

Who are you

A survey into our existence

Part 1

Jan van Origo

Carla Drift and Man Leben are fictional persons.
No existing person has been model for them.

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Mysterium est magnum, quod nos procul dubio transcendit -
The mystery is great, that transcends us doubtless

- *Encyclical of Pope Johannes Paulus II on the Eucharist*

The biggest mystery are you yourself

- Carla Drift, *Man Leben - One Life, a Biography*

Acknowledgement

Without the familiar breath that shaped the complete universe in one sigh from start until end, this book would not be possible. I am deeply indebted my gratitude to the eternal wind – in Sanskrit वात or vāta – as manifestation of this breath.

I have received endless help from all manifestations in the universe that exist in its innumerable varieties.

As human being I acknowledge my deep gratitude to the Universe and World in which we live. The creation of this book took place in this area; without it this book would not be possible.

Without the contribution of all the women, men, mothers, fathers, children, gatherer-hunters, wanderers, farmers, craftsmen and - women, warriors, monks, priests, rulers, scientist and people not mentioned from the beginning until now, this book would not be possible.

Our Universe and World has been studied by many Scholars in innumerable ways. Without the giant outcome of all these studies this book would not be started. I am deeply indebted my gratitude to all these studies.

Special gratitude I am indebted to:

- o My mother and father, sisters and family,
- o Friends and colleagues
- o Teachers, schools and university,
- o Villages where I lived, schools I attended and places where I was employed.

Without the continuous support of Marieke – my wife and Hanna and Jaap – our children, the creation of this book would not have taken place. They gave invaluable input to the content.

Possible mistakes and omissions in this book are solely my responsibility.

Also I aimed at a complete reference. May omissions in references be noted, please forward these omission to the author.

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Introduction

Introibo [1]

"Who are you" is about you and me and everything around us. Nothing has been excluded in advance. Are you and I connected or are we separated? In what way are we connected? When and where are we separated? What makes you the person who you are and who has been involved in your creation? Who are you before you were born and who will you be after your death? Do you exist without an universe? What relationship do you have with the universe? How are you aware of yourself? And how are others aware of you? How is the environment aware of you? Does an universe exist without thought and consciousness? Does consciousness and awareness exist without an universe? The answer to all these questions is unknown, but nevertheless we will raise these questions.

Now, with about everything in view, the question arises where to start. The narrator of the Mahābhārata by Peter Brook [2] says in the opening scene:

"The beginning is always shrouded in clouds, I don't know how to start".

"Start with yourself", the narrator receives as advice.

Let you and I start at the beginning – at your birth: at the birth of existence.

After the birth of existence we will investigate the way of the journey that made you what you are. This quest – with 17 stages [3] – will be a journey home.

It took Odysseus ten years to make his journey home from Troy. Our Odyssey will take quite a bit longer: our trip lasts from the beginning until now. At the end, we will look back on our journey. We will see that everything is accomplished in one sigh.

This part 1 of the Odyssey "Who are you" resulted from the posts on the weblog www.janvanorigo.nl between March until September 2011 about:

- o the preparation of the Odyssey
- o our complete unity (in One)
- o our separation (in Two)
- o our reunion by intervention of several intermediaries (in Three)
- o an intermezzo as preparation to the entrance in everyday world

The following two parts of the quest will include posts on the chapters 5, 7 in which you and I enter the everyday world (in Five) and thereafter transcend the everyday world (in Seven). The denouement of the Odyssey will follow at the end (in Zero).

The main characters in our Odyssey are fictional persons. No existing human being has been model for one of the main characters. The author has described both protagonists in the first and second person singular to reduce the distance from the reader, but they are not the author not the reader. Their names may be Allman and Everyman.

For readability, the names Man Leben and Carla Drift are used for the first and second main character in the intermezzo after stage

Three. The two main characters receive these names in the second part of the quest.

Notes

[1] *"Introibo ad altare dei: I will enter the altar of God; I will enter the altar of God".* In the Latin word "intrare" we recognise the parts "in" and "tr"; these parts mean "in, to and into" and "to cross". In the Latin word "Altarus" we notice the parts "al" and "tr" meaning "to adorn, to be competent/able" and "to cross". Source: electronic version of the dictionary Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta and Egenes, Thomas, *Introduction to Sanskrit – Part Two*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2005 p. 387.

The traditional view that "altar" derives from Latin "altus" meaning "high" is no longer general accepted. Source: Ayto, John, *Word Origins – The hidden Histories of English Words from A to Z*. London: A & C Black Publishers, 2008 p. 20.

[2] DVD Peter Brook, <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahabharata> – Het ultieme verhaal



DVD – cover: Source image: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Mahabharata_\(1989_film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Mahabharata_(1989_film))

[3] See post "The 17 stages during our Odyssey"

Weblog

I NTRODUCTION to "Who are you"

6 March 2011

IN spring of 2010 the idea arose to write an essay or a book about the five normal realities in which we observe life and ourselves.

The first idea for an essay or book on this subject already took shape in 2005 in a contribution for a "liber amicorum" with the theme "Building". This contribution described five ways of thinking that provide – like windows – a view on a triptych.

The triptych consisted of the main panel "Looking and thinking" and two side panels "Music" and "Physical build".

The five conceptual frameworks were:

- o Things and logical connections
- o Intensities and associations
- o Inter-connectedness
- o Void
- o Transparency of all four previous conceptual frameworks.

Over time my ideas for the five conceptual frameworks evolved and last year there was sufficient material for an essay on this subject.

During the summer of 2010 much energy was given to acquiring knowledge and skills in writing books and essays.

This study resulted in my decision to write for a wider audience. The footnotes to the text are intended on the one hand to give additional information to more interested readers and on the other hand to provide references for more scientifically oriented readers.

In drawing up the table of content including key words for the contents of the separate chapters, I noticed in the autumn of 2010 that my interest was wider and I wished to adjust my ambition to "a survey into our existence". This has resulted in the present table of content of the book "Who are you".

FOR whom I write "Who are you".

9 March 2011

THE future book "Who are you" is about you, me and everything around us. It covers the beginning of time and how your ancestors were born, lived and died. It also refers to who you were before you were born. Nothing is excluded in advance. We are looking for you and me and for the "complete all and one" in which you and I are involved and from which we emerge. The book "Who are you" is therefore written for you and me and everything around us.

The idea for this extensive readers group for the book arose while watching the opening scene of the film Mahābhārata directed by Peter Brook [1]. The Mahābhārata is a philosophical epic of India consisting of over 100,000 verses, which makes it much longer than the Bible, the Iliad and Odyssey together. According to Wikipedia the title Mahābhārata means something like "the big being" or "the complete world" [2].

In the opening scene of the film, the narrator explains to the listening boy:

"The story is about you, your people, how your ancestors were born and raised. It is the history of mankind in verse. If you listen carefully, you're someone else at the moment the story ends".

The Mahābhārata is the story of India in verse.

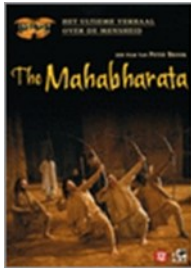
In a similarly manner the book "Who are you" covers our past, our present and our future; nothing is excluded on beforehand. It's about what we have in common, how we differ, how we relate to each other and how we are involved with the world.

Are the target readers group and the subject too ambitious and far too wide? Certainly, but remember that we are in constant relationship with everything around us, e.g. as we breathe. The basic common things around us are so obvious, that we will only notice these when they are suddenly gone. Water probably is the last thing a fish will discover.

In the next posts I will tell you more about how the book will take shape and in which manner it will be structured.

Notes

[1] DVD Peter Brook, Mahābhārata – The ultimate story



DVD – cover: bron -[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Mahabharata_\(1989_film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Mahabharata_(1989_film))

[2] See: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahabharata> and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahabharata>. Probably the interpretation of "Mahābhārata" in Wikipedia (NL) as “the big being” of “the complete world” is not correct. The author of this lemma in Wikipedia has maybe misunderstood "bhā" as "bha" that means "to be". According to an electronic version of Monier-Williams "bhārata" means "decendents of the bharata's" in Sanskrit.

BEGINNING of the quest

12 March 2011

NOW with nearly everything is in view, the question arises how to start.

The narrator of the Mahābhārata by Peter Brook says in the opening scene:

"The beginning is always shrouded in clouds; I do not know how to begin". [1]



[2]

"Start with yourself", the narrator receives as advise.

You and I will start at the beginning - when you were born.

First I will disappoint you. This book does not begin on the date of birth when you left the womb according to your civil status. We will also not take your conception - nine months earlier - as the starting point. In China and Vietnam you are already one year old when you leave the womb [3]. During these nine months in the womb you nearly accomplished the whole evolution. After you have left the womb, you developed from infant, baby, toddler, infant, child, youth to adult. But this journey from conception until now does not constitute who you are.

Your birth is at the beginning of everything. There we will start our quest for "Who are you". After your birth, you began a journey with many stages to "here and now". We look for the path of this journey that constitutes who you are.

The following message is about the 17 stages.

Notes

[1] DVD Peter Brook, Source image: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahabharata> – Het ultieme verhaal

[2] Source: <http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/C>; Courtesy NASA/JPL-Caltech.

[3] See: Thich Nhat Hahn, *The heart of understanding*. Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1988

THE 17 stages during our Odyssey

15 March 2011

THE scope of the search for "Who are you" contains everything. You and I cannot fully include this scope in one book. During our quest we will visit infinite stages. Almost all these stages will be excluded from this book. But at 17 special stages we shall describe our findings acquired during the quest for who you are, who you were at the beginning of time before your birth, and who were your ancestors.

The 17 special stages in this book were selected on the basis of the first prime numbers. We choose for primes because this group of numbers is only divisible by one and by itself.

1	: 1	
2	: 1 2	prime number
3	: 1 3	prime number
4	: 1 2 4	
5	: 1 5	prime number
6	: 1 2 3 6	
7	: 1 7	prime number
8	: 1 2 4 8	
9	: 1 3 9	
10	: 1 2 5 10	
11	: 1 11	prime number
12	: 1 2 3 4 6 12	
13	: 1 13	prime number
14	: 1 2 7 14	
15	: 1 3 5 15	
16	: 1 2 4 8 16	
17	: 1 17	prime number
18	: 1 2 3 6 9 18	
19	: 1 19	prime number

Sometimes primes are seen as solitary outliers with no obvious connections, for they are not composed of other numbers. You and I find prime numbers absolute prime in itself [1], because all these numbers are complete. Prime numbers are a whole universe in itself. They do not know boundaries: they continue into infinity. Also, all other integers can be derives from primes [2].

We stop our Odyssey at prime number seven; otherwise the size of the book will exceed the usual limits. The span of control of most people is limited to seven due to the fact that we have only two hands and ten fingers. With much ingenuity the Mesopotamians were able to count to twelve with one hand using their thumb along the twelve digital bones in their four fingers [3]. By using two hands they could count 12 times 12 until a gross or 144. This twelve-number system is too artificial to our taste for arranging the description of our quest.

Following the prime numbers up to seven, we get the chapter number one, two, three, five and seven.

The description of our quest will end with chapter number zero - a pivotal number - that was discovered rather late. The concept of zero as number is started in India, where in the 9th century AD practical calculations are performed using zero [4].

This number zero completes the total number of 17 descriptions of special stages or:

o Introduction	1
o One	1
o Two	1
o Three	1
o Five	5
o Seven	7
o Zero	<u>1</u>
Total:	17

The next post will cover the contents of the book.

Notes

[1] See: Enzensberger, Hans Magnus, *The Number Devil: A Mathematical Adventure., The third Night*

[2] See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prime_number

[3] See: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duodecimal>

[4] See: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/0_\(number\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/0_(number))

TABLE of contents of the book

18 March 2011

IN the previous post we explained how we have come to the number of 17 special stages during our search for who you are. These places constitute the table of contents of the book.



[1]

The 17 special stages on our quest are:

Introduction – *Introibo* [2] [3]

Preparation

1. One - Thus, in unum deum [4]
2. Two - In dubio [5]
3. Three - Dubio transcendit [6]
4. Five easy entities
 - o Facts and logic
 - o Intensities and association
 - o Emptiness
 - o Change
 - o Interconnectedness
5. Seven other entities
 - o Ishvara [7]
 - o Et incarnatus est [8]
 - o Show me a small truth
 - o No time, no change
 - o Thou art that
 - o And death has no dominion here [9]
 - o Here en now
6. Zero - Not one, not two

The next three post is about myth and rituals as preparation on our Odyssey.

Notes

[1] Source of image: Microsoft Word

[2] Translation: *Introibo ad altare Dei: I will enter the altar of God*

[3] See also Joyces, James, *Ulysses*. 1975, P. 7

[4] Translation: In one God

[5] Translation: In doubt

[6] Translation: by doubt transcended

[7] A philosophical concept of God in Hinduism, see also: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ishvara>

[8] « *Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto* » may be translated by “*And he became a body of the Holy Ghost*”

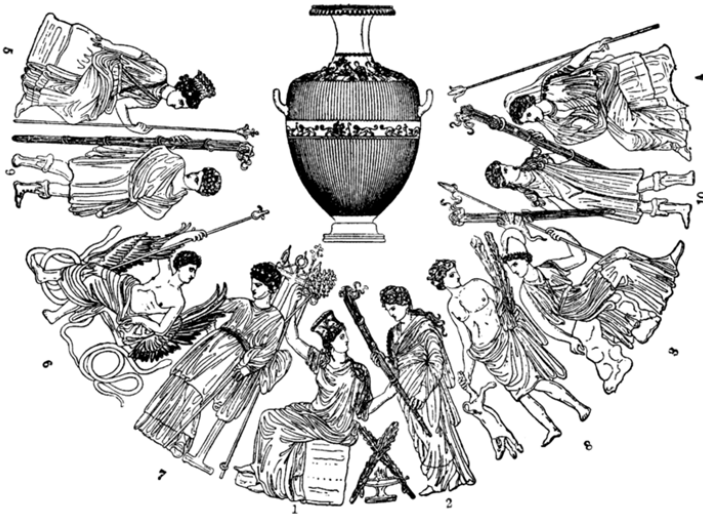
[9] See also: Thomas, Dylan, *And Death shall have no Dominion*

M YTHS

21 March 2011

THE book "Who are you" is a contemporary myth that tells of a quest in which you and I search for who you are. This quest takes us along endless perspectives and realities. This book describes several crucial realities that we encountered during our Odyssey.

In ancient times, myths were passed on from generation to generation to convey wisdom and life experience. These myths do not tend to cover facts and logic, but they retell stories about the origin of our existence, about the meaning of life, the relationship of our ancestors with each other, with the gods and with their environment, about motives of our ancestors and about trust and distrust.



Probably our ancestors did not take the facts and logic told in the myths literally. However for our ancestors, the intensity and associations which appear in these myths, were very recognizable. They derived much wisdom from the myths to provide clarification in elusive conditions, in psychological conditions and during tragic events [2].

We have partly lost the active use of the language of intensities and associations in myths and dreams [3]. In the chapters five and seven, you and I will describe our experiences with this lost language.

During our quest we will deduce meaning and give meaning – from changing points of view – to the life of you, me, everyone and everything around us in the past, present and future. Several of these points of view are difficult to express in our contemporary language. Due to this fact, we will occasionally use poetry, imagery and mythic narratives. The report of the quest has the character of an essay and of a contemporary myth.

Myths now have a connotation of stories that are not true. However today we also create many contemporary myths: e.g. the myth of money.

Money can be seen as a metaphor for trust. According to a common contemporary myth, money provides a carefree happy eternal life; bank officials and stockbrokers guard as demigods this heaven. As gate keepers they provide access to this dream world. According to this myth, money is changed from a device or intermediary in trust into a purpose in life beyond which no existence seems possible.



[4]

The current financial crisis is not only a crisis of confidence, but it also caused an existential crisis questioning the role of the contemporary demigods and gatekeepers of dream worlds.

Sport is also a contemporary myth as a metaphor for real life. The athletes are role models who are revered as demigods and/or tragic heroes based on the outcome of the match. Sports coaches and reporters show some resemblance with high priests.

Another contemporary myth covers property, legal bodies and the National State that have a life of its own in our mundane and universal reality. During our Odyssey we will encounter the origin and consequences of this myth.



[5]

In the next post we will cover the roles of rituals.

Notes

[1] Bron afbeelding: http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Griechische_Mythologie

[2] Amstrong, Karen, *The Case for God - What Religion really means*. London: Vintage Book, 2010 - page 2 - 4

[3] Zie ook: Fromm, Erich, *The Forgotten Language*. New York: Rinehart & Co, 1951

[4] Bron van afbeelding: <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geld>

[5] Bron van afbeelding: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:2008-08-01_No_Tresspassing_sign_at_RDU.jpg

RITUALS – part 1

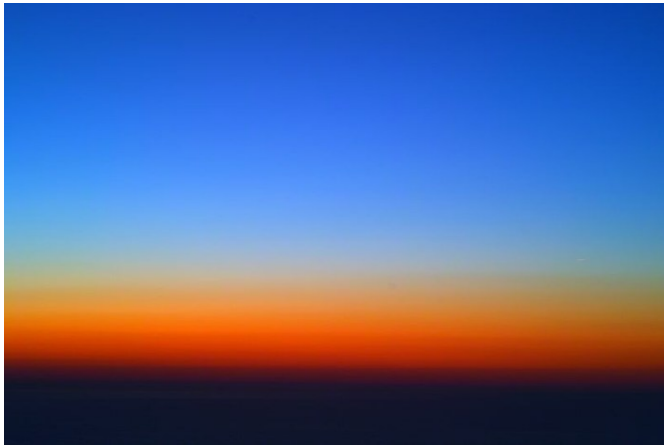
24 March 2011

BESIDES myths we also have rituals to give important changes and transition a place in our lives. Rituals often consist of a number of conventional acts.

First you and I will look at several important "rites of passage" - or the rituals that mark major transitions - in our life.

At the beginning of your life - therefore at the beginning of all time – you are still united with everything and everyone around us. Are there already changes and transitions? We do not know. We are not aware of rites in this phase of your life.

Your first birth from the comprehensive oneness took place during the separation of air and earth. Did this first division happened quickly in a sigh, or slowly whispering, or with a big bang followed by a flash? We do not know this.



[1]

After this separation you are baptised for the first time in the air and the water of the earth. The following baptisms you have undergone, connect you with all your ancestors and with the "rite of passage" of the separation of air and earth.

Rituals provide a good modus for establishing common faith and continuation of mutual trust. Through rituals, the trust between the world, air, earth, gods, priests, people and everything around us is continually restored. Rituals have to be repeated periodically in order to retain the trust; without repetition these "rites of passage" have no lasting effect.

Hereto monks, priests and pastors throughout the world over and again make their meditation, prayers, hymns and rituals in order to maintain the common order and trust.

A monk once said that meditation is vital for the whole world, so that the world is maintained.

A Reformed organist said during a radio program that the singing of the church community is the most beautiful aspect in the world.

In Chapter 5, we report your marriage to the world. We follow the rituals connected with reason, feeling, with endless possibilities, with the change and with interconnectedness.



[2]



[3]

Your marriage to the "complete oneness" is covered in chapter 7.

We follow your connections with:

- o God and gods in the paragraph "Ishvara [4]";
- o The connection between body and soul/spirit in "Et incarnatus est [5]";
- o Every particle around us in "Show me a small truth";
- o Eternity/time in "No time, no change"
- o All our actions and existence in "Thou art that"
- o Death and finitude in "And death shall have no dominion here [6]"
- o This moment in all her glory in "Here en now".

Each of these connections has its "rites of passage". Below we show two pictures of "rites of passages" in the surpassing of the ego included in "No time, no change".



[7]



[8]

At the last stage zero – not one, not two – you and I have surpassed and incarnated all myths and rituals.

In next post we continue with the role of rituals.

Notes

[1] Bron afbeelding: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:SDIM0241b.jpg>

[2] Bron afbeelding: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Professors.JPG>

[3] Bron afbeelding: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantin_Br%C3%A2ncu%C5%9Fi

[4] A philosophical concept of God in Hinduism, see also: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ishvara>

[5] "*Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto*" may be translated by "And she/he becomes flesh of the Holy Spirit"

[6] See also: Dylan Thomas, *And Death shall have no Dominion*

[7] Source of image: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/grassvalleylarry/238432804/sizes/o/in/photostream/> (All sizes of this photo are available for download under a Creative Commons license)

[8] Bron afbeelding: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zen>

RITUALS – part 2

27 March 2011

IN the previous post, we have had a first glimpse into the role of rituals as “rites of passage”. Now you and I will look a little further into the role of a few rituals in our daily life. These rituals often consist of a number of conventional acts.

One of the oldest documented myths is named the cattle-cycle [1]. In the cattle-cycle, God [2] gives livestock to farmers who in turn take care of the cattle and let the herd increase. Foreign men steal the cattle. In return the warriors steal cattle from foreign farmers and they give a portion of the cattle as sacrifice to the priests for smoke offerings to God who in turn thanks for the sacrifices and again gives livestock to farmers.

The myth of the cattle-cycle tells about rituals that form the basis for mutual trust between gods, priests, and people. Cattle are a metaphor for mutual trust; a role that money has taken over in our society.

Looting of cattle has a central place in this culture. It is necessary for warriors to acquire property. With the stolen cattle the warriors have a means of exchange to obtain one or more women [3]. In Proto-Indo-European world, women represent the only real property that is of value [4]. Only by holding the highly regarded medium of exchange – cattle – a warrior can acquire women for obtaining offspring.

The myth of the cattle-cycle sanctions looting of cattle if accompanied with the prescribed rituals to come to terms with the gods and society.

According to an old saying, each property has been acquired by an initial crime. Today acquire and transference of possession is still surrounded with many rituals. Are today's rituals still necessary in order to sanction the initial crimes? We give the following reflection from the New Testament:

"How hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich [5] to enter the kingdom of God" [6].

Chapter 5 reports our experience with dealing of property and ethics herewith.



[7]



[8]

In today's society and on the workplace, rituals are repeated again and again for retaining mutual cohesion.

During lectures in the late seventies of last century, Prof. Dr. W. Luijpen - professor of philosophy at the Technical University in Delft – made three remarkable statements.

The first statement is:

*"We have decided to work for our existence. We will work at least eight hours in order to sit for fifteen minutes in the sun. We will **not** work fifteen minutes to sit for eight hours in the sun as in some other cultures".*

To this statement you and I add the following anecdote of the South Seas fisherman as illustration:

An American saw a man sitting on the beach of a sunny island with a fishing rod. The American gave the following advice:

"You must use five rods. "

"Why?", said the fisherman.

"Then you may catch more fish and earn more money".

"Why?", said the fisherman.

"Then you can buy a boat. "

"And then?": said the fisherman again.

"Then you catch more fish and you are able to buy a bigger boat and earn even more money".

"And then?": said the fisherman again.

"Then you will earn so much money that you can sit the whole day in the sun."

The fisherman smiled and made an arm gesture to the blue sky and the Sun.



[9]

The second statement was:

"We have decided that our official relationship between each other will happen through a legal order and our conflict will be settled by

legal procedures. In case of disagreement or conflict we will not settle the case unilateral by brute force, but we will settle these disputes through our existing legal system."

Examples have already been found in ancient Irish law. After a severe offence an exile was sent on a boat on the sea [10].

The third statement was as follows:

"We decided that we believe in a God father. We do not believe in a Mother Goddess and our religion is not poly-or pantheistic. Other societies have a different way of believing. "



[11]

We will describe in each chapter of the book the various ways of religion that we encounter on our Odyssey.

After this preparation on our Odyssey with an excursion to myths and rituals we continue with chapter one.

Notes

[1] Source: Mallory, J.P., *In Search of the Indo-Europeans*, p. 138

[2] In Sanskrit “go” means “cattle” en “da” means “to give”

[3] Source: Anthony, David W., *The horse, the wheel and Language* (2007), p. 239

[4] Source: McGrath, Kevin, *STRĪ women in Epic Mahābhārata*. Cambridge: Ilex Foundation, 2009 p. 9 - 15

[5] Probably this concerns **all** richness and property in any manner. If we all dispose of all our wealth and property here and now, that will probably cause major problems. Perhaps a middle position is better: let us for the time being be good care takers of our wealth and property.

[6] Source: Bible, New Testament, Marcus 10:24-25

[7] Source image: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestand:Karakul-camellos-d02.jpg>

[8] Source image: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Sewing_needle_eye_with_thread.jpg

After closing time of the main gate in Oriental cities a narrow port remained open to give people and animals stripped of luggage the opportunity to enter the city: this narrow gate seems to be called "the eye of the needle".

[9] Source image: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Palm_Beach,_Sydney.jpg

[10] Source: Kelly, Fergus, *A guide to early Irish Law*. Dublin: Dundalgan Press, 2005 p.219

[11] See also: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venus_of_Willendorf

ONE

1 April 2011

YOU and I start our search for "Who are you" at the beginning of everything. In the beginning there is no distinction - and thus no separation - between you, me and everything around us. Everything is completely connected. Has there been any change? We do not know. Maybe everything is constantly floating in itself. Or everything is constantly changing size by periodic expansion and contraction [1] .



[2]

Words and concepts have significant limitations for a full description of oneness, because they aim to distinguish between things or events. In addition, words and concepts are also used to denote separate things. Oneness precedes differences and separate things and events, so words and concepts will give a poor reflection of the complete oneness.

In describing the oneness we try to obtain a complete connection between content and form. We decide to use poetry to describe oneness without significant development. As a result, some poems change into a "*retrograde*": these poems can also be read from the end to the beginning without substantially compromising its meaning.

The wind takes you along
Volatile and familiar
With the air over the sea

With the air over the sea
Volatile and familiar
The wind takes you along

On the next pages three poems are included that are part of the report on the stage "One" on our Odyssey.

ONE

Thus [3], in unum deum

Thus one
Is the universe
Whole

Moon, stars, earth, air
Together with you
In one sigh

The wind takes you along
Volatile and familiar
With the air over the sea

Secure in the dark
Lights your being
In all her glory

By a web of scents
Flimsy laced together in Indra's net [4]
Forever in your domain

Buried in flaked foam
Is your voice
The murmur of the waves

Abrasive sand
On the skin whirling
landed at you

In the tide
You are wave after wave
One with me

Night

Dark under a blanket spread over you
Shelter in the firmament
Rags of clouds and fog glide over
So many stars, so many stars, ripe on the grass

Morning

In the dawn light buried
Your face for all
One in the course of the day
Evaporated dew drops in the universe

Afternoon

Glory and beauty, sun and rain
Shower on your body
Where you are
The Angelus tolls [5]

Evening

Rays sunset in a host for you

Grass already damp of dew

Full moon above the horizon

Eyes and moon as ocean and waves one together [6]

Spring

The young herb is on the fields.
The fresh grass spreads the scent of an eternal beginning.
The children play in the morning light
Hand in hand wrinkled by the cool water.
A breeze blowing over the winter
The bones stiff from lying on the cold ground
perceive the solar glow.
Of humus spring a fountain of flowers.
Birds come and go
The landscape is seen in their songs.
Nests are built.
Young birds fly up and fall again.
Blossoms adorn bushes and trees
in one breeze blown away colorful over the world.
Eternal resurrection.

Summer

The sun all day: the night is gone.
Buzzing insects living in clouds hovering.
Leaves expand into continents.
The warm soil and air are together in their heat.
Thunderstorms with clattering summer rain freshen the air.
The sun and wheat fields have a golden color.
The harvest shapes the autumn.

Autumn

Yellow leaves rustle on the trees.
In a golden glow you sweep fallen leaves on a pile.
The wind is playing its game.
The leaves, do they come or go with the wind?
Words, thoughts and memories are gone.
Just sweeping of the leaves remains.
Also the sweeping stops.
Piles, leaves, sweeping, arms and breath come together.
Autumn, leaves, soil and moisture smell
Like a just born laid in the crib

Winter

Bare trees stand like ghosts on the land.
Branches covered in snow.
Winter wind blows from pole to pole.
Your face in snow and ice
Tingling of love.
Snowdrops arise.

Glide to

For Thou art the glory [7]

The complete oneness is described according to a human scale, familiar to people in a western civilization in a temperate maritime climate. A Bedouin in the Sahara will give a different description.



[8]

The Inuit–Yupik (better known in our culture as Eskimo) will give another description. This difference of rendering is caused by the different manifestations of the perfect oneness to the separate life forms. In later chapters we come back to this phenomenon.

Obviously, a full representation may be appropriate, but this is beyond comprehension for people and we lack the possibilities to do so. You remark that in chapter One the word "Thus" - or "evam" [9] in Sanskrit - is a correct rendering of the complete oneness, but a rendering remains a vague reflection.

In the next posts we continue with the creation of the poem "Blossom". Afterwards we look at "solipsism", "the universe is a dream" and "pantheism" as classics for oneness.

Notes

[1] The big bang may be one expansion of the many periodic expansions and retractions. About the origin of the theory of the big bang and expanding universe a concise introduction is available in Wikipedia (NL) under the entry "George Lemaître".

[2] Source of image: <http://hubblesite.org/gallery/album/pr2009032c>

[3] See Lopez - *The Heart Sutra explained*. 1990, p. 34; *"The commentary Vajrapāṇi has high praise for the word Evam (thus), the word with which sūtras begin. Those four letters are the source of the 84.000 doctrines taught by the Buddha and are the basis of all marvels."*

See Red Pine (Bill Porter) – *The Diamond Sutra*. 2001, p. 41-42; *"Commentaries have written volumes on the profundity of evam (thus). Does it mean "like so", or does it mean "just so"? And what is the difference? Is this sutra the finger that points to the moon, or is it the moon itself?"*

See Holstein, Alexander- *Pointing at the Moon*. 1993, p. 49; in the enlightened mind of a Zen master, probably, there is no distinction what the ordinary mind calls "to point at" and "the moon". To the enlightened mind, the relation between the two is similar to the relation of an ocean to its waves.

[4] See: Cleary, Thomas, *Entry Into the Inconceivable: An Introduction to Hua-yen Buddhism*

See: Cook, Francis H., *Hua-yen Buddhism: The Jewel Net of Indra*. 1977

[5] *"In Germany, the Netherlands and in some parts of France the Angelus bell was regularly known as the "Peace bell", and pro pace schlagen (to toll for peace) was a phrase popularly used for ringing the Angelus."* Source: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01487a.htm>

Source: La Montagne, Victor De. *Het angelus klept in de verte*

[6] See: Holstein, Alexander. *Pointing at the Moon*. 1993, p. 49

[7] See: Bible - King James Version; Psalm 89:17

[8] Source of image: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woestijn>

[9] In Sanskrit the word “Evam” consists of the verb \sqrt{e} meaning “approach, reach, enter” and the noun “va” meaning “wind, ocean, water, stream, going”. Source: electronic version of the dictionary Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta

O NE – Blossom

2 April 2011

Blossom



[1]

Dust [2] rises up in the tree trunk [3]

To the beginning of a bud

Emerging in the spring light

The bud [4] shows a blossom fan [5]

Her beauty in full glory

In one sigh elapsed

Confident the blossom petal falls
From the bud downwards
Whirling in a cloud with the wind

A blanket of fingerprints on the ground
Footed by the world
Gone to dust [6]



[7]

This poem may also be read as retrograde. In the paragraph “No time, no Change” in chapter 7 you and I will meet the mystics including amongst others the role of a flower [5].

Notes

[1] Source image: Jan van Leent

[2] See also: Genesis 3:19: "*For dust you are, and to dust you shall return*". Before the separation of air and earth (see also the second stage during our Odyssey), the transitions of void to dust and dust to dust reflect the different manifestations of the complete oneness. At our homecoming (see the last stage "zero") you and I hope to return within the complete oneness. Have we ever been away?

[3] "*When dust is lifted, the land flourishes. When dust is taken, void arises*". This is a free rendering of koan 61 from the Hekiganroku. See: Yamada Kôun Roshi, *Hekiganroku, Die Niederschrift vom blauen Fels*. München: Kösel-Verlag, 2002.

[4] In Sanskrit the name Buddha consists of the noun "bud" meaning "bud or knop" as "bud" in rosebud in the film "Citizen Kane" directed by Orson Wells – and the verb \sqrt{dha} meaning "place, grant, bestow". Source: electronic version of the dictionary Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta

[5] According to the tradition, the second zen master is recognized by Buddha when only he noticed with a smile the flower raised by the hands of Buddha. Is this a recognition of the complete oneness? We do not know. According to the Denkôroku, the following zen masters are directly linked with each other. Have these masters ever been away from the budding of the flower? We do not know.

[6] See also: the Old Testament, book Ecclesia 12:7: "*When the dust returns to the earth, it returns to itself*". Is this the complete oneness or a manifestation hereof? We do not know.

[7] Source image: Jan van Leent

ONE - Solipsism

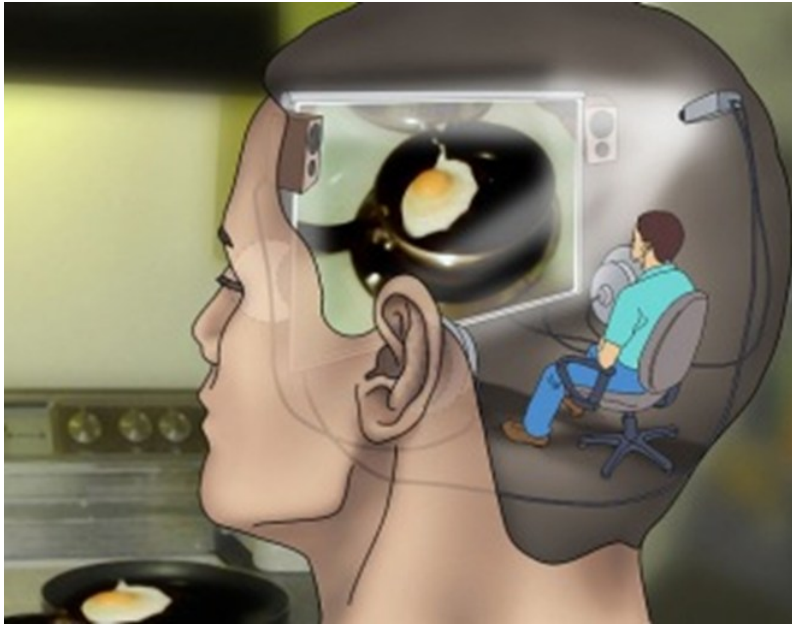
3 April 2011

ON our Odyssey you and I will encounter three obvious “classics” for oneness. In this case “classics” are views and ideas that do not suit anybody (completely), but are still worth studying to progress further. We make in this introduction a short detour along the three classics, “solipsism”, “the universe is but a dream” and “pantheism”.

Solipsism [1]

Solipsism knows and recognizes only one single consciousness that completely coincides with the consciousness of the observer. In the original form of solipsism, there is no existence outside the consciousness of the observer. On our Odyssey, you and I will encounter many elements and forms of solipsism.

At the first stage - described in chapter one - the oneness includes at first sight several features of solipsism, but oneness can easily avoid solipsism because oneness at this stage will be divided two or more parts soon and it cannot be excluded that all these parts have a separate consciousness. In addition, one is the recurring initial divider of every prime number.



[2]

At the second and third stage we will not easily encounter solipsism.

At the fifth stage, each of the five basic realities may easily degenerate into solipsism because every reality may regard itself as the only true consciousness within which everything is fully and completely enclosed, e.g.:

- Only natural science based on facts and logic is true: everything else is a delusion or worse. In this extreme form natural science migrates to religion, and currently religion is not included within the competence of natural science.
- Only feeling matters. Everything outside feeling is not worth considering.

- *“Only in the void I can live, elsewhere I never found shelter”* [3]. This is a pitfall for zealous practitioners of meditation. As lured by the Sirens [4] these practitioners are attracted into the void, putting aside the other realities.
- Everything changes; or only change counts [5]. The quest for change can be blind for the good.
- All is fully interconnected: outside this interconnectedness nothing exists.

At our seventh stage we will encounter elements of Solipsism in all seven entities, e.g.:

- In the reality of Ishvara [6] – where you and I will meet God, Gods and religion – only reality of the own God, Gods or religion is recognised as the only existing reality. Other Gods and religions are often contested with all possible means. Only the own God/ Gods and religion is regarded as the sole true reality outside which nothing exists (or is allowed to exist).
- Only the reality of “here and now” exists. Everything else is unimportant or does not exist.

At the end of our Odyssey on our homecoming at “Zero – not one, not two”, we will see if all manners of solipsism in the seven realities are surpassed.

The next post will cover the second classic “the universe is but a dream”.

Notes

[1] See also: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/solipsis/>

[2] Source image: http://ia.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Cartesian_Theater.jpg

[3] Free rendering of a verse written by Jan Jacob Slauerhoff “*Only in my poems I may live, elsewhere I never found shelter*”.

[4] See also Homerus’ Odyssey.

[5] See also Heraclitus: “*πάντα χωρεῖ καὶ οὐδὲν μένει*” meaning “*everything changes and nothing remains untouched*”. Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heraclitus>

[6] A philosophical concept of God in Hinduism, see also: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ishvara>. In Sanskrit the word “Ishvara” consists of the noun “ish” meaning “god, ruler” – Wherein the German word “ich” can be recognised –, the noun “va” meaning “wind, ocean, water, stream, going” and the verb √ra meaning “give, influence”. Source: electronic version of the dictionary Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta.

ONE – The Universe is but a Dream

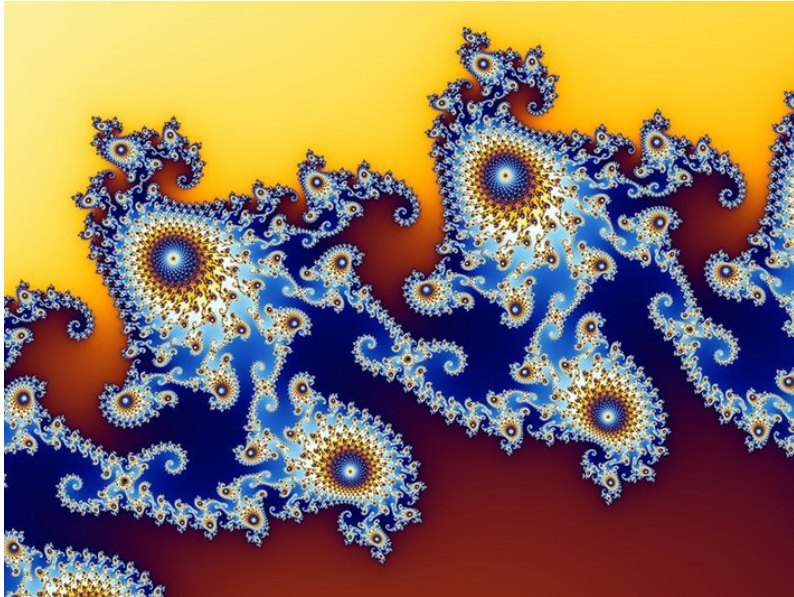
4 April 2011

THE second classic that you and I visit on our detour, is "The Universe is but a Dream" or "Māya" [1] in Sanskrit.



[2]

Several Eastern religions are based on the premise that all phenomena are included in or come from a universal being/entity (e.g. Ātman [3] or Brahman [4]). Beyond this universal entity, there is no independent being /entity: only this universal entity exists. All other observations beyond this entity are illusions. People rarely perceive this universal entity: mostly the myriad of illusions are regarded as separate realities.



[5]

Within the framework of this classic, ordinary people experience the transient as permanent, and the permanent and transient.

The difference between "Solipsism" and "The Universe is but a Dream" is the fact that a Solipsist regards his own consciousness as the complete and universal entity. Within "The Universe is but a Dream", the own consciousness and the perception is seen as illusions and dreams, that may or may not reflect a universal being/entity.

Solipsism is a classic supported by few, because:

- Solipsism is inwardly consistent and logical, but it is not falsifiable, nor refutable nor provable [6];

- Solipsism is exclusively confined to the consciousness of the observer, beyond which nothing exists, This hypothesis is very restrictive for scientists.

"The Universe is but a Dream" is a way of thinking with many manifestations. The "ideas" of Plato has characteristics of this classic. The "Look" and "Bad Faith" from Sartre [7] - whereby you and I lose our freedom and are reduced to an object [8] - are also characteristics of this classic. In the later chapters that frame of mind will appear in many forms.

Will you and I have internalized and surpassed the classic "The Universe is but a Dream" at the end of the Odyssey when we return home? We don't know yet.

The next post will include the third classic "Pantheism".

Notes

[1] "Creating an illusion" in Sanskrit. Source: electronic version of the dictionary Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta.

[2] Source image: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dream>

[3] In Sanskrit "Ātman" means amongst others "breath, universal soul, individual soul, nature, essence, highest existing entity). "Ātman" consists of "Āt" meaning "thus, further" and "man" meaning "thinking, consciousness, knowledge, conceive". Source: electronic version of the dictionary Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta.

[4] "Brahman" means amongst others "religious of spiritual knowledge/wisdom". Source: electronic version of the dictionary Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta. The origin of this word is

possible the verb $\sqrt{\text{brh}}$ meaning "worship, enlarge, grow, enhance" and "man" meaning "thinking, consciousness, knowledge, conceive".

[5] Source image: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>

File:Mandel_zoom_05_tail_part.jpg

[6] See also: Solipsism in Wikipedia

[7] See also: Sartre, Jean-Paul, *Being and Nothingness*. New York: Washington Square Press: 1977

[8] In chapter 5, you and I will meet this way of seeing.

O NE – Pantheism

7 April 2011

YOU and I will make a detour to the third classic named "Pantheism". Pantheism is quite similar to Polytheism, because both forms of religion recognize and acknowledge many gods. The major difference between the two religions is, that in Polytheism there is a separation between the believers – in our case mankind – and the gods, whereas in Pantheism the believer – or the subject of religion – coincides with the gods or the divine. Pantheists see themselves and everything around them as a god, or as a part of god; or any item – thing or living being – is seen as divine. Retrieval of the god or gods is not necessary, even as coming to terms with the god or gods, as the reality – and therefore also individual – is identical with God. Making a covenant with God and seeking the favours of God are also superfluous.

Do you and I regard ourselves as a god or gods? Currently not, pride comes before a fall and we still have a long journey to go. On our Odyssey you and I will probably encounter various forms of Pantheism. An example of this is the hubris of rulers who allow themselves to be worshipped by believers/ people, e.g.:

- the Pharaohs or
- the Chinese emperors who portrayed themselves around 500 AD Chr. as Buddhas [1].



[2]

Other (secondary) forms of pantheism are ancient stones or special places in the landscape that are honoured. These places or stones are worshipped as divine objects; believers regards these

places and objects as gods. By the Catholic Church, these places are often adapted and incorporated into the Christian faith as field crosses [3].



[4]



[5]

This concludes our detour along the three classics.

The next post is a transition between "One" and the next stage "Two" on our Odyssey. First we will encounter Indra's net before we will watch the 10-minutes movie "Powers of Ten" made by Ray and Charles Eames in 1968.

Notes

[1] See also: Porter, Bill, *Zen Baggage*, Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2009, p. 39

[2] Source image: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Statue_at_the_Yungang_Grottoes.jpg

[3] See also: Robb, Graham, *The discovery of France*. London: Picador, 2007

[4] Source image: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestand:Vijlen-Wegkruis_Oude_Trichterweg.JPG

[5] Source photo: Marieke Grijpink

ONE – Pantheism – Indra's net

8 April 2011

ON our way to the movie "Powers of Ten" by Charles and Ray Eames, you and I encounter a beautiful world. It looks like a beautiful glass palace where everything – as tiny glass beads – reflects in each other and with each other. The image below shows an enlargement of a tiny part of this world.



[1]

Suddenly we recognize this glass palace from descriptions in books: it looks like "Indra's net" [2]. We are fully enclosed in this world; you and I and this world are one and perfectly reflected in each other [3]. But we arrive at the outer skirt "One". Although everything is reflected in everything, independency is emerging

between the particles. You and I will give an impression of Indra's net.

Indra's net is an infinite grid, which is very finely woven. It is transparent – empty – full of infinite and transparent and reflective glass beads that shine into each other. Each glass pearl or jewel is infinitely small; it shines heavenly and divine [4] in its beauty. This splendid world appears by its dazzling jewels the pinnacle of pantheism. However the complete consistency of the jewelry of this world completely transcends pantheism.

First, a static description of the net. The jewels are in constant connection with each other, as each jewel is reflected in all the other jewels. All other jewels are also reflected in one jewel. One jewel is the entire network because the entire network is reflected in this single jewel, and this single jewel is seen by all other jewels. One single jewel is the network, and all the other jewels are shaping this single jewel.

Now the magic starts: the net just starts to move. If one jewel starts moving, the complete net moves and changes. If the entire net vibrates, than the separate jewels will vibrate accordingly. Because each individual jewel twinkles with all other jewels, change is a constant perfection. The whole network vibrates in itself and with itself. Each jewel plays its game and it shapes the net. All jewels play their game and they shape every single jewel. Each jewel constitutes all and all jewels form each single jewel. "One" is the entire network and "One" is every single glass pearl in the net. Between one glass jewel and the whole network is still no distinction.

We continue through this beautiful world and approach stage "Two" on our Odyssey. A precursor of bundling of the glass jewels is gradually unfolding. You and I and everything around us start to cluster.

In the next post we will – as promised – look at the 10-minutes film of Charles and Ray Eames' Powers of Ten "of 1968.

Notes

[1] Source image: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indra's_net

[2] See also: Cook, Francis, *Hua-Yen Buddhism: The Jewel Net of Indra*

[3] See also: Cleary, Thomas, *The Flower Ornament Scripture, a Translation of the Avatamsaka Sutra*. Boston: Shambhala, 1993 p 363. According to the Avatamsaka Sutra, particles within Indra's net have compassion, feelings and needs. They are aware of anger, joy, knowledge and ignorance. They can make everything within their reach happy. Indra's net can be healthy and ill.

[4] The word "Deus" for God is derived from the verb √div, meaning "shine, increase, rejoice" in Sanskrit. Source: electronic version of the dictionary Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta.

ONE – “Powers of Ten”

10 April 2011

AFTER you and I went through the wonderful world of "Indra's Net [1]", we are looking forward to the presentation of the 10 minutes film "Powers of Ten" by Ray and Charles Eames of 1968 (and reissued in 1977).

Charles and Ray Eames [2] are an architect / designer couple who gave a significant contribution to the development of modern architecture and furniture design.

A first impression of the "Eames house[3]:



[4]

And a picture of a chair in the "Lounge Chair" designed in 1956:



[5]

The documentary "Powers of Ten" is an adventure in size and views on different scales. The film shows the known universe in "powers of ten" [6]. The content and structure of the film is based on the book "*Cosmic View - The Universe in 40 Jumps*" [7] published in 1957, written and designed by the Dutch pedagogue educator Kees Boeke [8], who is founder of the "Werkplaats Kindergemeenschap" [9] - Children's Community Workshop - in Bilthoven, the Netherlands.

The film begins with a picnic area near the lake in Chicago. Every 10 seconds we are transported ten times further in the universe until our solar system is just a speck in the sky. Then we return quickly to the picnic area. There we zoom in on the hand of the sleeping pick-nicker. Every ten seconds we zoom in 10 times on

the hand until we move inside the carbon atom in a DNA molecule within a white blood cell.

Are these images different manifestations of "One"? Is "One" displayed according to "*the ways of the world and not according the inexpressible universality*" [10]? We do not know. See for yourself.

After this introduction we may look at the film: please visit the following website:

<http://www.powersof10.com/film>

You and I saw the film twice. The first time we enjoyed the movie and the second time we carefully looked at the manifestations of "Indra's net" in different sizes. The observations of "Indra's net" are always the same and always different.

The next post is an introduction on "Two", the new stage on our Odyssey.

Notes

[1] See also: Cook, Francis, *Hua-Yen Buddhism: The Jewel Net of Indra*

[2] See also: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_and_Ray_Eames

[3] See also: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eames_House

[4] Source image: http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eames_House

[5] Bron afbeelding: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/>

Bestand:Eameslunch.jpg

[6] See also: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order_of_magnitude

[7] Boeke, Kees, *Cosmic View, The Universe in 40 Jumps*. 1957

[8] See also: [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kees_Boeke_\(pedagoog\)](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kees_Boeke_(pedagoog))

[9] See also: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Werkplaats_Kindergemeenschap en <http://www.wpkeesboeke.nl/>

[10] Free rendering of a sentence from the Mahaprajnaparamita Sutra; see also: Porter, Bill, *Zen Baggage*, Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2009 – page 15 and 16.

TWO – Separation of Earth and Air

11 April 2011

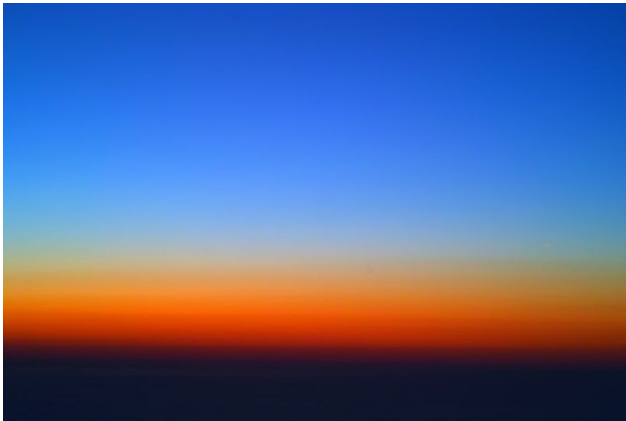
WE approach the second stage on our Odyssey.

Initially, everything is completely one. Prior to words and without thoughts, earth and air, light and dark are inseparably connected: one and all.

For you and me this complete oneness cannot be expressed in thoughts and words: the entire oneness precedes our comprehension.

At a certain point, earth and air are separated [1]. Did this first separation occur in a sigh and quickly, or slowly and whispering, or in a big bang followed by a flash? We do not know.

This separation of earth and sky is the most painful split to date. Genesis in the Old Testament speaks of a rupture of heaven and earth. This separation created a first all-encompassing gap where all objects – big and small – can pass through.



[2]

The following separations are vague recollections of the first rupture of earth and sky. Not that these later separations may not have been painful, but this initial crack is the immense separation from which all other divisions have emerged like crackle.



[3]

During the "separation of earth and air" and the subsequent divisions you and I have completely disappeared from the complete oneness. It is also the end of our perfectly being together. As separate beings we continue together our own way.

But the desire to the complete oneness remains:

"I tend my flowers for thee - Bright Absenty "[4]

We reach the second stage of our Odyssey.

Noten

[1] See Genesis 1:1, Old Testament

[2] Source image: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:SDIM0241b.jpg>

[3] Image as illustration for crackle of glas. Source image: <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Einscheiben-Sicherheitsglas>

[4] See: Dickinson, Emily, *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*. London: Faber, 1977 - Opening of Poem 339

TWO – You and I separated

16 April 2011

WE endured the separation of earth and sky and then we encountered innumerable splits and cracks. I look sideways to see you. I wonder how you have survived these events. But where ever I look, I do not see you. I call you: no answer. Are you and I separated during one of these innumerable divisions?



[1]

For the first time on our Odyssey, we are not together. Strange. But the divisions had not stopped: I too fell apart. My consciousness reduced, my eyes became cloudy and sounds disappeared. Everything faded.



[2]

Your narrator continues: "In their quest to "Who are you" – after the separation of earth and sky – the two main characters have disappeared in the course of the countless divisions. Temporarily, they are not able to report their experiences. Your narrator continues the story of the Odyssey. My name – Narrator – I have received a long time ago. My name originates from the word "narā" [3] meaning "people", and "tr" [4] meaning "cross or pass". As a narrator I will tell you the events until the two main characters will be able to tell their story again."

"After the primal separation and the following endless splits, everything is broken into infinite small particles. Of course there is still some order between these particles – or at least a start of order. But these connections are beyond our comprehension. And if we can apprehend it, we cannot express it in words. According to our notion of time in Western society, it takes several billions of years from the separation of earth and sky until we again have a

beginning of life. Or was this period much shorter? Several thousand years according to the Bible, or a blink of the eyes? Your narrator does not know. He was not present at the beginning of the universe and also not at the beginning of the Bible. However, your narrator is constantly amazed that after a blink of the eyes, the world still exists. The two main characters will recount their experiences with the perception of time on a later stage during their Odyssey. "

"After the complete collapse of "One" in infinitely many pieces, order is recreated. Mankind [5] is still investigating how this order is established and how long it took before the separate organisations of life emerged. The stories of discovery and development of life can occupy the rest of my life. Your narrator will – like my designation implies – transfer you to the point that "You and I" reappear when conditions permit human life again."

"The following post includes the outcome of the first organisation."

Notes

[1] Painting by Isaac Levitan - Over the Eternal Peace, 1894. Source image: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Landscape_art

[2] Source image: <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sandsturm>

[3] In Sanskrit this word consists of "na" meaning "not", and the verb √ra meaning "rejoice"; "nara" means ordinary man or woman. In the name "narrator" the plural for "men" is used: "narā". "Nara" has other meanings amongst others "eternal spirit" and "of the son of Manu". Source: electronic version of the dictionary Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta

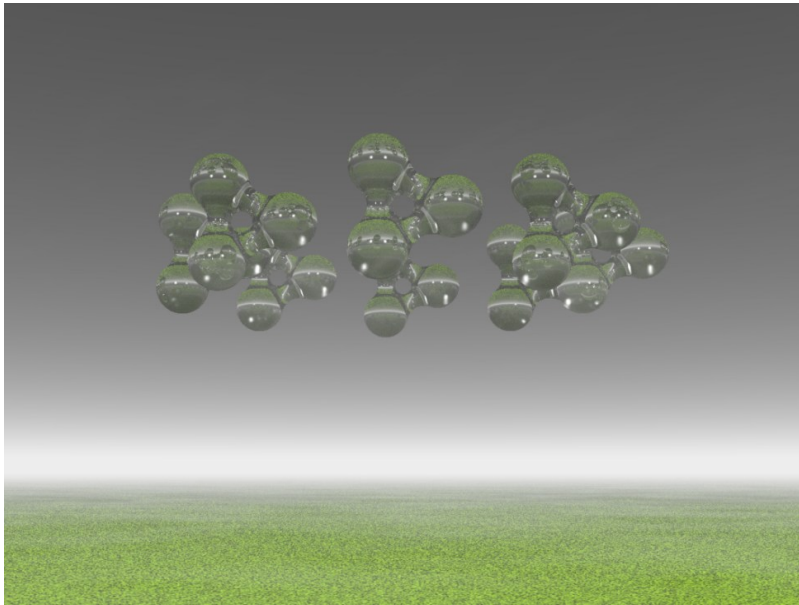
[4] In Sanskrit the verb \sqrt{tr} means "to cross over" according to Egenes, Thomas, *Introduction to Sanskrit – Part two*. 2005 p. 387

[5] "Man" means "think, conscience" in Sanskrit. People try to become aware of our past and to get hold of former experiences. Vanity, vanity, everything is vanity? Your narrator does not know.

TWO – First order arises

19 April 2011

YOUR narrator takes you back to the days when earth and air are divided, everything is broken as crackle and then fallen apart into small particles. After some time, a beginning of order does arise. Through time more complex forms of life appear. Your narrator does not know the history of this organization because in his current form he was not present at these events. Also, the narrator does not know the complete manner of this order: the various manifestations of this absolute miracle can only be seen if the conditions allow us.



[1]

In today's world we use hierarchies to bring order in the infinite manifestations. Some years ago, your narrator read in a book [2] a description of a hierarchy that is recognisable for people in Western society. This hierarchy looks something like this:

- Non living organisms
- Living organisms
- People
 - o Biology
 - o Law and regulations
 - o Science
 - o Quality
- Complex structures
 - o Hardware
 - o Software
 - o Villages with their own dynamics
 - o Cities with their own dynamics

“Your narrator uses an ethical [3] principle stating that every appearance has an equal right to exist. But if a choice between two forms is unavoidable, a more complex appearance - in this case the form on a higher place in the hierarchy - is preferable.

A second hierarchy, your narrator read a few thousand years ago. Nowadays this ranking is less easy to follow for people in Western society. This hierarchy has a ranking of the 32 'residences' [4]:

- Hells
- Titans
- Hungry ghosts
- Animals
- People
- Gods in 22 categories
- Five spheres of infinite space, awareness and emptiness”.

“In both hierarchies, mankind has a central place. Overestimation of humanity itself? We do not know. In the next stage of our Odyssey we will look closer at these two hierarchies”.

“The Western world also has a dichotomy in heaven and hell. Are heaven and hell nearby or far away, or only reserved for an afterlife? Your narrator does not know.

A few decades ago, a priest in Valkenburg explained the difference between heaven and hell hear during sermon”.

This priest said:

“In hell, people have a minor handicap: they cannot bend their arms. They are in a room with most abundant food and drink. But unfortunately they remain hungry and thirsty forever. They can look at the food and drink, because eating is prevented due to their minor handicap.”



[5]

"In heaven, people have the same minor disability and they are in the same room with food and drink. But they have no hunger and thirst, because these people care for each other. One gives the other at arm's length drink and food on needs and satisfaction."

A nice explanation of one and the same - looked upon in two ways? Or two manifestations depending on different circumstances? Or two different worlds? Your narrator does not know".

The next post is about twins.

Notes

[1] Source image: Jan van Leent

[2] Source: Pirsig, Robert M., *Lila, an Inquiry in Morals*. London: Bantam Press, 1991

[3] *"The underlying meaning of Greek "ethos" was "personal disposition". It ultimately came from the Indo-European word*

"*swedh-*" wherein we recognise the words "sva" and "dha" meaning in Sanskrit "self, Ego and human soul" and "to place, to give".

Sources: Aytō, John, *Word Origins, the hidden History of English Words from A to Z*. London: A & C Black, 2008 and Electronic version of the dictionary Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta.

[4] Source: *The Long Discourses of the Buddha*. Massachusetts: Wisdom Publications, 1995 p. 38-39

[5] Painting "The Last Supper" by Leonardo da Vinci. Source image: <http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cena>

TWO – Twins and opposites

22 April 2011

THE previous post was on a first order arising after everything has fallen apart into an infinite number of particles. Your narrator has told the first steps towards a hierarchy and ethics. You have received a glimpse of heaven and hell. In this post we continue with twins and opposites.

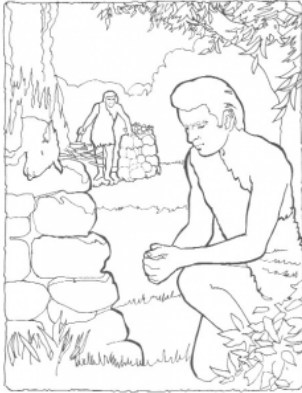
Twins are very important to people. In ancient myths and stories twins are often at the beginning of important developments. But around these twins, there usually exists uncertainty and instability. A choice is foreseen. Unfortunately, in myths a violent fate is made. One of the twins must leave or must be killed.

You probably know the twins Romulus and Remus, who were raised by a wolf. Romulus killed Remus in a dispute over the sovereignty of the new city. After this assassination Romulus could continue with the founding of Rome [1].



[2]

In Genesis – the first book of the Old Testament – Cain and Abel are the first two children of Adam and Eve. The description gives indications that they are twins. Cain was a farmer and Abel was a shepherd. Both brought offerings to God, but God accepted only the smoke from the cattle-sacrifice [3] [4] of Abel.



[6]

Because God does not accept the sacrifice of the harvest, Cain slew Abel – his brother [5].

People are very sensitive to opposites. In a desire for certainty, the opposition has to disappear as quickly as possible – often at the expense of a great loss. As a solution of this dilemma, one side of the opposites is then chosen. Your narrator showed you already the sad fate of Remus and Abel: the opposites within the twins have to be resolved by the disappearance of one of the twins.

When opposites arise, people want clarification as quickly as possible. Much is put aside to get clarification between yes or no, right or wrong, true or false, belief or unbelief, right or wrong. Often this choice is made by an immediate sacrifice or destruction of one of the two opposites. This choice is so important that people even commit fratricide; people are killed, war is made, dissidents are massacred.

Why should opposites immediately be solved? Why may they not survive? Does humanity have a strong desire for oneness or is it necessary to settle unrest and discontent as quick as possible at the expense of great sacrifices? Or may be both? Is the transcendence of the unrest and dissatisfaction worth committing major crimes? On their Odyssey, the main characters encounter many of these dilemmas.

Your narrator perceives the reappearance of the two main characters in the distance. They are not twins and I hope that they will not solve their differences through violence and murder on their Odyssey. We'll see.

Your narrator leaves the report now to the two main characters. In the next post, they will tell their story about a vigil at the beginning of spring in preparation for the next stage in their Odyssey."

Notes

[1] See also: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romulus_en_Remus

[2] Source image: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestand:Lupa_romana.jpeg

[3] See also: Mallory, J.P., *In Search of the Indo-Europeans*, p. 138

[4] See also: Introduction – Rituals 2 (27 maart 2011)

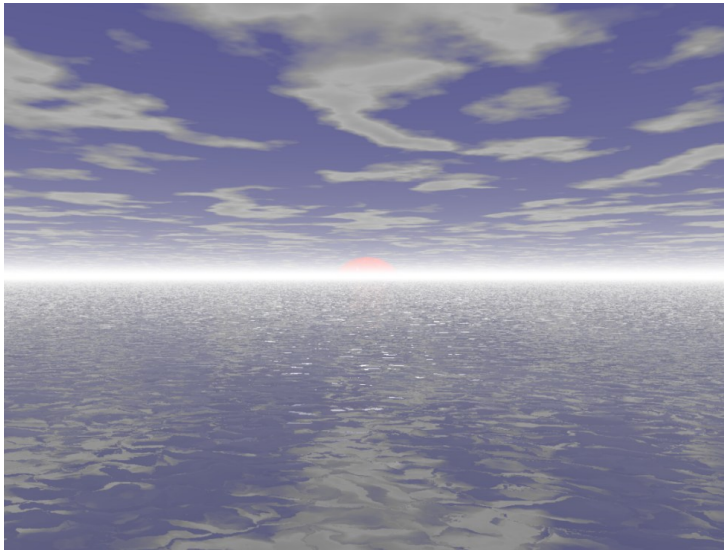
[5] See also: Genesis 4

[6] Source image: <http://www.tstl.net/children/coloring/coloring.asp>

TWO – Night of spring

25 April 2011

YOU and I have tried for several years to see the first rays of sunlight on the first day of spring. Many generations before us have watched for the moment the sun rose above the horizon on the first day of spring at exact six o'clock in the morning. Until now you and I have not succeeded to experience this view, because once it rained all night, another time it was foggy, or one of us was sick and other years we had our work commitments.



[1]

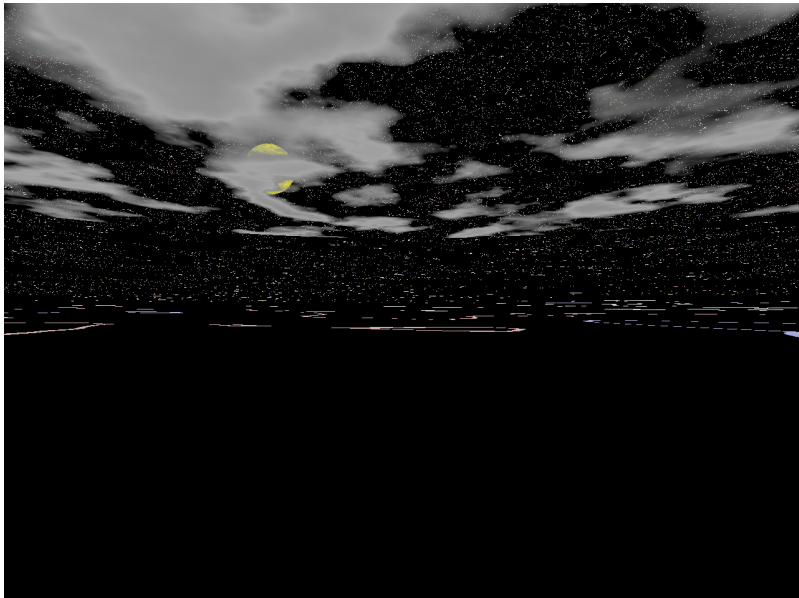
For you and me, this moment is so important because our ancestors needed this moment to determine the time of the year. This time served as a benchmark for e.g. determining the sowing time of wheat [2].

The importance of this time for our ancestors was evident because in all Catholic churches the altar faces east – the center of the windows above the altar receives the first ray of sunrise exactly at sunrise at 6 o'clock in the morning on the first day of spring. The sermon is always held in the direction of the morning light – the light of the resurrection (of nature).

During funerals, the deceased are carried with their feet forward towards the altar, so that the first thing the dead will see on the day of the resurrection, is the morning light. Many graves of ancestors also have this direction [3].

Now we are sitting on a peninsula with water all around us. Just to the north it is connected to the land. There is little wind; it promises to be a cold and beautiful night.

After diner in twilight we prepare for the night in the moonlight:



[4]

"Did you see my flashlight?"

"It is full moon, no flashlight needed."

"I like to set the alarm correctly."

"The alarm is set at five."

"Enough time to wake up."

"I hope the night and dawn will be clear. Then we can see the sun beautifully rise at six o'clock."

"Yes, that will be nice."

"It will be a cold night."

"Fortunately we have warm sleeping bags."

"I hope there will be no fog and mist to spoil our view of the sunrise."

"You want the sunrise with fireworks and Clarion blasts?"

"Better than waking up in thick fog. After so many years I enjoy to see a beautiful sunrise. We are not so often in the open air at the onset of the spring."

"Maybe it is more realistic to look at the primeval fog we originated from and into a fog we will return."

"I'd rather see the view that many people before us have looked at. There is good reason for the orientation of the altars to the East."

"I also look forward to a beautiful resurrection tomorrow morning. But don't be disappointed if we have a different view."

"How shall we lie, head over to the West and feet to the East?"

"Similar to our funeral. With the feet to the altar."

"I don't want to think about my funeral. I'm needed for my family and at work."

"I also prefer to live. But I would like to be unique by following the footsteps of our ancestors. Who has done this before?"

"No one is as crazy as we."

"It is nice to look at the sky during a clear night. Our ancestors have done this so often. When you snore I'll have a view at the universe. Tomorrow I hope to share the unique view that our ancestors have seen. We deserve it after all these years"

"Will you also share the day of resurrection with your ancestors?"

"I don't know. Sleep well, have a nice dream."

"Dream of dreams".

Notes

[1] Source image: POVRAY – Sunrise Jan van Leent

[2] Calvin, William H., *"De Rivier die tegen de Berg op stroomt – een reis naar de oorsprong van de aarde en de mens"*. 1992

[3] Depending on the latitude, graves are oriented to the East or to the South. Source must be retrieved.

[4] Source image: POVRAY – Moonlight Jan van Leent

T HREE – Dubio transcendit

28 April 2011

YOU and I arrive at the third stage on our Odyssey. Now we will give a first interpretation to – and derive a first meaning from [1] – the complex universe around us. By making sense of and derive meaning from the things around us, a creative process starts. Most of this process of creating and recreating is beyond our perception [2]. This invisible creative process goes its own way. We can only trust in the good event of these developments beyond our control.

The tiny part of the creation and recreation that you and I can control, we try to change to our advantage. We think that we need this advantage for our survival. Here we act selfish. Later, you and I will encounter more complex forms of ethics. Now we start at the beginning of conscious creativity and our opinion about it.

Our selfishness is often overtly and socially acceptable in our society. We hunt and gather, we perform farming, we work in factories or offices, or by mutual agreement we will prevail over others. All these actions are questionable: later we will come back to this. But sometimes this selfishness is unacceptable and is obtained by force or by law suits.

In specific cases, we camouflage our selfishness by adding appropriate images to acts that are not acceptable on its own. Around wars and the conquest of land linger all sorts of myths and rituals [3].

In one particular case the number three is also used to justify the theft of cattle in a myth: it is the Triton myth followed by the myth of the cattle cycle [4] [5].

In the Proto-Indo-European world, the creation of the world is interpreted by the Triton myth.

The twins Manu – related to the word "man" [6] – and Twin travel through the universe accompanied by a cow. The two brothers decide at a certain moment to create the world. This requires that Twin must be sacrificed. With the help of the gods, Manu creates the separate parts of the world from the remains of Twin. With this act Manu became the first priest [7] and the first inventor of the ritual sacrifice by which the world was created.

When the world was finished, the sky-gods gave cattle to the "third man" named Triton. But the cattle was cleverly stolen by a three-headed snake. With help of the storm gods, Triton killed the snake and freed the animals. Some of the cattle was given to priests for a smoke offering to the sky gods. By this act Triton [8] was the first warrior. He restored the prosperity of the people and his gift of livestock to the gods ensured that the cycle of gifts between gods and humans continued.

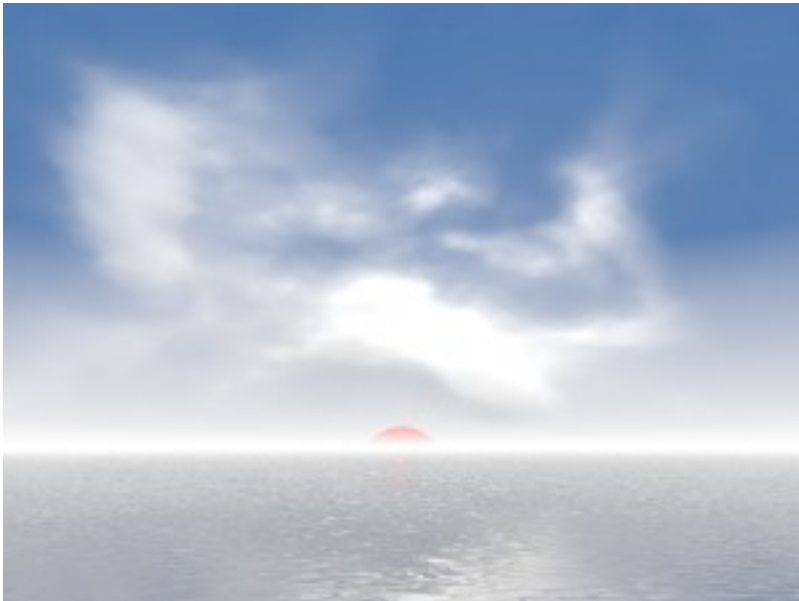
The second myth – the cattle cycle [9] – is a continuation of the Triton myth. In the cattle cycle, God [10] gives cattle to the farmers who in turn take care of the cattle and increase the herd. Foreign men raid the cattle. The warriors seize the cattle back and give a part of the cattle to the priests for smoke offerings to God who in turn thanks for the sacrifices by giving cattle to farmers again.

The raiding of cattle has obtained a central place in this culture by both myths. It is an essential act to acquire property. With the acquisition of livestock by raiding, warriors may obtain means of exchange for acquiring one or more women [11]. In the Proto-Indo

-European world, women represent the only real property of value [12]. Only through holding the highly regarded medium of exchange – cattle – warriors can get women in order to beget offspring.

The cattle cycle provides a basis for a ritual of mutual trust – Credo (I believe) – between gods, priests, men and classes of people themselves. In this case, cattle is a metaphor for mutual trust, a role that money has taken over in our society.

In the following messages you and I will encounter the "person in the middle," "the object in the middle" and the "spirit in the middle".



[13]

Notes

[1] See : Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, *Phénoménologie de la Perception*

[2] See also: Eames Charles & Ray, *Powers of Ten* (1977) and the post on this subject.

[3] See also: Keegan, John, *A History of Warfare* (2004); Goldsworthy, Adrian, *In the Name of Rome* (2003); Crefeld, Martin van, *The Culture of War* (2008).

[4] See: Anthony, David W., *The Horse, the Wheel and Language* (2007), p. 134

[5] See: Mallory, J.P., *In Search of the Indo-Europeans*, p. 137

[6] √man: Means “think” in Sanskrit.

[7] In Sanskrit √pṛ means: “be able, show”; Ish means: “ruler, god”; and √tṛ means: “cross”

[8] kshatriya means warrior in Sanskrit. Possible this word is derived from “ksha” meaning “field” and √tṛ: “cross over” or “tri” maybe referring to Triton.

[9] See: Mallory, J.P., *In Search of the Indo-Europeans*, p. 138

[10] “go” means “cow or bull” and “da” means “give”

[11] See Anthony, David W., *The Horse, the Wheel and Language* (2007), p. 239

[12] See: McGrath, Kevin, *STRĪ Women in Epic Mahābhārata*. Cambridge: Ilex Foundation, 2009 p. 9 - 15

[13] Source image: Povray – Float Cloud Jan van Leent

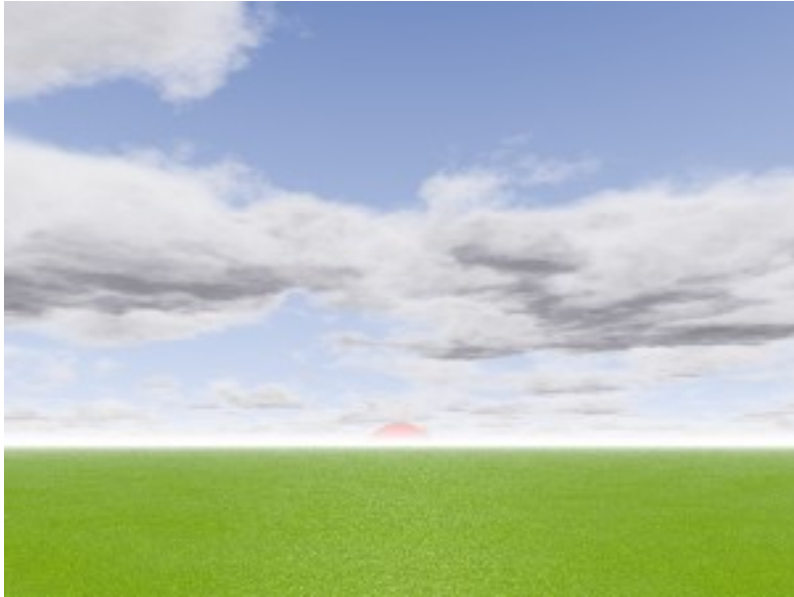
T HREE – Person in the middle

1 May 2011

DURING the third stage on our Odyssey, you and I have encountered the Triton myth and the cattle-cycle. These myths – with rituals – are a first manner of restoring confidence between the gods, priests, men and classes of people themselves. Livestock is a metaphor for mutual trust, a role that money has taken over in our society.

In the Triton myth about the origin of the world, you and I met the gods: Manu created with the help of the gods the world from the parts of Twin. In this myth, the gods are necessary for Manu to create the world. Who are these gods? You and I do not know. Are there more Gods or is there only one god? We do not know; each society has given different answers to this question. Is there a world without gods? We do not know. Are the gods an integral part of the complete oneness? We do not know. However, you and I will investigate this later during our Odyssey

Following the creation of the world, the sky gods give cattle to Triton. After the storm gods help him during his adventures with the three-headed serpent, Triton sacrifices cattle to the air gods to restore and consolidate the mutual trust. Within the cattle cycle, priests sacrifice animals to the gods in order to restore and maintain the confidence between gods, priests, people and categories of people.



[1]

According to these first myths – you and I have seen in the Proto-Indo-European world – the gods are needed to create and maintain the world. The trust and aid of the gods is vital for these people. How the people in this Proto-Indo-European world perceive the god in their daily life, we do not know. Though in this society, soon persons emerged who created and maintained the connections between the world of humans and the gods.

The precursors of the persons in the middle – without whom a connection between people and gods no longer seems possible – we have already encountered in both myths.

Priests [2] – as persons in the middle – have a role to establish and maintain a connection between the sky gods, the world and the people by performing smoke sacrifices and rituals. This connection is of vital importance to maintain and continue the

rhythm of life. This connection maintained by the priests in the pre-scientific age also gives a first answer to the questions where mankind comes from, why people are on earth and what future awaits them.

In the Catholic Church the pope acquires a role of Pontifex Maximus [3] – or the great builder of bridges – between heaven and earth. In this church the Pope – as first among his peers – is the "person in the middle" who maintains the connection between heaven and earth and/or between God and humanity.



[4]

The warriors – and over time their chiefs in the form of emperor, king or general – get the role to establish and perpetuate order in society by conquest and military operations (with its rituals and practices). Later – as a representative of the gods – they regulate the affairs of the society on earth. For earthly matters, they

increasingly act as representatives of the gods on earth. In this form they become a "person in the middle" between on one hand the complete oneness and on the other hand society and humanity. According to this way of thinking, society ceases to exist without this "person in the middle": Roman legionaries fell into despair – their entire existence on earth fell apart – as a general of a legion threatened to leave the legion to its own fate [5].



[6]

The arrangement between priests and warriors – or between church and state – is usually sensitive. The hierarchy between

these two roles changes continuously. Sometimes balance occurs: the pope crowns the emperor so the profane role of the emperor receives recognition by a sacral ritual performed by the Pontifex Maximus, while the role of the Pope – as a bridge between heaven and earth – is recognised and perpetuated within the same ritual [7].



[8]

The next post is about “the object in the middle”.

Notes

[1] Source of image: POVRAY – Clouds Jan van Leent

[2] In Sanskrit $\sqrt{p\ddot{r}}$ means: “be able, to show”; Ish: “ruler, god”; and $\sqrt{t\ddot{r}}$: “to cross”

[3] See also: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pontifex_Maximus

[4] Source image: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Gregory_I

[5] See also: Goldsworthy, Adrian, *In the Name of Rome* (2003)

[6] Source image: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlemagne>

[7] The balance between Charlemagne and Pope Leo III is of short duration. It only lasts the coronation as emperor. Charlemagne has wondered which court the Pope must appear to in case the Pope commits crimes. Source: Norwich, John Julius, *The Popes, A History*, London: Chatto & Windos, 2011.

In addition, Charlemagne has achieved that the affix to the Credo "and from the son" to "the Holy Spirit is created from the father" is accepted by the German churches in 794 A.D. as the only appropriate text. Pope Leo III sent a letter to Charlemagne in 808 A.D. mentioning that it is inappropriate to add "and from the son" to the creed. Charlemagne has held to his position; as consequence he has not asked Pope Leo III to crown his son to Emperor. Source: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geloofsbelijdenis_van_Nicea-Constantinopel.

[8] Source image: <http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlemagne>

OBJECT in the middle – part 1

5 May 2011

ON our last stage "Two", first the sky and the earth had been separated, and then everything fell apart into innumerable small parts. Afterwards a first order has arisen. While meaning and purpose was given to this order, a first creative process started.

People give interpretation to their environment, so they can increase their chances of survival by increasing their grip on touchable matters and circumstances. Furthermore, this interpretation takes shape in stories and myths which anchor knowledge and skills – from other times and circumstances – within the known world of people. Religion and rituals bring the unknowable and elusive within the scope of people; we try to influence the unknown and elusive in our environment by performing recognisable acts.

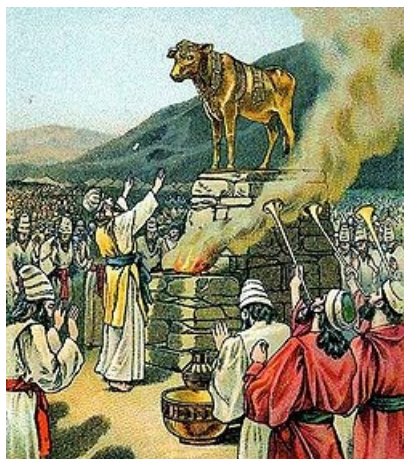
Cattle was a metaphor for mutual trust in the world of our ancestors. In our society money has taken over this role of cattle. In earlier societies, also special objects – as replacement of living beings – served their role of metaphor for mutual trust. Special shells, jewellery and precious artefacts were examples thereof.

Some items rose above the role of metaphor for mutual trust. These objects turned from metaphor into the physical reality itself. The banner [1] of a Roman legion was the identity (or entity) of the entire legion. If the banner was lost, the legion ceased to exist. The three legions led by Varus, lost their banners in the Teutoburg Forest; these banners were never replaced [2].



[3]

Images of gods were worshiped by people as real gods. In the Old Testament, Moses had done everything to let Yahweh be recognised – without image – as the only God of the Jewish people. After receiving the tables of the Ten Commandments from Yahweh – including the first two commandments: *"I am Eternal your God, and thou shalt have no other Gods before me"* – he noticed on his return that the people were worshipping a golden calf. The Jewish people were completely forgotten Yahweh and the golden calf as "object in the middle" had completely taken the place of Yahweh.



[4]

Furiously Moses throws the tables of the Ten Commandments in pieces. He needed to return to the mountain again for receiving new tables of the covenant from Yahweh. These new tables including the Ten Commandments were carried with the people in the Ark of the Covenant. Later the ark was placed in the sacred space of the Temple in Jerusalem. Since that time, Yahweh was considered to be present above the ark in the void between the tips of the wings of two angels [5].



[6]

The Ark of the Covenant was probably destroyed by the Babylonians during the devastation of the first Temple in Jerusalem in 586 BC.

Did the image of Yahweh also disappear in order that Yahweh is now ubiquitous? We don't know.

Notes

[1] See also: Goldsworthy, Adrian, *In the Name of Rome – The Men who won the Roman Empire*. London: Phoenix, 2004

[2] See also: Wells, Peter S. *The Battle that stopped Rome*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004

[3] Source image: <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vexillum>

[4] Source image: [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gouden_kalf_\(Hebreeuwse_Bijbel\)](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gouden_kalf_(Hebreeuwse_Bijbel))

[5] Source: Oude Testament; boeken Exodus 25:22 en Numeri 7:89

[6] Source image and see also: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ark_van_het_Verbond

OBJECT in the middle - part 2

9 May 2011

BEFORE [1] we have met ancient stones in the landscape. These stones had a special importance for our ancestors as landmarks for interpretation of the known and the unknown. The Catholic Church has tried to incorporate the role of these stones into the Christian faith by placing field crosses at these places.

You and I noticed how the "object in the middle" – as a metaphor for mutual trust and a symbol that the metaphor of the object surpasses and transgresses – changed into a tangible reality which the "object in the middle" originally depicted.

People visit each other, exchange gifts in order to express and maintain mutual trust. In special circumstances, special gifts are given to commemorate and perpetuate the mutual relationship. Examples of these special circumstances are important milestones in life such as birth, baptism, birthday, marriage, death of parents. Often these gifts are jewellery that – when wearing the jewels – symbolise the mutual bond and the special status of the wearer of jewels. Occasionally these jewels are buried with the owner in the grave after her or his death, so the owner may also show the confidence and status in the previous life with the jewellery in the afterlife.



[2]

In the graves of Neanderthals, jewellery was never found [3]. Perhaps they did not use "objects in the middle" to demonstrate and consolidate mutual trust. Maybe they did not need interpretation in their lives, since they were fully confident? Didn't they know any interpretations or didn't they create any image of these interpretations? We do not know.

Over time, people make images of "objects in the middle" in order to symbolise the original trust that the object depicts. For groups of people, these symbols become important objects to express the nameable and unnameable feelings within the group. The symbols receive their own dynamics in the form of flags and pictures with accompanying music and with rhythm in time. The Catholic

Church shows many images of God and the saints. Group identity and national feelings are reinforced by flags and emblems.



[4]

In addition, these symbols raise distrust to outsiders. This distrust often takes shape as outright hatred: the outsiders are determined to completely extinguish the strange symbols – and everything that they represent – so all traces are erased. Many wars have begun in this way with their own dynamics: the flags, music, sound of boots and women placing flowers in the barrels of the guns do

the rest. The group pressure to destroy is so strong that group members, who do not want to engage in violence, are threatened with expulsion or even execution.

In some cultures the unnameable and the higher is so overwhelming that it cannot be displayed. In the Islamic culture depictions of Allah are not allowed; also images of beings with a soul are not desirable. In the Jewish faith, Yahweh cannot be displayed. In the Protestant churches no images of God are present. Have these ways of religion surpassed the value of symbols and images? And have they overcome the aversion to strange symbols and images, because they have transgressed the value of symbols? Probably not, golden calves [5] are still revered and contested.

Notes

[1] See the post “One-Pantheism” in this weblog.

[2] Source image: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewellery>

[3] Arsuaga, Juan Luis, *Het halssieraad van de Neanderthaler – Op zoek naar de eerste denkers*. Amsterdam: Wereldbibiotheek: 1999

[4] Source image: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Wallingford-screen-sta.jpg>

[5] See previous post: “Three – Object in the middle – part 1”

O

BJECT in the middle - part 3

15 May 2011

IN the previous post you and I made a first exploration on the role of symbols – like "objects in the middle" – to establish and consolidate mutual confidence. We have noticed that symbols call for hope, expectation and deep trust in people, but that symbols also cause deep disgust. In addition, symbols may incite violence, destruction and outright hatred. Sometimes symbols have a comprehensive influence and provide a strong bond of mutual trust, but symbols rarely provide an input to the "perfect oneness" for all. [1].

Now you and I encounter another "object in the middle" that is seen by many people as a place to establish and maintain mutual confidence within close family. This "object in the middle" is our home [2]. For individuals, the uterus is the first house where human beings pass about the whole evolution before their birth. After birth a baby is depending on its parents, educators and a community where the child grows to adulthood. As adult the environment with which one has become accustomed, is seen as home.

Hunter-gatherers experience their habitat – literally, where one lives – as their familiar surroundings. Violations of trust, that may arise between the hunter-gatherers and their habitat, is – as far as we know – restored through rituals. E.g. in rituals hunter-gatherers identify themselves with their prey for two reasons. They seek redemption for the sin of killing their prey, and they

identify with their prey to maintain their unique system of survival for both hunter and prey [3].



[4]

Pastoral people will also see their habitat – in which they wander – as their home and environment. Their habitat provides forage for their herds and, indirectly, for themselves. Through rituals pastoral peoples try to maintain trust between the known and unknown habitat on one hand and themselves on the other hand. In previous posts, you and I have seen the Triton myth and the cattle-cycle as examples of these myths and rituals.

Farmers will experience their fields and crops as their habitat. Initially the farmers move on after a short time when the land has been impoverished by growing the same crops several times in succession. Once the farmers have developed a periodic system – crop rotation – for maintaining a balance in time between different crops and the soil, they stay in permanent residences. They see their habitat as their home.

Later on our Odyssey, we will encounter people who are constantly at home everywhere. A glimpse of this, we may see in the following poem by R̄yōkan:

*"Even though I sleep
Every night in my life
Always somewhere else,
The eternal dream takes me
everywhere to my home." [5]*

Many people see a home as a safe haven and as a origin from where the world is experienced. They see a house not only as a familiar environment, but they largely identify themselves with their home: they shape their house and the house expresses who they are.



[6]

In this respect, our present society only recognises people when one has a nationality and a permanent residence. Without possession of a nationality and a permanent residence, people lose many of their common rights within today's society. We see that today's society gives immense faith to a home as "object in the middle". In other times and under different circumstances, people have given another value and trust to a home as "object in the middle".

Why is our society so attached to a permanent residence? Has our society only confidence in its people with this specific "object in the middle"?

During the previous night, you and I slept under the stars. Tonight you and I will sleep in a caravan where the ceiling will show the sky in the dark as a reminder of the sky in the open air. Tomorrow you and I will sleep in a house.

The next post is about the house of God as "object in the middle".

Notes

[1] See posts related to Introduction of “One”

[2] In Sanskrit “grham” is one of the words for house. This word possibly consists of “grh” meaning “take, grasp en encompass” and “aham” meaning “I” – first person, singular, nominative.

[3] See also: Eliade, Mircea, *A History of Religious Ideas*, Volume I, page 5.

[4] Source image: http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/J%C3%A4ger_und_Sammler

[5] Free rendering of translation of Tanka from R̄yokan on page 170 in the bundle: Tooren, J.van, *Tanka – het lied van Japan*. Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1983

[6] Source image: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rietveld_Schr%C3%B6der_House

OBJECT in the middle - Church

20 May 2011

IN the previous post you and I have met the role of the house as "object in the middle". Now you and I are looking into the role of the house of God as "object in the middle". The first sacred places, we have already seen. We have encountered sacred stones on our Odyssey. We remember the stone circles as places for ceremonies which we no longer know.



[1]

We also know the golden calf as an image of a (demi-) God [2]. We have read in the Old Testament about Yahweh who is present between the tips of angel wings above the lost Ark of the Covenant.

Probably the hunter-gatherers have already given shelter to the Gods. We have read about rituals performed by the hunter-gatherers to unite the hunters with their prey as redemption for killing of the prey, and to maintain the unique bond between prey and hunter for both their survival. The rituals may be performed at specific times and places. These sites may be seen as a precursor to the house of God. The many caves with paintings of hunting scenes are a next step towards a house of God. Probably, these paintings also had a religious background.

Many nomadic peoples have travelled around with their herds. They may also have known fixed holy sites and probably they have seen sacred sites with established residents. Have they identified themselves with the Gods of the established residents and the hunter-gatherers? Probably not, but maybe they adopted some elements of the faith of other people. As nomads, they carried their sacred objects on the travels with their herds. In their tents special places are reserved for shrines. One example is the Ark of the Covenant that the Jews carried around on the travels and placed in a tent during stages. Even in the temple in Jerusalem, the Ark is placed with poles on both sides as a reminder and a preparation for a new travel.

The appearance of Islamic mosques reminds you and me of temporary stays – large tents and outposts to indicate the entrance point – in a desert. These mosques were transformed in imposing houses of Allah with courts and outbuildings around. An example is the Suleyman Mosque in Istanbul.



[3]

Farmers with fixed fields settled themselves in permanent residents. Also the gods received their private habitations. The recognition of the house of Gods did not happen overnight.

When we visited the oldest stave church at Urnes in Norway, the guide explained that the woodwork of the church is decorated with dragon motifs on the outside to keep the many evil spirits outside. This was necessary in the long dark winters. The Vikings must leave their swords outside next to the door. Inside, the church only has a few small lights from above. In that light a wooden crucifix is seen from which redemption and access to the afterlife may come. At that time the priests tried to change the image of Valhalla – the hall where the honorary fallen soldiers during battle continue eating, drinking and fighting to the end of time – into a longing for deliverance from sin and a Christian view of the afterlife. The blue paint color - lapis lazuli - on the wooden crucifix made around the 12th century AD comes from Afghanistan according to the guide.

During the explanation of the guide I think of Jalāl al-Dīn – also known as Rumi – who was born around the same time in Vaksh in Balkh Province in Afghanistan. Probably Rumi transcends the "object in the middle" in his contact with Allah:

"My thoughts are in the heart of Allah, the heart of Allah will be sick without the thoughts of me [4]".

Later on our Odyssey we will learn more about Rumi.

When we leave this church, you say: "Those light openings under the roof remind me of a saying by Oscar Wild:

"We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars"."



[5]

"Do you remember the first rays of the sun at 6 o'clock in the morning on the first day of spring? [6]", I ask.

"Whenever I visit a church", you answer.

The next message continues on churches as "object in the middle".

Notes

[1] Source of image: Marieke Grijpink

[2] See the previous post "Introduction: Three – Object in the middle – part 1.

[3] Source image: http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:PIC_2004-08-20_11-24_9538.jpg

[4] See: Nicholson, Reynold A., *The Mathnawi of Jalálu'ddin Rúmí*, Book II. Cambridge: Biddles Ltd, 2001 p. 281

[5] Source image: <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benutzer:Hesse1309/Fotos>

[6] See the last post on "Two" on 25th of April 2011

O

BJECT in the middle – Church 2

23 May 2011

IN our search for the church [1] as "object in the middle" we make a trip of 5 miles. You and I begin in the more than 1000 years old Aachen Cathedral in Germany and continue in time through the village church in Wahlwiller in the Netherlands to the newly built church in the abbey Benedictusberg in Mamelis near Lemiers. At the same time this trip leads us back in time from the contemporary city of Aachen, by the village community of the past 50 years to the monastic life of many centuries ago.

"On this trip we travel through time as the main characters in the book *"The once and future King"* by Terence White. Kay and The Wart move forward in time and Merlin returns in time", you say.

"If Merlin would follow our Odyssey back in time, than he has to accomplish an impossible task in the transition from Two to One. He must group an infinite number of fragments together to restore the complete oneness. Perhaps Merlin has a chance", I say.

"That's impossible. A fractured bowl is beyond repair. I do not know what we can expect on our Odyssey. The transition to Zero is an impossible change in its own. Let's first see the Cathedral", you say.



[2]

We look at the light in the dome. As I look at the arches, I realize that Charlemagne fought violently with the Moors. But in this house of God that emerged from the palace church of Charlemagne, the shape and the colour of the arches are very similar to the arches in the mosque in Cordoba.



[3]

We look at the altar. A group of Germans enters and starts to sing:

"Plorate, Filii Israel. Plorate, omnes Virgines, et Filiam Jephthe unigenitiam in Carmine doloris lamentamini." [4][5]

Or in our language:

"Weep, Children of Israel. Weep, all young women, for the only daughter of Jephthe let us weep with mournful songs."

"Jephthe made a terrible sacrifice for his victory. His daughter kept him to his promise to God by which she completely accepted her own fate", you say.

"In that time, women kept their promises to men [6]. Will Jephthe and his daughter rise from the death by following the promise to God by which they accepted their doom?" I ask.

"I do not know. Let us hope so. I hope that all people will resurrect who accept their fate. The light in the church gives hope", you say.

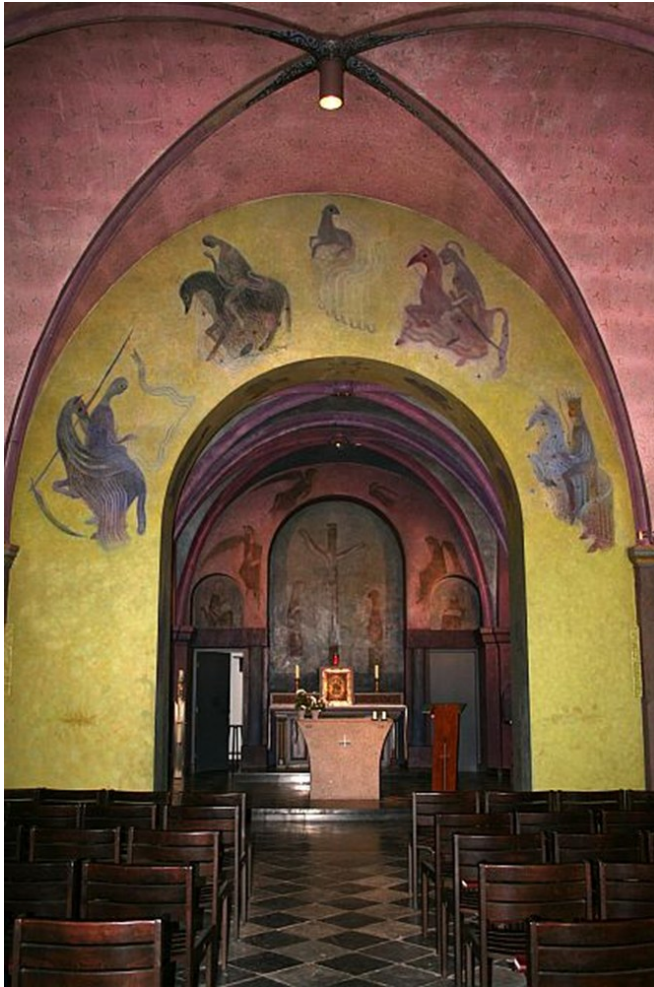
The sun breaks through. The light in the dome shines around the altar and creates a golden glow. The cathedral shows itself in its full glory.

"The light gives hope", I say.



[7]

We continue our trip to Wahlwiller on the road past the University Hospital, the Hochschule for Technology and the border post at Vaals. After a few kilometers, we see on our right side the Abbey Benedictusberg, our third destination today. A few moments later we leave the main road and enter the village Wahlwiller. We came to admire the paintings by Aad de Haas [8] in the St. Cunibertus Church. The colours inside and the Stations of the Cross in this church are exceptional. In 1947 the paintings are far too modern and outstanding for the Catholic Church. After more than thirty years, the paintings of the Stations of the Cross [9] did return in church again.



[10]

We enter the church and again a golden glow.

"People show the light of their surroundings. The main altar in the Storkyrkan on Gamla Stan in Stockholm consists of silver on dark ebony. This renders the bright spring light in the Nordic countries", you say.



[11]

"In South Limburg the light is much softer, therefore this golden glow. The fifteenth station representing the resurrection – in addition to the traditional 14 Stations of the Cross – is beautiful. This painting should actually be directed towards the East and be positioned behind the altar", I say.



[12][13]

"The image of the Eastern resurrection matches text:

*"Unless a grain of wheat falls into the Earth and dies,
it remains alone;
but if it dies,
it brings forth much fruit". [14].*

Considering the resurrection, I also think about a resurrection from a tabernacle. Probably a tabernacle is mainly empty to give room for the resurrection. Above the Ark the area for Yahweh is also empty", you say.

"Heaven and earth surpassing; only in the void, the sun rays may shine so beautifully in this church", I say.

We return in the direction of Lemiers. At the beginning of the driveway to the abbey Benedictusberg, you read that we may join the prayer services. First we examine the photographs of the abbey church [15].

"It looks like the inside of a sanctuary. This absolute beauty of dimensions and the layout of space does not need any further images", you say.

"Very contemporary and also completely timeless. Modern and also the very first church. It seems like time has no grip on this area. What a beautiful light from above", I say.



[16]

"Let's attend the Vespers [17]", you say.

"Very well", I say.

The following post continues on meditation rooms as "object in the middle".

Notes

[1] The source of the word "Church" probably is Greek "Kūrios" meaning "Lord, Master". Source: Ayto, John, *Word Origins, the hidden History of English Words from A to Z*. London: A & C Black, 2008.

Maybe the word Church originates via the German word "Kirche" from the compound of Indo-European words "kr" (karoti, kurute) meaning "make, do, perform", and "ish" depending on the "sh" sound either "sacrifice" or "ruler", or "ich meaning I in German" in Sanskrit.

[2] Bron afbeelding: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aachen_Cathedral

[3] Bron afbeelding: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:AachenDomInsideOktogon.jpg>

[4] Source: Oratorio by Carissimi, Giacomo (1605-1674), *Jephte*

[5] See also: Old Testament, Judges chapter 11.

[6] See also: McGrath, Kevin, *STRĪ women in Epic Mahābhārata*. Cambridge: Ilex Foundation, 2009

[7] Source image: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestand:Aachen_Cathedral_Barbarossaleuchter.jpg

[8] See: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aad_de_Haas

[9] See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stations_of_the_Cross

[10] Source image: http://www.kerkgebouwen-in-limburg.nl/foto.jsp?foto=files/usr_leon/Wahlwiller/inter-koor.jpg

[11] Source image: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Stockholm-Storkyrkan_06.jpg

[12] Source image: <http://www.deroerom.nl/pagina/344/pasen>

[13] Complete overview of the Stations of the Cross in the Church in Wahlwiller: [http://home.kpn.nl/dreumpie/w/index_copy\(1\).htm](http://home.kpn.nl/dreumpie/w/index_copy(1).htm)

[14] See also: New Testament, St. John 12: 24

[15] Architecture: Dom Hans van der Laan. See also: [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_van_der_Laan_\(architect\)](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_van_der_Laan_(architect))

[16] <http://www.kerkgebouwen-in-limburg.nl/view.jsp?content=2044>

[17] Evening prayer at the end of the afternoon.

MEDITATION rooms

26 May 2011

WE also encountered "objects in the middle" which give room for meditation. These special areas create the possibility for transcending the human scale and/or experiencing a complete oneness. Specific parts of the natural landscape have been used for this purpose for centuries. During our Odyssey we have seen stone circles, caves and stones in the landscape.

Probably with the occupation of homesteads people have created rooms for meditation that resemble their homesteads. Initially, the rooms for meditation are mainly located in or near their residences. Over time these areas have become major sacred places for worship and/or houses of God. Some of these places have been transferred in worldly contemplation space that we encounter as museums and art galleries. During our Odyssey we visit almost all museums, but we cannot report on these visits.

Let us visit two special rooms for meditation.

This first room – the Mark Rothko [1] chapel in Houston from 1967 – is a building for religion and for art. The exterior is a monolithic octagon with a small entrance. At first glance it looks like a mausoleum.



[2]

We enter the chapel. The interior radiates serenity – as monolithic as the exterior. The light comes from above. Internally I sing the first chorus of Cantata 131 by Johann Sebastian Bach:

*"Aus der Tiefe rufe ich,
Herr [3], zu dir.
Herr, höre meine Stimme,
lass deine Ohren merken
auf die Stimme meines Flehens!" [4]*

Or in English:

"From the deep, Lord [3], I cry to you. Lord, hear my voice, let your ears hear the voice of my doubt!" [4]



[5]

The windows consist of paintings by Mark Rothko from 1964 - 1967, shortly before his death.



[6]

The paintings render all impressions of the World. It seems that he tries to imprint – in translucent blue/black ink – every word ever written and spoken on the panels", you say.

"That's right. All glass beads of "Indra's net" [7] are included in the paint of the panels, the colors are so dense", I say.

The sun breaks through. On the triptych lights the blood of the earth in a red purple glow.



[8]

We sit next to a meditating - Zen? - Buddhist. When the Buddhist stands up, we go outside.

Outside you say: "I once read:

"A man asks a female Buddhist hermit in contemporary China to the core of Buddhist life in calligraphy on paper.

She puts the paper aside.

A few months later, he received four words per post: benevolence, compassion, joy and detachment.

Her calligraphy is strong and clear as her soul." [9]

Are these four words also applicable to the chapel?"

"Yes." I say.

"I first hesitated on joy, until the sun broke through." You say.

In the next post we will watch the last part of the movie "Offret" - or "The Sacrifice" by Andrei Tarkovsky from 1986.

Notes

[1] For further information on Mark Rothko:

Hughes, Robert, *The Shock of the New – Art and the Century of Change*;

Arnason, H.H., *A History of Modern Art*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1979, pages 533 - 534

[2] Source image: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestand:Rothko_chapel.jpg

[3] Maybe the German word “Herr” is linked to the verb √hr meaning “offer, present” and “seize, take away” in Sanskrit. Source: electronic version of the dictionary Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta. Both meanings of the verb √hr express together both roles of the warrior caste within the cattle-cycle: they rob the cattle and give a part of the cattle to the priests for offers to the Gods. A lord has also two roles of offering protection and taking a part of the harvest. Probably the role of Lord coincides with the role of God. In the experiences of nationals the king and God are closely interwoven.

[4] Translation: “*From the deep, Lord [3], I cry to you. Lord, hear my voice, let your ears hear the voice of my doubt!*” In German the word “Flehens” means supplication, But here this word is translated with doubt, because doubt is the origin of nearly all supplication to God. See also the book Job from the Old testament.

[5] Bron afbeelding: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:In_the_Tower_-_Mark_Rothko.JPG

[6] Source image: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/jenniferconley/3806774794/>

[7] For further information on “Indra’s net”: the post “Introduction: one – Pantheïsm – Indra’s net” of 8th of April 2011.

[8] Source image: <http://hayleygilchrist.wordpress.com/2008/04/09/contextual-studies/>;

<http://whitneymahoney.wordpress.com/2011/02/02/mark-rothko/mark-rothko-center-tryptich-for-rothko-chapel-1966-houston/> en
http://ghpoetryplace.blogspot.com/2010_09_01_archive.html <http://jhist11hw.blogspot.com/2011/02/rothko.html>

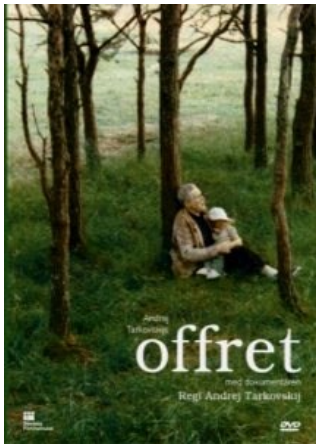
[9] Source: Porter, Bill, *Road to Heaven - Encounters with Chinese Hermits*. Berkeley: Counterpoint, 1993. page 109

OBJECT in the middle – Sacrifice

30 May 2011

IN the previous post, we entered two meditation rooms. The first room is the Mark Rothko Chapel in Houston. The other meditation room is everywhere and always present.

Now you and I consider the sacrifice as "object in the middle". For this we look at the last part of the movie "Offret" or "The Sacrifice" by Andrei Tarkovsky in 1986.



[1]

Before we start watching this part of the movie, we read first several introductions and reflections on this film. We start with "*The sealed time*" [2]: reflections on the cinema by Andrei Tarkovsky.

"The sealed time" is also a good name for the interior of the Mark Rothko Chapel", you say.

In these reflections Andrei Tarkovsky writes:

"The protagonist of the film " Offret " is meant as a weak personality. No hero, but a honest person who – as servant of fate – is able to sacrifice when the situation or his hart requires it in his opinion. He faces not being understood by others and to be seen as destructive and desperate. His efforts remain unnoticed and misunderstood, but do contribute to the harmony of the world." [3]

"Do you recognize yourself in this description?" I ask.

"With shame. I often follow my own way and I have neglected other people unnecessarily", you say.

"Who does not?" I say.

"Saints?", you say

"We both aren't," I say.

In the afterword to these considerations Andrei Tarkovsky writes:

"Ideologues and politicians have shown people "the only right way" that can save the world. The individual should give up all own ideas. To safeguard the future of humanity, the individual sacrifices his inner life. Herewith mankind forgets its own personal interest as Christ preaches: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." This means: "Love yourself so much that you respect the divine principle in yourself, the supra-personal that prohibits selfishness and obliges

you to give yourself to others unconditionally, loyalty to yourself from the I as a personal centre of life." [4] [5]

"This requires a consideration between self-interest – in which the world is reflected – and sacrifices for others – whereby each sacrifice for another is a sacrifice to yourself – as every wave is connected to the ocean", you say.

"Somewhere I read that a beggar and a benefactor show compassion for each other by offering. The beggar gives the benefactor the opportunity to demonstrate compassion and the benefactor shows compassion with another manifestation of his own life", I say.

"Before giving offerings in an unconditional manner, we still have a long way to go. Andrei Tarkovsky describes a first step towards a Buddhist bodhisattva [6]. The ideal of salvation and the unconditional offerings to others is present. Only the efforts and the ways to achieve one's own perfection before the Bodhisattva encourages others to prepare for enlightenment, is missing", you say.

"Within Mahāyāna [7] Buddhism enlightenment is only possible for everyone at the same time. The metaphor of Indra's Net shows this. First, one's own glass bead has to be prepared for enlightenment. After this, all other glass beads have to be able to enter enlightenment. If one glass bead is illuminated, all other pearls are also lit: no jewel within Indra's Net is left behind, because otherwise the dust on one non-enlightened jewel reflects in all", I say.

"Absolutely. Because the protagonist is not clear in his mind, he cannot save the world. If he does so, he remains behind with his faults and at least one small part of the world is not saved. Hereby the protagonist is not a bodhisattva, but a tragic hero", you say.

"He cannot be a classic tragic hero, because he believes in a God who may grant him salvation," I say.

"Later on our Odyssey, we will encounter enlightenment again. You and I share the same shortcomings as the protagonist in the film. I hope we are able to see a glimpse of the enlightenment. Odysseus has been tied to the mast of his ship in the vicinity of the Sirens. The ears of his crew were filled with wax to prevent noticing the seductive sounds. This reasoning is not sound, anyway", you say.

"Let us watch the movie", I say.

The last film of Andrei Tarkovsky – finished shortly before his death – begins with the monologue by the father – Alexander – to his son who will not speak during the entire movie due to a throat disease:

"Long ago, an old monk was in an Orthodox monastery. He has planted a dead tree. His pupil may give water to the tree every day. Every morning he climbs with a full bucket of water uphill and gives water to the dead tree trunk. On one day after three years, the tree blooms with full blossom [8]. Every action has its consequence. If you perform undisturbed at the same time every day the same ritual, the world will change irrevocably." [9]

"My mother once put a dead stick on the ground outside to the wall. After several months, the stick had rooted", you say.



[10]

During the film a threat of a war develops that will destroy everything and everyone. Under this pressure, the main character – Alexander – enters his study. He kneels on the ground and does something he never has done before. He prays:

"Lord, save us in this fearful hour. Do not let my children and friends, my wife, everyone who loves and believes in you die. And those who do not believe in you because they are blind and have not given thoughts to you. Because this war is a terrible war. After this there will be nothing left. I give you everything I own. I leave my family that I love. I destroy my house and take away my son. I will remain silent and talk to nobody. I renounce all that binds me to this life. If you only ensure that everything is as it was. I will do everything what I promised." [11]

The next morning, the threat is disappeared. Alexander sticks to his word and lures all the residents to the seaside before putting the house on fire. All his possessions are on fire. He sacrifices his

soul for his neighbours and the world. He is retrieved by an ambulance for admission to a mental institution.



[12]

"This sacrifice is not only a sacrifice of the protagonist. It is also a sacrifice made by his family and friends. Without any direct say, they lose Alexander, their house and possessions. Can a sacrifice be a real sacrifice when innocent people are involved" [13], you ask.

While the ambulance passes, the son is ready to water the dead tree with full buckets of water. The Aria "Erbarme dich" from St. Matthew Passion begins.

*"Erbarme dich,
Mein Gott,
Um meiner Zähren willen
Schaue hier
Herz und Auge weint vor dir
Bitterlich". [14]*

The son looks at the crown of the tree and says his only words during the film:

"In the beginning is the word [15].

Why Father?"

At the appearance of the text mentioning that the film is dedicated to the son of Andrei Tarkovsky – with hope and consolation – the crown of the tree seems to bloom.



[16]

"The son makes three sacrifices. He loses his father because his father sticks to his word and to God's word. He continuously gave water to the tree and through this second sacrifice he brought this tree back to life. And he remained silent throughout the film. Fully justified the son asks his father – and God – why his father must keep his word", you say.

"For me this is a film of hope, because the last film by Andrei Tarkovsky is dedicated to his son with hope and consolation. At the end of this film, the light gives bloom to the tree of life. The life of his father – now a dry tree, because he has stopped acting – becomes a tree of life for the son by means of water. The son does not need any words for his sacrifices; his life, his actions and his knowledge precedes all words", I say.

"A great enhancement of my impressions. Tarkovsky transcends "the sealed time" with this end of his last film", you say.

The next post is about the Lamb of God as sacrifice.

Notes

[1] Source image: front of DVD-cover of the Swedish version of the film "Offret".

[2] Tarkovski, Andrei, *Sculpting in Time – Reflections on the Cinema*. 1989

[3] Tarkovski, Andrei, *De verzegelde tijd – Beschouwingen over de filmkunst*. Pagina 203.

[4] Tarkovski, Andrei, *De verzegelde tijd – Beschouwingen over de filmkunst*. Pagina 207 – 208.

[5] For consideration: Indra's Net as metaphor; see also: "Indra's net" in post "Introduction: One – Pantheism – Indra's net" of 8th April 2011

[6] The word bodhisattva consists of two words "bodhi" and "sattva" meaning "perfect knowledge, wisdom" and "being, conscience, living being" in Sanskrit. The school of Mahāyāna buddhism knows the bodhisattva ideal. According to this ideal, a human who is on the verge of enlightenment – named bodhisattva, will refrain of entering until the complete universe and every particle is capable to enter enlightenment. In the meantime a bodhisattva will prepare everyone and everything for enlightenment.

[7] Mahāyāna means "large vehicle". All and everyone is enclosed in this large vehicle, no particle is excluded.

[8] See also the post of 2nd of April 2011 “Introduction One – Blossom.”

[9] See also the posts of 24th en 27th March 2011 on rituals.

[10] Source image: <http://www.jaapnoordzij.nl/credo/2010/09/offret-het-offer.html>

[11] Abridged rendering of the prayes in the “Offret” by Andrei Tarkovski.

[12] Source image: http://www.discordance.fr/top-5-les-meilleurs-epilogues-du-cinema-27740/1_offret

[13] Source: Fanu, Mark Le, *The Cinema of Andrei Tarkovsky*. London: BFI Publishing, 1987, page 125

[14] Aria from the St. Matthew Passion by the German composer Johann Sebastian Bach. Translation: “*Have mercy, my God, regarding my tears, look at me, heart and eyes weep for you bitterly.*”

[15] See also: Opening of the Gospel of St. John from the New Testament.

[16] Source image: http://www.elitisti.net/artikkeli/2005/02/004308/offret_1986_uhri.html

OBJECT in the middle – Lamb of God

3 June 2011

IN the previous post we looked at the sacrifice as "object in the middle". For this, you and I watched the movie "Offret" – or "The Sacrifice" by Andrei Tarkovsky in 1986. At the end of the film we saw how the father had sacrificed everything he owns – and binds him in this life – to God. He made this sacrifice to save the world, in order that everything remained as it was before the threat of war and to be freed from that deadly, unbearable, animal fear. This sacrifice of the father was as well an unintentional sacrifice of his family and his relatives.

The son brings three sacrifices. He loses his father because his father sticks to his word and to God's word. He is constantly giving water to the dead tree and therefore he brings the tree – the tree of life – back to life. By the third sacrifice he remains silent throughout the film.

The son asks to his father – and to God – why his father should keep his word. The son does not need any words for his sacrifice; his life, his actions and his knowledge precedes words.

Rightly, the son asks at the end of the film: "In the beginning was the word. Why Father?"

This question brings us to the first sentence in John's Gospel in the New Testament [1]. Later in our Odyssey, we will try to give answers to this unavoidable question of the son.

In this post we will look further at the sacrifice as "object in the middle". We look at the painting of the Mystic Lamb by the brothers Van Eyck in Ghent. This painting depicts Jesus in the form of the Lamb of God. The Lamb of God is described in the first chapter of John's Gospel in the New Testament:

"The next day St. John the Baptist sees Jesus approaching. St. John says: "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." [2]



[3]

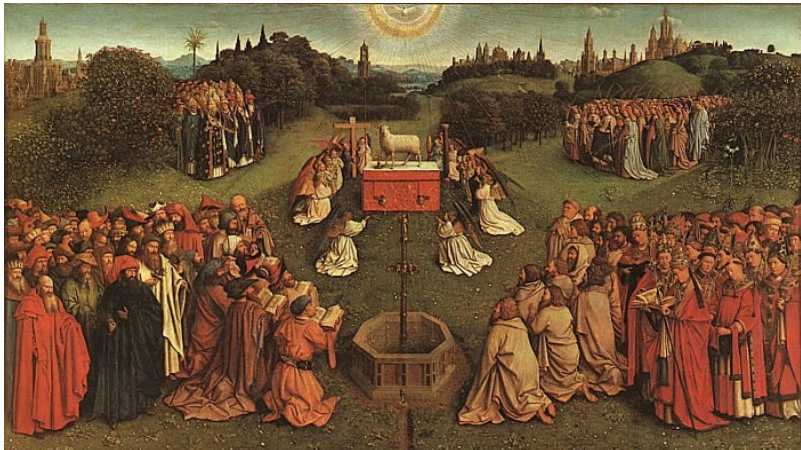
Internally I hear the Agnus Dei from Mass in B - minor by Johann Sebastian Bach.

*"Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, Miserere Nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, Miserere Nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, Dona Nobis Pacem. "*

Or in our language:

"Lamb of God, you who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Lamb of God, you who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Lamb of God, you who takes away the sins of the world, grant us peace".

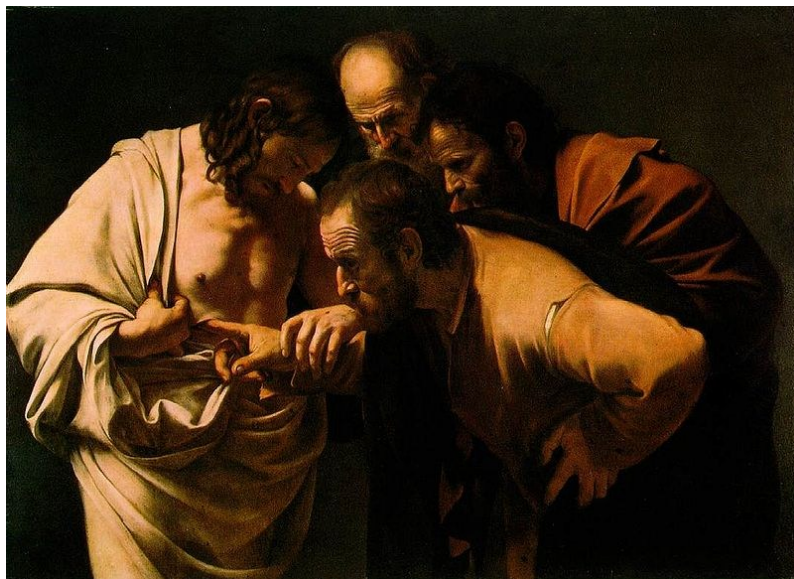
"It seems that the last weeks of our Odyssey we are travelling according parts of the liturgy of Holy Mass from the Catholic Church. A few weeks ago we started with the Kyrie: the word "church" probably originates from Kyrie [4]. Inside the churches, we continued with the Credo in the form of light and hope. The reflection and the sermon followed within two meditation rooms. And now we arrive at the sacrifice by watching the movie "Offret" and at the Agnus Dei [5] as the Lamb of God", I say.



[6]

"I could never say the Credo – or I believe – with conviction. It is not possible for me to believe in the Christian theology", you say.

"You're not alone and I feel this doubt with in you. Also Thomas one of the disciples of Jesus, cannot believe in the sacrifice of the Lamb of God and the resurrection of Jesus as salvation and resurrection of all people or believers. Caravaggio's painting shows that. This doubt of Thomas is not taken away by feeling the wound. Probably, faith and doubt go hand in hand for many Christians", I say.



[7]

"I believe that every day the sun rises as resurrection and I believe in my next breath. But I cannot believe in the sacrifice of the Lamb of God as salvation of the universe", you say.

"People have also questioned the next rising of the sun and the next breath. Hereof many rituals are known for establishing and perpetuating this confidence. People know a lot of uncertainties

about the past, the present and the future. Christian theology tries to overcome these uncertainties ("in dubio" or "in doubt" in Latin) with faith, rituals - including offerings - and hope. A deeply religious Christian once said: *"The last thing I want to lose is my faith."* For me, this sentence includes even a trace of doubt. A rock-solid belief never fades. With rituals, people try to establish and maintain trust and hope. The Christian faith says: *"And they that know your name, will put their trust in you."* [8] The painting of the Mystic Lamb by the brothers Van Eyck nicely show this: the Father, the Son as the Lamb of God and the Holy Spirit as trinity", I say.

"The Bible includes the Book of Job that is about a rock-solid faith [9]. I also think of the Japanese poet Rōkan. Once at night everything was stolen from his simple hut:

*"The thief leaves behind,
the ever changeful Moon
at the firmament. "* [10]

The moon [11] points to the firm belief of Rōkan", you say.

"The faith of people in the past often seems more certain, because we see their past as well established. But maybe their rock-solid faith did also know uncertainties in their lives. If we look with their eyes, do we see a different world, other uncertainties, different expectations, a different religion? I do not know", I say.

"Me neither. Shall we continue with the Dove as the Holy Spirit in the next post?", you say.

Notes

[1] St. John 1:1 from the New Testament: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."*

[2] St. John 1:29 and 1:36 from the New Testament.

[3] Source image: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lamb_of_God

[4] The source of the word "Church" probably is Greek: "Kūrios" meaning "Lord, Master". Source: Ayto, John, *Word Origins, the hidden History of English Words from A to Z*. London: A & C Black, 2008. Maybe the word Church originates via the German word "Kirche" from the compound of Indo-European words "kr" (karoti, kurute) meaning "make, do, perform", and "ish" depending on the "sh" sound either "sacrifice" or "ruler", or "ich - I" in Sanskrit.

[5] "The Agnus Dei is part of the Mass in the Catholic church and seems to be introduced for the first time during a Mass by Pope Sergius I (687-701 AD). Agnus Dei means Lamb of God and literally refers to Christ in his role as the perfect sacrifice that reconciles the sins of mankind in the Christian theology. The prayer dates from the time of the ancient Jewish sacramental sacrifices. The Agnus Dei is sung during Mass when the priest breaks the Holy Bread and unification takes place, the priest drops a piece of the wafer in the chalice - filled with wine and water as blood of Christ. The sacrifice of a lamb and the blood of the lamb are often used metaphors in the religions of the Middle East. It refers to the ancient Jewish custom to liberate people from their sins by a sacrifice. In the Protestant churches in the Revelation the phrase "washed in the blood of the lamb" is used to designate the deliverance of the original sin supposed by the churches. On our Odyssey, we already have encountered the cattle-sacrifice in the myth of the cattle-cycle and in the Triton-myth.

In art, Agnus Dei - the figure of a lamb bearing a cross - symbolizing Jesus as the Lamb of God. This metaphor is often used in Christian art,

where the Mystic Lamb by the brothers Van Eyck in Ghent is famous.

Source: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agnus_Dei

[6] Source image: http://www.bertsgeschiedenis.nl/middeleeuwen/eeuw15/jan_van_eyck.htm

[7] Source image: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestand:The_Incredulity_of_Saint_Thomas_by_Caravaggio.jpg

[8] Source: Psalm 9:10: "God, the protector of the believers".

[9] Also Job despairs when he and his wife feel the big setbacks directly in their bodies. Job asks God why he deserves these setbacks, his faith is unconditional. In a storm God replies: "Where were you when I separated the sky and the earth and created the universe!". Hereafter Job recognizes his ignorance, he calls for teaching and confesses that he has directly seen God in his omnipotence. Job does penance in dust and ashes. After a cattle sacrifice, God's wrath disappears and prosperity returns for Job.

When Job would have recognized all setbacks as part of himself, may Job have answered God that he too was present in the separation of air and earth? May he have the courage to say that his appearance in the separation of air and earth is adapted to the circumstances? That he always remains one during and after the separation of air and earth and during and after all the crackle that follows?

[10] Source: Stevens, John, *Three Zen Masters, Ikkyū, Hakuin, Ryōkan*. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1993. Page 131.

[11] Ryōkan is a Japanese Zen Buddhist. Zen Buddhism starts in China by a merger of Taoism and Buddhism. Taoism knows Tao as a keyword meaning "road or course of life", but this word is probably derived from the ancient Chinese word for "Moon". Source: Porter, Bill, *Road to Heaven - Encounters with Chinese Hermits*. Berkeley: Counterpoint, 1993 Page: 35.

OBJECT in the middle – The Dove

6 June 2011

IN the previous post we have looked at the painting the Mystic Lamb by the brothers Van Eyck in Ghent. This painting shows the Lamb of God as an offering to take away the sin of the world. Jesus Christ, the only son of God the Father, is represented as Lamb of God [1]. Above the Lamb of God, a dove is depicted as bright shining sun who illuminates the world. This dove symbolizes the Holy Spirit.

The choir sings during the Mass in B - minor by Johann Sebastian Bach how Jesus Christ was born through the Holy Spirit out of Mary:

"Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria virgine et homo factus est." [2]

Or in our language:

"And he has taken the flesh by the Holy Ghost from the Virgin Maria, and he became human."

Later in our Odyssey, you and I will dwell on "et incarnatus est". During this post we consider the dove - the Holy Spirit – through whom Jesus as Son of God the Father is born out of Mary. For this we look one more time at the painting the Mystic Lamb by the brothers Van Eyck in Ghent.



[3]

According to Christian theology God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are a Trinity [4]. In the painting, this Trinity is depicted as a father – in the upper middle sitting on a throne as King-God – with thereunder a separate painting of the Holy Spirit as a shining sun that illuminates the world. Through the Holy Spirit the Lamb of God emerges as the only child of the Father. On this painting the Holy Spirit is painted as a dove.



[5]

How does this divine Trinity relate to the invisible Jewish God who is considered present between the tops of the wings of angels on the Ark of the Covenant? [6] Do we see different physical appearances of the same God – who cannot be encompassed – but who takes different manifestations for the faithful?

Is the invisible God who is considered present between the tops of the wings of the dove similar to the Jewish Yahweh who is considered present between the tops of the wings of angels on the Ark of the Covenant?

The son of God takes away the sin of the world as a sacrifice in the form of the Lamb of God. Is this a continuation of the sacrifices within the cattle cycle that have been made long ago in order to establish and consolidate the trust between Gods and mankind? [7]

Christian faith has been spread through the Roman Empire. Within the world of the Romans, the father in the family has absolute power over his children [8]. The birth of a Roman only takes place

when the father decides whether and how the new-born child is included in society. Until a child is fully mature and starts living on her/his own, the father has absolute power over his children [9]. In Western Europe the Catholic Church is a continuation of the Roman empire until now. Before 300 AC. Jupiter [10] is the most important Father God. The vestments in the church still show resemblance to the fashion of the Late Western Roman Empire [9] and the church provinces are still quite similar to the provinces of the former Roman Empire until now. Does "God the Father" show similarities with the father in the Roman Empire in respect to the powerful position over his children?

"It seems that within the Christian theology the mystery of the divine Trinity is needed to reunite various forms of mysteries from the past. Through this unification of the Trinity and through rituals (with the usual offerings), the mutual trust between mankind and God is maintained according to the Christian faith. Through this mutual trust and faith, a view of a resurrection is created for the believers", you say.

"Your explanation sounds good, I leave a further investigation of this subject to church historians [11]. The divine trinity, the world and the universe also fit perfectly within another metaphor for the mystery of life. The three manifestations of God, including the world and the universe fit perfectly within Indra's net. Within this metaphor all aspect (including the three manifestations of God) are glass beads, that are more or less radiant and reflective. By their mutual radiation and reflection they constitute each other and together they shape the net. Within this metaphor a church is a community - with or without a building - that constitutes one another by mutual reflection arisen from beliefs, so that the life course is followed", I say.

"If we follow this way of thinking, the Holy Spirit may be the fleeting life course, light, wind, water, air, dust from which we are born and where we will return to. It also makes me think of the opening of the Ishvara Upanishad which goes something like this: *"That is the whole, this is the whole, from the whole, the whole becomes manifest; taking away the whole from the whole, the whole remains. Peace! Peace! Peace!"* [12]", you say.

"Two questions remain. According to the metaphor of Indra's Net, no single particle can get lost. And the second question arises because I've read somewhere that the gods are bound by the law of cause and effect. Maybe more on this later on our Odyssey", I say.

"Emily Dickinson gave a reference to the Trinity and the Holy Ghost as "soft breeze" in a short poem:

*"In the name of the Bee
And of the Butterfly
And of the Breeze, Amen!"* [13]

Maybe she aimed at the Trinity as: "Being", "Changing Manifestations" and "Eternal Wind", you say.

"And maybe she ment a continuous resurrection?", I say

The following post is a transition to the next stage "Five" and is about the "Word".

Notes

[1] See footnote 5 at the post "Introduction: Three – Object in the middle – Lamb Gods" of 3rd June 2011.

[2] Source: Credo see also <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Credo>

Source image: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lamb_of_God

[3] The first start of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity is given during the first Oecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325 by the church leaders of the great Christian centres in Rome, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. This Council rejects the Arianism – in which the verb $\sqrt{\text{arh}}$ may be recognized meaning "be worthy or be capable" in Sanskrit – and explains this view as heresy. Arius, the eponym of this Christian flow and priest in Alexandria, has proclaimed that Christ – although a superior man – has no divine nature but is created by God and therefore as "son of God" is subordinate to God the Father. In response to this view the Nicene Council determines that Christ is not a demigod but God and essentially one with God the father. In Nicaea is the doctrine of Trinity is not yet fully developed, because the Holy Spirit, the third Divine person, is not mentioned. This happens during the Oecumenical Council of Constantinople in 381 where the Nicene Creed is accepted as unchangeable with the main addition that the Holy Spirit as third divine person is equal to God the father and Christ the son of God. The Holy Spirit, according to the text, is "derives from the father". In Latin: "Qui ex patre procedit". Source: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geloofsbelijdenis_van_Nicea-Constantinopel

[5] Source image: part of http://www.bertsgeschiedenis.nl/middeleeuwen/eeuw15/jan_van_eyck.htm

[6] See post: Introduction: Three – Object in the middle – Part 1 of 5th May 2011.

[7] See post: Introduction: Three – Dubio transcendit of 28th April 2011.

[8] Source: *Histoire de la vie privée. Tome 1: De l'Empire romain à l'an mil*. Red. Ariès, Philippe & Duby, George.

[9] Source: Chapter 1 from *Histoire de la vie privée. Tome 1: De l'Empire romain à l'an mil*.

[10] The word Jupiter consists of the words Deus (or Dieu in French) that via the verb $\sqrt{\text{div}}$ means "Shine, appear, increase", and $\sqrt{\text{ptr}}$ meaning father.

[11] See also: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geloofsbelijdenis_van_Nicea-Constantinopel. The doctrine of the Trinity – with the Holy Spirit as third Divine person – is not yet developed in the creed as established during the Council of Nicaea in 325 a.d. At the Council of Constantinople in 381 a.d. an adapted creed is agreed upon, in which the Holy Spirit is acknowledged as third Divine person next to the Father and the Son where the Holy Spirit comes from the father or "qui ex patre procedit". The creed of Nicaea-Constantinople is accepted by all Christians. In 589 a.d. during the third Council of Toledo, "filioque" or "and the son" is added in the Latin text: the Holy Spirit emerges from the father and the son according to the Latin text. Charlemagne has been successful in ensuring that this addition is accepted by the German churches in 794 a.d.. Pope Leo III has sent a letter to Charlemagne in 808 a.d. mentioning that it is inappropriate to add "filioque" to the creed. Charlemagne has held to his position; he has not asked Pope Leo III to crown his son to Emperor. The creed in the Roman Catholic creed still includes "filioque". The Greek and Eastern Orthodox churches have seen this addition as a heretical degradation of doctrine of the Trinity, because this addition says that the Holy Spirit comes from the Father and the Son, and so is no equivalent God. In 1054 a.d. this addition has caused a schism between the Church of Rome and the Eastern Orthodox Churches. See also: Eliade, Mircea, *A History of Religious Ideas*, Volume 2. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982, p. 213-216.

Studying this development two questions arise. Why do Christians not accept that the Trinity are three manifestations of one and the same where they arise together? Why do the father and the son not arise from the Holy Spirit if there is a need for a single origin?

[12] See also: Major B.D. Basu ed., *The Upanishads, Volume 1 and 23*. New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 2007

O

BJECT in the middle – the Word

11 June 2011

THIS post is a transition to the next stage "Five" on our Odyssey. In the next stage, we will look at five contemporary realities:

- o Facts and logic
- o Intensities and associations
- o Void
- o Change
- o Inter-connectedness

In this post we start with "the Word" as "object in the middle" in the transition from "Three - Dubio transcendit" to "Five - five contemporary realities".

During stage "Three" we have seen the role of rituals and sacrifices that are continually made to establish and maintain the basic mutual trust – Credo (I believe) – between Gods, priests, people and categories of individuals. The contemporary world is full of similar rituals and sacrifices within society, in private life and in religious beliefs: again and again the rituals and sacrifices give trust and comfort. In a nutshell, you and I met the "person in the middle", the "object in the middle" and the "spirit in the middle".

When looking at the end of the movie "Offret" – or "The Sacrifice" – by Andrei Tarkovsky in 1986, we have seen the son – who looked at the crown of the tree coming to life – saying his first words in

the film: *"In the beginning was the Word [1]. Why Father?"*. This question was absolutely right, because this son needs no words for his sacrifice, his life and his knowledge, and his actions preceded all words.

Words indicate and include, and words exclude. In Psalm 119 in the Old Testament these two aspects of the word are shown:

"Your word is a lamp for my feet, I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws." [2]

By following God's word and light, the believer is in God's grace. A little further:

"You reject all those who stray from your statutes, for their deceit is vain. All the wicked of the earth, do ye away like foam."

By not following God's word and light, exclusion will be the consequence. His actions are not only optional for the believer, but it also has major consequences for others and the environment. The Word of God forms a hard separation between confidence and hospitality on one hand, and infidelity, rejection and exclusion on the other hand. The other metaphor for the mystery of life does not exclude; within Indra's Net, everything is totally enclosed, and everything takes shape within mutual reflection. Later in our journey we will see more of Indra's net.

In the film "Offret", the father sticks to his word to God. After the salvation of the world – as promised – he sacrifices and gives up all his possessions and all that binds him to this life. Without any direct say, his family and relatives lose the father/friend, their

house and possessions. Can a sacrifice be a real sacrifice when innocent people involved? [3]

The wife and son of Siddhartha Gautama – the future Buddha – were without husband and father after Siddhartha Gautama left his family to respond to the inner necessity to illuminate the world. A contemporary description of Buddha's life has a whole chapter devoted to describing the loss and the grief of the wife of Siddhartha Gautama.

"You and I left our family at the beginning of our Odyssey. They certainly bring a great sacrifice by our absence", you say.

"I feel guilty about the decision to make this quest. Because I follow this inner vow, other people and perhaps the universe are affected accordingly", I say.

"It amazes me that the lost son [4] in the New Testament receives much more joy than the son who continues his normal life. Maintaining day to day life is the foundation of everything. It deserves great joy and reward", you say.

"In the New Testament, the lost son stands for the unbeliever who – after many years wandering – returns into the womb of faith. Of course, the lost son receives joy and happiness! The other son and all believers experience a constant joy of their faith in maintaining everyday life [5]", I say.

"The name "Dubio transcendit" for this stage on our Odyssey begins to dawn on me. Believers surpass their doubts by maintaining everyday life the life of all days within a constant joy and certainty of their faith. It does not convince me completely,

but the beginning of an understanding is there. Where did you get the name of this stage?", you say.

"From the *Encyclical Ecclesia de Eucharista* of Pope John Paul II, which is a circular letter of the Pope as supreme bridge builder [6] between heaven and earth. In this letter the role of the Eucharist in the church is exposed. This circular includes the passage:

"Mysterium est magnum, quod nos procul dubio transcendit" [7]

which means:

"The mystery is great, that transcends us doubtless".

In the circular, this passage refers to the mystery of faith. I like this short passage, because the mystery of life – with all doubts and all divisions – transcends us by far. Even our faith and certainties, our disbelief and our doubts fit easily into the mystery of life, with and without faith. For this reason, I named this stage on our Odyssey "Dubio transcendit". With and without faith, with and without a sacrifice, the mystery of life transcends our doubts and divisions", I say.

"Have you received a final answer on the mystery of life during this stage?" you say.

“There for the mystery of life is too great.

*Fremd bin ich eingezogen,
fremd zieh' ich wieder aus.
Der Mai war mir gewogen
mit manchen Blumenstrauß.
Ich kann zu meiner Reisen
Nicht wählen mit der Zeit:
Muß selbst den Weg mir weisen
In dieser Dunkelheit.
Es zieht ein Mondenschatten [8]
Als mein Gefährte mit [9].[10]“,*

I say and sing.

"Beautifully sung. I know four performances of Winterreise. Peter Schreier with Sviatoslav Richter on piano, Hans Hotter with Gerald Moore, Christa Ludwig with James Levine and Brigitte Fassbaender with Aribert Reimann", you say.

"All these versions are beautiful in their own way. Time to go to the next stage", I say

Notes

[1] See also: Opening of John's Gospel from the New Testament.

[2] Source: Psalm 119:105-106 en 118-119

[3] Interpretation of the role of an offer is based upon: Fanu, Mark Le, *The Cinema of Andrei Tarkovsky*. London: BFI Publishing, 1987, pagina 125

[4] See: Gospel of Luke 15: 11-32 from the New Testament.

[5] See also “in dubio” in the post “Introduction: Three – Object in the middle – Lamb of God” of 3rd June 2011.

[6] See also: post “Introduction: Three – Person in the middle” of 1st of May 2011

[7] Source: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/special_features/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_20030417_ecclesia_eucharistia_lt.html: Ionnis Pauli PP. II Summi Pontificis, Litterae Encyclicae Ecclesia de Eucharistia, Rome, 2003

[8] Literally: a moon shadow. For the moon symbol also see footnote 11 to the post “Introduction: Three – Object in the middle – Lamb of Gods” of 3rd June 2011.

See also: Post “On the Way 2” in: Drift, Carla, *Man Leben – One Life, a Biography*. Amsterdam: Omnia – Amsterdam Publisher, 2012

[9] Poem by Wilhelm Müller. First song from the song cycle “Winterreise” by Franz Schubert.

[10] Translation: "As a stranger I came, I leave again as stranger. The month of May was favourable to me with many bunches of flowers. I am not free to choose my time for the journey: I have to choose my own way in the darkness. A shadow in the moonlight travels as my companion.

Intermezzo

20 juni 2011

Your narrator will accompany you during this intermezzo in the Odyssey of the two main characters. Before the two main characters begin the second part of the Odyssey, they will introduce themselves with a short biography.

During this intermezzo, I will already use their names. The first protagonist is named Man Leben and the second main character has received the name Carla Drift from her parents. My name is Narrator [1]. You have already met me in the second stage [2].

Carla Drift and Man Leben are in need of rest after two months of travel. In addition, Man Leben is not really well and needs to recover. Carla Drift has urgent family obligations. They will resume their quest within a few weeks. They use their rest to organize the report on the Odyssey.

During this intermezzo I will give an introduction to the five skandhas, which many centuries ago have taken shape in Buddhism. The five skandhas are various ways of self-reflection and experiences of our own. The skandhas resemble to some extent the five contemporary realities that we will encounter in our next stage.

The word skandha [3] means trunk of a tree in Sanskrit [4]. In a book [5], the meaning of tree trunk for skandha is compared to the forest of trunks of a Banyan tree. In Sanskrit one of the names of

banyan tree is "nyagrodhapādapa". This word literally means "not given to grow from a trunk". The Banyan tree originates from a bird, that leaves a seed of a banyan tree in another normal tree. First the seed feeds on the host tree. Through aerial roots, the banyan tree starts looking for food in the earth. The forest that we see are the aerial roots of the banyan tree. After some time a grove of tree trunks has been established in which the host tree cannot be found after some time.



[6]

In the next post your Narrator will continue on the five skandhas.

Notes

[1] My name consists of the word "narā" [3] meaning people, and "tr" [4] meaning "to cross or to pass". Nara" has other meanings amongst others "eternal spirit" and "of the son of Manu". Source: electronic version of the dictionary Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta

[2] See post: *Introduction: Two – You and I separated* – 16th April 2011

[3] The word skandha consists of the verb √skand and √dha meaning in Sanskrit "jump, or letting jump" and "to place, or to position". Source: electronic version of the dictionary Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta

[4] The electronic version of the dictionary Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta, mentions also the following meanings for "skandha": a big branche or bow; an aggregate or a group, a part or division of an army; a chapter; the five objects of sense; the five aggregated elements of being; the body.

[5] Source: Red Pine (Bill Porter), *The Heart Sutra*, 2004: page 57

[6] Source image: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Banyan_tree_Old_Lee_County_Courthouse.jpg

FIVE skandha's

26 June 2011

YOUR narrator continues his introduction to the five skandhas in Mahāyāna [1] Buddhism.

According to Buddhism, the five skandhas include everything we need for our spiritual development [2]. The five skandhas are various ways of self-reflection or experiences of ourself; they relate to you, me and everything around us. Once your narrator has read that:

"If you use the five skandhas in a correct way, then you are completely included in the perfect universe. Do you use this accesses in a wrong way, then you will stay a mortal being." [3]

In the second part of our Odyssey, we will see how this claim relates to the universe.

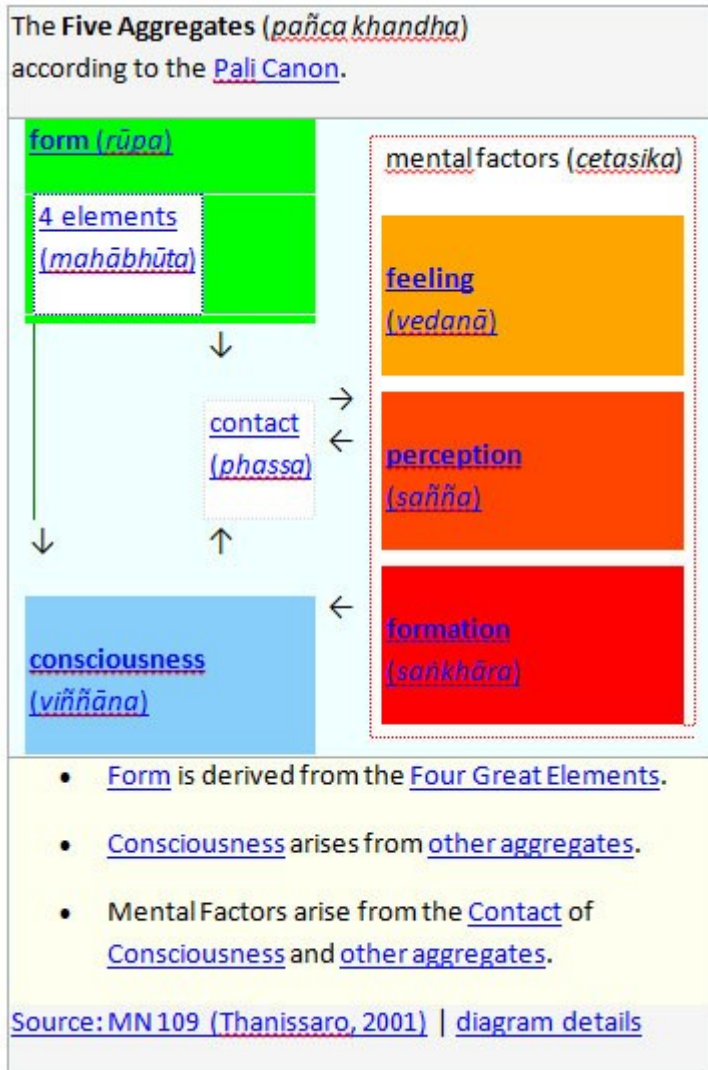
The five skandhas can be divided into three main groups:

- a physical manner of self-reflection by form or matter (rūpa in Sanskrit);
- three emotional ways of self-reflection
- (self)consciousness.

Now I will give a brief description of these five skandhas [4]:

1. Form or matter (Sanskrit – rūpa):
external and internal matter. External: rūpa is the physical world. Internal: rūpa includes our physical and physiological body and senses.
2. Sensation or feelings (Sanskrit – vedanā):
experience of an object as – for example – pleasant, unpleasant or neutral
3. Perception, recognition or distinction (Sanskrit – samjñā):
perception or recognition of an object (e.g. the sound of a bell or the shape of a tree).
4. Mental impressions, impulses, imprints (Sanskrit – saṃskāra):
all mental manners, thoughts, imprints, ideas, opinions, prejudices and decisions that are activated by an object.
5. Consciousness (Sanskrit – vijñāna): in Mahāyāna Buddhism, the skandha "consciousness" is the base that support all experiences.

The skandhas do not exist separately. The Skandhas arise, take shape and disappear in mutual relationship and interdependency [5].



[6]

After this introduction to the five skandhas, the question arises why our protagonists do not visit these skandhas as stages on their Odyssey.

The following post will give an answer to this question.

Notes

[1] Mahāyāna means "big vessel". All and everyone is included in this vessel, no particle of dust is excluded.

[2] Source: Red Pine (Bill Porter), *The Heart Sutra*. Washington D.C.: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2004 p. 56

[3] Source: The Sixth Patriarch's Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra. San Francisco: Buddhist Text Translation Society, 2002, p. 381 – 382. Remark: "Buddha-use" and "Store enveloping consciousness" are rendered by your Narrator as "perfect universe".

[4] Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skandha>

[5] Source: Dasgupta, Surendranath, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I. London: Cambridge University Press, 1957, p. 94

[6] Source image: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skandha>

A Day without yesterday – a Day without tomorrow?

3 July 2011

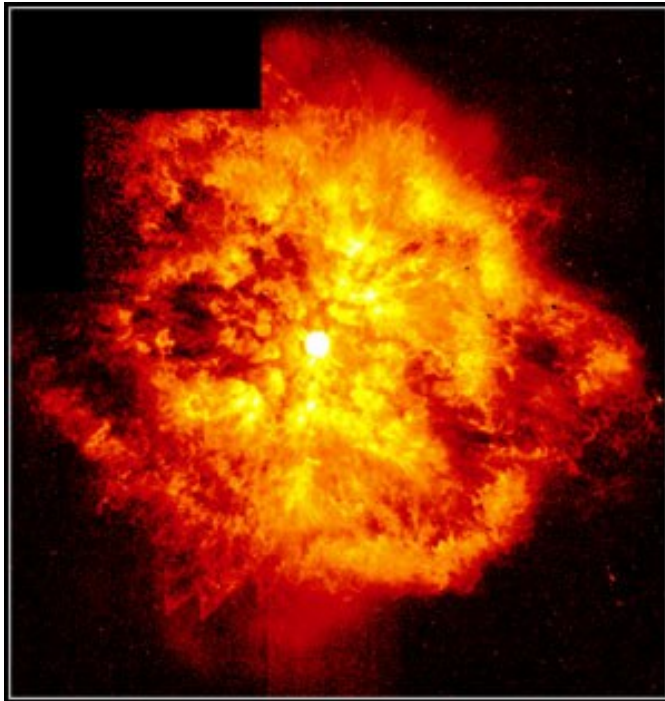
IN the previous post your Narrator said that according to Buddhism, the five skandha's provide everything what we need for our spiritual development [1]. The Heart Sutra [2] – one of the later Sutras in the Mahāyāna Buddhism – says that the skandha's are empty. Are these statements correct?

Why don't the two main characters examine these claims immediately? The explanation is very simple. The description of the first skandha "form or matter" written over 2000 years ago – by the four elements earth, water, air and fire – is not compatible anymore with the contemporary perception of science. The claim that the five skandhas give everything what is needed for our spiritual development is easily refuted on the basis of the contemporary perception of science, because the description of the first skandha by the four elements earth, water, air and fire is completely obsolete. If we assume an universal description of the skandhas – which adapt itself to the circumstances, then the refutation is less easy, because in this case the first skandha includes a large part of the natural sciences. In our contemporary society the spiritual and (natural) scientific reality are separated. Is this separation of religion and science justified?

The Belgian priest, astronomer and physicist Georges Lemaître [3] is the founder of the theory of the big bang and the expanding universe.

According to this astronomical theory, the universe began in one place over 13 billion years ago with a big bang. From this place, everything within our universe was hurled into space by an unimaginable explosion. Since that time our universe is expanding ever further. [4]

He also made a contribution to general relativity. He developed the theory of the expanding universe on the basis of the premise that the observation of the red shift of light emitted from the celestial bodies is the result of the Doppler effect [5] by the expanding of these celestial bodies. In 1927 Einstein said to Lemaître: *"Your calculations are correct, but your grasp of physics is abominable"*. In 1933, Einstein has frankly admitted the incorrectness of his remark [6].



[7]

During his life, Georges Lemaître – also as a member and President of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences – made a plea for a separation between religion and science. Has he maintained this distinction to avoid a mixture between nonequivalent doctrines emerged from the (natural) science on one side and the Catholic Church with its history of Scholasticism and the Roman Empire on the other side? Or does he wish he to maintain this distinction to avoid downsizing the "*Mysterium magnum est, quod nos procul dubio transcendit*" [8] – part of his priesthood? Your Narrator does not know the answer.

Possible George Lemaître did not wish to transcend the basic doctrine of the Catholic faith. The basic doctrine states that first there was a creation, then there is life on Earth. After a life on Earth there is an afterlife: for the elected a happy afterlife and for the damned follows repudiation [9]. The theory of the big bang is completely in line with this basic doctrine. Based upon the doctrine of the Catholic faith there is nothing previous to the big bang: there is no day prior to the big bang or there is "no day before this first yesterday". Is this assumption correct? Your Narrator does not know the answer, but he is aware of discussions on this topic. Within these discussions, one speaks of a continual alternation of expansion and contraction of our universe whereby big bangs with hurling of material are followed after an incredibly long – but finite – time by contraction of our universe whereafter matter is so densely compressed that a big bang will follow.



[10]

Has Indra's net – the other metaphor that our two main characters have encountered on their Odyssey for "*Mysterium magnum est, quod nos procul dubio transcendit*" – difficulty with "the day before yesterday" or the time previous to the big bang? Your Narrator thinks that Indra's net will respond to this issue in Swahili with: "*Hakuna matata* [11]" or "no problem" in our language. Your Narrator expects that Indra's net will manifest "the day before yesterday" or "the day before the big bang" perfectly when the circumstances may arise. Your Narrator also expects that Indra's net will reflect the distinction between the spiritual and (natural) scientific perfectly when the conditions are present. Indra's net will let this distinction easily evaporate again or transcends it when conditions require.

The following message continues on the question whether the five skandha's give everything that we need for our spiritual development.

Notes

[1] Source: Red Pine (Bill Porter), *The Heart Sutra*. Washington D.C.: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2004 p. 56

[2] See: several translation of the Heart Sutra, e.g. by Red Pine (Bill Porter), Edward Conze, Donald S. Lopez Jr.

[3] Source: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georges_Lema%C3%AAtre

[4] See also: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_Bang

[5] The Doppler effect is immediately noticed when a car drives past: the pitch of the sound is higher when the car is approaching and lower when the car drives away. The red shift in the light of the celestial bodies suggest that celestial bodies move away from our position.

[6] Source: Midbon, Mark, *A Day Without Yesterday: Georges Lemaitre & the Big Bang*. Zie: <http://www.catholiceducation.org/articles/science/sc0022.html>

[7] Source image: <http://hubblesite.org/newscenter/archive/releases/1998/38>

[8] From the Encyclical of Pope Johannes Paulus II on the Eucharist (Rome, 2003); see also the post "Introduction: Three – Object in the middle – The Word".

[9] Source: Credo. See also: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geloofsbelijdenis_van_Nicea-Constantinopel

[10] Source image: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geloofsbelijdenis_van_Nicea-Constantinopel

[11] Literal meaning in Swahili: "No problem".

FIVE Realities and Five Skandha's

6 July 2011

IN the previous post your Narrator gave a brief introduction about the consistency between religion and science. In this post your Narrator will explore the question whether the five skandhas include everything that we need for our spiritual development.

During the following stages on their Odyssey, Carla Drift and Man Leben will continue with their quest for who we are, where we come from and where we shall go to. First we will attend the five common realities:

- o Facts and logic – scientific reflection and consciousness
- o Intensities and associations – intuitive reflection and consciousness
- o Emptiness – mode of consciousness
- o Change – mode of consciousness
- o interconnectedness – mode of consciousness

How do these five realities relate to the five skandhas from Mahāyāna Buddhism and with the emptiness of these skandhas according to the Heart Sutra [1]?

The answer to the second question is easy at this moment: the two main characters will look for the answer at the when they visit the third daily reality – Emptiness.

The answer to the first question is also quite simple. The five realities include the five skandhas whereby the five realities better reflect the contemporary consciousness and science.

The fifth and final skandha – consciousness – supports the other four skandha's and at the same time the fifth skandha derives from these four skandhas [2]. Consciousness underlies the five realities and consciousness is formed by the five realities. As far as your Narrator is aware, there is no difference between the fifth skandha – including emptiness – and the five realities.

The first skandha – form – in contemporary form, coincides with the five realities, because form takes shape by facts and logic (or lack of it), by intensities and associations for the experience of form, by change because everything changes and by interconnectedness because a form exists in relation to other forms.

The second skandha – feelings and sensation – coincides with the second reality for the experience, with the fourth reality for the change of feelings and with the fifth reality for the experience of feelings within and by a society.

The third skandha – perception, recognition or distinction – coincides with the first reality as far as its nature of facts and things, with the second reality insofar as the distinction of intensities and associations concerned, with the fourth reality for the change of distinction and recognition, and with the fifth reality for the distinction and recognition relative to other things, facts, entities, living beings and events.

The fourth skandha – mental impressions, impulses, imprinting – is reflected in a similar way as the third skandha in the first, second, fourth and fifth reality.

As far as your Narrator is aware, the five skandhas – including the emptiness – coincide with the five realities which the main characters will visit.

At the end of the Odyssey, the two main characters may – in retrospect perhaps – conclude whether the five skandhas provide everything that is needed for our spiritual development.

Notes

[1] See several translations of the Heart Sutra, e.g. by door Red Pine (Bill Porter), Edward Conze, Donald S. Lopez Jr.

[2] Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skandha>

MEMORIAL for the Fallen

16 Augustus 2011

TODAY your narrator met Carla Drift. Man Leben is still not fully recovered. In about two weeks they may be able to resume the journey. Your narrator will continue this intermezzo for a while.

Carla Drift is on vacation in Brittany in France with her family for a few weeks. She prepares herself for the second part of the Odyssey. This second part is an exploration of the five common realities. Herewith the stages of science, emotions, emptiness, change/time, and interconnectedness will be visited. They will encounter ordinary meaning and madness.

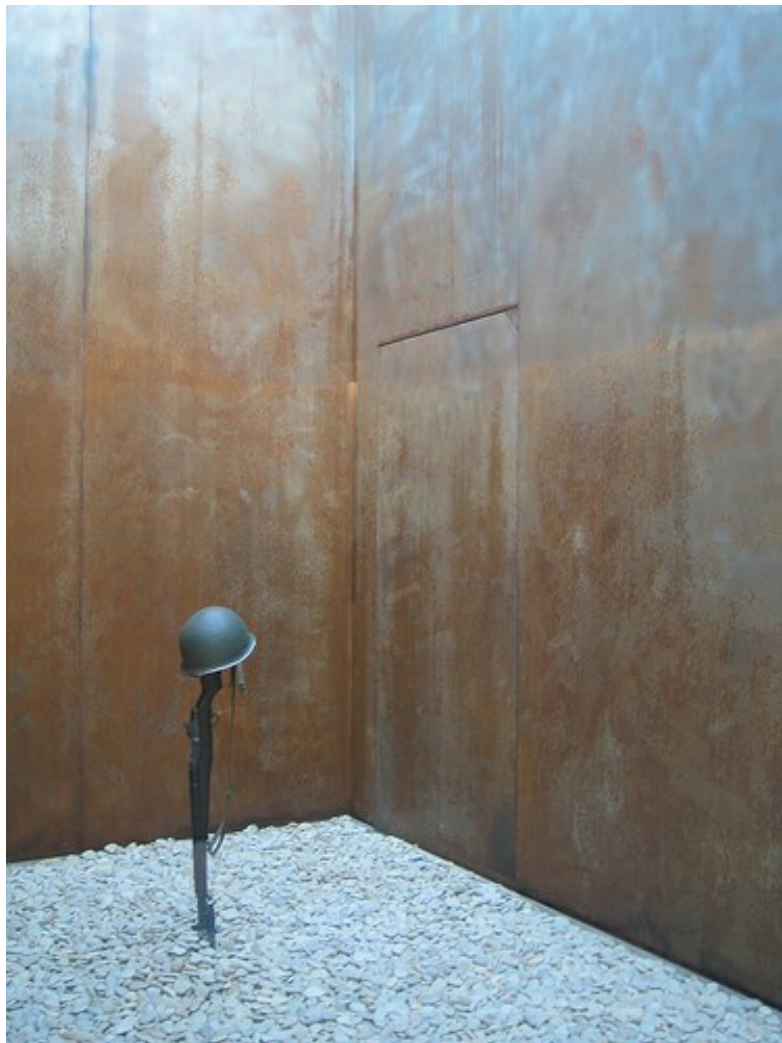
Carla Drift hesitates where to start. She receives the same advice that is given to the narrator of the Mahābhārata – directed by Peter Brook [1] – at the start of the Odyssey: "*Start with yourself*".

During her holiday, Carla Drift visited the beaches in Normandy, where the landing of allied forces took place on D-day in June 1944. Near Omaha Beach at Colleville-sur-Mer, a cemetery of approximately 7000 fallen American soldiers is located.



[2]

In the Memorial building at this cemetery, a rifle with helmet – instead of a cross – is placed in the ground behind a glass wall as memorial for a fallen soldier.



[3]

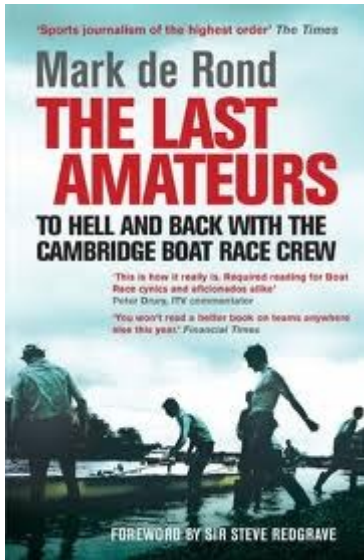
After seeing the rifle with helmet of the fallen soldier, Carla notices the similarity between the rifle and the crucifixes when walking on the cemetery. Many cemeteries have crucifixes as headstones for deceased Christians.



[4]

The Christian faith is often forcefully spread upon the Western world. Until about 320 years AD, Christians are often persecuted for their faith. When the Roman Emperor Constantine recognised the Christian faith as State Religion and as his personal faith, the Christian faith changed from a persecuted faith into a persecuting faith [5]. During the persecution the use of violence is not shunned. The similarity between the sword and the cross as symbol of the Christian faith is striking. Carla noticed the similarity between the rifle in the ground as memorial/symbol for the soldier who has fallen for his homeland and the Christian cross — with a certain similarity with a sword that is placed in the ground – as memorial/symbol for a deceased believer.

During her holiday, Carla read the book "The last Amateurs" about the preparation of the boat race between the University teams of Cambridge and Oxford.



[6]

The following intermezzo is about amateurs.

Notes

[1] See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Mahabharata_%281989_film%29

[2] Source image: <http://www.abmc.gov/cemeteries/cemeteries/no.php>

[3] Source image: http://www.flickr.com/photos/oo_x/2043226753/

[4] Source image: <http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archivo:Omaha-beach-cemetery.jpg>

[5] Source: Norwich, John Julius, *The Popes, A History*, London: Chatto & Windos, 2011 p. 17

[6] Cover of the book: Rond, Mark de, *The last Amateurs*, Cambridge: Icon Books, 2008

A MATEURS

19 Augustus 2011

YOUR Narrator continues this intermezzo and provides a few other posts. This post is about world-class amateur rowers - oarsmen, who with (almost) all effort want to be selected for one of the two students race crews who will compete for the victory in the annual regatta on the Thames.

During her holiday, Carla Drift read the book "*The last Amateurs*" by Mark de Rond on the preparation of the boat race between the University teams of Cambridge and Oxford. The subtitle of the book is "*To hell and back with the Cambridge boat race crew*" or freely rendered "*To the end of the world and back with the Cambridge race crew*".

The second part of the quest for "Who are you" of the two main characters may also be subtitled "To the end of the world and back" and Carla Drift and Man Leben are also amateurs. They perform – just like the oarsmen their training – this search from a deep inner urge and for temporary moments of joy in achieving a milestone that at the same time unfolds a new horizon.



[1]

Alongside their studies at the University of Oxford or Cambridge the oarsmen/rowers – many of whom have already been selected for Olympic Games or World Championships for their country – prepare themselves during seven months usually twice a day for selections and for the final regatta. In the morning, the training includes more than an hour on a rowing ergo-meter.



[2]

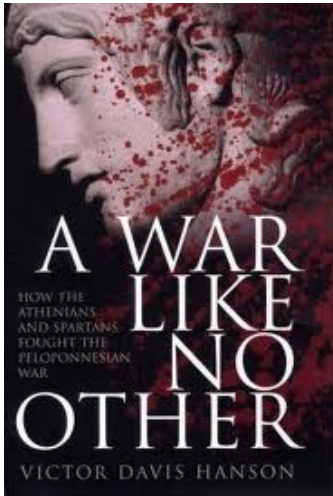
In the afternoon follows a workout in the boat of about two hours. A part of the preparation is a constant selection on the rowing ergo-meter to determine which candidate can deliver the most power. Continuous seat-races are performed to get an impression which crew will deliver the fastest team. During this preparation the candidates are each other's companions and each other's opponents. A mix of these factors affects the selection process, because if one candidate is tested in a seat-race, the other oarsmen in the boat will subconsciously perform a trifle better for a good friend. At the end of the selection process, the future crew sometimes takes the selection fully into their own hands, whereby the choice of the coaches is completely ignored.

The oarsmen have different backgrounds and they come from many countries. Some oarsmen need to sacrifice everything to go to the University and to be included in the initial selection. Other

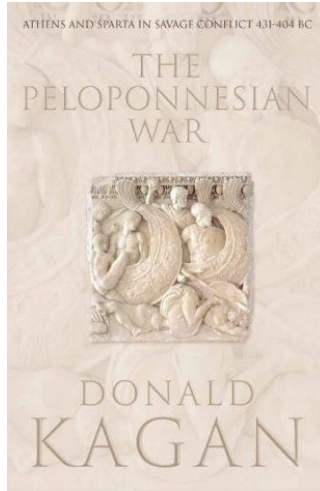
rowers are Sunday's children: they already have everything at hand to arrive at this position. Of course, the oarsmen have an excellent posture in common, but above all they have in common that during the preparation and after the race their self-image is entirely dependent on the outcome of the selection and the race. A positive result confirms their status as Alpha-man and a negative outcome lets the self-image – temporarily? – shrink to a loser. Their role as student and their privileged position in society is completely inferior to their position in the rowing team. Their self-image is fully determined by the outcome of their sport and a trifle by the results of their study.

Carla Drift has noted with astonishment the extreme changes of the self-image of the oarsmen that depends on the outcome of the selection and the race. This change of self-image seems to have characteristics of being in God's grace or not [3]. Carla has endured a hard quest; emerged from the complete One and All, separated and completely disintegrated during the first schism of sky and earth and all subsequent separations during Two, and by trust rebalanced during Three. The oarsmen have endured the same quest, but they are unaware of this feat, because their attention is focused on other activities. Despite these far-reaching changes, Carla has a rather balanced self-image, but the exploration of the everyday life has yet to begin.

In preparation for the meaning and madness of everyday, Carla has read two books on the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta in 431 to 404 BC.



[4]



[5]

The next three posts cover "A War like no other" and oarsmen in triremi during the Peloponnesian War.

Notes

[1] Source image: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestand:Rowing_-_USA_Lwt_4_@_World_Champs_2003.jpg

[2] Source image: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indoorroeier>

[3] See also post "Three – Object in the middle – Word" and Psalm 119:105-106 en 118-119

[4] Cover of: Hanson, Victor Davis, *A War like no other – How the Athenians an Spartans fought the Peloponnesian War*. London: Methuen, 2005

[5] Cover of: Kagan, Donald, *The Peloponnesian War – Athens and Sparta in savage Conflict 431 -404 BC*. London: Harper and Collins Publishers, 2003

A War like no Other

24 Augustus 2011

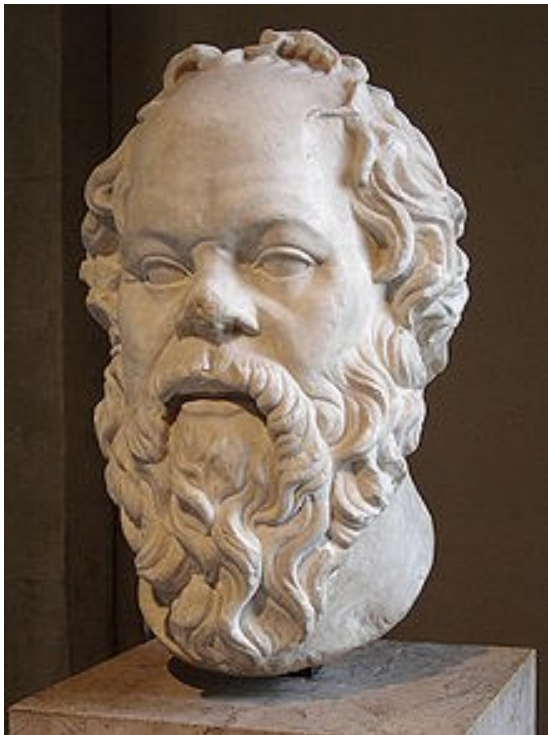
IN the previous post your narrator has written an intermezzo about the self-image of world class amateur oarsmen, who with (almost) every effort want to be selected for the race teams which will compete for the victory of an annual rowing race on the Thames. This post is about the self-image of people involved in violence and participation in warfare.

Violence and warfare between people exist as long as mankind [1]. The hunter-gatherers appear to live in a relatively peaceful co-existence. Once your narrator read that a researcher has interviewed a peaceful living elderly woman that still lived in a hunting and gathering society about violence in her life. She said to live a peaceful life. The investigator asked her about the men in her life. She told that she was married to three men: the first husband was killed during a conflict with another tribe, her second husband was killed by her third husband when he wanted to occupy the place of her second husband. Now she lived happily and peacefully with her third husband.

The cattle-raid that is part of the rituals within the cattle cycle, is probably accompanied by violence and bloodshed between people [2]. The first myths and sagas – such as the Gilgamesh Epic, the Iliad, the Mahābhārata and the Old Testament of the Bible are full of violence and warfare. These myths describe not only the meaning of life, the motives of our ancestors and trust and mistrust, but they also imprint a self-image for the listeners. They give a meaning and interpretations to warfare and violence, and

they provide to the listeners archetypes of meaning to their own life – including meaning to life and death by violence and acts of warfare. In the Mahābhārata a warrior acquires immortal fame when fallen on the battlefield at the moment women mourn him in shrill cries and weep over his life boasting his former beautiful appearance [3]. A contemporary reflection of this, Carla heard in a video which is shown in the Memorial building at the military cemetery next to Omaha Beach at Colleville-sur-Mer in Normandy in France: one of the survivors called the fallen soldiers the real heroes of the war.

Another example of the great importance that heroic deeds in warfare is granted upon, is the philosopher Socrates.



[4]

Socrates lived from about 470 BC to 399 BC in Athens. He was famous as a philosopher. Socrates himself valued his deeds on the battlefield during the Peloponnesian War higher than his contribution to philosophy. In his middle age, Socrates partook in the battle of Delium [5] as a hoplite – see image below.



[6]

At the time of Socrates, most freemen had a weapon equipment in which they – reasonably – protected by a helmet, shield and breast and leg plates – took part in battle very close together. Each fighter/hoplite had to partly seek protection behind the shield of his neighbour.

Formerly in Greece, combats between two villages took place on e.g. disagreements on the right to use a field. The men of both villages met on this field early in the morning. In battle order –

with their heavy armour on – they tried to prevail similar to a rugby-scrum.



[7]

At a moment a party broke their line and the losing party fled, the real blood thirst started within the winning party. On the run most victims fell among the losers. By running away abandoning their heavy armour, the losing party could leave the battlefield. The dead toll among the losers was often 10% of the combatants. The losses among the victors were much less. Probably reality was much crueller than the stylized descriptions.

During the battle of Delium in 424 BC – in which about 14,000 fighters/hoplites took part – the lines of Athens rotated under pressure so that a part of the Athenians attacked their own lines. This confusion caused the Athenians to flee. During this very chaotic flight, Socrates quietly kept his honour as hoplite by retreating with a group of co-fighters in a quiet fashion and guarding all attacks [8]. Here, too, the myth described in Plato's Symposium is probably more stylized than reality. More bloodshed was prevented due to the late start of the battle and the onset of darkness.

The following post continues on the Peloponnesian war.

Notes

[1] See also: Keegan, John, *A History of Warfare*. London: Pimlico, 2004

[2] See also the posts *Rituels – Part 2* dd. 27 March 2011 and *Three – Dubio transcendit* dd. 28 April 2011.

[3] Source: McGrath, Kevin, *STRĪ women in Epic Mahābhārata*. Cambridge: Ilex Foundation, 2009 p. 25

[4] Source image: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socrates>

[5] See also: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Delium

[6] Source image: <http://ant3145f08group01.wikispaces.com/Ancient+Greek+Warfare>

[7] Photo made by Maree Reveley. See: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Scrum-1.JPG>

[8] Sources: Hanson, Victor Davies, *The wars of the ancient Greeks*. London: Cassell & Co, 2000 p. 112-113 and Lendon, J.E., *Song of Wrath – the Peloponnesian war begins*. New York: Basic Books, 2010 p. 314

A War like no Other – The leading Players

31 augustus 2011

IN the previous post your Narrator has written a short intermezzo about the self-image of combatants in war and violence. He also has given a glimpse of the participation of the philosopher Socrates in the Peloponnesian War in Greece.

Now your narrator will give a glimpse of the leading players during the Peloponnesian War.

A book about this war begins with the poem:

*Wrath, icy wrath that brought countless horrors to the Achaeans,
and sent brave souls of many heroes to Hades
and changed their bodies in prey for a dog and swarms of birds,
and the will of Deus/God was accomplished [1].*

Who are you who brought these horrors? Who are you who wanted this war like no other? Who are you who brought the horrors of brother murder, robbery, honour robbery and slavery to your neighbours and who left the bodies of your kind as prey for dogs and swarms of birds? Who are you who wished these murders? Who are you who wanted the existence of the continuing cycle of honour/power – pride – wrath – and revenge [2]? Do the dog and the birds also accomplish your will; do they have a godlike nature [3]?

In which do you differ from Krishna [4] – the charioteer – who urged Arjuna [4] in the Bhagavad Gita [5] – a small and old part of the Mahābhārata – to enter the arena in which families, teachers and students confront each other in the tension between on the one hand the world order and duty [6] and on the other hand human action? [7] [8]

Your Narrator does not know the answers; he poses the questions. Who knows the world, speak!

The most important players in the Peloponnesian War are Sparta and Athens with their respective allies. But the influence of Persia was still great. Who are they?

Between 490 BC to 479 BC, Persia – a dictatorship with "compliant" local satraps – tried to include Greece in the Persian Empire. In 449 BC, Persia recognized the Greek city states in Asia Minor. Persia did not directly attack Greece anymore, but Persia successfully played off the Greek states against each other. In addition, the memory of the Persian wars still had much influence on the events during the Peloponnesian War.

The second leading player is the militaristic and oligarchic City State Sparta situated in the middle of the Peloponnesus in Greece. In this city the fighting skill of freemen was of imminent interest. Before the birth of a child, preparations were taken to merge the best genes for excellent descendants. A married woman had a certain degree of freedom to choose the best man for the begetting of her children: older spouses accepted that their wife begot their children from younger fitter men [9]. At birth, health determined the destiny of the baby. Boys and girls from the age of 6 were rigorously trained: the boys as fighters and the girls for health. Men and women lived mostly separated from each other. Spartans were descendants of the original inhabitants of the city. In

addition, the freemen living around Sparta - Perioikoi – sometimes fought as hoplites together with the Spartans. In and around Sparta most people were Helots who served the Spartans in all activities except warfare. The Helots were the original inhabitants of the region. They were defeated by the Spartans in the fight and as consequence served as slaves. But always the Spartans felt the threat of a revolt of the Helots; they did everything to prevent this rebellion. The Spartans were feared in battle: they had the name to never give in. Perhaps the constant threat of a revolt of the Helots caused the steadfastness. The Spartans were very faithful and superstitious; they only went to war when all religious obligations were fulfilled and the omens were favourable. Due to this, allies sometimes had to wait a long time for support of the Spartans. During the battle of Sphacteria – in the South West of the Peloponnesus – a group of 292 fighters including 120 young Spartans surrendered to the Athenians. This surrender shocked the Greek world [10], because Spartans never surrendered. In Sparta the shock was even greater, because besides a huge loss of face, these young Spartans included a large part of the future generation. These prisoners were held hostage in Athens and during this time Sparta stopped burning the harvest on the fields near Athens. After their release, Sparta regarded these prisoners never as its full citizens again.



[11]

The third leading player was Athens – an extreme form of democracy – and located close to the Aegean Sea in Greece. Athens has become enormous rich at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War with the exploitation of silver mines and with trade. This wealth caused on the one hand uneasiness to Sparta on the hegemony in Greece and on the other hand the wish for Athens to be recognized as an equal. This strain is one of the reasons for the war.

About 50 years earlier Athens was led by Kings and tyrants – these tyrants were autocrats or oligarchs who came to governmental power in a polis not by inheritance or not by the mandate of elections [12]. During the Peloponnesian War, Athens was a democracy in which the its free inhabitants directly controlled the power in the polis. However the majority of the population was not free and thus not actively participating in the democracy. In practice this democracy often meant imperialism for Athens allies. In Athens the important decisions were taken during meetings of

the free people. They took the decision and they appointed an executor. This executor had to report back to the free people. In case of a failure, the property of the executor could be confiscated and he and his family wore the consequences including exile and/or the death penalty for the executor. During the war the free people decided on the fate of prisoners and of conquered cities. The decisions were often very cruel and out of place. At the end of the war some captured cities of neutral players or former allies were completely destroyed and the inhabitants were deported or killed. Sometimes the war effort took too great a contribution of the allies or Athens requested an excessive contribution. These decisions went against the wishes of the generals who had conquered the cities. Outrages of the democracy estranged Athens further from its allies: today you – tomorrow I.

Athens possessed a war fleet which was sovereign. Athens and its port Piraeus were surrounded with – for its time – unconquerable walls. This allowed a continuous connection between Athens and its harbour.



[13]

The wealth of Athens was shown by the buildings on the Acropolis. At the beginning of the war the silver stock of Athens was sufficient for at least ten years of warfare including food for its inhabitants. On the basis of this wealth the old statesman Pericles had worked out the tactics for the first period of this war. With the agreement of the citizens, he decided that Athens would avoid battle on land: Athens withdrew behind its walls and they relied on its fleet for warfare and for the safe supply of all necessary resources. Grain came from Egypt and the Black Sea area. The Spartans with its allies could plunder the fields around Athens during the harvest time; this would not harm Athens. But the farmers from the area around Athens had to stand by on the walls to see how their harvest was plundered and destroyed. Later a further humiliation: olive trees – with which they were closely connected and which already provided harvest to their ancestors – were grubbed.

These systematic humiliations ensured that within its walls the city state of Athens was overcrowded. A plague – that came from Egypt? and looked like measles or typhus? – wiped away a third of the inhabitants of Athens [14]. This is relatively a larger number of deaths than the Spanish flu. At the end of the first world war this plague caused more casualties than all battle fields together



[15]

There is another special player: Alcibiades. He successively held a leading role in the societies of all three leading players. Socrates may have saved Alcibiades life during the battle of Potidaea. Alcibiades was promoter and one of the three leaders of Athens during the adventure in Sicily. When that expedition failed, he fled to Sparta where he was an important advisor and in this role he caused Athens a lot of havoc. After a relationship with the wife of a Spartan king, he had to flee again. He went to Persia where he was an adviser to a satrap. Hence he had to flee again and he went back to Athens for assistance during naval battles. After an error by one of his employees he had to leave Athens. In between, he was a Olympic champion chariot racing. After his second flight from Athens, in Asia Minor his murder was ordered by satrap on advocacy of some Athenians [16].



[17]

This war includes all forms of public administration. All horrors are included. All motives are included. It is a war like no other, a war like any other.

The following post is about the rowing regatta at Athens on its way to Sicily, its fate there and the consequences of this adventure.

Notes

[1] Free rendering of: Lendon, J.E., *Song of Wrath – the Peloponnesian war begins*. New York: Basic Books, 2010 p. V. These are also the opening verses of the Ilias.

[2] See: Lendon, J.E., *Song of Wrath – the Peloponnesian war begins*. New York: Basic Books, 2010 p. 9

[3] According to Buddhism, everything has a Buddha nature. A student asked the Zen master Chao-Chou if a dog – in China a low creature – has a Buddha nature. Chao-chou answered: “Mu”. This means “no, nothing, void”. Chao-Chou has also said “yes” to another students. This koan demands a direct and full insight in this question. See amongst others Yamada Kōun Roshi, *Gateless Gate (Mumonkan)* case 1 and Wick, Gerry Shishin, *The Book of Equanimity – Illuminating*

Classic Zen Koans. Somerville MA: Wisdom Publications, 2005 p. 57 for an introduction on this koan.

[4] In Sanskrit Krishna means “black” or “dark”. This name consists of “kr” meaning “make, do or act” and “ish” meaning “rule, master, God” whereby the sound coincides with the German word “Ich”. In this sense Krishna means “God’s action”.

[5] Arjuna is one of five brothers who live together and are married to one wife Draupadi – the most beautiful and influential woman of her time – in polyandry. The five brothers fought together for their share of the kingdom, for rehabilitation of the honour of Draupadi and for rehabilitation of the order of the world. The name Arjuna means amongst others “white, clear”; in the name also “arh” is recognised meaning “worthy, able to”.

[6] Free rendering of Dharmakshetra consisting of Dharma – literal: place of continuous self/Self, and “kshetra” – literal: field.

[7] Free rendering of Kurukshetra consisting of Kuru – a conjugation of “kr” meaning make, do or act, and “kshetra” – literal: field.

[8] From the opening’s verses of the Bhagavad Gita. Zie ook: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhagavad_Gita

[9] Sources: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_Ancient_Sparta under “marriage” and Hughes, Bettany, *Helen of Troy – Goddess, Princess, Whore*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005

[10] Kagan, Donald, *The Peloponnesian War – Athens and Sparta in savage Conflict 431 -404 BC*. London: Harper and Collins Publishers, 2003 p. 152

[11] Probaly a buste depicting Leonidas, a king of Sparta in de time of the Persian war. Source image: http://uk.ask.com/wiki/Spartan_Army

[12] See also: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyrant>

[13] Source image: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peloponnesian_War

[14] Bron: Kagan, Donald, *The Peloponnesian War – Athens and Sparta in savage Conflict 431 -404 BC*. London: Harper and Collins Publishers, 2003 p. 78

[15] Source image: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Acropolis3.JPG>

[16] Source: The three books on this war and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alcibiades>

[17] Source image: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Bust_Alcibiades_Musei_Capitolini_MC1160.jpg

A War like no Other – A fatal Regatta

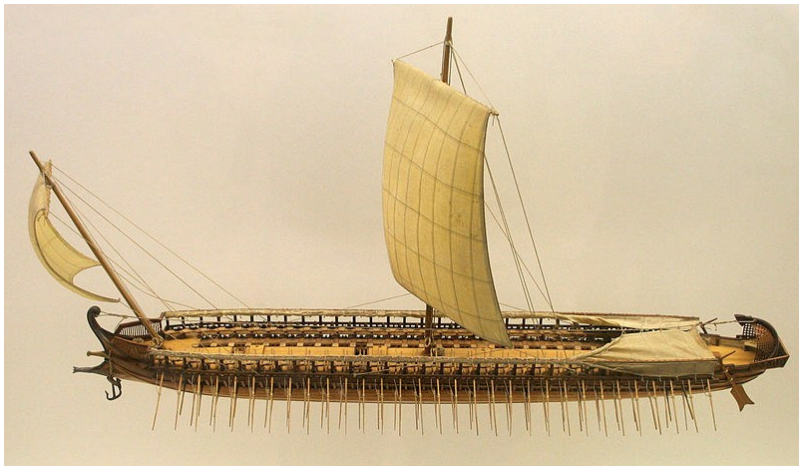
4 September 2011

IN the previous post your Narrator has given a glimpse of the leading players during the Peloponnesian War. Due to a continuous cycle of honour/power – pride – wrath – revenge the two main players Athens, Sparta and its allies inflict countless horrors upon each other. Sparta and its allies had the militaristic hegemony on land and they devastated at regular time the surroundings of Athens. On its turn Athens and its allies had the maritime hegemony on the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea and they plundered the coasts of the Peloponnesos with their fleets. In 421 BC – after 10 years mutual humiliations – a temporary armistice was decided upon. Local fighting and cruelty continued during this peace.

In 415 BC Athens begins its adventure in Sicily. Athens had several allied cities on that island. These cities ask help of Athens in a dispute with Syracuse – the ruling city in Sicily. Syracuse was also a democracy that had many similarities with the democracy of Athens. This we shall see later.

After intercession of amongst others Alcibiades, the inhabitants of Athens decided to send a fleet to Sicily with three executors including Alcibiades. Athens hoped to get a big influence in the western part of the Mediterranean Sea. Maybe it gives an opportunity to move the city state of Athens in its entirety from the hornets' nest of Asia Minor to Sicily.

The two university boats manned by the last amateurs from Cambridge and Oxford [1], are for about 17 minutes – or a day, or a year – lord and master on the River Thames in London [2]. For 150 years the 300 trireme of Athens – partly private [3] warships of Athens; per boat powered by 170 oarsmen – are lord and master of the Aegean Sea [4]. The life of a rower was hard and very uncertain: many could not even swim. rowing well was the only possibility to enhance the chances of survival. The hoplites on land behind their wall of bronze shields participate directly in the battle: they try to expel the enemy in a kind of rugby scrum and they use their lances to harm the opponents. The oarsmen behind their thin wall of wood and leather float at sea in their fast light boat equipped with a battering ram: the battering ram destroys the boat of the opponent. Rowers only take indirectly part in the sea-battle. Are the rhythm of the boat and the rowing stroke – with the mighty sound of "Twwhsh" – for the rowers the real lord and master for whom they do all efforts?



[5]

Exercise in peace time was of great importance to keep the boat at a speed of 10 knots for a long time and to perform the manoeuvres for battering the boats of the opponents quickly and correctly.

Your narrator read in a book [6] that the religion of our ancestors is based on experience, exercise and faith. Is the religion of the Athenian oarsmen and the current oarsmen also founded on these three principles?

In the second half of June 415 BC the fleet departed. The entire population of Athens with its foreign allies was in Piraeus – the harbour city of Athens – to see the spectacle. It looked more like a show of power and wealth for the Greek world than the departure of an expedition army. A trumpet sounded and the fleet departed. The boats started in a mutual contest: they raced until Aegina. It seemed to be more a regatta than the start of a long and precarious adventure [7].

In Sicily, inability, bad luck and fate struck Athenians. The siege of Syracuse failed because the city could not be sealed off on land. Groups experienced horsemen of the opponent always made passages. On the water the fleet of Athens engaged in a battle with too little room for manoeuvres. Alcibiades went back to Athens with the request for reinforcements. When this request was refused, he fled to Sparta.

After fighting and destruction of boats near the Athenian camp, the Athenians delayed their flight across land too long. When they finally fled by land, there was a lack of water and food and everywhere ambushes of the enemy were in place. In a valley some muddy water was found. Soon this water became red due to the attacks of the enemy. After many losses, thousands of Athenians – including many unarmed oarsmen – surrendered to avoid a further massacre. The prisoners were led to Syracuse.

Against the will of its leaders the democracy of Syracuse decided to kill the two Athenian executors and to imprison the other Athenians in a stone quarry near the theatre that was opened by Aeschylus himself with a performance of the "Persians".



[8]

Almost all prisoners were being confined here at a very low food ration for eight months. Many died in the quarry and the survivors were branded and sold as slaves. No one returned to Athens. Athens lost about 7,000 men with this expedition. This number matches the number of fallen American soldiers buried in Omaha Beach near Colleville-sur-Mer. This was the price for the folly and the pride of Athens. This was the price of the verdict of the people of Syracuse.



[9]

In 413 BC the war flared up again. Athens had a major lack of good oarsmen. Many free inhabitants decided to volunteer for oarsman with all the risks and hardships. Sparta built a fleet with the help of Persia. After the democracy of Athens had alienated several allies by committing unnecessary atrocities, she was defeated on her own speciality in several sea battles. Herewith ended the Peloponnesian war.

This regatta is part of "a war like no other, a war as any one". Like any fight, this fight knows only losers. Athens lost a part of its population and Syracuse lost her good name. Syracuse has committed death sins against the core of the Buddhist life according to a contemporary female Buddhist recluse in China [10]. Athens and Syracuse have sinned against "benevolence, compassion, joy and detachment" for the eyes of the world.

Is this regatta also included in Indra's net [11]? Your Narrator thinks so. He once read that the number of Avogadro is so large,

that with each breath we inhale a few molecules of Julius Caesar's last exhalation with the words: "Et tu, Brute" [12]. Are we – with every breath – in a similar way connected to this war and to this regatta? Is also here applicable: "*Mysterium magnum est, quod nos procul dubio transcendit*" [13], that means: "the mystery is great, that transcends us without a doubt."? Your Narrator does not know the answer.

This ends the report of the intermezzo that Carla Drift has passed in preparation before entering the five easy entities. The following post gives a report of the preparations of Man Leben. He attend a graduation ceremony of one of his granddaughters. As a consequence of this ceremony, he read the opening line of John's Gospel in Sanskrit.

Notes

[1] See: Rond, Mark de, *The last Amateurs*, Cambridge: Icon Books, 2008

[2] See former post titled "Amateurs"

[3] See: Hanson, Victor Davis, *A War like no other – How the Athenians an Spartans fought the Peloponnesian War*. London: Methuen, 2005 p. 251. Generally the the boat, the crew and the equipment was supplied by the State, but the food etc. had to be provide by the trierarch – the commander of the boat. There were also private boat supplied by rich Grecs: these boat had the best material and the best oarsmen.

[4] See: Hale, John R., *Lords of the Sea – The epic Story of the Athenian Navy and the Birth of Democracy*. London: Penguin books, 2009

[5] Source image: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trireme>[6] See: Lewis-Williams, David & Pearce, David, *Inside the neolithic Mind*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2009 p.25

[7] Source: Kagan, Donald, *The Peloponnesian War – Athens and Sparta in savage Conflict 431 -404 BC*. London: Harper and Collins Publishers, 2003 p. 264 and Hale, John R., *Lords of the Sea – The epic Story of the Athenian Navy and the Birth of Democracy*. London: Penguin books, 2009 p. 189

[8] Source image: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Theatre_at_Syracuse,_Sicily.jpg

[9] Source image: <http://www.abmc.gov/cemeteries/cemeteries/no.php>

[10] See: Porter, Bill, *Road to Heaven - Encounters with Chinese Hermits*. Berkeley: Counterpoint, 1993. page 109

[11] See former post: Indra's net.

[12] See also: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Et_tu,_Brute%3F

The number of Avogadro is 6 times 10^{23} and the atmosphere of the earth until 10 km height contains a volume of approx. 5,2 times 10^{21} litres.

[13] See the posts “Three – Object in the middle – The Word” and “A day without yesterday – a day without tomorrow? “

BIBLE in Sanskrit

9 September 2011

YOUR Narrator has met Man Leben. He was completely exhausted after undergoing the first three stages on our Odyssey to "Who are you". The recovery of these efforts has lasted a long time, because he is rather old. Now he is recovered more or less: the next week we can resume our Odyssey.

At the end of June – at the beginning of his rest period – Man attended the graduation ceremony of one of his granddaughters. She and her family beamed. He has been in the background: he is not invited to the ceremony, because he and his family are alienated from each other. In the next stage we will learn more about the life of the second main character. Now he will give his report.

During the graduation ceremony all successful candidates receive a Bible to their wish. It is a Christian school and although I am of Jewish origin, my children and grandchildren are raised Christian. Most students have chosen a Bible in the usual translations. Some have received a Bible in English and one girl from Japan has been given a bible in Japanese. Two outliers received a Bible in Swahili – "*Hakuna matata*" [1] – and a Koran. The Bible in Sanskrit – the language of the gods in the world of the men [2] – is not requested.



[3]

A few months ago I have seen two translations of the New Testament in Sanskrit [4]. I started to study this language a few years ago, so my knowledge is still limited. Reading the John Gospel in Sanskrit, it strikes me that the opening sentence has an additional interpretation.

आदौ वाद् आसीत्, स च वाद् ईश्वराभिमुख आसीत्,

[5]

आदौ वाद् आसीत्, स च वाद् ईश्वराभिमुख आसीत्,

[6]

Or in our alphabet: "Ādau vāda āsīt, sa ca vāda īshvarābhisukha āsīt"

At first glance, the translation [7] of this sentence is equal to the text in our language:

*"In the beginning was the word,
and this word was with God".*

But looking closer at the words in the sentence, creates a deeper insight.

The first word "ādau" is a conjugation – locative singular – of the word ādi" meaning "beginning".

The second word looks like the word "vada" meaning "good/ meaningful word". But the translator has, in my opinion correctly, chosen the word "vāda" meaning "word of/about". "Vāda" is composed of "vā" meaning "blow like the wind" and "da" meaning "to give". So "Vāda" can mean "gift from the wind" or "sound of the wind". If the word "Vāda" is interpreted in this sense, than "sound/gift of the wind" refers to the memory and remnants of the first separation of air and earth [8].

The third word "āsīt" is a conjugation of the verb √as meaning "to be". This verb is conjugated – in accordance with the verb root – in the active voice or the "parasmaipada": this means that the fruit of the action is transferred to the other. Here my preference is the middle voice or the "ātmanepada" [9]: the fruit of the action remains with "the Self". In this case I choose for the verb √ās meaning "to sit/remain/exist/inhabit/praise"; I prefer to change "āsīt" to "āsta".

The fifth word is "ca" meaning "and".

The fourth word is "sa" meaning in this case "this or his".

The sixth word – "īshvarābhisukha" – is a consistent of "īshvara" and "abhisukha". The word "īshvara" is composed of the noun "īsh" – in which the German word "ich" may be recognized – meaning "God, ruler"; "va" meaning "wind, ocean, water, stream, go" and "ra" meaning "give, influence". "Abhisukha" means "approaching, focus the face on, in the vicinity of" and consist of "abhi" meaning "near" and "sukha" meaning "happy, comfortable".

The seventh Word is āsīt again. Here I also prefer "āsta" meaning "he sat/remained/existed/inhabited/praised".

With this background knowledge the opening sentence of the Gospel of John has the following additional interpretations in Sanskrit:

*"In the beginning the gift of the wind exists,
and the sound of the wind was encompassed in the All/Self".*

With this additional interpretation the air and the earth are not yet separated in the opening-sentence of the Gospel of John. I love the sound of the wind. In it I still hear the connectedness of air, earth and water within one "All/Self".

*"A breath of the wind
In the rustling of the trees
Your voice is heard" [10]*

In following post Man Leben explains why he is studying Sanskrit.

Notes

[1] Literal meaning Swahili: “No problem”.

[2] Free rendering of the title: Pollock, Sheldon, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men – Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in the pre-modern India*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006

[3] Source image: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Professors.JPG>

[4] See: <http://sanskritebooks.wordpress.com/2009/11/26/the-bible-in-sanskrit/>

[5] Source image: <http://www.archive.org/details/dharmmapustakasy00brit>

[6] Source image: <http://www.archive.org/details/NewTestamentOfBibleInSanskrit>

[7] In the analysis of the text the electronic version of the dictionary Monier-Williams – the introduction to Sanskrit MWDDS v1.5 Beta, the introduction in Sanskrit by Egenes, Thomas and the Sanskrit by Mulder, Maaïke and the Whitney, William Dwight are used.

[8] See former post “Two” of 11 April 2011.

[9] The word “ātman” means in Sanskrit “Breath, Self/self”; also “āt” means “thus/then” and “man” means “think/consider/observe”.

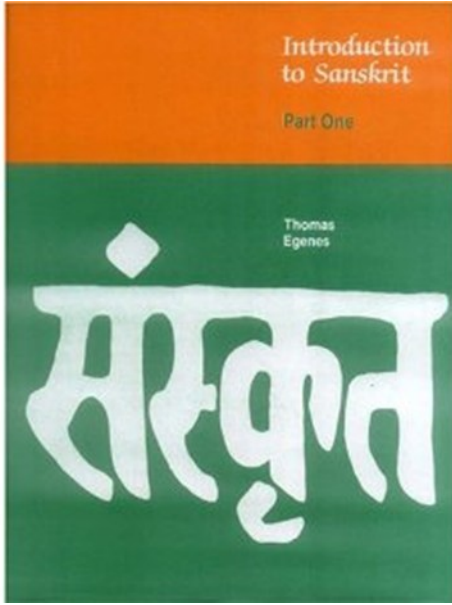
[10] Moses saw and heard – the voice of – God in the burning bush. See Old Testament, Exodus 3:2

WHY Sanskrit?

12 September 2011

YOUR Narrator asked Man Leben why he studies Sanskrit. His answer is that it happened naturally. In examining Buddhist texts he noticed that a number of concepts are easy to follow in Sanskrit. For example the sound "ātman" is similar to our word "breath". It also turns out that some writers on Buddhism [1], philosophy [2] and the origins of words [3] have studied Sanskrit.

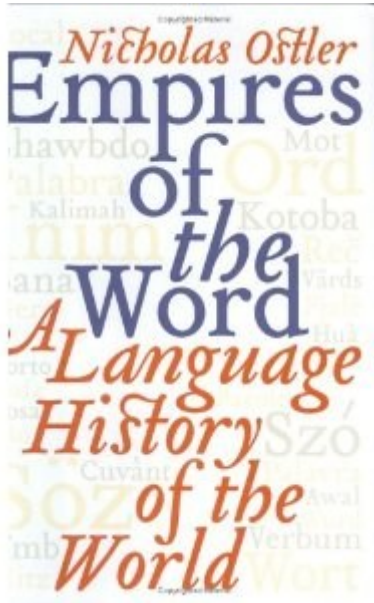
Man Leben is interested in the origins of our language as a form of archaeology to the origin of our consciousness or "man[4]-kind". At the start of the study it appeared that for lay people the origin of the Indo-European is not easy accessible: there are only a few standard studies available [5]. On the other hand, Sanskrit – one of our older sister languages – is extensively documented and fixed in a very early stage. This fact has caused that Sanskrit first became an artificial language and later a dead language. On the other hand, by the artificiality Sanskrit received a high status. The comprehensive, logical and sophisticated grammar is documented by Pāṇini [6] and his contemporaries in the fourth century BC. Our alphabet has an incoherent order; the alphabet in Sanskrit is logically built up according to the way people express vowels and consonants from the inside out. There are also very comprehensive dictionaries Sanskrit – English available. An introduction to Sanskrit [7] can be studied with some perseverance. Sanskrit has provided Man Leben a good opportunity to study the origin of language and thus the interpretation/expression of our consciousness.



[8]

During the study of Sanskrit, the second main character noticed that many names and places in Indian and Buddhist texts have a meaning. For example, Buddha [9] means "placing a bud of a flower" and Ānanda means "bliss and joy". The Buddhist words and concepts get a larger depth with knowledge of Sanskrit.

During his recovery period, the second main character has read the book "*Empires of the Word – A Language History of the World* [10]".



[11]

In Chapter 5 of this book, Sanskrit is addressed under the heading "*Charming like a Creeper – the cultured Career of Sanskrit*". With surprise and recognition, the second main character read how Sanskrit established itself in India and how it has been spread with Buddhism across Southeast Asia, Tibet, China and Japan by trading caravans and via freight boats. In addition to the Chinese characters, the Japanese alphabet is modelled according to the alphabet in Sanskrit. A professor in Ergonomics said to Man Leben that a language is the speech impediment of the ruler. Sanskrit has been distributed in a large area in a relative nonviolent manner. By the religions that are linked to the Sanskrit – Hinduism and Buddhism – this language has had a great influence in this area. The easiness and naturalness of this spread has surprised Nicholas Ostler [12]: he discussed this fact with several friends from India. These friends have pointed out to Nicholas Ostler how little believers must give up for Buddhism and Hinduism: former

religions do not have to be rejected. Buddhism and former religions may go well together. Other beliefs require far more from its new believers. Man Leben does not agree with these friends. By their nature, Hinduism and Mahāyāna Buddhism [13] require everything from its believers including their original religions.

Over time, Sanskrit has been first expelled by Islam from parts of India and Indonesia and afterwards it was banished from China with Buddhism. But, the remains of Sanskrit – like Hebrew – can be seen everywhere for a specialist.

Also many words in German, English and Dutch have a richer meaning with knowledge of Sanskrit. During his recovery period, once Man Leben strolled around. He overheard a small group of women talk to each other twittering like birds. When he walked along, one of the women said: "What that concerns [14], I say so: I say nothing". Then the women continued their conversation. The second main character thought: "Tathāgata [15], evam [16], śūnya [17]" or "what the world of forms concerns, thus, void". These three words summarize in one sentence the following stage during our Odyssey with the addition: "*What comes from the power of the wind, becomes brooken and crumbled in the end* [18].

These additions reminds of a free rendering of a pop-song by Neil Young [18]:

"Life is like a flower.

It only grows on the vine.

Handful of thorns and you know you missed it.

And you lose it

when you call it Mine, Mine, Mine".

Notes

- [1] For example: Sheng Yen, *Footprints in the Snow – the Autobiography of a Chinese Buddhist Monk*. New York: Doubleday, 2008
- [2] For example: Pirsig, Robert M., *Lila, an Inquiry in Morals*. London: Bantam Press, 1991
- [3] For example: Ayto, John, *Word Origins – The hidden Histories of English Words from A to Z*. London: A & C Black Publishers, 2008
- [4] “man” means in Sanskrit “think/consider/observe”.
- [5] For example: Fortson, Benjamin W., *Indo-European Language and Culture – an Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004; Mallory, J.P. & Adams, D.Q., *The Oxford Introduction to Proto-Indo-European and the Proto-Indo-European World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007; Mallory, J.P., *In Search of the Indo-Europeans*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2005
- [6] See as introduction: <http://en.wikipedia.org/> under “Pāṇini”
- [7] For example: Egenes, Thomas, *Introduction to Sanskrit part 1 & 2*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2003 - 2005
- [8] Source image: www.amazon.com
- [9] In Sanskrit the name Buddha consists of the noun “bud” meaning “bud or knop” as “bud” in rosebud in the film “Citizen Kane” directed by Orson Wells – and the verb \sqrt{dha} meaning “place, grant, bestow”. Source: electronic version of the dictionary Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta
- [10] See: Ostler, Nicholas, *Empires of the Word – A Language History of the World*. New York: Harper Collins, 2005
- [11] Source image: www.amazon.co.uk

[12] See: Ostler, Nicholas, *Empires of the Word – A Language History of the World*. New York: Harper Collins, 2005 p. 217

[13] Mahāyāna literally means "big vessel". All and everyone is present in this big vessel, no particle is excluded.

[14]The original in Dutch sounds "What Tathāgata" meaning "What that concerns"

[15] See also: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tath%C4%81gata>. The word "tathāgata" consist of "tathā" meaning "thus" and "gata" or "āgata" meaning going or coming. In Mahāyāna Buddhism the word "tathāgata" has two meanings: on the one hand "the complete arising and vanishing Self" or "Buddha or Self" and on the other hand "the myriad forms as they are".

[16] In Sanskrit the word "Evam" consists of the verb \sqrt{e} meaning "approach, arrive" and the noun "va" meaning "wind, ocean, water, stream, going". Source: electronic version of the dictionary Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta

[17] In Sanskrit "śūnya" means zero of void. The word "śūnya" consists of "śūna" meaning "swollen state of empty" and "ya" meaning "mover, traveller or wind".

[18] Source: Wick, Gerry Shishin, *The Book of Equanimity – Illuminating Classic Zen Koans*. Somerville MA: Wisdom Publications, 2005 p. 51 casus 16.

[19] See: <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/neilyoung/loveisarose.html>

About the author

Jan van Origo is the writer's name of Jan van Leent.

In 1955, Jan was born in Heerlen – the Netherlands. During his youth he lived in the middle of South Limburg – the Netherlands.

When Jan finished his study of Industrial Design at Delft University of Technology, he lived in Amsterdam where he met his wife Marieke. Now Marieke and Jan live with their two children Hanna and Jaap for almost 20 years in a village near Rotterdam – the Netherlands. His work is related to the safety of consumer products.

His hobby's are reading, writing, music, travelling and cycling. Jan reads many books on philosophy, religion, literature. Since 3 years he studies Sanskrit – the language of the gods in the world of the men.

Half a year ago he started writing a essay on “Who are you – a survey of our existence”.

Jan van Origo keeps a weblog under: www.janvanorigo.com or janvanorigo.wordpress.com

This weblog in the Dutch language may be found under: www.janvanorigo.nl or janvanorigonl.wordpress.com

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