and space, it was much more difficult to maintain this at the particular point in the history of philosophy when Plato was doing his thinking. We need only reflect for a moment on the preceding history of Greek philosophy, which we have looked at - the ceaseless flux, which the Heraclites attributed to the natural world and Parmenides who believed that what is real, must necessarily be eternal and unmovable.

In fact in modern day thought there is more concurrence to the Platonic Ideas than one might think. If challenged, their users would deny that they had any such concepts in mind, but in fact a surprising amount of every-day thinking is conducted as if there were real and unvarying entities corresponding to the general terms that we use.

In science, we have the Laws of Nature. Each of these laws, if not so much to-day then at least in the very recent past, is treated very much as if it had an existence apart from the events in which it is manifested; laws which are, of course, never entirely uniform, nor do they always work exactly the same. Challenged, the scientist will reply that of course these are only practical conveniences and no more than rough approximations to the truth. They represent strong probabilities but no more. Nevertheless, imposing edifices

of scientific theory have been built on the assumption of their invariable truth. Without the faith that the same laws of nature would operate to-morrow as they operated yesterday, science would make no progress. Yet it is no more than faith, unless we attribute a transcendental and absolute validity to them. We treat them as if they had this absolute character, while at the same time denying that they have it.

An even better example of the objectifying, at least in ordinary speech, of a general term is one which is commented on in an appendix to Ogden and Richards' book, *The Meaning of Meaning*. It is written by a doctor and his example is the use of names for different diseases. A word like 'influenza' is a perfect example of a general term covering a set of particular cases none of which are exactly alike. Yet it is commonly spoken of as an absolute, a thing which exists in its own right. Even if the point were put directly to them, a great many people would still fail to see that it had not a separate existence of this sort. Yet as the writer points out, there are in our experience no diseases, only sick people and not two have exactly the same symptoms. The general term does not stand for anything real, which exists over and above the individual cases. The point here is a practi-

cal one, since a careless objectifying of the disease can lead to a rigid and unimaginative approach by the physician which will be the reverse of beneficial to the patient.

We may say then that in one way Plato elevated to the status of philosophical doctrine, and defended as such, what many of us in our conversation and writing unconsciously assume; that is, the existence of something invariable corresponding to the general terms that we use, over and above the varying individual instances which are all that the term in fact covers.

The difference is that whereas the man in the street is still in very much the position in which Socrates found him, of throwing general terms about freely without pausing to think whether he knows what they mean, Plato's consciously held belief that these stood for a metaphysical reality was intended to endorse the lesson of Socrates that we would never get anywhere unless we did that very thing - i.e. take the trouble to find out exactly what they mean.

Given, then, the existence of a perfect and timeless pattern-world, and given that whatever reality we may attribute to the phenomena of the world in which we live is due to their sharing to a limited extent in the reality of the transcendent Forms: how and when (it may be asked) did we make the acquaintance of those eternal Forms so that we can as it were refer to them in order to identify the creatures that we see, or to recognize as partaking of the good or the beautiful any action that we see performed?

Here Plato developed and confirmed, in the light of the religious teaching of

In Plato's philosophy Reason expressly includes 'feelingly thinking' and the still observing of what is right and reasonable

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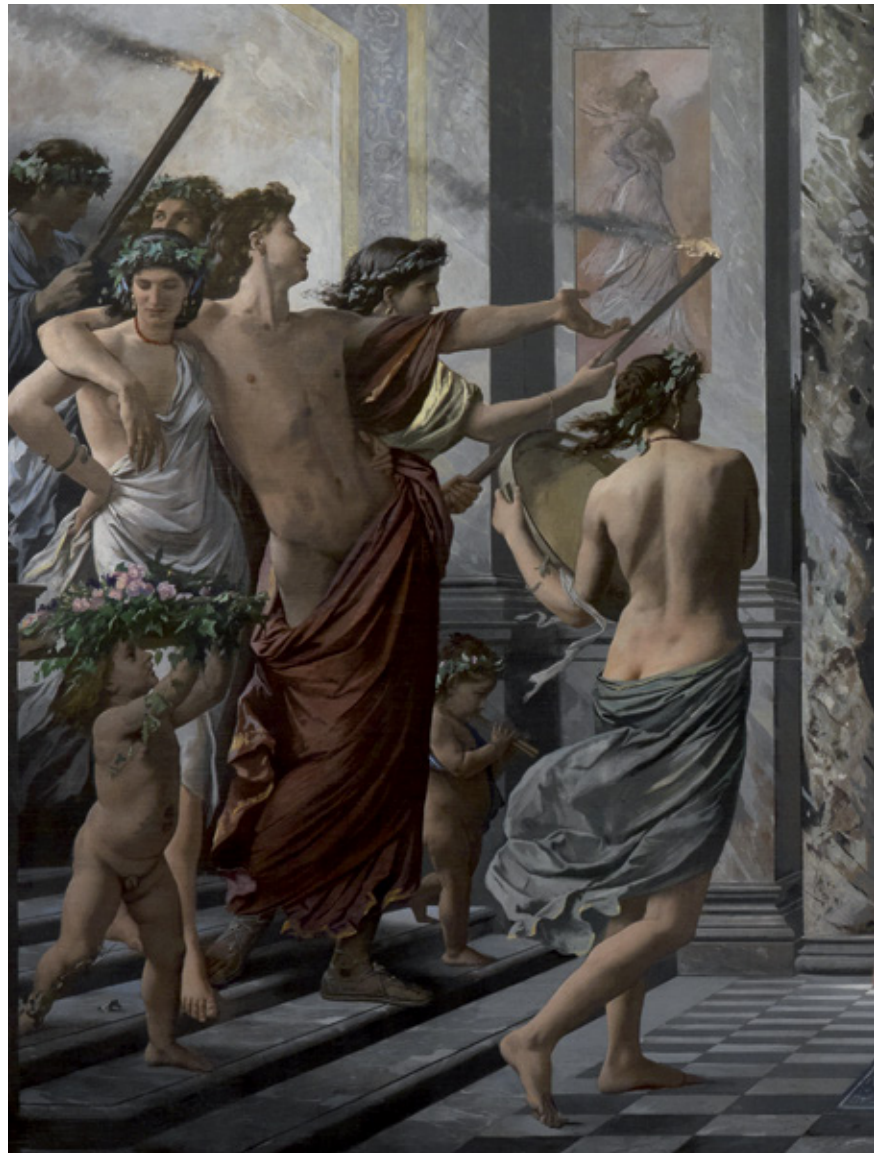


the Orphics and Pythagoreans, another side of Socrates. It was said earlier that another Socratic exhortation which needed amplification and defense was the exhortation to 'tend one's soul', and it was in the doctrines of the religious reformers about the nature of the psyche that Plato saw the bridge between the earth-bound human mind and the transcendent world of the Ideas. In ordinary Greek belief, when the body perished, the psyche, now a mere homeless wraith, slipped out ('like smoke', as Homer described it) into a pale and shadowy existence without mind or strength, which were given it as the result of its investiture in bodily organs. Perhaps (as Socrates on the day of his death mischievously accuses his friends of believing) it was particularly dangerous to die when a high wind was blowing, for it might catch up the psyche and scatter it to the four corners of the earth! It was not surprising that in the atmosphere of such beliefs the affirmation of Socrates that the psyche was far more important than the body, and ought even to be looked after at the body's expense, met with a good deal of incredulity.

In support of this conviction of his master, Plato reaffirmed the truth of the Pythagorean religious doctrine that the soul belongs in essence to the eternal world and not the transitory. It has had many earthly lives, and before and between them, when out of the body, has had glimpses of the reality beyond. Bodily death is not an evil for it, but rather a renewal of true life. The body is compared both to a prison and a tomb, from which the soul longs to be released in order that it may fly back to the world of Ideas with which it had converse before its life on earth. The doctrine of Ideas stands or falls

together with the belief in the immortality - or at least the pre-existence-of the soul. It explains learning - the acquisition of knowledge in this life - as a process of recollection. The things that we perceive around us could not implant in us for the first time a knowledge of the notions of the universal and the perfect which we believe ourselves to possess. But because we

have already had a direct vision of the true realities, it is possible for the feeble and imperfect reflections of them on earth to remind us of what we have once known, but forgotten owing to the soul's contamination with the material dross of the body.



Plato's Symposium, by Anselm Feuerbach, ca. 1869. In the picture, we see Agathon, who welcomes Alcibiades. The contrast between the drunken guest and the spiritual figure of Agathon, depicts the inner struggle of the painter. The painting is full of symbolism that refers to the spiritual life of Plato's Academy. Feuerbach worked more than fifteen years on this topic.



On the one hand, the Heracliteans maintained that everything is continually flowing. Parmenides, on the other hand, said that there is a stable reality

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The Academy of Plato, mosaic at Pompeii, before 79 AD

The basic assumption of the doctrine is that the imperfect by itself could never lead us to knowledge of the perfect. No two things in this world are exactly, mathematically equal. If then we have a definable idea in our minds of the true meaning of the word 'equal', we cannot have got it merely from an examination and comparison of sticks which we see or lines which we draw. These physical approximations have to be studied, but only because they can assist the mind in its business of winning back the perfect knowledge which it once had and which therefore is now latent within it. That is the role of sensation in the acquisition of knowledge. It cannot be dispensed with, but since all knowledge acquired in this world is in fact recollection, once he has been set on the way by sense-perception the philosopher will ignore the body as far as possible and subdue its desires, in order to set free the soul (that is, for Plato, the mind) and allow it to rise above the world of sense and regain its awareness of the perfect forms.

Philosophy is, in the words of the Platonic Socrates, 'a preparation for death', in that its business is to fit the soul to stay permanently in the world of the Ideas instead of being condemned to return once more to the limitations of a mortal frame. This view of the soul's nature, as the ultimate explanation of the possibility of knowledge, permeates the whole of the *Phaedo*, where it is expounded in dialectical form as well as in the symbolic language of the final myth.

In another dialogue, the *Meno*, an attempt is made to treat the theory of recollection as something susceptible

of logical proof, although the combination of religion and philosophy which it implies is suggested at the outset when Socrates refers to it as a doctrine held by 'priests and priestesses who make it their business to be able to give an account of their actions'. Elsewhere, however, this side of Platonism is mostly to be found in the great myths which form a kind of final set piece to so many of the dialogues.

The greatest is the myth of Er at the end of the *Republic*, where a complete account is given of the whole history of the soul, its series of incarnations, what happens to it between its earthly lives, and how when finally purified, it escapes the wheel of birth forever. The fact that we do not remember the truths which we have seen in the other world is accounted for in the myth by saying that when they are ready for rebirth the souls are compelled to drink of the water of Lethe (the river of forgetting). As they have just been made to traverse a scorching and waterless plain, there is a temptation to drink deep, and souls betray the degree to which they have advanced in philosophy by the strength which they show in resisting the temptation. All however must drink some, unless they are already destined for escape from the body into eternal communion with the truth. This motif of the water of Lethe can be paralleled elsewhere in Greece, both in myth and cult, and illustrates Plato's use of traditional material for his own purposes. In his own mind it was perhaps no more than an allegorical expression of the actual effect of contamination by the clogging matter of the body.

Again in the *Phaedrus* we have the more definitely allegorical myth in which the composite nature of the human soul is symbolized by the picture of it as a winged chariot in which a human charioteer, representing the reason, drives a pair of horses, one high-spirited and naturally inclined to obey the charioteer, the other bad and disobedient. These represent the brave, heroic side of human nature, including strength of will, and the bodily appetites respectively. Once long ago the chariot made its way round the very rim of the Universe where it could contemplate the eternal verities, but the restive plunging of the bad horse has brought it down and immersed it in the world of matter and change.

The fact that so much is expounded in mythical form has made it difficult for some people to be sure how far Plato intended it to be taken seriously. Perhaps the best answer that can be given is that which Plato himself gives in the *Phaedo*. There the immortality of the soul is made the subject of dialectical proof, and the dialogue then closes with a long myth in which much detail is given about the life of the soul after death. At its close, Socrates sums it up as follows: 'Now to maintain



Visitors in front of a wall that shows Biodiversity in the American Museum of Natural History, New York, NY, USA

that these things are exactly as I have said would ill befit a man of common sense; but that either this or something similar is the truth about our souls and their dwelling-places, this (since the soul has been proved to be immortal) does seem to me to be fitting, and I think it is a risk worth taking for the man who thinks as we do.'

We may take it that the existence of the Ideas, the immortality of the soul, and the view of knowledge as recollection were all seriously held philosophic doctrines. Beyond that point Plato thought the human mind could not go by its particular instruments of dialectical thinking. But these conclusions themselves necessitated a belief

in regions of truth into which the methods of dialectical reasoning could not follow. The value of myth is that it provides a way into these regions, opened for us by poets and other men of religious genius. We take account of myth not because we believe it to be literally true, but as a means of presenting a possible account of truths which we must admit to be too mysterious for exact demonstration.

In such brief reflections on Plato's philosophy as are being given here, it was a problem to know what to put in and what to leave out. Whatever the choice, it is practically impossible to avoid a one-sided picture of the man and his mind. So far I have chosen to speak of a fundamental doctrine like the theory

of Ideas and to allow it to lead on, as it naturally does, to the more metaphysical and even mystical side. Since moreover the works most commonly read by those with a general interest in Plato are the Republic and the Laws, and in them most attention is likely to be paid to the details of his political theory, this is perhaps justified. It is essential to understand the spirit in which he approached his task, and for the Republic at least, a knowledge of all the main doctrines that have here been outlined, and of the spiritual outlook which they represent, is an indispensable preliminary. Lest, however, what I have said so far should suggest a picture of him as sitting with his eyes for ever fixed on another world, we may remind ourselves before we stop of the sense of duty which he inculcates, e.g. in the allegory of the Cave in the Republic.

The philosopher who has succeeded in leaving the shadow-play in the cavern of earthly life for the real world in the sunlight outside, will, he says, inevitably be impelled to return and tell his former fellow-prisoners of the truth which he has learned. Such men in fact must form the ruling class of the Platonic Republic. 'Unless political power and philosophy meet together, there can be no rest from troubles.'

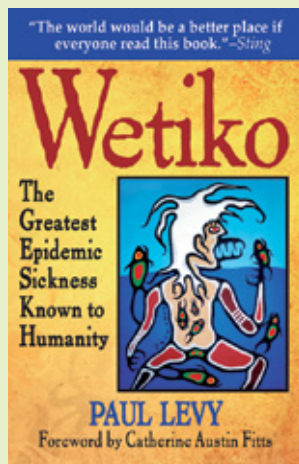
To govern adequately, its rulers must attain a wisdom that is almost divine, for if they are to direct the State towards the good they must know the truth and not merely its shadow. That is to say, they must recover the knowledge of the perfect Idea of which all the goodness in this world is but a pale, unsteady reflection. Hence the long and rigorous discipline which they have to undergo before they are adjudged fit to rule.

A preliminary education up to seventeen or eighteen is to be followed by three years of physical and military training. Then follows ten years of advanced mathematics, leading to five more years of study in the highest branches of philosophy. Some elimination takes place at each stage, and those finally selected are ready for subordinate posts at the age of thirty-five.

Political power will then be for these philosophers a burden rather than a temptation, but they will shoulder it for the good of the community. It is another indication that the ruling class in the Platonic state will be by no means the most fortunate, although in virtue of their enlightenment they are in Plato's view the most truly happy. ★

This article comes from the fifth chapter of W.K.C. Guthrie, *The Greek Philosophers from Thales to Aristotle* (1950)

Dispelling Wetiko – Breaking The Curse Of Evil



Born in New York in 1956, Paul Levy studied economics and fine arts. In the 1990s he worked for the Jung Foundation. After intense spiritual experiences, he founded 'Awakening in the Dream'- groups in which he accompanies people in discovering the true nature of our reality. He is a lecturer and tutor, a practicing Tibetan Buddhist and author, whose books include 'The Madness of George Bush: A Reflection of Our Collective Psychosis' and 'Dispelling Wetiko: The Greatest Epidemic Sickness Known to Humanity.'

« *Dispelling Wetiko* is one of those rare, courageous books that leads us where we would prefer not to go: into the depths of our own shadow. Yet this is the most essential journey for our present time ... It is a must-read, without a doubt. »

(Caroline Myss)

In *Dispelling Wetiko*, which means driving out wetiko that is: breaking the curse of evil, researcher-artist Paul Levy tells of a mental illness, a collective psychosis afflicting humanity that the indigenous American peoples call 'wetiko.' Someone who has degenerated to wetiko is plagued with excessive greediness and self-seeking, thriving on the life-energy of others, unable to muster any compassion. The author describes it as an ancient virus that has nestled in our psyche, behaving like a deranged antibody, seeing the healthy parts as tumors and attacking them.

Paul Levy further enlarges on this vision by explaining how this disease in our time breaks out before our eyes on a global scale with the devastation of our planet as a result. Examples galore: the deforestation of the Amazon (indeed the lungs of our planet), the oil pollution in our oceans, the unbridled greed of the Wall Street system, and the terrible wars and acts of violence that fill our media headlines.

For this disaster humans are to blame without a shred of empathy, infected by cancer of the soul, which turns them against humanity. The Gnostics of old already knew of this phenomenon, as is shown in the teachings of the archons and eons (see pentagram 4-2015).

In the author's vision, these psychosis-like expressions of the human mind ultimately acquire an independence and compel human beings on a subconscious level to a way of life wholly contrary to their deepest self. In such a life-practice all life-energy is food for the demon, a term he derives from C. G. Jung.

'Wetiko can also subliminally instill thought-forms and persuasions into our minds which, when unconsciously enact-

ed, feed this virus and will ultimately kill its host. Wetiko preys on the creative imagination that it lacks itself. As a result, if we do not use the divine gift of our creative imagination in the service of life, wetiko will use our imagination against us with lethal consequences. The wetiko predator competes with us for a part of our own mind, wanting to sit in our driving seat. Then, instead of sovereign beings that consciously create by means of our thoughts, we are unconsciously determined by them, since the wetiko pathogen literally thinks in our place.'

Another aspect that the author cites is the knowledge of quantum physics, which teaches us that the observer and the observed are not separate; that all things interconnect, as happens in a dream, and all phenomena inextricably correlate everywhere at every moment. This knowledge is fundamental for the correct understanding of our reality. The moment we understand how our individual and collective reality manifests itself- that moment of insight is the crossover point at which we can change things. And we would do well

Life is the art of returning to nature, without adhering to it, without romantically exalting it, but also without placing nature exclusively in a bad light, as if it opposes humanity and its path, for nature herself is no such opponent.

T

This is how positively the classical Rosicrucians regarded nature. Inspired by Paracelsus they write, 'Examine the book M,' the book of the world, Liber Mundi, the book of nature. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, nature was a great source of inspiration for several spiritual and scientific currents. To recognize the 'book' it is first necessary to determine man's anomaly with nature. This is of course subjective, but through knowing the anomaly, original nature may all the better inspire us. What first strikes one here is that nature is 'defiled,' or maybe one should say 'no longer pristine'. In Western countries there is usually not much of the original physical nature that is pristine. It is all developed, or even changed into 'new nature.' This has mainly to do with economy and how we have utilized nature to provide us profit and advantage - a profit-characteristic as old as humanity itself.

The glass circle 'Greeting to the Sun' glistens on the Zadar peninsula. Three hundred glass plates with photo voltaic cells absorb solar energy by day and after sunset respond alegorically with light in rhythm with the sounds of the adjacent 'Sea Organ.' Architectoral art by architect Nikola Bašić, Zadar, Dalmatia, Southern Croatia.



Our present day socio-economic straightjacket



Profit seeking

In that very special 17th century the concept of commerce was associated with the profit motive in a positive way. Pursuing profit or gain was a civil virtue and striving in one's own interest would give life to the populace as a whole.

In the twentieth century, the American novelist and philosopher Ayn Rand struck the same chord in her novel *The Virtue of Selfishness*: for the public at large it is better when each of us strives for gain and that self-interest prevails, for in the long term that will be advantageous for the community.

Self-interest is thus a civil virtue, with which the god of commerce was (and is) seen exclusively as a positive Mercury-quality and not as the god of thieves, as he was known in both capacities in Greek mythology.

In the seventeenth century, and more recently by Ayn Rand, commerce is understood exclusively as a positive Mercury-characteristic.

We know of yet another side of the god-of-thieves Mercury, also since ancient Greek mythology, trading year in year out, in a one-sided cultural perspective embodying the threat of violence.

Is 'profit' natural? Has this aspect of egoism something to do with a specific of human nature? Professor Inger Leemans says in *The Nature of the Economy* with regard to this: 'Capitalism is also a product of the imaginative power. A broad arsenal of concepts is necessary to make capitalism seem 'natural', to give traders confidence in the economic process and to provide a warrant for their self-image'. We have not only 'defiled' physical nature for profit and gain, but since that same seventeenth century, we have also cultivated the psychical and spiritual human nature. The human mind in particu-

lar must now also validate its economic motives.

The fast growing European world trade in the seventeenth century was not driven by an Invisible Hand, as the philosopher of economic liberalism Adam Smith dared to proclaim. On the contrary, contracts were sealed with oriental sultanates and South American and Asian rulers and chiefs under the threat of naval artillery.

Insight into the microcosm-macrocosm relationship?

Conclusion? Rather than deepen or illuminate our understanding of that highly praised nature, which, among many others, the classical Rosicrucians observed, culture has estranged us from nature. Culture gives us no deeper understanding of the microcosm-macrocosm relationship. At least not as long as we continue chasing profit for ourselves. Society grows more rigid and is polarized by it. Such a society of compulsive consumerism creates no enlightenment or new insight for the individual but rather more and more possibilities for addiction. Thus creating not a greater freedom in individual development, but a tighter binding to 'products' or what was formerly called 'matter' or 'dust' or 'earth'; a track that often runs from interest to fascination, and then to a habit and finally to dependence and addiction. In the mid 1990's a cell phone was useful, now it is indispensable, a social must-have, and you border on the antisocial if you are not reachable on a mobile device.

Deviation schedule

'Nature - culture - virtual reality' is how a modern thinker defines the modern human progression. In this context, what is the wisdom-potential for natural man? A wisdom that is gnostic and thoroughly knows the microcosm-macrocosm re-

lationship? Over the last four hundred years, the possibility has always existed to deepen the wisdom-knowledge relationship without doing violence to the nature of economic or power motives. But how is the development of wisdom and knowledge progressing?

Firstly, we should discern between wisdom and knowledge, for they are two different qualities. By expanding our knowledge, we have lost wisdom. We see the facts and descriptions of time-spatial phenomena, conditions, processes and functions as truths that are parts of wisdom. Yet through this culture of facts, we relinquish wisdom. With knowledge alone, we lose true wisdom. The cause of this is the lost connection, and the connection is love. Love makes it possible to establish the elements of wisdom in knowledge on a human plane. Then knowledge can be reasonable, which means 'beholding' in and out of the reason that is united with love. The transition from original nature to the facts-culture is a deviation. The 'objective' knowledge of the facts-culture is not

in itself enrichment for a consciousness that wisdom would embrace. Wisdom is the ability to behold and weigh-up all of life's realities, interconnections, causes and outcomes in a fraction of a second in order to choose the right action. The facts-culture can even become a burden when the upper room grows top-heavy and the scholar in us absent minded, no longer able to string together the vast domain of knowledge. Lacking the cohesive force, he can no longer manage to connect the links, and remains standing in the highly accelerated knowledge of a separated discipline.

In information, we lose knowledge

It can diverge even further, as shows when we examine the shift from knowledge to information.

Anno 2015 there is an overwhelming amount of information with a declining percentage of 'knowledge'. As we saw, wisdom is the faculty of interconnection. Knowledge is what you have accumulated and therefore 'know,' and about which you do not have to consult someone or something. Information is a totally differ-

WE ARE A ROCK HARD I

The human consciousness is currently individualised to the extreme. We are materialised to the extreme. We are a rock hard I-centred. We are conscious as an I-being in a physical world, a world that we perceive externally with our senses. This I-being experiences only differences, contrasts and contradictions. We see light because of its contrast, darkness et cetera. As an 'I' we can be conscious of something. We are externally oriented to other people, things and phenomena. We are consciousness relating to one point. We can distinguish three I-centres. The first is the belly 'I', the instinctual, animal I-being. This is clearly the strongest I, fighting for life's basic needs. It makes a human being viable in our world, for man has need of food and warmth and goes in search of it. Then a kind of adjustment, a certain culture arises by

means of the heart-I - feeling, and the head-I - thinking, both of which frequently come into conflict with the belly-I. Our upbringing mainly focuses on regulating the belly-I through the faculties of feeling and thinking. The I clothes it in a culture. It learns to be subordinate to others, driven by the fear of losing attachments, affection, love; thus maintaining a certain balance individually and collectively. As we know, it is a very delicate balance and, when threatened, the temper-regulated I-being mostly ends up being boss. Modern western scientific theories explain human behaviour on the one hand by hereditary factors, on the other hand by circumstances. We acquire behaviour. If something proves successful and rewarding, we do it more often. This concept explains human behaviour to some extent, but not entirely.

ent thing. Information does not serve the human consciousness aspect of 'knowledge' but represents a - sometimes even abstract - factuality that suggests the reality. The flow of information runs counter to the advice: 'Know thyself'.

But we do not dare to give this back; we do not say to Google 'that's your opinion, or that's your reality.' No, we take the facts for reality, and that diminishes our own human knowledge, the potential self-knowledge of our own microcosm in relation to the macrocosm.

No more grip on reality?

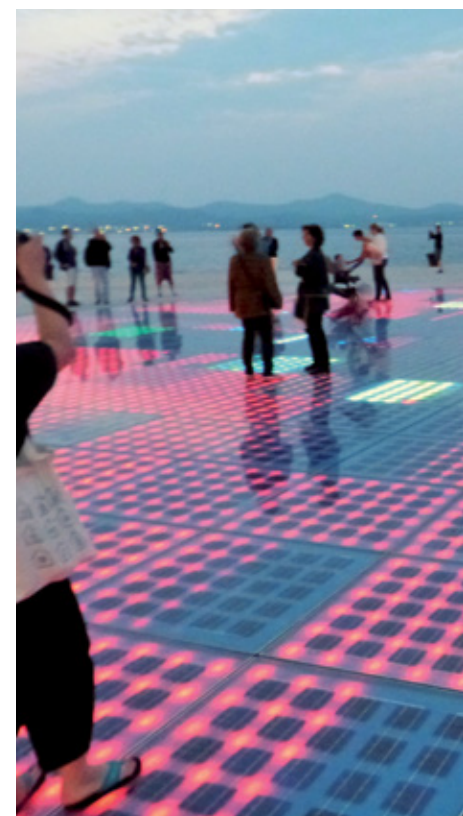
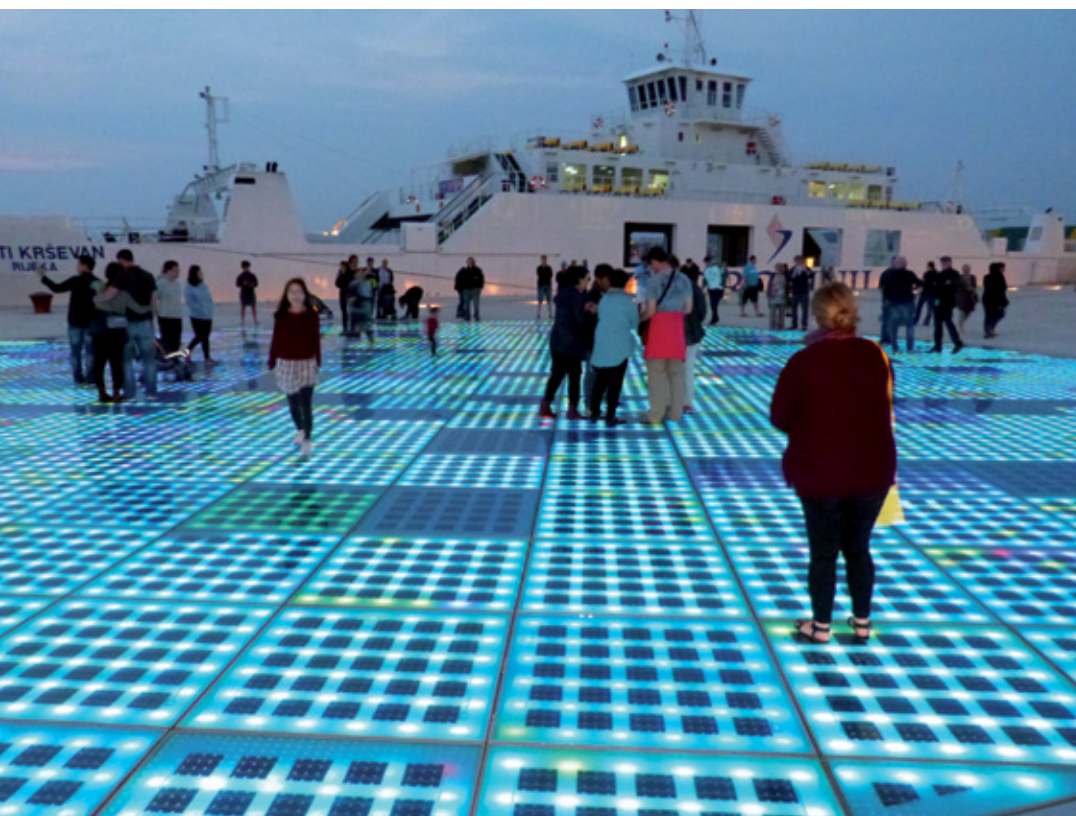
How is it that we let reality escape our awareness in this virtual arena? Primarily of course, because of the extent to which we have deviated from nature, and secondly because of the excessive informa-

tion we are bombed with which suggests that we cannot comprehend reality due to the complexity and quantity of the overload of data, which can no longer even be stored in our own already heavily loaded upper room. 'What one cannot hold and contain, one cannot reflect upon, and what one no longer thinks about, eventually does not exist.' Thus says German philosopher and anti-atomic activist Günther Anders.

Information management

For the soul, the downward turning point came with the start of the culture-era in which the industrial revolution began. Now it revolves not so much around the management of energy but of information, the output of which is wholly subordinated to our consumption.

Consumption must have the greatest possible turnover, achieved by offering for free as many information and communication products as possible, in exchange for which the consumers 'pay' with their highly personalized data and attention; and with that data and attention, new customized offers can again be made. This happens wholly outside of our perception-sphere, as if there is an invisible factory where an equally invisible work force catches and manipulates the consumer's soul. Automatic, easy catches, based purely on data. Taken up in this invisible



WE ARE OUR THOUGHTS, FEELINGS AND DESIRES

Human life also has a non-material side. As well as a physical being, we are also a feeling being and a thinking being. Our thinking, feeling and wanting is bound to a physical body, but it also forms a reality in itself. We think, feel and want. These are energetic processes. These processes within us connect with the outside world; a world of emotional and thinking energy and it is our connection with the world around us. Becoming conscious of this reality - that we are a thinking feeling being in a world of emotional and mental energy and its laws - could be called esoteric psychology: it means perceiving your relationship with these forces or energies.

What do we think, feel, want? What is taking place here? Can

we exercise any influence on it? What is our situation? We attract particularised emotional energy to ourselves with our feeling, our desiring, and we repel the things that we do not want. In this way, we consciously or unconsciously create an emotional field around us which we breathe in and out. It is a field in which we live, and precisely the same applies to our thinking and action life. We attract and repel forces.

This creates a very private reality. It is our own, personal reality - islands in the physical world, - which includes the worlds of feelings and thoughts. As I-beings, we all have our own perception, our unique interpretation of reality, and very clearly our own interests, that often clash with those of others.



labyrinth of servers every sender is a receiver, all are outputs and inputs. The raw material and endproduct of this digital-industrial chain is thus wholly to do with man, who is both input and output of the process. Muscles, nervous system, thinking and imagination, desires and deepest secrets, not the least thing may be overlooked, everything must be utilised in the production and consumption process, one's total energy and attention must be mobilised, one's entire soul and salvation must be oriented to production and merchandise.

Aberrant behavior and psychological disturbances in the virtual era

This total instrumentalization of people threatens to reduce the human being to a 'new proletariat', such as Hans Schnitzler describes in *The digital proletariat*, and the 'infocracy' that establishes its power through overload. The signature of this interminable and overwhelming expansion of information is brain hyperstimulation. Such hyperstimulation, writes Hans Schnitzler, can entail new disturbances, such as attention disorders, egomania, identity crisis, amnesia, solipsism, dissociative disorders, regression symptoms, violent fantasies, delusions of grandeur, obsession, compulsive neuroses (twitteritus, facebook-fetishism, compulsive click-and-surf behaviour), digital dementia, exhibitionism, tunnel reaction, info-socio obesity, digistress, game and sex addiction, depression, and so on, but we'd better stop here.

The restoration of nature?

O, how remote we are from nature! The English philosopher John Gray cautions: 'We must acknowledge however, that if we recreate nature and customize it to our human will, we run the risk of sculpting an image of our own pathologies.'

In just two decades, digital services and products have radically influenced the conditions of human existence. If the Internet would shut down tomorrow or if the 'cloud' disappeared in a mysterious black hole, the result would unquestionably be a global crash, life on earth would largely come to a standstill, says Hans Schnitzler. The digital infrastructure in place today not only conditions our daily concerns, it also infiltrates a number of fundamental life-conditions that define our humanity, the digital deforming of which interferes deeply with the essence of our human worth.

We can hardly fall back on a cultural heritage or memory, not even the enormous esoteric treasure of the preceding centuries

Return to which nature?

But is it still possible to go back? Back to that nature which is in accordance with our human worth? Despite its unmasked legitimatising of self-seeking, the market now governs and dictates the socio-economic conditions of our existence, tailored to the totalitarian infocratic regime to such an extent that one might consider that learning and breathing again in attunement with the original nature

nigh impossible. The more so since the susceptible elements of culture, such as a bona fide spirituality, trustworthy philosophical insights and inspiring and uplifting art, are failing more than ever.

We can hardly fall back on a cultural heritage or memory, not even the enormous esoteric treasure of the preceding centuries. Yes, of course you can look it up, google it, but increasingly only what you can experience at this moment is real. The American author Philip Roth already stated in 2001 that uplifting truths such as esotericism offers us, are not interesting anymore, and hardly tie-in with our consciousness, because they mostly presuppose a hidden reality that is different to the great exposed reality in which we live. People of today, especially young people, simply want to live and experience this greater reality directly, preferably not in text but in image form.

KARMA

All human behavior, thinking and feeling, has consequences and is, so to speak, remembered, stored. Everything we do, and do to others, forms force-lines and tensions that will have to discharge themselves again in space and the time - an elementary condition of the law of karma, which in modern terms we might call the law conserving the balance of energy. Karma protects the world and humankind, maintaining equilibrium. It takes care of the interconnectedness throughout the whole, the divine. One often sees karma as events that happen to us while we stand in the stream of time. Karma is also the specific flow of emotion, the continual, emotional coloring of all the events to which we are bound, against which we resist only with great difficulty. They are like addictions. In extreme cases we speak of obsessions. It concerns our feelings, thoughts and actions that control us via the subconscious I-being, the sum of our past.

Moreover, the major ideologies and composite doctrines are ignored, with the exception of the market ideology.

When in this light the virtual reality of the internet, and all the techno-economical developments that grew out of it, has us more or less wrapped and bound - or perhaps we have let ourselves be seduced into captivity and modern slavery - then any endeavour to return to the original nature would seem hopeless. Why should we? And who needs wisdom? After all, wisdom often relates to transparency, which entails an increasing number of disadvantages.

'Things become transparent when they are smoothed out and streamlined, flexibly accommodating the ripple-free flows of capital, communication and information,' the Korean philosopher Byung-Chul Han summarises powerfully.

About transparency, the French sociologist Jean Baudrillard says 'This hyper-visibility is our fatal condition, together with the end of the secret. When all the riddles are solved, the stars will be extinguished. When every secret is made visible, and more than visible - obscenely evident; and when every illusion has become transparent, then heaven leaves the earth to its fate.' So it is indeed true what the Rosicrucian Manifestos say about the mysteries: 'Unveiled mysteries become worthless, defiled they lose their strength.'

A wholly different orientation

Yet this excess of information - which our brain cannot process into the totality of consciousness relating to our soul - can offer a significant opening in this all but desperate situation. When, in the endless variety, complexity and infinite data a binding with the original undefiled nature is not possible, then perhaps it is possible in the context of the all-uni-

We can hardly fall back on a cultural heritage or memory, not even the enormous esoteric treasure of the preceding centuries

ty - the undivided wholeness of the great reality upon which we as humans depend - to unite with nature as the classical Rosicrucian saw her? As a source of inspiration, as the highest reality of wisdom and knowledge, can this mystical rose also flourish in the present time?

Which mercury ladder can we still climb?

Not nature-mystically, remaining at a standstill glorified in a romantic delight. That does not work, as the past three centuries have shown us. Yet there is an attitude of soul and spirit that can give us back our contact with nature via the unity and the One, enabling us to rediscover what is valuable and worthwhile. Not a natural mysticism but the mysticism-of-being can place us in the consciousness atmosphere that we can call spiritual. A *rosa mystica*. That is what mystic-magic orientation means.

In the book *The Confession of the Brotherhood of the Rosycross* (*Confessio Fraternitatis*), J. van Rijckenborgh presents the new orientation to nature in the chapter 'The Wonderful Book' as follows: 'We, who investigate the relationship between macrocosm and microcosm, see the magnificent equilibrium between all things. We, who grasp the narrow rungs of the mercury-ladder to lift our conscious being into the worlds of the unseen, see the

life-streams of nature's realms flow through the ether.'

The narrow rungs of the mercury ladder do not refer to the mercury influence of thieves and merchants, nor to the market that maintains the robbery in and of the world, nor to the derailed intellectual reasoning. That mercury ladder is the ascent to the mystic-reason. This ascent resembles a spiritual marriage. There is a very early rendering of the spiritual wedding by the Rhineland thinker Jan van Ruusbroec. In the thirteenth century, he recognised the dangers of nature-mysticism - musing in the spiritual sun without active involvement. He described this in *The Spiritual Wedding*. The theme of this work is 'Behold, the bridegroom comes - go out and meet him.' The last part is a mystic-magic necessity. It is an inner microcosmic happening, resonating with the macrocosm, completely in harmony with the original natural state.

The mysticism-of-being in the twenty-first century

That original nature, that Spinoza even called God, knows a source of wisdom and knowledge with no equal. In the wisdom of that nature, Divine Love reveals itself. Yet at the same time the necessity for the manifestation of man as a reflection of the Divine-Nature state, as microcosmic sons and daughters of God, because that is what nature desires most, according to Paul. Therefore, it is not merely entrancing to go the path, to accomplish the transformation in the power of Christ. It is not just a solution for those who are totally stuck in the virtual reality that they themselves have helped to create. It is out of sheer necessity, and out of the wisdom, which is love. ★

STRUGGLE AND RECOGNITION

What is our relation with the cosmos, with the All, the great sublime totality that is God? It is the relationship of a creative force: the creator with its creature, the created. In the deepest sense I recognize two possibilities. That is my liberty.

1. I struggle against reality, against creation; I want it different to what it is. I cut myself off and lay a series of causes on course that inevitably have consequences in space and time.

That is inevitable because in deepest essence reality cannot be divided, split. God is one. Also in space and time, the split remains one undivided reality. I only cut myself off and this will cause my death. I then eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

2. I acknowledge, recognise in myself the creator, which I myself am not. In this I immediately acknowledge, recognise the love that the creator is and sends to me. He sends me a force with which he creates, brings forth his child. The perfect creation, which is love. That force is sent to us. And crucified in ignorance. Crucified, because I struggle, fight and do not know what love is. When I stop struggling and surrender and give myself to this love, it becomes one with me. Together with him, we are again the Two, the creation from the tree of life.

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The blind spot



A sort of instinctive reflex spontaneously divides my observations into good and bad, into for and against, and so forces me to permanently take sides. But why should I accept this despotic reflex? For so I fashion an existence in which I go along with one half and reject the other, for that is what I do and I am therefore continuously saddled with a blind spot. Exactly at the spot where good and bad overlap my assurance that I am right cloud my observation. Because the middle ground is thus hidden and unavailable, I find myself in a battlefield of opinions and choices, which I then have to correct again later. And so, if I look at it afterwards, I may well wonder what the actual result was of a so-called success. Or of an apparent disappointment.

The ‘head’ side of the coin is the aspect that suits me best at the moment. If I turn to the ‘tails’ side, then both sides change their aspect and their alleged quality. In this way good and bad and front and back often change places. Friend turns into foe, a no-no becomes fashionable – and all of them are self-created walls cherished by my convictions at a certain moment.

And I – I walk headlong into these walls again and again – until I am finally prepared to give up my convictions and adopt another view. Until I am ready to question my right to mete out this impulsive summary justice and find myself willing to bring the ‘tails’ side of the coin to the fore. We’ve often heard it said: “Look at it from the other side’. Not always easy but certainly worth the effort. Where I feared for loss of face I gained another point of view.

Or we hear: “Make a virtue of necessity” as well as: “Nothing so bad but it brings some good”. We learn

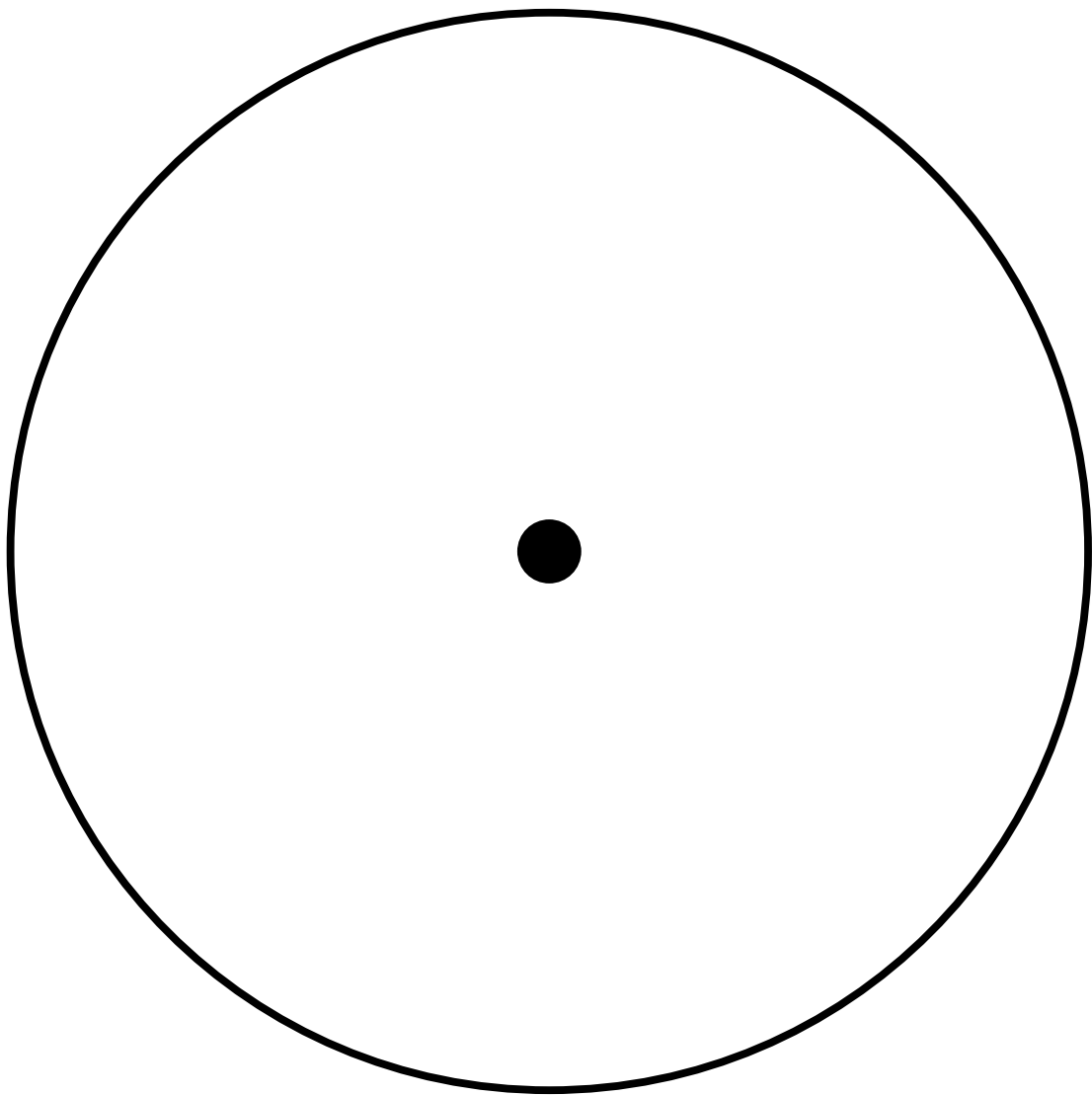
from all this that loss and gain are but relative qualities that harbour a unique essential with regard to the reconciliation of opposites, that is; the building of bridges between them. In this essential I detect the power of the hermetic quote: “As above, so below” – and yes, I discover it even in myself! Below I am governed by my need to be right but when I observe this in all honesty I realise how my being in the right crumbles because it is dissolved by the unifying ‘Force that never slumbers or sleeps,’ the force which extracts the right medicine from all these opposites. I only need to add some water in my (so called) wine – be it a sufficient quantity though – and just in time I am able to take the middle way.

Without heaven the earth is not worth living in

This middle way involves inhaling and exhaling life in its entirety. Taking and giving. When I observe my life in the hermetic way then all illusion evaporates and I stand eye to eye with myself. I am then the crucible of heaven and earth. The blind spot gradually dissolves and I receive a foretaste of Eternity. The stumbling block becomes a stepping stone - solid ground on which life unfolds and from which I may freely make my choices.

Without the earth heaven is tasteless. Without heaven the earth is not worth living in. Look around. Look at all the people who have forgotten this. When I unite the two spheres and leave the opposites behind me, then I will see a new heaven-earth. From that moment on I fully take up my responsibility and I am co-builder of the All. ★

Illustration: Golden coin of Philip II of Macedon, 359-356 BC



Circle and point

Sun – Circle – Spirit

The first symbol is a simple disc, an ancient and universal symbol of unity, wholeness and infinity. The second archaic symbol is a disc with a point in the centre, the first differentiation: the solar logos, neutral and infinite, as we learn from the “Secret Doctrine” of H.P. Blavatsky.

The point is the starting as well as the turning point. Thus there is a starting point but also expansion.

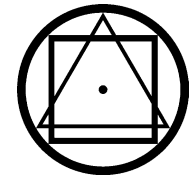
Together, the circle and the point within also represent the symbol of the solar system, the sun, the microcosm and man.

The point is the spirit, the spiritual seed, in which and through which all development becomes possible. The circle is the enclosure, the cosmos of the spiritualised matrix, a sacred space.

Gnostic traditions connect the continuous circle with Ouroboros, the ‘world snake’, which forms a circle by biting its own tail. In this sense the Spiritual School has connected its symbol to this universal starting point. The new symbol consists of nine elements, sorted in an exact determined order. This sequence will be actively used in everything that we as a School undertake:

- As a starting point, use the simplicity and the unity of the point, the turning point, the spirit, and create a conscious connection with the centre, with the rose, with the heart of the All-Creation, to be a central point in everything you do, even in the smallest and seemingly unimportant things;
- Connect the three powers of your soul – the fiery triangle of heart, head and hands, to that source as the basis, the true meaning behind all things – and let your soul be guided by the spirit within you;
- Initiate your most important activity: the construction of your own Being, on the basis of the square and harness the four forces of your personality – willing, thinking, desiring and acting, as the four horses to Apollo’s chariot in the service of spirit and soul;
- Finally place yourself on the universality of the circle, which encompasses everyone and reaches out to everyone. Manifest this in your life even unto the smallest details as a truly living connection between spirit and life, through the living forces of your reborn soul!

*The point – the turning point – the spirit
The triangle of the reborn spirit-soul
The foursquare of the transfigured personality
The circle of the new life field
Here, in this life, unveiled!*



Angel's Landing, 7 o'clock in the morning, on top of the world (Utah, USA) © Dong Nan Xi Bei



The spirit is the subtlest of all that can be perceived. The spirit is above all and reigns in the highest abode, subordinate only to the supreme Deity, Who is eternal, holy and exalted.



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