

Carla Drift

One Life - A Biography

Man Leben

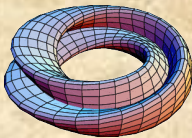


Omnia
Amsterdam

"Who are you" is about you and me and everything around us. Are you and I connected or are we separated? How are we connected? What makes you to the person who you are and who is involved in your creation? Who are you before your birth 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?

This search will be a way home. Our journey leads from the beginning of time until now. At the end, we will look back. We will see that everything is finished in one sigh.

Man Leben, Carla Drift and Narrator started the Odyssey to "Who are you". This biography gives a description of the life of Man Leben to date.



Man Leben – One Life

A Biography

Carla Drift

Man Leben is a fictional person. No existing man has been model for him.

Carla Drift is a writer's name of Jan van Origo.

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Because mankind thinks of the interests of all, it 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".

- Andrei Tarkovski, *De verzegelde Tijd – Sculpting in Time*

With Hope and Consolation

- Andrei Tarkovski, *Offret – The Sacrifice*

Acknowledgement

WITHOUT the familiar breath that shaped the complete universe in one sigh from start until end, this book may not be possible. I am indebted my gratitude to the eternal change that shows itself in the emptiness of the universe.

I acknowledge my gratitude to all manifestations that exist in their innumerable varieties.

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

Our Universe and World is studied by many Scholars in innumerable ways. Without the giant outcome of all these studies, this book may not be started. I am deeply indebted to all these studies.

Special gratitude I am indebted to:

- o My mother and father, wife, children, sisters and family,
- o Friends, acquaintances, colleagues and passers-by,
- o Teachers, schools and university,
- o Villages I lived in, places I attended and areas of employment.

Possible mistakes and omissions made in this book are solely my responsibility. I did my best to include all references. May mistaken and omissions be noted, please forward these errors to the author.

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Introduction

MAN Leben and I first met in the lecture room when the philosophy lectures by Prof. Dr. W. Luijpen at the University of Technology in Delft were given. We sat side by side.

Man Leben took this series of lectures while he was a part-time senior research fellow at the Faculty of Architecture of the Delft University of Technology with the subject Construction Materials and Modular Building. I took these series for my Bachelor of my technical study. The first lecture by Prof. Luijpen left a deep impression on us. At the end of this lecture we had lunch together.

More than 30 years ago, Man was a charming middle-aged man who was really interested in other people.

My radiant carefree life was slowly derailing. He had attention for this development. With advise he helped me when I moved to Amsterdam for the continuation of my study. He introduced me to friends of him for a room.

His life had already taken another turn; this change I heard later, much later. He did not make a show of it. At the end of the series of lectures he said that he would start to work on a farm in South Limburg – a few villages from the village where I grew up. Regularly I visited him on the farm. We kept in touch during the rest of our lives – sometimes just a New Year's card, other times we stayed together on our life journey.

A year ago, Man Leben and I started our Odyssey to "Who are you – a survey into our existence". Narrator has been invited as

taleteller on this quest and he continues the Odyssey when Man and I are absent.

The search for "Who are you" is about you and me and all that is in connection with us. Are you and I connected or are we separated? What makes you to the person who you are? Who are you before your birth and who will you be after your death? Do you exist without an universe? How are you aware of yourself? And how are others aware of you? The answer to all these questions is currently unknown, but nevertheless we raise these questions.

We started looking for the way that shaped you to who you are. This quest – with 17 stages – will be a homecoming. The journey from Troy to home took Odysseus ten years. We do quite a bit longer about our Odyssey: our trip runs from the beginning of time until now. At the end, we will look back on our journey. We will see that everything is finished in one sigh.

During the first part of this Odyssey, you and I experienced the complete oneness at our first stage. Then we endured the first separation of Air and Earth – *if there is a only one hair width of difference, then Heaven and Earth are clearly separated* [1] – and all subsequent separations: we were completely disintegrated. After an incredible long time we returned again in a human form. Then we visited stage three. Here we experienced how people try to overcome the doubts and separation by placing "people, objects, offerings and words in the middle" between themselves and the uncertainty. During preparation for the continuation of our Odyssey an intermezzo followed. The report of the first part of our Odyssey is available on the website of the publisher – www.omnia-amsterdam.com

On the second part of our Odyssey we will meet the following five common realities at separate stages:

- o Facts and logic
- o Intensities and associations
- o Void
- o Change
- o Interconnectedness

In this second part we will enter everyday life. No existing man has been model for one of the main characters. Their names may be Allman and Everyman. Now it is the time to give you and me a fictitious name and place in our society. Your name is Man Leben, my name is Carla Drift and the name of your taleteller is Narrator.

In this biography of “Man Leben – One Life”, a short description is given of the course of his life to date. The biographies of Narrator and me will follow before we report on our experiences in the five common realities.

On the third part of our Odyssey, we plan to visit the seven other realities:

- o Ishvara
- o Et incarnatus est
- o Show me a small truth
- o No time, no change
- o Thou art that
- o And Death has no dominion here
- o Here and now

The last stage on our quest will be:

- o Zero – not one, not two

[1] See also: Wick, Gerry Shishin, *The Book of Equanimity – Illuminating Classic Zen Koans*. Somerville MA: Wisdom Publications, 2005, p. 54.

Biography

YOUR Foreparents *19 September 2011*

Shrivalled faces

Autumn leaves on the ground

Furrows of life

THE first part of the description of your life is the story how your foreparents lived before you came into their lives. You tell about you foreparents:

"About 4500 years ago my foreparents entered our history. Before this period they had lived an immeasurable time on earth. A coherent history of the first million years is missing. Through excavations, in wall paintings, in the landscape, in habits, in behaviours and in words we still see fragments of their lives.

The last part of the history of my foreparents is described in the book *Wanderings - The History of the Jews* [1] by Chaim Potok. As far as I am aware, my foreparents moved around 2500 BC from Mesopotamia to their "Promised Land". After a brief period in Egypt, they moved back to Jerusalem. Around 600 BC, the Babylonian King ordered to destroy Jerusalem.

My foreparents were deported as prisoners of war to Babylon – the world city with the hanging gardens, where they were treated surprisingly well. A part of my family remained in that city, but around 500 BC my foreparents moved back to Jerusalem – after the destruction, Jerusalem was a place where the sheep grazed. Until recently, these old family ties with Babylon continued to exist: we have helped and advised each other through the ages.

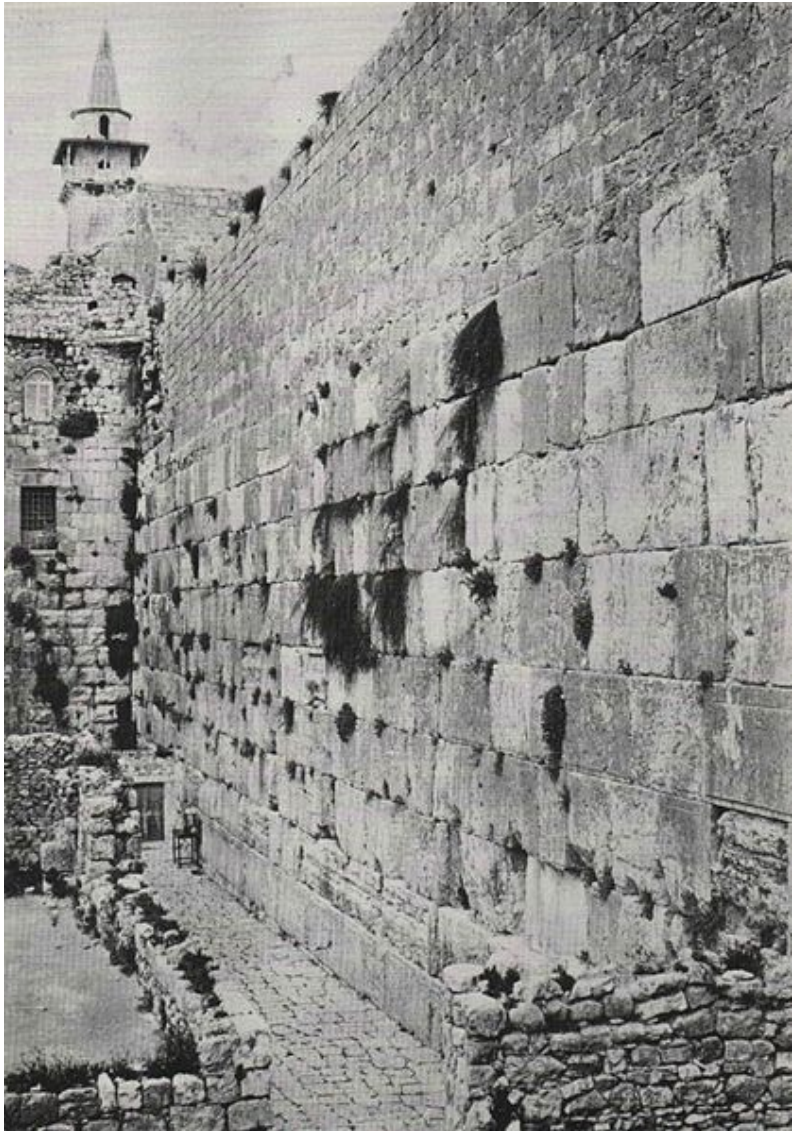


[2]



[3]

After the fall and destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans around 70 AD – only the Western Wall of the temple in Jerusalem remained – my ancestors moved away to Europe.



[4]

Probably until the Crusades, they were involved in international trade. At the beginning of the Crusades they established themselves in Islamic Cordoba. Around the year 1000 AD, Cordoba was a city with more than half a million inhabitants. It was an important financial, commercial and cultural centre of the world and its library contained 400,000 books [5]. My family probably were writers and bookkeepers.

In 1236 AD the Spanish King took possession of Cordoba: this was a downturn for my forefathers. They tried to escape persecution by converting themselves to the Catholic faith. This was to no avail, because the persecution was severe against converted Catholics – former Jews and Muslims – who secretly practised their traditional faith.

Finally, around 1500 AD my ancestors moved to the Baltic region in Northern Germany, Poland and Lithuania. They became traders.

A few years after the retreat of Napoleon from Russia, my ancestors moved to the centre of Germany. My mother's family established themselves in Frankfurt am Main. The family of my father lived in several German cities. In 1927, my mother met my father when he studied at the University in Frankfurt am Main. Erich Fromm [6] was a distant acquaintance from the university. We will encounter his books [7] on our Odyssey. In the beginning of 1933 my parents married. In that same year another regime was established in Germany: Erich Fromm first moved to Geneva and afterwards to the United States, and my parents moved to Amsterdam", you say.

"Little is known of the history of my foreparents", I say.

"That may be a blessing; many stories end with the words – and they lived happily ever after", you say.

In the following post we continue with a description of the beginning of your life.

[1] Potok, Chaim, *Omzwervingen – De Geschiedenis van het Joodse Volk*. 's-Gravenhage: BZZTôH 1999 or in English: *Wanderings: History of the Jews*.

[2] Source image: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:BabyIon_1932.jpg

[3] Source image: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:The_historical_city_of_Babylon.jpg

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

[5] Sources: [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/C%C3%B3rdoba_\(Spanje\)](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/C%C3%B3rdoba_(Spanje)) and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cordoba,_Andalusia

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

[7] Fromm, Erich, *Escape from Freedom*. New York: Rinehart & Co, 1941

Fromm, Erich, *The Forgotten Language*. New York: Rinehart & Co, 1951

Fromm, Erich, *The Sane Society* (1955)

Fromm, Erich, *The Art of Loving* (1956)

T

HE First Years

23 September 2011

Wie kann man leben, wenn man nicht sterben will [1]

IN the previous post you have told in a nutshell the history of your foreparents and parents, until the moment you came in their lives. No existing person has been model for one of the main characters. Their names could have been Allman and Everyman. Now you will continue with your first years of life:

"On the evening in March 1933 when I came into the life of my parents, they decided to leave Frankfurt am Main. They moved to Amsterdam with abandonment of many of their possessions. They have never told me, but I think I was conceived during that night within a cocoon of love, hope and consolation.

First a sketch of the time and area where I came to life.

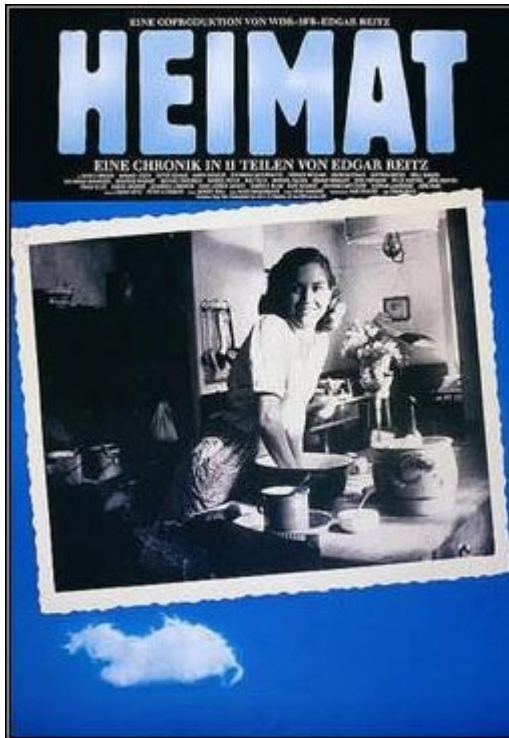
After the defeat in "A war like no other, a war as everyone", Germany fell into a deep economic crisis with high unemployment. In 1923 due to the reparations, the hyperinflation of money – the confidence inspiring "object in the middle" – was so enormous that the salary earned at the end of the morning had to be converted in one bread, because in the course of the afternoon that money became worth only a few slices.

At that time my grandparents based a small capital in sound currency in Switzerland and the Netherlands.



[2]

My foreparents and parents always were outliers in every society – also in Germany – with all consequences this entails. In the second half of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s, Germany created an overwhelming dynamism, hope and wrath – icy wrath [3]. Motorways were built, industry flourished, a huge urge to life came into existence and the soldier's boots were prepared for a march forward. *"Everything on the puff; who is going to pay"*, said the grandmother of Hermann Simon in *Heimat – Eine deutsche Chronik* [4] after visiting her family in the Ruhr area. The future price was still unimaginable [5].



[6]

In order to establish this mutual trust in German society, a “person in the middle”, “objects in the middle”, “myths” and “rituals” [7] were necessary.

Also a scapegoat in society was quickly found; my grandparents, parents with other descendants of my foreparents were identified as collective bearers of evil.

With the sacrifice and removal of the scapegoat from the society, the German people thought to remove all evil from society. It started with destructions and small harassments and it continued with smoke offerings in which Synagogues and books were burned in the Kristallnacht in 1938.



[8]

When in March 1933 the other government in Germany had obtained all powers, my parents decided to leave: they didn't want to be sacrificed. My grandparents stayed behind.

I was born in Amsterdam in early January 1934. Also Amsterdam was in a financial crisis. With the small capital deposited by my grandparents in the 1920's, my parents could start a new life in a district similar to the Rivierenbuurt [9]. My father went into trade. I grew up as a Dutch boy in Amsterdam.

In May 1940, the other government from Germany also flooded the Netherlands. In despair some acquaintances of my parents committed suicide, because they did not know another way out. My parents continued their lives. In September 1940, I went to elementary school. Except for the "J with yellow star" on my clothes, life continued as usual until the end of 1941. On a night before I went to a sleepover at my aunt, my parents told me that I

would stay away for a long time, but that eventually everything would be fine.

I stayed at my aunt for one night. Via several intermediate stops and with a new first and family name, I ended up on a farm in South Limburg (The Netherlands). From that time my official name is Hermanus [10] Maria Jacobus [11] Leben; I was baptised Catholic. They called me Man – a name that carries far over the fields against the wind", you say.

"I originate from South – Limburg. I recognized your first name "Man" right away. In South Limburg there are so many names that carry far over the fields. Mat from Matthew, Wiel from Wilhelmus, Sjraar from Gerard, Sjang or Sjeng from John, Joep from Joseph, Pie from Peter, Nant from Ferdinand, Sjier, Sjeuf. In all these names I have faces in my mind", I say.

"I also carry these names and faces with me", you say.

"And your parents?", I ask.

"I always carry my parents with me. In 1942 – nearly a year later, a sister was born, named Carla [12]. That is the only thing I know about her. Always, if I see women of her age with some similarity in appearance with my family, I still look out if it is her. Once I read: *"If there is even a hair's breadth of difference, heaven and earth are clearly separated"* [13]. There was also written: *"The Supreme way is not difficult, it simply dislikes choosing"* [14]. Later more", you say.

The next post is about your school time in South Limburg.

[1] Translation: *How can one live, when one doesn't want to die.*

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

[3] See also: *"Wrath, icy wrath that brought countless horrors"* – first verse of the Iliad – in the post of 31st of Augustus 2011: *A war like no other – the leading players*

[4] Source: Reitz, Edgar, *Heimat – Eine deutsche Chronik*. 1984 See also: [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heimat_\(Edgar_Reitz\)](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heimat_(Edgar_Reitz))

[5] See also: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_wars_and_anthropogenic_disasters_by_death_toll and for the toll of the Spanish flu at the end of the Great War: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1918_flu_pandemic

[6] Source image: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heimat_\(film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heimat_(film))

[7] See former posts with the same titles.

[8] Photo of the fire in the Synagogue in the Börnestraße in Frankfurt am Main during the Kristallnacht on 9th of November 1938. Source of image: <http://www.frankfurt.frblog.de/ostend-industrieviertel-mit-juedischen-wurzeln>

[9] Description of the history of refugees from Germany in Amsterdam during the Second World War: <http://www.zuidelijkewandelweg.nl/tijdtijn/razzia%27s.htm>

[10] The name Hermanus consists of "Herr" and "Man". Possibly the German word "Herr" is connected to the verb root "√hr̥" meaning "to offer, sacrifice" and "take, take away" in Sanskrit. Source: electronic version of the dictionary Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta. See also the first Chorus in the Cantata 131 of Johann Sebastian Bach: *"Aus der Tiefe rufe ich, Herr, zu dir. Herr, höre meine Stimme, lass deine Ohren merken auf die Stimme meines Flehens!"*. Translation: "From the deep, Lord [3], I cry to you. Lord, hear my voice, let your ears hear the voice of my doubt!". "Man" "man" means "think/consider/observe".

[11] Probably this name is closely linked to the verb root "√śak" meaning "be able/capable" in Sanskrit.

[12] The name Carla is composed of "car" meaning "to move, to wander" in Sanskrit and "la" meaning "undertake or give".

[13] Source: Wick, Gerry Shishin, *The Book of Equanimity – Illuminating Classic Zen Koans*. Somerville MA: Wisdom Publications, 2005 – case 17, p. 54.

[14] Source: Hekiganroku - Case 2. Zie ook: Yamada Kōun Roshi, *Hekiganroku, Die Niederschrift vom blauen Fels*. München: Kösel-Verlag, 2002

I N South Limburg (NL)

26 September 2011

Die Zeit die man leben nennt [1]

UNTIL the end of 1941 you lived your early childhood as a Dutch boy in Amsterdam.



[2]

No existing man and place have been model for one of the main characters and places. Their names might be Allman, Everyman and Everywhere.

Just before your eighth birthday you said goodbye to your parents. After a night staying at your aunt, you arrived via several places

and with a new name Jacobus Hermanus Maria Leben – they called me “Man”– as Catholic boy on a farm in South Limburg.

On your eighth birthday, you ended up in a country where a language extends as far as you can see [3]. So many foreign armies have set foot on this country, so that the new regime from Germany brought no shocking change. But the manner in which one lives and who is allowed to live here, the Pruujsj – or German – and the Holländer – or Dutchman – has nothing to do with. In 1942, life went on as it has done for many thousands of years.

You continue with your primary school years:

"A long journey by foot, by bike, by train and on a carriage followed when I left my aunt. A number of nights I have lodged with different people. In between, I have been renamed and baptized Catholic. I still use this name. At the end of the trip just before sunset, I arrived in a different world; a farm near Valkenburg [4]. I couldn't understand anyone. The farm looked like a castle surrounded with walls and buildings and everything smelled unlike anything I was used to. The farmer and his wife – who adopted me as godfather and godmother – and the servants were kind. First I got supper: bread and many delicacies. I was tired and I fell sound asleep in a strange bedroom. The next morning the rhythm of the farm, Church and school began: first I helped with milking of the cows, then I went to the church – a strange world – had breakfast and then school began. The pastor introduced me in the classroom. Odd looks; I could understand no one. After school I helped on the farm. Later I also played with classmates. I remained an outsider at school: I could learn far too well.



[5]

After the period of habituation, this life in South Limburg is the most beautiful time out of my life. Everything was stable between my eighth and twelfth year. In that time I got used to the seasons, the change of light and the rhythm of nature. I still carry the field flowers with me, the Church with the processions through the fields and the golden yellow light from that time.



[6]

Soon I was allowed to confess like all children of my school. After some classmates did their confession, the door of the pastor opened, he opened the other door to a brutal boy. The boy received several slaps – in a farmers' environment this did not really hurt – and he was allowed to carry on with his penance. I actually had not sinned, but I decided to invent a few small sins; my first deviation from the right path. Later followed more.

At the age of ten, I unexpectedly fell in love with a girl in the village. It seemed like lightning struck, so fiercely and unexpectedly; Everything was covered in a white glow. From then on, life was different with extra feelings and concerns. Nobody has ever known of my first love.

Later I never more helped so carefree on the fields with ploughing and sowing. The smell of freshly ploughed earth only smelled of growth and bloom. After I left South Limburg, another – sad – smell was added [7].

In between in September 1944 the other regime from Germany was expelled from South Limburg without any clashes in our

village. Near Aachen, in the Ardennes and in North Limburg there were fierce fights. A new regime from the West arrived with first the sensation of change and later habituation; life re-took its rhythm.

In the summer of 1946 my aunt came. With her I moved to a village near Rotterdam. I moved from an environment that is completely Catholic to an area that has a strict inner faith and guilt with a sharp "F" and a hard "G". As I look back, this move is – next to having children – the biggest change in my life", you say.

"These changes should have been shocking for you", I say.

"In Limburg, it came as it came, it was as it was and it went as it went; and not otherwise. Falling in love was a change. After this lightning struck, life was no longer the same, no longer carefree as before. I had a very good time in Limburg. Around 1975, I again lived two years on the same farm: again a good time. The shocking changes came when I moved to Holland", you say.

The next post is about my high school years near Rotterdam.

[1] Translation: "*The time one names life*". There exists a film with a similar title; see: <http://www.tvspielfilm.de/kino/filmarchiv/film/die-zeit-die-man-leben-nennt,1318419,ApplicationMovie.html>

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

[3] In France until the time of Napoleon, the languages did not extends further than one can watch. See: Robb, Graham, *The Discovery of France*. London: Picador, 2007

[4] No existing farm or neighbourhood in the area of Valkenburg has been model for this post.

[5] Examples of farms in South Limburg. Source image: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestand:Houtemstgerlach.jpg>

[6] Source image: <http://www.sxc.hu/browse.phtml?f=download&id=1361079>

[7] This sentence may remind of the title of a novel by: Pavese, Cesar, *La terra e la morte*.

SCHOOL Time in Holland

30 September 2011

Ein Weg durch das Abenteuer, das man Leben nennt [1]

YOU continue with your school time in Holland.

"In the summer of 1946 my aunt visited my godfather and godmother in Limburg. She stayed for one week. After this week I moved with my aunt to a village near Rotterdam. The departure from my godparents was not easy; fortunately, I visited them on a regular basis at their farm: every time special.

Near Rotterdam in the train, I was surprised that a country could be so flat and empty. And so full of canals, small and even smaller. Later I understood that this was the result of a centuries-long co-existence with water and a necessity to keep the polders dry.



[2]



[3]

When we arrived in our new home, my aunt had sad news. My father and mother had not survived the war due to the consequences of the other regime from Germany, that had also

flooded the Netherlands. My father died in Auschwitz [4], my mother did not survive an illness in Dachau. Furthermore, my aunt never talked about the time of war. I had never asked her about it: it was obvious that this was too painful. After the war, a distant family relation helped her with a post at a Trade Office.

In Holland I lived in a Christian village, I went to a Christian Grammar school and we went to a Christian Church with quite different habits. Still, I had study the Jewish scriptures of my aunt on a regular basis; this legacy of my ancestors was not denied. Everything was strange, even my first name was strange and in the beginning my German-sounding last name caused reservation. I could understand the people, but they responded differently. By my accent and behaviour I remained an outsider. In Holland milk was widely drunk – preferably a litre per day; in Limburg only a little milk was put in the coffee. At celebrations a slice of cake was offered instead of an abundant treat of fruit pie: for an important feast in Limburg, the woman next door delivered 24 different fruit pies at the baker for baking.

Over time I became accustomed to our new life in Holland. I got friends at the new school, I silently was in love again and after 6 years I received my diploma for Grammar school. Then I started my study at Delft University of Technology", you say.

"Jo Ritzen, who studied physics at Delft University of Technology, wrote in his autobiography [5] that the transition from Limburg to Holland was the biggest change in his life. Your changes are even bigger", I say

"For me there was no choice. It came as it came, it was as it was and it went as it went; just like the weather or the wind, not otherwise", say you.

The following post is about your years of study in Delft.

[1] Translation: “*A way through the adventure that one calls life*”

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

Bestand:Tussen_Bergambacht_en_Schoonhoven,_panorama2_foto2_2010-07-04_13.41.JPG

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

Bestand:MolenVanafDijk.JPG

[4] The name Auschwitz is derived from the Polish town named Oświęcim near the camp. Many Jews who live in Oświęcim before the war, named this place Oshpitzin – the Yiddish word for guest – because this place was known for its hospitality before the war. See: Glassman, Bernie, *Bearing Witness - A Zen Master's Lessons in Making Peace*. New York: Bell Tower, 1998, p. 4

[5] Ritzen, Jozef Maria Mathias, *De Minister – Een Handboek*.

Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 1998.

YOUR Study Time in Delft

3 October 2011

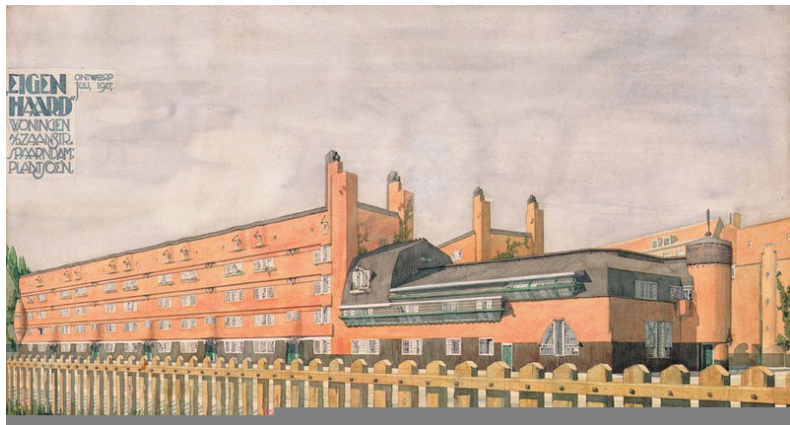
Träume soll man leben – Dreams one shall live

YOU continue with your years of study in Delft:

"After receiving my grammar school diploma, I hiked with two friends for four weeks in the Netherlands, Belgium and France. My aunt encouraged me to study and to live by myself in a rented room in Delft; she liked to see me following in the footsteps of my father. Due to the rebuilding after the war, I got interested in architecture and as a consequence I started studying Architecture in Delft. I settled in a small room in a house at the "Oude Delft". I enjoyed my student life, my student association, two year rowing as an oarsman, jazz, trips to Amsterdam, Paris, and of course architecture. The shock of the new: "Amsterdamse School", Frank Lloyd Wright, "De Nieuwe Zakelijkheid" or "New Objectivity" and Glasshouse.



[1]



[2]



[3]



[4]



[5]

Just after my 21st birthday, a disillusion followed. My aunt explained to me how she had managed the legacy of my father and mother. She had done well, but the time was not well-disposed to her.

She explained how the small capital – that my grandparents had deposited around 1923 in Amsterdam – was used by my parents in 1933 to make a new start in Netherlands. With part of this capital, they bought a house in Amsterdam; the rest was used as reserve capital for trade. The trade was rather successful until the other regime from Germany installed barriers of trade for my parents. During their deportation to Germany, all our movable property was seized or has disappeared. Their house was confiscated in order to create housing of others.

The first letters that my aunt in 1945 received on her return in Netherlands, were tax bills from the Dutch Government for recovering taxes not paid by my family during their absence due to their deportation to Germany. My aunt understood that after the war the Dutch Government had to rebuild everything from scratch, like everything and everyone. As heir and guardian, my aunt had to look after the obligations of the deceased relatives and for me.

All possessions were gone or not accessible and my parent's house was inhabited by other people. Many bills for maintenance were not settled or were paid by others and the ownership of the house was disputed. By transferring the property of the house officially to new owners, all debts and tax bills could be settled.

Luckily my aunt got a post at a Trade Office from which she could start a new life. With this base, she could get access to the other capital my grandparents had deposited in Switzerland. With this small capital my aunt was able to cover the costs for me and for my study. She wanted me to have a good time in Delft: I had to enjoy myself without a worry during the first two years of my study.

One wish of my aunt I could only fulfil much later, when I was in my 50's. She requested me to honour my father and mother not only with my life as I had done before my maturity, but also to honour my parents with the traditional remembrance of the dead. First I thought of "Dies Irae" [6] – or "Day of Wrath" – as a commemoration of the days of doom and horror that befell on my father and mother during the war.

The request of my aunt went further: she asked me – when I was ready to do so – to honour my parents according to the Jewish remembrance – named Kaddish [7] – with the opening lyrics: "You are praised, and holy is your name in the world - created according to your will". This text is very similar to the Christian equivalent "Thine be the Glory" [8]. Many years later, I finally reached the maturity and humbleness to say these texts for one year and thus to fulfil the wish of my aunt. I could only start this task after a monk in a monastery saw that I had trouble with bowing down. "Do you know for whom you bow down?", he asked. I replied that I had trouble to honour God in this humble way.

Thereupon the monk said: "These bows are bows for yourself".
The meaning of this answer dawned upon me years later.

After this disillusion following my cheerful first two years of study,
I received my engineering degree at the University of Technology
four years later.

My final thesis involved utility-building: a reasonably good job,
except for the very best architects", you said.



[9]

"I do not have this maturity and humbleness. I am still full of
rebellion ", I say.

"It took me a lot of trouble to get it", you say.

The following post is about your fruitful years in the society.

[1] Source image: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestand:Scheepvaarthuis5.jpg>

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

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

[4] Source image: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestand:Wrightfallingwater.jpg>

[5] Source image: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Glasshouse-philip-johnson.jpg>

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

[7] See also: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaddish>

[8] See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thine_Be_the_Glory

[9] “Ketelhuis” near the “Rotterdamseweg” in Delft. This “Ketelhuis” is an example of the “New Objectivity”. The design is made by the architecture-office van den Broek en Bakema – see also: <http://www.broekbakema.nl/>. Source image: Screen-print from Google maps.

E VERYDAY Life

7 October 2011

Wie soll man leben – How to live

NOW you continue with your contribution to society and your everyday life in Amsterdam:

"I have completed my general education at a Catholic primary school in South Limburg and a Christian grammar school in Rotterdam. In my grammar school time my aunt promoted the regular study of Jewish scriptures. At that time these were completely different worlds. Looking back, I mainly see similarities.

Open-minded, I started my study Architecture in Delft without formal obligations. On my 21st birthday the disillusion followed. My aunt explained to me how she had handled the inheritance of my parents and family. She had done well, but the time was not kind to her.

Hereinafter I finished my studies in four years with study in the field of utility-building.

Everyday life took me on. A short period I worked at an architectural firm on utility projects. Through this firm, I ended up in the trade of building materials. In the early sixties, more money came available in society and as a consequence there was also more money available for building materials. I floated on this tide.



[1]

Through my work at the architectural firm, I met my wife and mother of our three children. In grammar school and the first two years of my study, I have been in love several times, but there always was a distance. Now I saw her and she appeared in a white glow; not as overwhelming as when I fell in love for the first time in primary school. Then lightning struck me and everything was completely white, now it was gentler and she stood in a white glow. Fortunately I could utter a few meaningful words. The second time I had the courage to ask her out. So it went on. We quickly engaged and we married in 1959. A short time we lived in an apartment and when the children came, we moved to a house near Amsterdam.

The trade in building materials was very successful. For me my "Jaguar year" started.



[2]

I will keep the description of these "Jaguar years" brief, because Lucy Irvine [3] – in her book about the stay on a deserted island in the Pacific – could not stand it when her companion "G" began about his "Jaguar days". When we became more successful, we moved to a detached house in the outskirts of Amsterdam; we went with vacations to further and further locations. The children went to primary school and everything seemed quiet and fine.

With the increased wealth at the end of the 1960s, there was an underneath sense of uneasiness in society, this disquietness also got a place in our family. Structures and ways of living changed, values and ways of behaviour altered and we felt a great increase of freedom [4] and possibilities. The imagination seemed to come to power. The routine of a fixed family with fixed ways of living together changed in a free family with free manners. Our marriage changed in an open marriage with room for other relationships.

The Jaguar was exchanged for a Renault 4 as family car – a lovely moving car, which flowed like everything else in that time, because we felt we were still young and alternative; we enjoyed life.



[5]

The trade prospered and required another car – a Saab 99. Looking back the joy of this freedom and other relationships was fleeting and shallow; the submerged discontent remained.



[6]

The second-wave feminism rolled into our family. After our wedding my wife stopped working, she took care of everything in and around our house, and of the children; I took care of the income, of all official business and of the management of our possessions. We made plans for the future and considered important decisions together. Everything was nicely divided as usual in that area. We started with a normal marriage like everyone else in that time. The Hippie time made everything loose and more jolly; clothing was alternative and so were relationships. In the early 1970s my wife wished to develop and orient herself on her place in society.

My wife started to develop herself; she began a study languages at the University of Amsterdam. Her social life changed – her new friend came into our life and not much later they moved on with the children: she was my ex-wife and a visit arrangement with the children followed. My social life changed: there were several female friends in my life and my circle of friends changed because our separation also resulted in a separation in the family and

friends – "partir est mourir un peu". My inner discomfort and dissatisfaction remained.

With these changes also the view on other religions came in my life: Catholicism, Christian and Jewish faith had already found a place in my life – the last 25 years more or less dormant. With the alternative movement also Eastern religions like Buddhism and Hinduism came into view. Later these religions played an important role in my life.

In the end of the 70 's I was – additional to my work in the trade - a few years part-time senior research fellow for Modular Construction Elements at the Delft University of Technology. I had already transferred part of my job to younger colleagues. In that time I attended the lecture series in philosophy by professor W. Luijpen. His view on society had a major influence on me.

In 1980 my aunt was very ill for a short time; I visited her daily. Fortunately, she recovered quickly. During her recovery we had a conversation about my life. She said to me: "Life has its course; floating in the stream – as best as possible – is often the only choice. Your parents and ancestors usually had not much choice. Our faith gives meaning to our lives. Now also your life takes its course – another way than you wish. Give meaning to life – where possible – and have patience and trust. Let your life be a blessing for the memory of your parents and ancestors – for here and for there". This was an indirect reminder to my aunt's wish to honour my parents according to the Jewish remembrance [7]. I still could not do this. I was not ready for it.

In the spring of 1982, my godfather in South Limburg suddenly died. My life was ready for a change. I decided to help my godmother on the farm: I moved to South Limburg and I was temporarily farmer. Before I left, I ended my business in

Amsterdam, sold our house and – like my grandparents had done for my parents in 1923 – I left a small capital in deposit for the children. My family did not appreciate this change. When I look back, I shouldn't have taken these steps so resolutely, but in that stage of my life I felt that this change was on my path", you say.

"I remember that confusing time. In Limburg these changes happened later, but at the end of my grammar school time everyone had long hair and colourful clothes. During my study in Delft, I felt resistance against men because I had the opinion that women had an unfair place in society", I say.

"When we married, the society was organised differently. The changes came later. On my return to South Limburg, I went back in time. In Limburg the relation between men and women had not changed so much", you say.



The following post is about your return to Limburg and how you started to drift.

[1] Source image: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestand:Piping01.JPG>

[2] Source image: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Jaguar.3point4.750pix.jpg>

[3] See: Irvine, Lucy, *Castaway*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1984

[4] The verb root "Vraj" means in Sanskrit "go, walk". Source: Egenes, Thomas, *Introduction to Sanskrit - Part Two*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2005 p. 395. According to the electronic version of the dictionary Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta, "Vraj" also has the meaning "to go to (a woman)" and "have sexual intercourse with".

[5] Source image: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Renault_4_R_1123_1968.jpg

[6] Source image: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Saab_99_EMS_1974_\(UK_Spec\).jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Saab_99_EMS_1974_(UK_Spec).jpg)

[7] See also: Zie: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaddish>

[8] Source image: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestand:Ford5000.jpg>

BACK to Limburg

10 October 2011

Treibend auf die Wellen kann man leben –

Floating on the waves one can live

YOU continue with your return to Limburg:

"My godfather died. The farm in South Limburg urgently needed help. I was ready for a change; my "Jaguar – Saab years" were finally over. At the age of 48 years I became a farmer for a year and a half.

My godfather and godmother could not have children. I have always felt it, but it was told when I was an adult. During the war until the end of my primary school, they took care for me. I was more than welcome; while living with them I had the most beautiful time of my life. Now, my godfather had suddenly died and the farm wished to resume the rhythm of spring.

The funeral of my godfather went according to usual habits in Limburg. A heavy bell brought the village the sad news that there was a death, a mass, the walk to the cemetery, a meal with the usual good food. The inheritance had not yet to be divided. By herself my godmother had to take care for the farm, the cows, the fields, the vegetable garden and orchard – help was needed. The transition to work on the farm was on my path. Again I moved to South Limburg.

I settled myself according to the rhythm of the day, month, season and year on the farm. I could remember much from the past, but a lot had changed.

My godmother still followed all the rituals of the Catholic Church, but the secularization was also advancing in Limburg.

The farm used to be almost fully self-sufficient. The surplus of the farm was sold and part of the money was used to purchase tools and for maintenance, another part was set aside for savings, and the last part went to church and help for others.

The mechanization had already begun – there was a tractor and a number of machines were available. But a further increase in scale was needed within a few years: the choices were not easy and the necessary investments would be considerable. Was the farm large enough to be taken over by family or heirs? My godfather and godmother had been thinking about this question for several years; soon a decision had to be taken. Now she had to make this decision on her own.

My godmother noticed that for me a change was more than welcome that year. After a few weeks my godmother and I agreed that I would continue at least until the farm was prepared for the next winter.



[1]

For her, this was not an easy time: loss of her husband, help from me – an inexperienced farmer, how to continue the farm and the changes in everyday life. In Limburg the secularization started and the television showed all the changes of the world in the kitchen.

She fulfilled her duties for her late husband and I went along with her to each mass. This rhythm and the rhythm of the farm gave form to my life again.



[2]

In autumn – just after the 6 months mass for my godfather – my godmother said that my help on the farm was welcome, but that I was not a farmer; I did not belong on a farm. I belonged somewhere else, just as at the age of twelve I belonged somewhere else. On that evening we decided to live another season on the farm and within that year take care for the transfer of the farm to someone else.

A college friend visited me for a weekend at that time. We have always kept in touch. He was a successful architect now. Together, we considered the possibilities for a holiday farm. The location was good, the buildings were in a good condition and they offered sufficient opportunities. In consultation with my godmother we developed the plans further during winter and spring. At the end of spring my godmother – after consultation with the family – offered the farm and land for sale. In summer she bought herself a nice apartment in the village. We finished the summer season on

the farm. The cows were sold to villagers and the land was leased. So, we finished our farmers' rhythm.

In that year we also talked about my future plans. I would be able to take care of myself: my godmother believed me, but in her opinion this was not my destination on earth. We also discussed the wish of my aunt. She fully understood the wish of my aunt to honour my family with the traditional remembrance of the dead according to the Jewish tradition. My inability to do this, my godmother did not understand well. One may take the position of "no one's boss, nobody's servant", but there existed a natural order with a God who created heaven and earth; He had to be honoured. For my godmother her faith and her way of life had always been clear: one knew what to do – like it or not – you had to do it. Gently she proposed a pilgrimage to me; a pilgrimage in the autumn to Dachau. That would be a preparation for honouring my family.

Looking back on my life in Limburg and the hike/pilgrimage, I remember a text that I have read once: "*Disease and medicine help each other. The medicine is the universe. Who are you?*" [3]

At the end of the summer of 1983, I packed my backpack with two sets of clothes, a bivouac sack and a small stove. I said goodbye to my godmother and to the village and I hit the road", you say.

[1] Examples of farms in Zuid Limburg. Source image: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestand:Houtemstgerlach.jpg>

[2] Example of landscape in Zuid Limburg: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nationaal_Landschap_Zuid-Limburg

[3] Free rendering of Case 87 from the Hekiganroku. See also: Yamada Kôun Roshi, *Hekiganroku, Die Niederschrift vom blauen Fels – Band 2*. München: Kösel-Verlag, 2002 p. 321.

O N the Way

14 October 2011

Mit dem Tod der andern muss man leben [1]

With the dead of others, one must live

YOU continue with your two months' hike:

"At the end of the summer I abandoned my life as farmer. Now my godmother lived in an apartment and the farm was transferred to the new owner for turning into a holiday farm. The hike would go to the chapel "Notre Dame du Haut" in Ronchamp, France and to Dachau, Germany. In Dachau my mother died in 1944 probably due to disease and exhaustion during the other regime in Germany.

With my backpack filled with another set of clothes, a sleeping bag, a bivouac sack and a small stove I left for this luxurious hike. I also had the necessary payment cards and my health was excellent.

I crossed the border with Belgium at "De Plank". After a few miles I passed the war cemetery Henri Chapelle where about 8000 soldiers were buried [2] [3] who died during the Ardennes offensive.



[4]

My hike would lead me along many war cemeteries, because I walked to Ronchamp along the French – German language border. On the first part of my trip I stayed mostly on the French-speaking side, as in South Limburg I had also lived just on the French – oriented side. On many parts I followed the GR 5 unless the detour was – in my opinion – not on my route.

For two months I was wanderer, but a luxury wanderer. Until recently my rhythm was determined by my work in Amsterdam and by my living on the farm. Now, the weather, the road and the environment took care of the rhythm. Several hundred years ago the landscape was in a similar way densely populated with travellers [5].

As solitary hiker I was never alone. Almost always the wind was my companion and at night under a clear sky, the moon and the stars were my company. Contact with others was simple. Almost

everyone was interested in the tour. The basic questions: "Who are you? Where do you come from? Where do you go?", are simple and at on a basic level quickly answered. But for the answer to "Who are you?" in the full width, you and I will search for on our Odyssey. After this proposal round, we will depart on our Odyssey again.

Especially I got to know the wind and the moon on this hike. In the following post I will give an introduction to the moon. I noticed that the wind was always present; it was my constant friend. Just as water is the last thing that a fish will discover, I discovered that the wind – with the always moving air – was my constant company on this hike .

Later during my study of Sanskrit, I learned two words for wind that show my experiences during that hike.

The first word for wind in Sanskrit is "marut" [6] meaning "wind, air, breath, children of the air or ocean, living in the North, and golden wind". This word is composed of "ma" [7] meaning "mine or of mine" and "ruta" meaning "sound, loud, shout, roar, hum of bees, whistling of birds". This word is very special for me, because Ruth is my mother's first name. She is named after the book of Ruth from the Old Testament. The name Ruth means in Sanskrit "of a man" and the statement made by Ruth in the book Ruth: "Where you go, I will go", is used in Jewish, Catholic and Christian wedding services [8]. As during all my life, my mother accompanied me on this hike.

The second word for wind in Sanskrit is "va" meaning "wind, ocean, water, stream", and the verb root vâ meaning "to blow, to give by blowing/breathing". Derivatives of these words are "vada" meaning "to speak, giving wind/air" and "vâta" meaning "wind god". The words "vada" and "vâta" sound like the word "Vater" [9]

or father in German. With the omnipresent wind, my father also accompanied me on this hike – like he did during my entire life.

The omnipresent wind – named “marut” and “vâta”, but in reality nameless and name of all – made it possible for me to say the text of Kaddish. In the course of the hike, the wind took the place of the Biblical father figure whom until then I had identified with “He” and “Him” in the text of Kaddish. The biblical father figure from the pastoral world – to whose image men might be created – had always caused difficulties for me, but the wind was inevitably and fleeting present. The wind became the “He” and “his” in the text of the Jewish remembrance of the dead. On my way to Ronchamp, I started reciting this text for my parents, and for my godfather.

*May his great name exalted and sanctified in the world He has
created according to his will.*

*May his kingdom be recognised in your life and in your days and in
the life of the whole house of Israel, soon and near future.*

Now say: Amen

May his great name be blessed now and forever.

*Blessed, praised, celebrated, and high and exalted always honoured,
Glorified hailed be the name of the Holy,
blessed be He,
high above each blessing, every song,
praise and comfort said on earth.*

Now say: Amen

*May there come many peace from heaven and life!
Over us and all over Israel.
Now say: Amen*

*He who makes peace in his high spheres, will also make peace for us
and for Israel.
Now say: Amen [10]*

Through the Ardennes, Luxemburg, Northern France, the Vosges with Route de Crête, I arrived in Ronchamp. There I visited Notre Dame du Haute designed by the architect Le Corbusier. In my "Jaguar years" we had in our house a chair designed by him in 1928.



[11]

Now in other circumstances, I walked uphill to the chapel.



[12]



[13]

In the chapel the light was wonderful and colourful. In one of the towers I looked up. As in so many churches, what a beautiful light from above.



[14]

In Ronchamp I wrote the poem:

*Wind takes you along
Volatile and fatal
From Hades' realm.*

*Heaven nor earth
May exist without you
Ascent in the void.*

The following post is about the journey from Ronchamp to Dachau", you say.

[1] Part from: <http://www.meinpoesiealbum.de/abschied.htm>

[2] See also the post “Remembrance of the fallen” from 16 Augustus 2011 and the posts about “A War like no other” from Augustus and September 2011.

[3] Source image: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henri-Chapelle_American_Cemetery_and_Memorial

[4] Source image: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Henri_Chapelle-memorial.jpg

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

[6] See: elektronische versie van het woordenboek Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta

[7] “Mama, Mâ and ma” is the genitivus of “Aham” meaning “I”.
Source: elektronische versie van het woordenboek Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta

[8] Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Ruth

[9] In the German word “Vater”, the Indo-European words “va” and “tr” may be recognised. meaning in Sanskrit “wind, ocean, water, stream” and “to cross or to pass”.

[10] Source: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaddisj>

[11] Source image: http://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%A4%D0%B0%D0%B9%D0%BB:Ngv_design,_le_corbusier_%26_charlotte_perriand,_LC-4_chaise_longue,_1928.JPG

[12] Source image: http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fichier:Ronchamp_Notre_Dame_du_Haut_ext%C3%A9rieur_1.jpg

[13] Source image: <http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Ronchamp1.jpg>

[14] Source image: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Roncamp_inside.JPG

O N the Way 2

18 October 2011

Wie kan man leben?

How can one live?

YOU continue the brief summary of your life with the journey on foot from the chapel "Notre Dame du Haut" in Ronchamp, France to Dachau, Germany:

"In the end of September 1983 I visited the chapel "Notre Dame du Haut" in Ronchamp. My way would lead to Dachau where my mother died and where she was buried in 1944. My godmother had recommended me this pilgrimage to embed the death of my immediate family and the others in my life. I started this journey on foot to honour the wish of my aunt; she had asked me just after my 21st birthday to carry out the traditional Jewish remembrance of the dead for my parents, when I would be able to do so.

In 1983 I was 49 years old; my life was ready for a change. During the first part of the hike, I started to identify the wind [1] and the moon with the "He" and "His" in the Kaddish prayer [2]. From then on, I said this prayer every day for a year for my father, mother, and godfather. In the second part of the journey I also wished to perform the Catholic grave worship as is customary in South Limburg. During the 2nd of November – on All Soul's Day – I hoped to honour the grave of my mother with a visit.

My sense of luxury increased. Although the weather was bad and I was tired, I still owned a lot more than the pilgrims in the past. My backpack included a set of clean and dry clothes, my bivouac sack

was made of waterproof and breathable material and the sleeping bag was warm. My health was excellent. In short, my existence was more luxurious than in my "Jaguar-years".

Via Belfort I walked to Mulhouse in France. In his early years my father loved racing-car races. Against the wishes of my grandparents he followed the reports in the newspapers and he read books on this subject. In his boyhood he wanted to be a race car driver. As ode to the boyhood of my father, I visited the "Schlumpf Automobile Museum" in Mulhouse [3]. The museum was derived from the passion for collecting of the brothers Schlumpf, who mainly converted their capital from the wool factory to an exceptional collection of classic cars. The French State, confiscated this collection for one French franc – as "Object in the Middle". The collection of Bugatti's made a deep impression. Vanity of vanities [4], but a vanity of great beauty.



[5]

Near Freiburg I crossed the Rhine and the border with Germany. Not much further, I left behind the area where so many wars were fought. The wars in this area already began in Roman times. How could this continuation of greed, honour, anger, horror and boundless grief be prevented? Later in a book [6] of Robert Aitken – in the chapter "Not Stealing" – I read a good proposal.

First he cited Unto Tähtinen:

"There are two ways of avoiding war: one way is to satisfy everyone's desire, the other way is to content oneself with the good. The former is not possible due to the limitations of the world and therefore there remains this second alternative of contentment" [7]

He subsequently cited Mahatma Gandhi:

"In India we have many millions of people who have to be satisfied with only one meal a day. This meal consists of a chapati containing no fat and a pinch of salt. You and I have no right to anything until these millions of people are better fed and clothed. You and I ought to know better and adjust our wants, and even undergo voluntarily starvation in order that they may be nursed, fed and clothed." [8]

The German language has a beautiful expression for this attitude: *"In der Beschränkung zeigt sich der Meister"* – "In the restraint the master shows her-/himself".

I continued my trip through Schwarzwald, Germany. I visited Ulm, Germany, because the Hochschule für Gestaltung [9] – University for Design – was located there from 1953 to 1968.



[10]

This University has educated a number of designers who strove for simplicity and restraints. For example, the TC 100 tableware designed by Nick Roericht.



[11]

The study model for the continuum – designed by Ulrich Burandt in the academic year 1958–59 during the workshop of Tomas Maldonado – includes the universe in simplicity and limitation. Inside and outside exchange continuously. At the same time the form gives shelter and includes the universe in its continuum. Shelter and openness together: a reflection of my experience of the journey.



[12]

On this tour the wind and the moon were my constant companions. My introduction to the wind, I gave in the previous

post. As promised, now I will show how I have got to know the moon.

The months of the year are important on the farm . The twelve months of a year may easily be discovered with the thumb along the 12 phalanges of the four fingers.

In the open air, at night, in a dimly illuminated environment, I learned the new moon, the crescent moon, the full moon and the waning moon. On a clear night with full moon I could do almost everything, except reading outside: for reading there was just too little light. The moon also gave a beautiful image in the sky during the day.

During the "moon illusion", the full moon near the horizon is awesome. This moon illusion I have also seen on my journey.



During a clear night with new moon outside in my sleeping bag, I seemed to be fully included in the universe. The distance between the universe and me faded: I was sucked into it.

The phases of the moon – in addition to the rhythm of the sun – must have been crucial and ungraspable for people living outdoors. Probably the word Tao – literally meaning "road or life" – came from the word moon [14]. In Sanskrit one of the words for moon is "candra", where the "c" is pronounced like the word "chair" and the "A" as "America". "Candra" means in Sanskrit "moon, shining like gold, the number one/whole, pleasant or lovely phenomenon" [15]. The word is composed of "can" meaning "to delight in, to satisfy with" and "drâ" meaning "to run freely". The consistent of "dra" and "va – for wind" or "drava" means "to run, flow, stream, essence". The set of "Candra" may be understood as "the course of things, the course of the moon, the essence of the whole".

In the Zen literature the moon occurs frequently. The word for Zen is derived from "dhyâna" [16] meaning in Sanskrit "meditation, thought, far-reaching and abstract meditation". This word is composed of "dhî" meaning "wisdom, intelligence, intention, knowledge, meditation, prayer" and "yâna" [17] meaning "path, journey, going, moving and vessel". Zen Buddhism originated in China by a merger of Mahâyâna Buddhism and Taoism.

By encountering the moon on my pilgrimage, I noticed how much the Chinese word "Chan" – or Zen in Japanese – matches in meaning and sound the "can" in "candra". If this resemblance is not accidental, than Zen may also be seen as "the revolving Moon". This thought gave me comfort and confidence on the road to Dachau", you say.

The following post is about your visit to Dachau.

- [1] See post “Man Leben – on the way” from 14th October 2011.
- [2] See: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaddish>
- [3] See: <http://citedelautomobile.com/en/home>
- [4] See: Book of Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament
- [5] See: <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bugatti>
- [6] Source: Aitken, Robert, *The Mind of Clover – Essays in Zen Buddhist Ethics*. New York: North Point Press, 2000^B. Page 31
- [7] Source: Tähtinen, Unto, *Non-Violence as an Ethical Principle*. Turku, Turun Yliopisto, 1964. pag. 136.
- [8] Cited in: Tähtinen, Unto, *Non-Violence as an Ethical Principle*. Turku, Turun Yliopisto, 1964. pag. 128.
- [9] See also: http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hochschule_f%C3%BCr_Gestaltung_Ulm and the pagina in English: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ulm_School_of_Design
- [10] Source image: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ulm_School_of_Design
- [11] From the TC 100 designed by Nick Roericht. Source image: http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hochschule_f%C3%BCr_Gestaltung_Ulm
- [12] Model for the continuous study of the workshop of Tomas Maldonado. Source image: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ulm_School_of_Design
- [13] Moon illusion above the Parthenon in Athens. Source image: <http://apod.nasa.gov/apod/ap110320.html>
- [14] Source: Porter, Bill, *Road to Heaven - Encounters with Chinese Hermits*. Berkeley: Counterpoint, 1993, p. 35.
- [15] Source: elektronische versie van het woordenboek Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta

[16] Source amongst others: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zen>

[17] Remark: this word is also part of the consistent “Mahâyâna”.

O N the Way 3

21 October 2011

Geschichte, mit denen man leben muß

History, with which one must live.

YOU continue the brief report of your life with the arrival in Dachau after a pilgrimage of two months:

"In September 1983, I left the farm of my godmother in South Limburg. She had recommended me this pilgrimage in order to honour the wish of my aunt, who had asked me after my 21st birthday to carry out the traditional Jewish remembrance of the dead for my parents, when I would be able to do so. My mother died in 1944 and was buried in Dachau. During All Souls' Day on November 2, I hoped to visit the grave of my mother according to the Catholic habit in South Limburg.

On my journey by foot, I got to know the wind [1] and the moon [2] and I started to identify the wind and the moon with the "He" and "His" in the Kaddish prayer [3]. Hereby I could say this prayer every day – for a full year – for my father, mother, and Godfather.

As wanderer, but a luxurious wanderer, I arrived in Dachau at the end of October 1983; my health was still excellent and my equipment comfortably. Also with the early nightfall at the end of the afternoon, I learned to live by making a small fire in a small used tin.

A day later – on a stormy day – I visited the camp. The images and impressions of these camps are well known. Sources report that the administration in the camps at Dachau recorded the intake of

206.000 prisoners and 31,951 deaths mainly caused by malnutrition, exhaustion and diseases [4]. In comparison, on the war cemeteries in Omaha Beach in Normandy, France and in Henri Chapelle in the Ardennes, Belgium, 7000 and 8000 soldiers were buried: boundless grief.

During my visit to the camp, I noticed what my aunt could not mention and did not wish to mention. I also understood why she added to her wish so explicitly: "When you are able to do so". Later, much later, I could put my feeling into words during the visit.

*Inside and outside
Stilled and turned to stone
The Wind played Her song.*

At the fall of dusk I left the camp. Outside I sang the aria from Cantata 82 "Ich habe genug" composed by Johann Sebastian Bach:

*Schlummert ein, ihr(e) matten Augen,
Fallet sanft und selig zu!
Welt, ich bleibe nicht mehr hier,
Hab ich doch kein Teil an dir,
Das der Seele könnte taugen.
Hier muss ich das Elend bauen,
Aber dort, dort werd ich schauen
Süßen Friede, stille Ruh.*

This Cantata was written by Johann Sebastian Bach for February 2nd or "Purificatio Mariae" [5] – the Purification of Maria – 40 days after Christmas. Appropriate: I sang the purification of and for my mother, her memory be a blessing to our world and for the hereafter [6]. For me, these two worlds of Her have always been one and the same.

The next day I came back to see if my mother's grave was well taken care of. I had a round pebble with me: this pebble I put on her grave.



[7]

Then I walked along the Catholic Chapel, the Christian Church of Reconciliation and the Jewish Memorial. For me, none of these rooms invited me to go into.



[8]



[9]



[10]



[11]

In Ulm, I had seen the study model for the continuum that includes the entire universe in all its simplicity and limitation. Inside and outside change continuously. At the same time this reconciliation room gives shelter, and includes everything from the universe in security and responsiveness. My mother, her memory be a blessing for here and for there.



[12]

On November 2nd – All Souls Day – in the afternoon I visited my mother's grave. The stone was gone. I could understand this,

otherwise there might arise a mountain of stones. At her grave, I said the prayer of Kaddish.

Near the fall of darkness I moved on. My feelings during this departure I read many years later in the Zen koan: "*Each of you have Your own light. If you want to see, than it is not possible. The darkness is dark, dark. Now, what is your/Your light?*" The answer is: "*The room of the universe, the road.*" [13]

Wanderers are not welcome in Dachau. I moved on. Winter began. It took me 10 years before I visited the grave of my father in 1993. First I lived in monasteries for several years", you say.

The following post is about your monastery years.

[1] See post "Man Leben – On the Way".

[2] See post "Man Leben – On the Way 2".

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

[4] Sources give different numbers. The numbers in this post come from: http://www.dachau.nl/het_kamp/historisch/index.html and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dachau_concentration_camp

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

[6] See also: Wieseltier, Leon, *Kaddisj*. Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1999, p. 11

[7] Source image: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Dachau-015.jpg>

[8] Source image: http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:KZ_Dachau_Todesangst-Christi-Kapelle.jpg

[9] Source image: Source image: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:16JUN2005_Munich_054.jpg

[10] Source image: http://hu.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=F%C3%A1jl:2500_-_KZ_Dachau_-_Protestant_Monument.JPG&filetimestamp=20071012014216

[11] Source image: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:16JUN2005_Munich_064.jpg

[12] Model for the continuous design by Ulrich Burandt as study during the workshop of Tomas Maldonado at the Ulm School of Design. Source image: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ulm_School_of_Design

[13] Free rendering of Yunmen's light – case 86 from the Hekiganroku. See also: Aitken, Robert, *The Mind of Clover – Essays in Zen Buddhist Ethics*. New York: North Point Press, 2000⁸. pag. 62. Remark: According to the sources, the answer to this koan is: “*Storeroom/kitchenstorage, gate/gateway*”. In this post “Storeroom” is rendered as “the room of the Universe” referring to “*Deine Seele ist die ganze Welt*” or “*Your soul is the whole world*” – see also: Hesse Herman, *Siddhartha*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag: 1989 p. 10. In Sanskrit “Gate” means amongst others “going, and the locativus for the verb to go”.

C ONVENT Years

24 October 2011

Im Kloster entdeckt man Leben in vielfältiger Form

In the monastery one discovers life in various forms

YOU continue the story of your life:

"After my visit to the camps at Dachau and the grave of mother on All Souls ' Day in 1983, I moved on. My continued presence in Dachau was not appreciated: wanderers are not welcome. For one week I could sleep in the open air, but I became to noticed. Early November I returned to the North. I had a vague plan to visit the grave of my father in Auschwitz. But quickly I understood the impossibility of this plan. Winter is a very bad time of year for wandering and Germany was still divided in two. I couldn't walk through Eastern Germany to Poland.

I became ill. It started with a cold, and I got a fever. A relatively small monastery gave me a place to sleep and within four weeks I was fully recovered.

In a very short time the monasteries changed considerably. At the beginning of 1960, there were many young men who entered the monastery for study, contemplation, focus on God and His works, and for disseminating faith and His works in other parts of the world. The monasteries were still flourishing. Ten years later, no young men entered the convent and many monks had left the monastery for ordinary life with or without a partner. Again ten years later, only the older monks and the Abbot remained. In 1983 the buildings were very inward oriented.



[1]

The monastery where I recovered, was not very large. In 1983 the intrusion of emptiness was not depressing in the buildings. The last 15 years only one new brother entered the convent and the resident monks were aged 15 years. If the monastery wished to survive, than a change was needed.

I also needed a change. It was still winter and moving without purpose was not on my path. During my recovery I was getting used to the rhythm of the monastery. After my recovery I could stay until spring came. I helped with necessary maintenance and I did jobs for my meals and indwelling.

In the beginning of the spring I had a farewell meeting with the Abbot. This conversation was a new beginning. The Abbot expressed his concerns about the future of the monastery; the

convent had to a change in line with the tradition and focus on the future.

Any time, any act, each prayer and singing, every day, every year, everyone's life, the life within the monastery and the faith in the monastery were focussed on God. The world outside the monastery changed constantly over the centuries. In the past, the changes have had effects on the monastic life. In the Middle Ages, monasteries – with their enormous libraries – were centres of almost all scientific knowledge and skills in the Western world. Many monasteries acquired richness that were not in line with the tradition of the monasteries. By the end of the Middle Ages – around 1550 [2] – many monasteries were violently stripped of their richness: a number of monasteries decayed.

The last 15 years, the world outside the monastery changed very fast. This rapid change had a significant effect on the monastery, because the average age of the monks increased very rapidly. Stillness, contemplation and focus on God belonged to the monastery; on the other hand inflexibility and clinging to the past was not in line with the tradition.

The Abbot asked if I could contribute to the orientation of the monastery. My architectural background and my introduction to different religions could give good points of view. In addition to the usual tasks for a lay monk, I would dedicate myself to advice for and contributing to this orientation.

The monastery buildings were in good condition. It was excellent suited for monastery. With a declining number of permanent residents, parts of the building could also be used for activities in line with the objectives of the monastery.



[3]

The orientation to the outer world showed that outside the monastery and the Christian Church, there was a need for

reflection and contemplation. This need was often expressed in other manifestations.



[4]

This analysis of the outer world resulted in a monastery open for reflection and education of outsiders: individually and in groups. A number of monks in the convent studied religions from Asia to enrich the monastic life with the motto "Explore the new and keep the good". Also knowledge and skill was acquired for guidance of groups in religious activities and meditation. Lay monks entered the monastery for guidance of contemplation and education. Often they stayed temporarily or permanently in the monastery.

Approximately 5, years I worked and lived in the monastery accompanying groups. At the end of this period, the monastic vows oppressed me. The vows of simplicity/poverty were no problem; I had a luxurious life with a good health, sufficient simple meals and a useful contribution to the monastery and the world. The vow of chastity was slightly trickier. Since my student days there have always been women in my life. During my stay in the

monastery, there were no women in my life; the temptation was not great. The vow of obedience was the major problem: I've always been independent and my motto was: "nobody's boss, nobody's servant".

My wish to start studying Eastern religions did not go well with the request of the convent to accompany other monasteries with their changes. I remained involved in developments of future plans for other monasteries, but the implementation of these plans was carried out by others. Occasionally, I gave advice during the progress. From a resident of the monastery, I became a periodic visitor.

Around my 55th year of life, a new phase of my life began. I began with my study of Eastern Religions", you say.

The next post covers your study of Eastern religions.

[1] Example of a monastery. Source image: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benedictijnen>

[2] In England by King Henry VIII – see also: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dissolution_of_the_Monasteries; In Europa during the reformation whereby in the Netherlands the iconoclastic and the Eighty Years' War did harm the monastic orders.

[3] Source image: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestand:Trappist_praying_2007-08-20_dti.jpg

[4] Source image: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Meditating_in_Madison_Square_Park.jpg

O RIENTAL Wisdom

28 October 2011

Kann man leben in den Stand der Vollkommenheit?

Can you life in a state of perfection?

YOU continue the story of your life:

"In 1989 I left the monastery. At regular times I returned for guidance of groups and for consultation and advice on the state of affairs of the monastery and the convent. At that time I was 55 years old.

Driven by an inner need, I studied Oriental wisdom. Initially I lived everywhere and nowhere. Occasionally I returned to the monastery for obligations and I lived with various friends and acquaintances. For more stability, Amsterdam seemed a good place to live. I found a modest room in the house of friends.

Between the activities I read many books on Buddhism, Taoism [1] and Hinduism.



[2]

Eventually, I immersed myself in Mahāyāna Buddhism [3] and the Upanishads [4]. The consistency of contemplation, meditation and daily life kept me busy. How do they go together and how do they affect each other? At that time, my life seemed full of concentration and attention. Later I read a metaphor for my way of life [5]. I lived in a crowd with a mug filled with water on my head. All attention was necessary in order to steer smoothly and naturally through a crowd without wasting a drop of water.



[6]

Every action, every thought, every impression was like a drop of water that falls in the water. The waves of the impact of the drop flow to the past, to the future and to everything around us.

Nothing remains untouched.



[7]

In this study, I started reading the source texts. For a better understanding of the source texts, I began a study Sanskrit. In the beginning, I had difficulties remembering the characters of the Devanāgarī – literally meaning Divine city – alphabet [8]. The sounds of the alphabet are very logical. In the overview below the alphabet is shown. The first three lines contain the basic vowels. The following five lines show the consonants – sounding hard, hard aspirated, soft, soft aspirated, nose aspirated. The penultimate line show the half vowels. And the last line shows the hisses and the uvula sound "ha". The columns show the sounds made by the speaker from the inside out [9].



[10]

My whole life, I liked a sound order, but I loved the outliers. In the Devanāgarī alphabet the half vowels – ya, ra, la, va – and the uvula sound – ha – are the outliers. They have a special place in the alphabet and in the meaning of words.

The letter "ya" means in Sanskrit "joining, going, wind, attaining, meditation". The letter "ra" means "to go, to give/affect, to roll". The letter "la" means "of Indra". Indra is the God of the heaven and also the God of war, storm and rain. In Buddhism Indra is often called by his other name Śakra [11] that literally means "able to create". The letter "va" we have previously met; this letter means "wind, ocean, water, stream, going". The uvula sound "ha" means "water, blood, meditation, heaven, paradise, dying, wisdom, war".

These outliers resembled my life around 1990. I did not need much, because my housing was cared for by the monastery and by friends. The few things that I needed, came from guiding groups and from organizing and guiding the rebuilding of monasteries and later of houses of friends and acquaintances.

In 1993 my godmother and aunt died. In that year I also visited Auschwitz", you say.

The next post continues on your survey in Oriental wisdom.

[1] See also: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taoism>

[2] White Cloud Monastery bij Beijing. Bron afbeelding: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File: Baiyun.jpg>

[3] See also: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahayana> and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahayana>

[4] See also: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upanishads>

[5] Source: Wick, Gerry Shishin, *The Book of Equanimity – Illuminating Classic Zen Koans*. Somerville MA: Wisdom Publications, 2005 p. 136.

[6] Amitābha Buddha statue from Borobodur, Indonesia. Source image: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File: Seated_Buddha_Amitabha_statue.jpg

[7] Impact of a drop of water, a common analogy for Brahman and the Ātman. Source image: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Wassertropfen.jpg>

[8] See also: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanskriet>

[9] See also: <http://www.arsfloreat.nl/sanskriet-alfabet.html>

[10] Source image: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanskriet>

[11] See also: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C5%9Aakra_\(Buddhism\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C5%9Aakra_(Buddhism))

O RIENTAL Wisdom 2

1 November 2011

Alles gelebt was man leben kann?

Lived everything what you can live?

YOU continue with the story of your life:

"In the previous post I told how I explored Oriental wisdom. I have mentioned my preference for outliers. The meaning of the outliers "ya, ra, la, va and ha" in the Devanāgarī alphabet express my experiences at that stage of my life. In examining the meaning of "la" – meaning in Sanskrit "of Indra" – and consulting several sources, I encountered the meanings of Indra. Indra means "God of heaven" or "Svargaloka" [1]. Indra is often depicted seating on a multi-headed elephant.



[2]

Now I will explain the underlying meanings of svargaloka, because this gives clarification on the developments in my life around the death of my aunt and my godmother.

Svargaloka is composed of the words "svarga" meaning in Sanskrit amongst others: heaven, the residence of light and of the gods, heavenly bliss, Indra's heaven (where the souls of virtuous mortals go before they return in earthly bodies) and "loka" which means: free or open space, the universe, of number 7 – which we encounter later on our Odyssey. The world has three loka's: the sky/heaven, the earth and the underworld.

The word "Svarga" is composed of the parts:

- Sva: meaning "own, one's self/Self, the human soul".
- Ra: meaning "give, love, desire, motion, brightness, splendour",
- Ga: meaning "abiding in, staying" [16]

The composite of these parts, "svarga" is the residence of our/your own being in all its splendour. The Svargaloka is heaven, earth and underworld – all, everywhere and one – in all its manifestations. Here and now, it shows its splendour.

Around 1993, I studied Jalâl al-Din who is better known as Rumi. He has been given the name Rumi in the Arab world, because he lived in Konia, south of Ankara in Turkey while writing his great works. This part of the Arab world was identified with Rome from the Roman Empire [3]. In Chapter 7 we meet Rumi on our Odyssey.



[4]

In a book about the life of Rumi I read:

"Love for the dead is not lasting. Keep your love (fixed) on the Living One who increases spiritual life [5]".

At that time this way of seeing was for me one half of the mirror. I lived completely in our/Your own being in all its splendour. I was in the svarga one with the wind, the light, my parents and foreparents; the entire universe was omnipresent.

The other half of the mirror was formed by a passage from the Diamond Sutra: "*The past is ungraspable, the present is ungraspable and the future is ungraspable* [6]". The past is fixed in solidified glass; of course, our view on the past changes continuously, but a carefree life in Amsterdam with my father and mother as a five year old boy is no longer possible. Occasionally in dreams or with a particular taste – think of the madeleine biscuits in *À la recherche du temps perdue* from Marcel Proust – or with a particular smell, as a miracle the images and experiences of that lost world emerge in me. "*Only in the present I can live, nowhere else I found shelter*" [7]; sailing on the wind over the waves we experience the present: trying to grab "here and now" and it is gone. The future is ungraspable as the flower in the bud: the flower manifests itself in all its glory once and for all when circumstances permit – not earlier and not later. The flower arises from the void, flourishes in the void and passes away into the void. This elusiveness reminds me of the text that we encountered earlier in our Odyssey [8]: "*Mysterium est magnum, quod nos procul dubio transcendit*" [9] or in English: "*The mystery is great, without doubt it transcends us.*"

In that time I experienced life fully, overwhelming and transparent. Or shown by a metaphor, both these images in the mirrors – which were placed at a 90-degree angle – were a reflection of my experiences. The mirrors were empty [10].

In the past I thought that if people or things had names, they also got a place or a destination. On our Odyssey we will encounter this way of seeing a number of times.

In that time I also studied the Hua-yan school of Buddhism [11] and read texts about Indra's net [12], that is a metaphor for the emptiness of all things and living beings. This void has two sides: it is "emptiness from" and "emptiness to" [13]. Both these sides are similar to "freedom from" and "freedom to" as explained in "*Escape from Freedom* [14]" from Erich Fromm.



[15]

With these insights I was freed from the latent feelings of guilt about my existence, mainly because my immediate family – with the exception of my aunt – had not survived the other government in Germany. Until then, there was always the question: "Why am I still alive and how did I deserve it?". At the same time, I evaded the question for the meaning and reason of this dark, dark, dark history. The religion of my parents offered me no interpretation: I could not say with conviction the verses of Kaddish including

"*Thou art the glory*" and "*The world is created according to His will*". For saying these texts I had to learn to identify "You/His" with "the wind" and "the water".

This insight helped me organizing my aunt's funeral. Her funeral was attended by many old acquaintances – as far as still alive. Also some distant relatives were present. I was the only immediate family. For her I said a whole year the daily prayers with conviction according to the Jewish remembrance of the dead. May her memory be a blessing for here and for there.

I also attended the funeral and mourning services for my godmother. May her memory be a blessing for here and for there. It was a beautiful Catholic funeral in the tradition of South Limburg.

After these funerals I went to Auschwitz", you say.

"I can follow your view of Oriental wisdom, but for the time being I let my mind in the middle if I can agree with this view", I say.

"Buddhism is the Middle Way; consent with my view of Oriental wisdom is not asked for. I look forward to what the continuation of our Odyssey will bring. It will be a homecoming for me", you say.

The next post is about your visit to Auschwitz.

[1] Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indra>

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

[3] Source: Lewis, Franklin D., *Rumi, Past and Present, East and West*. Oxford: Oneworld, 2003 p. 9

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

[5] Free rendering from: Iqbal, Afzal, *The Life and Works of Jalaluddin – Rumi*. London: The Octagon Press, 1983 p. 239.

[6] Free rendering from: Red Pine (Bill Porter), *The Diamond Sutra*. New York: Counterpoint, 2001 pag.308

[7] Free rendering from the first two lines from the poem “Woninglooze - Homeless” from Jan Jacob Slauerhoff. See for the text of the poem: <http://4umi.com/slauerhoff/woninglooze>

[8] See the posts: “Three – Object in the middle – The Word” from 11 Juni 2011; and “A day without yesterday – a day without tomorrow?” from 3 Juli 2011.

[9] Source: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/special_features/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_20030417_ecclesia_eucharistia_it.html: Ionnis Pauli PP. II Summi Pontificis, *Litterae Encyclicae Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, Rome, 2003

[10] See: Wetering, Janwillem van de, *De Lege Spiegel*. Amsterdam: De Driehoek p. 118 - 120

[11] Sources: Cleary, Thomas, *The Flower Ornament Scripture, a Translation of the Avatamsaka Sutra*. Boston: Shambhala, 1993; Cleary, Thomas, *Entry Into the Inconceivable: An Introduction to Hua-yen Buddhism*. Boston: Shambhala, 2002 and : Cook, Francis, *Hua-Yen Buddhism: The Jewel Net of Indra*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1977

[12] See also the posts “One – Pantheism – Indra’s net” from 8 April 2011 and “One – “Powers of Ten”” from 10 April 2011

[13] See for “empty to”: Thich Nhat Hahn, *The Heart of Understanding*. Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1988 p. 8, 9

[14] See page 91 in the Dutch version of “Fromm, Erich, *Escape from Freedom*. New York: Rinehart & Co, 1941” published by Bijleveld in Utrecht, 1973.

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

[16] Source: elektronik version of the dictionary Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta.

DUST of a Journey

4 November 2011

Wovon man nicht leben kann, darüber muss man schweigen [1]

Whereof one cannot live, thereof one must be silent.

YOU continue with the story of your life:

"Around 1990 after studying Oriental wisdom, I more or less lost my guilt and shame about my existence. Within a short period, my aunt and my godmother died in 1993. Poland was easily accessible at that time. It was time to go to Auschwitz.

The name Auschwitz is derived from the Polish city name Oświęcim near the camp. Many Jews who lived in Oświęcim before the war, called this place Oshpitzin – the Yiddish word for guest – because this place was known for its hospitality before World War II [2].

In preparation for this visit, I studied Shoah [3] made by Claude Lanzmann. On seeing this documentary I noticed how extensive and detailed the logistics must have been for the transportation and the accommodation of the many millions of people under difficult circumstances in time of war. These were targeted and far-reaching enterprises. Many people who were interviewed between 1974 and 1985, had repressed or altered their memories of the scale and scope – and their share in it. After questioning, these people remembered the scope of the transports and the purpose of the camps, often with embarrassment and shame. Their share was presented as fulfilling their orders as a minuscule wheel in a big scheme.



[4]

I also looked at the statistics. Dachau was a concentration camp or a work camp where the prisoners were brought together to work. Most deaths in these camps were caused by heavy work, malnutrition, disease and abuse. Auschwitz II – also known as Auschwitz-Birkenau – was a death camp. Accurate data are no longer available, because these data have been destroyed near the end of the war. Most estimates indicate that approximately 1.3 million people are deported to the camps near Auschwitz. About 1.1 million people died. In Auschwitz II, more than 900,000 people have died according to estimates, of which 57 000 Dutch people – probably my father was one of them. After a journey of many days by train, a selection was made at arrival near the camp. Only the strongest people were selected for labour, the others went to their death [5]. The number of deceased Jews in Auschwitz II is similar

to all the inhabitants of Amsterdam including several nearby municipalities.



Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-R09910
Foto: o.Ang. / o.Dat.

[6]

About three quarters of the Dutch Jews have not survived the war. The Jews have been easily selected by the accurate population registers. The deportees have been written out the population registers as "emigrated". In total, approximately 110,000 Jews are deported from the Netherlands, of which about 5,000 have survived the concentration camps. The number of deceased Dutch Jews is similar to the full population of a city like Delft – including all the elderly and new-borns.

During the Second World War, the other government caused death to between 5,4 and 6 million Jews in Europe [7]. This is more than 700 times the number of soldiers buried on the war cemeteries in Omaha Beach near Colleville-sur-Mer in Normandy or Henri Chapelle in Belgium: boundless suffering.

The train journey to Oświęcim lasted two days. In Oświęcim I stepped into the footsteps of my aunt. I have never spoken about my visit to the camps at Auschwitz: I cannot do that and I do not want to. A week later I have returned to Amsterdam; empty inside and empty outside.

Several months later I have written three short poems:

*Dust of a journey
Cannot be shaken away
Homely ashes*

*Volatile lifes
Included in our marrow
Infinite time*

*All and all the world
Shapes in time's rivers
Animated breath*

In the camps near Dachau, I could not find reconciliation. The rooms for reconciliation in Dachau did not invite me to go into. On my journey to Dachau I had seen the study model for the continuum in Ulm. This study model included the entire universe in all Her simplicity and limitation. This room for reconciliation gave shelter and it included everything from the universe breathable in security and responsiveness.

After my visit to Auschwitz I looked in each mirror for hope and consolation. In the mirrors I saw my sad, angry, guilty, acquiesced eyes. And also always the questions: "Who are you" and "How are you related to it and how are you separated from it". On our Odyssey, we pose the same questions. In standing water I saw reflections of the world. With twigs and stones I have disrupted these images for a short time, but the images came back – bleak, cold, inhospitable.



[8]

The cracked glass of the Auschwitz Monument in Amsterdam reflects a part of my feelings after the visit to Auschwitz; personally, I would not crack the mirrors.



[9]

In the course of history, Auschwitz is not completely singled out. If in a hunter/gatherers society, a man wants to replace another man in the relation with a woman, than this struggle may cause the death of one of the men. Groups of people have fought with each other on the ownership of land: this often resulted in a casualty rate of 10% [10]. Since ancient times, the besiege and sacking of cities included customary rituals and rights: looting, killing men and leading women and children away as slaves were common practice. Since classical antiquity, warfare with professional armies is endemically anchored in our societies. With the arising of our current States, conscription is also introduced. Through registration, the States knew exactly where young men and horses/vehicles were located for deployment during warfare. We know the consequences: on the way to Moscow, Napoleon caused more victims amongst his soldiers than during the horrors on the retreat [11]. The casualties among the soldiers during the German/French wars run into the millions. Battlefields have always been a

Armageddon, but the extent and duration of the fighting increased vastly. In addition, the number of civilian victims increased dramatically and the massacres regularly include elements of genocide – think of systematic massacres in Africa and in Cambodia.

But Auschwitz II and the other death camps – created by the other government in Germany – are exceptional. In 1942 and 1943 when the Germany's conquests slowed down and the war effort were directly felt by the Germans, a scapegoat was easily found and stigmatised. It seems as though the other regime – that already had for 10 years a leader as a "person in the middle" for restoration of the disturbed trust – thought that the sacrifice of a scapegoat may reduce the problems. This sacrifice has been exceptional in size, effort and duration: *"The sacrifice was performed with a scientific-systematic, technical nearly impeccable style. Without hurry, well designed, registered and regulated. The direct perpetrators: not rarely brutes and illiterates, but often well-educated and intellectuals with a ineradicable love for literature, arts and music; most of them have been caring house fathers"* [12].

In the areas controlled by the other government, everything and everyone had a smaller – e.g. as witness – or larger share in execution of this sacrifice. The subsequent efforts to hide this share speak for themselves [13]. In Claude Lanzmann's Shoah [14] we see a reflection of these efforts to shielding. If I look in the mirror after my visit to Auschwitz, I still see a fraction of this effort for shielding – like my aunt I am not able to speak about this image in the mirror: I cannot and I do not want to.

Many years later, I read that a group of American Buddhists visited Auschwitz for consolation of everything and everyone [15]. From the long lists, they have recited the names of the deceased including the year of birth year and death year. Herewith the size

became visible: the age of the deceased varies between a few months and more than 80 years.

My trip to Auschwitz took one breath, two weeks, more than 4500 years, from the beginning of the universe to the present, and from the day before yesterday to the day after tomorrow.

My everyday life in Amsterdam took its course again.

More about this in the following post", you say.

The following post continues on your life after the journey to Auschwitz.

[1] Free rendering of the last sentence from: Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Amsterdam: Athenaeum-Polak & Van Gennip, 1976 p. 152

[2] Source: Glassman, Bernie, *Bearing Witness - A Zen Master's Lessons in Making Peace*. New York: Bell Tower, 1998, p. 4

[3] See also: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shoah_\(film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shoah_(film))

[4] Source image: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestand: Birkenau_gate.JPG

[5] Sources: [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auschwitz_\(concentratiekamp\)](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auschwitz_(concentratiekamp)); http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auschwitz_concentration_camp and <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holocaust>

[6] Source image: [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auschwitz_\(concentratiekamp\)](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auschwitz_(concentratiekamp))

[7] Source: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holocaust>

[8] Source image: [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiegel_\(optica\)](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiegel_(optica))

[9] Source image: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestand:Auschwitz_monument_amsterdam.JPG

[10] Source: Keegan, John, *A History of Warfare*. London: Pimlico – Random House, 2004

[11] Source: Zamoyski, Adam, *1812 – Napoleons fatale Veldtocht naar Moskou*. Utrecht: Uitgeverij Balans, 2005

[12] Source: First paragraph of the Introduction from - Presser, Jacques, *Ondergang. De vervolging en verdelging van het Nederlandse Jodendom 1940-1945* (twee delen), Den Haag: Staatsdrukkerij, 1985 – digitale version.

[13] Amongst others the publishing of “Presser, Jacques, *Ondergang. De vervolging en verdelging van het Nederlandse Jodendom 1940-1945* (twee delen)” in 1965 caused discussion on the participation of the Netherlands in this “Sacrifice”.

[14] See also: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shoah_\(film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shoah_(film))

[15] See “Part I” of: Glassman, Bernie, *Bearing Witness - A Zen Master's Lessons in Making Peace*. New York: Bell Tower, 1998

M ODULAR Building

7 November 2011

Seelenspiegel - das Spiel daß man Leben nennt

Soul mirror – the game one calls life

YOU continues the story of your life:

"In the beginning of autumn in 1993, I returned from my trip to Auschwitz. At the funeral of my aunt and godmother, my best study friend asked for a business meeting. We agreed to meet each other in the autumn holidays, after my trip to Auschwitz.

Before the autumn holidays, I started my everyday life again. In the beginning it was not easy. I already told that after my visit to Auschwitz I saw the reflections of the world in the mirrors and in the reflection of water. The image was sad, angry, guilty and acquiesced. With twigs and stones I disrupted the surface for a short time, but the images came back – bleak, cold, inhospitable. At the same time, the mirror and the water were empty inside and outside. After several days in Amsterdam, I wondered how the mirror and the water would see me [1]. All of a sudden the image in the mirror and I were a manifestation of life reciprocal interconnected in all Her glory. The universe is the medicine [2].



[3]

After my return, life had three surprises before we started our Odyssey.

The first surprise was the proposal of my best study friend to start a design office. With my study friend, I always kept in touch. When I returned to South Limburg, our contact was rather intensive. With his architectural office, he had several important projects in Limburg. We also developed ideas for the continuation of the farm of my godparents. Then the farm served for him as rest place for several hours, a meal or an overnight stay. During 1993, he came to the conclusion that in the future his office was too small to survive independently and too big to let it run its course. The merger with another office was almost finished.

My friend had the idea to introduce a modular industrial way of building in the last phase of his working life. He needed knowledge

of building materials and construction of utility building; in these areas, an industrial way of building was already applied. For this knowledge and contacts he would like to have me as a partner. Another study friend was asked for knowledge of housing in an urban environment.



[4]

He himself would like to focus on the modular design of luxury residential houses, to obtain sufficient income.



[5]

We started the new office. After a short starting-up phase, we prospered. Our Audi A8 years arrived. I did not need the exposure of this car – I always went by bike or by tram to the office, but the construction world expected the visibility of success. The office owned one car for visits and if necessary, we hired a second car.



[6]

From the revenue, I bought a small apartment in Amsterdam. My friends where I used to live until that moment, preferred to move to a smaller house. In this small apartment I still live.

The office took a lot of my time and energy. In order to have sufficient time for study and contemplation, I followed the "Sabbath", well I spent Saturday and Sunday morning on study and contemplation. In the vacations I visited the monastery for longer periods of contemplation. At that time, the convent only consisted of old monks and an abbot. They transformed the convent in a foundation with religious objectives in order to prepare the convent for another form in the future. In 2002, the second surprise occurred in my life. The following post is about this second surprise", you say.

The next post is about the beginning of your retirement.

[1] See also case 52 in: Wick, Gerry Shishin, *The Book of Equanimity – Illuminating Classic Zen Koans*. Somerville MA: Wisdom Publications, 2005, p. 161

[2] See post: Man Leben – Back to Limburg – 10 Oktober 2011, including the sentence: “*Illness and medicine help each other. The medicine is the universe. Who are you?*” This sentence is a free rendering of case 87 from the Hekiganroku. see also: Yamada Kōun Roshi, *Hekiganroku, Die Niederschrift vom blauen Fels – Band 2*. München: Kösel-Verlag, 2002 p. 321

[3] Source image: [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiegel_\(optica\)](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiegel_(optica))

[4] The design office is fictive. Example of a modular building in an urban environment. Source image: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Stoke_newington_raines_court_1.jpg

[5] The design office is fictive. Example of a modular building of a luxurious house. Source image: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huf_Haus

[6] Source image: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestand:A8_white.jpg

L O V E

11 November 2011

Liebe muß man leben, sie wächst und sie kann auch wieder vergehen

Love one must live, she grows and she may also perish again

YOU continue the story of your life:

"After my journey to Auschwitz in the beginning of the autumn of 1993, there are three surprises in my life. The first surprise is working in a design office to introduce a modular industrial way of building. This work is unexpectedly successful.

The second surprise was completely unexpected. I have previously told that I have suddenly fallen in love at the age of ten on a girl in the village in South Limburg. It seemed that lightning struck, so fierce and unexpected; I only saw a white glow. In grammar school I have fallen in love several times. Nobody has ever known about this love. After my studies I met my wife through my work on the architectural office. The first time, I saw her in a white charming glow. We had a happy time until our roads slowly split. The divorce was not easy; I should have shown more wisdom and compassion. At the end of our marriage until the start of my trip to Auschwitz, there had always been women in my life, but always at a certain distance.

After Auschwitz, love has adopted the form of compassion and sympathy in my life. These feelings are expressed in the poem "Bani Adam" or "Opening of all Gates", which is composed about 700 years ago by Abū Muşliḥ al-Dīn Muḥammad bin Abdallāh Shīrāzī-- better known by his writers name Sa'dī (or Saadi):

"The children of Adam are limbs of one body

Having been created of one essence.

When the calamity of time afflicts one limb

The other limbs cannot remain at rest.

If you have no sympathy for the troubles of others

You are not worthy to be called by the name of "Man" [1]

This poem is addressed to me personally; I wear the name Man.



[2]

Not long ago, I read that an old zen master once said: *"If there would be no suffering and no sentient people, than there would be*

no finger, no eye, no ear, no hand. Everywhere and One would be empty and deep, deep. There would be no loss and no gain" [3].

These sentences also express my form of love at that time. Buddhism has the word "Karuṇa" which means in Sanskrit compassion. The word Karuṇa is associated with wisdom [4].

In the summer of 2003 I turned my head and I saw her face full of furrows of life, boundless eyes, wrinkled hands. As companions we have admired each wrinkle and scar of our life. Later I have written the following short poem:

Your eyes boundless

Together in eternity

Tender little death

Two years later we met Her big death. The following message more about the third surprise – Simplicity – in my life", you say.

The following post is about the third surprise in your life.

[1] See amongst others: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Love> and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saadi_\(poet\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saadi_(poet))

[2] The tomb of Sa'dī in Shiraz, Iran. Source image: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saadi_\(poet\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saadi_(poet))

[3] Source: Wick, Gerry Shishin, *The Book of Equanimity – Illuminating Classic Zen Koans*. Somerville MA: Wisdom Publications, 2005 p. 170

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

SIMPLICITY

14 November 2011

Nun weiß man, leben ist einfach

Now one knows, life is easy

NEXT to this Odyssey, I have known three big surprises in the last part of my life. The first surprise is working in a design office to introduce a modular industrial way of building.

The second surprise is an unexpected love with my female companion for two years. Turning my head, we came into each other's lives, boundless deep. Then we went along, familiar.

In the beginning of my study Sanskrit, I encountered the “dual” – or dualis [1] in Latin – within the conjugations. First I thought it is a remnant of an ancient manner of counting: one, two and many. After I had translated several times the dual wrongly as plural – especially in body parts of people –, it became obvious that the dual may express a coherence of two parts.

The two years with my female companion were also dual – showing at once as a singular and a unity. In line with the old zen master from the previous message: *"If there would be no sentient people, than there would be no hand without another hand, no eye without another eye to see, no leg without another leg to walk, nor an ear without another ear to hear. Everything would be empty and deep, deep. There would be no loss and no gain."* [2] Until this unexpected love, I have seen the dual as a separation in my life. Now I see it also as a unity and a simplicity. One eye shapes the other eye, one leg shapes the other leg, one hand shapes the other

hand, man and woman shape each other in unity and simplicity – not in singular and not in plural. Her big death left me unexpectedly empty as the moon [3].

I once read, that people wish to leave our life with birth, constant change and death [4]; they want to exist in an everlasting heaven or in a state of constant bliss [5]. The fate of people states that we may sit between changing fires and ashes. I have grieved over the loss of my beloved companion.



[6]

The third surprise is the simplicity and solitude within interconnectedness, which is followed after Her big death. This death is not only a rupture or a fracture. It is also a continuum of change; we are returned in the flow of changing fires and ashes.

And the ashes rise in the tree trunks to the beginning of buttons
[7]:

*Buds on these trees.
If the blossom bursts open
than I know no doubt*



[8]

With the third surprise of simplicity and solitude, I started our
Odyssey and I continue her", you say.

"At the stages One, Two and Three on our Odyssey, I got to know
you. Your life is richer than I have ever imagined. May I ask you a

few questions before I introduce myself with a brief description of my life?", I ask.

"That is fine", you say.

The following post will start with the questions about your life.

[1] See also: http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dualis_en [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dual_\(grammatical_number\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dual_(grammatical_number))

[2] Free and adapted rendering of: Wick, Gerry Shishin, *The Book of Equanimity – Illuminating Classic Zen Koans*. Somerville MA: Wisdom Publications, 2005 p. 170

[3] The words "widower" and "widow" are derived from the Indo – European word "widhewo" or in Sanskrit "vidhu". Source: Ayto, John. *Word Origins – the hidden Histories of English Words from A to Z*. London: A & C Black, 2005 p. 547. In Sanskrit the word "vidhu" means: "alone, solitaire and moon".

[4] E.g.: the Aria: "Ich freue mich auf meinen Tod" in Cantate 82 by Johann Sebastian Bach.

[5] See also the sentences on zen master Tozan in: Wick, Gerry Shishin, *The Book of Equanimity – Illuminating Classic Zen Koans*. Somerville MA: Wisdom Publications, 2005 p. 176

[6] Source image: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vuur>

[7] See also the post: "One – Blossom" from 2nd April 2011.

[8] Source image: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Double-flowered_Cherry_Blossoms.jpg

I INTERVIEW

18 November 2011

IN the previous posts you have given a brief description of your life. I may ask some questions about this description before I introduce myself.

"Your life is deeper than I have ever imagined. In your perception your life already starts more than 4000 years ago. In 1933 your parents moved from Frankfurt am Main to Amsterdam to start a new life in a foreign country with a foreign language and culture. I assume that at home you spoke German in Amsterdam", I say.

"That is in partly correct. My parents continued speaking German, but I am raised bilingual. This is extraordinary, because when my parents spoke Dutch, they had a very German accent. In that time I felt ashamed for this accent, and now I feel ashamed for that shame", you say.

"In your description the farewell from your parents has appeared relative easy in 1942", I say.

"In that time I did not have the words and the knowledge to express my feelings. I have experienced this farewell as an adventure or a kind of natural and exciting change. Now I can see clearly that my parents and my aunt have presented this farewell to me as a transitional rite. My mother said that I would stay away a long time. She said: "From now on you are no longer a boy but a real Man, you are now a real Herr Mann". She has predicted that it will be a very dark time, but that I need to trust that at last everything will be fine. I stayed one night at my aunt's house. After

a journey of a couple of weeks, I came to live in South Limburg", you say.

"Your change of name, how did it happen?", I ask.

"I don't know all the details and I cannot tell the details, because there are people involved who might still be alive. The change of my name happened rather easy. A boy moves from the population register – under his original name with a personal license including an old photo – from one city to another city. A few weeks later the same boy – under a new name with a new personal license including a recent photo – moves from the second city to a third city. The old name is left behind in the second city. Later the old name is probably registered with "whereabouts unknown". I moved in this manner several times within a few weeks in order to cover the moves", you say.

"What did your parents do to find you later. How may your parent show that they are your real parents?", I ask.

"My new name is closely related to the names that I have received from my parents and family. My parents gave me my first name "Levi", named after the third son of Jacob and Leah in the book of Genesis. From the twelve sons of Jacob and Leah, the 12 tribes of Israel originated. Levi means: "He will connect" [1]. I have done this my entire life. Looking back, I see with shame that I have often been arrogant", you say.

"I don't think you are arrogant", I say.

"Arrogance has many faces. Later I read that scholars think that the name Levi is a loanword meaning "priest" or that the name refers to people who are connected to the Ark of the Covenant [1]. When moving in the desert, the descendants of Levi bore the Ark of the Covenant. The first high priest is also a descendant of Levi. Some scholars think that Levi refers to a tribe that is not of

Jewish origin, but consisted of immigrants who merged with the Jews [1]. The descendants of Levi were the only tribe that had no territory in Canaan. Moses and his brother Aaron, Samuel, Ezekiel, Ezra, John the Baptist, Matthew and Marcus are descendants of Levi [2]. According to Chapter 49 verse 7 of Genesis from the Old Testament, the children of Levi will be spread throughout the Earth. In the testament of Levi [3] – an apocryphal writing that is connected with the Bible – the priests who are descendants of the first high priest Aaron (and also from Levi), will be accused of pride. This pride will cause the Apocalypse or the end of times. My whole life I have done my best to avoid arrogance, but many times I have failed. Pride is also the main cause of the collapse of my family. Although my grandfather and I are no people of violence, the prediction for the fate of the descendants of Levi also has become our destiny. Apart from violence, the name Levi resembles the way of my life rather well. My new surname is derived from the first name that my parents have given to me. My new first name is closely connected with my family name. Peter Johnson was formerly often named "Johnson's Peter – or son of John, Peter". Probably my parents have thought that this reversal would later be successful to show that I am their legitimate son", you say.

"Sometimes a human in a dark time must make difficult choices, if one does not wish to leave the choices to others. I respect your reservation for showing the choices of your family and foster family in South Limburg. May I ask why you moved to Holland with your aunt after your happy and carefree time in South Limburg?", I say.

"That is obvious. My aunt is the younger sister of my mother. They resembled each other, also in their way of doing. For me she was very familiar. We started again in Holland. That was not easy as strangers in a country during the redevelopment after the war.

My aunt had no choice; after the war she was obliged to my parents to take care for me. I missed my life in South Limburg, but nearly every holiday I stayed with my godparents", you say.

"Let's continue later with the interview if I may", I say.

"That is good", you say.

The following message continues with further questions about your life.

[1] See also: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Levi>

[2] See also: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Levite>

[3] See also: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Testament_of_Levi. The Testament of Levi is is part of the Testament of the Patriarchs.

I INTERVIEW 2

21 November 2011

THE previous post includes the first part of the interview about the description of your life. Now I continue with some questions about your move from South Limburg to Rotterdam.

"You started to living with your aunt in the vicinity of Rotterdam at the age of 12 and you went to grammar school. How did you experience this change?", I ask

"In South Limburg I have probably had the best years in my life. I felt fully at home, although I was an outlier. First I could not understand the local language and customs, but after a year everything was fine and I could speak the dialect fluently.

In Rotterdam everything was again completely strange. I lived in a Dutch and Christian environment with an accent from Limburg, Catholic habits and a Jewish background: all exceptional. The bad word for Catholic is "paap"; this word means in the Sanskrit "wrong, bad, guilty" [1]. The first years near Rotterdam I have had difficulties to adapt myself. Luckily I was accepted at school among classmates.

My aunt also has had many difficulties: she had to finish a former life in a difficult environment; the possessions, the taxes and finances deserved attention. Also a new life had to be started. She was lucky that she could get a good post in a trading company due to a family relative. Later I have thought that she might have emigrated to America if I did not exist; She has never told me this", you say.



[2]

"You said that the small capital that your grandfather has deposited in Switzerland around 1924, was very helpful", I say.

"That I understood later on, when I was 21 years old. Before my aunt came to South Limburg, she had visited the bank in Switzerland where my grandfather has opened the account in 1924. This account remained outside the scope of others – including the authorities in Germany and the Netherlands. This is a small part of my arrogance: in that time for me very understandable. This small capital covered my study and a part of the capital for the homes of our family. Later, when our family had fallen apart, I also opened similar account from the sale of our family home for my children in future difficult times", you say.



[3]

"In that time it was money out of the book for the Governments", I say.

"That is true. It was a different time: our family did not regard the authorities of the Government as reliable. It was wise to have some savings outside the scope. Later, when I put faith in the wind and the Moon during my journey to Dachau, I began to see the vanity of capital. I saw the full meaning of the second commandment: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me". I began to understand that money is a metaphor for confidence. I put my faith in All en One – volatile as the wind and moving as water; from then on my way is lit by the Moon. In this world money is sometimes a useful medium of exchange, but a burden on the eternal way", you say.

The next post include several questions about love.

[1] Source: electronic version of the dictionary Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta.

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

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

I INTERVIEW 3

27 November 2011

THE previous interview is about your move from South Limburg to Rotterdam. This interview includes several questions about love.

"In the description of your life, you mention that there have always been women in your life. Your mother, your godmother and your aunt have a clear role as caregivers and educators. My place as companion during our Odyssey does not raise questions for me. I find it striking that from your 10th year until recently, there have been almost always loves and lovers in your life. I started around my 18th year with a vague love. From my 19th until my 20th year, I have known my love of my life – the man in my life. Then I have had feelings of companionship with men and men were in love with me, but I have never had real loves and lovers in my life again: I was never open to love after the love of my life. In the description of my life I will give more details. How did you deal with these changing loves?", I ask.

"If I had to choose, than I would have preferred to remain with my first love during my entire life; the love that I've felt as an intense glow on my 10th year.



[1]

With her I would like to marry on my 18th and grow old. This was not possible for several reasons: I moved to Holland and I was not really at home in Limburg. And later – when I was able to have contact with her – her life had taken another turn by an engagement with a nice and caring man. They still have a happy marriage, have many children and grandchildren and become old and happy. I have often met her: she has never been aware of this dazzling love in my young years. Now, when I look back, I see that my love has always been directed at one woman: one woman in different manifestations. Of course all loves have been different, but there was always one constant, the constant of intensity and intimacy in diversion. The feelings of intensity and intimacy for all my beloved did change in the course of the time, but it never disappeared. Maybe you and I have one point in common here; the

love of your life – the man in your life – is one man of all men. My loved ones is one woman in different forms", you say.

"I will reconsider this resemblance. How did you experience the finiteness of the separate loves", I ask.

"The women in my life have always treated me well. I have also tried to treat them well. With my wife I was not successful; I am still regretful and shameful about this inability: I should have known better. Also two separate relationships with German loves ended resolute and abrupt; they probably had in mind: finished is finished – no more fuzz. If the ways between my loves and I began to separate, than I always left the decision of the separation to my beloved. I think I have unconsciously felt that the ending of a relationship is easier for the loved one who starts the separation. In my life I'm probably better equipped for painful separations. When possible, I keep in touch with my former loved ones. Sometimes only through letters and Christmas cards, with others I have stayed or we travelled together", you say.

"I think the separation with your wife seems more of a separation of the way of life than a separation between two lovers", I say.

"You may be right. In the area of intimacy and love we drifted apart due to all kinds of reasons and circumstances. Then the time of our free [2] marriage started. This other way of our marriage has increased the difference between us: my wife flourished and she wished to start her own life with her new lover. This last development I have noticed too late. Too long I tried to maintain a family house. The sale of our house and the separation of our possessions – including the small capital for our children – marked the end of an era: a goodbye to a reality that had already changed a long time ago into an unsustainable illusion. With the settlement of our marriage and possessions, I operated fare too one-sided and

rigorously. I made nobody happy; my wife and children are completely estranged from me", you say.

"The end of the love of my life was impossible for me and it was a painful process. In the description of my life I will give more details. I find your poem about the "petite mort" in the post "Love" moving. In the love of my live I also experienced the all-encompassiveness of the small death.



How did your life continue after the great death of your beloved companion?", I ask.

"Her family and friends have seen me partly as an intruder. I can understand this, because in addition to a small apartment in Amsterdam, many books and a state pension – for me a great possession – I have no other possessions. She had significant more possessions. The family and friends insisted to arrange the funeral and the further settlement. I kept in the background. From the inheritance, I have received several books. In a recent book, she has underlined a passage on love: "The biggest mystery are you yourself". After her death I moved on with the feeling that I was ripped in half – invisible filmy in half – straight through the heart. Everything was cold, endless and painful. The third surprise of simplicity gave me a new balance", you say.

In the next post I will continue with several questions about your simplicity.

[1] Source image: <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestand:Haloljsselmeer2.jpg>

[2] The verb root "Vraj" means in Sanskrit "go, walk". Source: Egenes, Thomas, *Introduction to Sanskrit - Part Two*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2005 p. 395. According to the electronic version of the dictionary Monier-Williams – MWDDS V1.5 Beta, "Vraj" also has the meaning "to go to (a woman)" and "have sexual intercourse with".

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

I INTERVIEW 4

5 December 2011

THE previous interview was about love in your life. In this post I continue with some questions about the last surprise in your life.

"In the last part of your life you are involved in Oriental wisdom. In the description of your life you refer indirectly to a form of enlightenment. Aren't you enlightened?", I ask.

"Everything is enlightened. Nothing, not even the tiniest particle is excluded. Everything in all its natural forms are perfectly enlightened", you say.

"Also all greed, all crimes, all murders, all illusions, all nonsense and vanity?", I ask.

"Enlightenment is as natural as inhaling and exhaling whereby inhaling and exhaling are manifestations of enlightenment. We have experienced a glimpse of the complete enlightenment on our Odyssey when we have arrived on the peninsula at the end of the afternoon at the stage "Two - night at the beginning of the spring" [1] after a long day walking. The following morning at six o'clock we have seen the sunrise in the East at the beginning of spring. That afternoon we have washed ourselves in the water at the peninsula, we dried ourselves and put on clean clothes and then we have gathered wood for a small fire in an old tin. This is free rendering of the summary of the Diamond Sutra that directly reflects enlightenment [2]. The real summary is "evam" [3] - the first word of this sutra in Sanskrit - or in English "thus".

Every action, every word and every breath is complete enlightenment. The photo of the sunflowers in the header of this weblog "Who are you" is quite appropriate. Every sunflower seed on this picture includes the entire universe perfectly and completely", you say.

"Where do arise all crimes, all murders, all delusions, all greed, all nonsense and vanity?", I ask.

"In stage One in the post on pantheism, we have encountered "Indra's net" [4] as metaphor for the entire universe. Indra's net [5] is in the Hua-yan school of Buddhism [6] a metaphor for everything, for enlightenment and also for illusions and delusions. If a glass pearl in the net represents an illusion or a delusion, this illusion or delusion is reflected by all other glass pearls in the net. If a glass pearl is enlightenment, the enlightenment is reflected in all other pearls. Or if we translate this metaphor to our daily lives, if greed and crime are in our lives, than this affects everything and everyone; and if a person or thing is enlightened, than this enlightenment reflects on everything and everyone in the universe. Or practical, if we stick to possession, or sin against the ten commandments, than these actions affect the entire universe; and if we carefully share possession and perform appropriate action and non-action, than this is reflected in everything and everyone. Hence the Buddhist encouragement – work hard and show compassion with everything and everyone; exclude nothing and nobody", you say.



[7]

"I can follow the reasoning. I will reconsider this metaphor. On our Odyssey we shall encounter sufficient challenges. Many books on Buddhism describe the experience of enlightenment. Have you personally experienced enlightenment?", I ask.

"You mean the experience to be included in everything and everyone in all its manifestations? I don't know how, but if I look back than this has always been my basic attitude, also when I was blinded by love, anger or sadness. I can describe it clearer since I read in a book that: *"For an enlightened mind there is no difference between the finger pointing at the Moon and the Moon. In the same way there is no difference between the waves and the ocean"* [8]. Before, I have often mentioned as example in meditation meetings that the finger pointing to the moon may not be confused with the moon. After I read this passage, it is suddenly clear that the manifestations "the finger", "the Moon" and "the thoughts about

these" are mutual perfectly connected. Everything and everyone are natural manifestations of this", you say.

"For me, your description of "the fate of humans determines that we may sit between changing fires and ashes" and "the blossom growing from dust to dust" is pretty distressing and painful. Maybe the description of my life will clarify this beauty and distress. Do you try to live as a Buddha or as a Bodhisattva as described in the Avatamsaka sutra [9]", I ask.



"I am not a Saint. I look forward to the description of your life and of Narrator and then the continuation of our Odyssey", you say.

"May I combine the posts about your life with an introduction and a conclusion into a biography?", I ask.

"If it will be published after my death", you say.

In the following post I tell about the beginning of my life. [11]

[1] See post: "Two - Night at the beginning of spring" of 25 April 2011

[2] See: Red Pine (Bill Porter), *The Diamond Sutra*. New York: Counterpoint, 2001 p. 39.

[3] See: Lopez - *The Heart Sutra explained*. 1990 p 34; "*The commentary Vajrapâni 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 post: "One - Pantheism - Indra's net" of 8 April 2011

[5] See also: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indra's_net

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

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

[8] Source: Holstein, Alexander. *Pointing at the Moon*. Rutland: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1993, p. 49

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

[10] Source image: <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bodhi>

[11] In the near future to be published in *Carla Drift - A Biography*.

Final Word

MAN Leben and I have continued the quest for "Who are you". Together, we have visited the stages "Facts and Logic", "Intensities and Associations" and "Emptiness". Without Man Leben I would not be able to visit the stage "Emptiness"; I needed his full support.

Visiting the stage "Change", Man woke up dead on one morning. We were some distance from the inhabited world. I called him when breakfast was ready. No answer. I went to see him. He seemed quiet asleep, but he was already cold and stiff.

I have known a man in a similar situation who remained seated with his late wife for almost a day before he came in action [1]. Completely empty and quiet I remained seated next to Man for two hours.

That day around noon, I called his former wife, children and acquaintances. None of them wanted or were in the opportunity to come for handling the formalities and the funeral. I considered the settling of the cause of death and an explanation for his death with the local government – which was also 50 km away from us – too dangerous. The local Government was corrupt; the risk of arrest was great and the regaining of my freedom may include large amounts of bribes. I wrote a statement of my findings. With this statement, the death act was drawn up in the inhabited world at a later stage.

Transport of his deceased body was not within my reach. Burying was not possible in the hard soil. At the end of the afternoon I started with the preparations for a cremation. Fortunately, there

was a lot of firewood in the environment. The next day I started with the preparation of the funeral pyre for the cremation of his deceased body. At the end of the afternoon I put his body on the pyre. Around the last daylight I created the fire. The whole night the pile has burned as a bonfire for his life. In a life won against the flow – also with headwind his name bears far over the fields – and now his life turned in the stream of changing fire and ashes.



[2]

During the next day the fire extinguished. After the ashes had cooled, I looked in the remains of the pyre for relics of his body [3]; several small bones I crushed and scattered with the ashes of the pyre.

After some time back in Amsterdam, I made preparations for the handling of his inheritance. None of his family and acquaintances were willing or able to do so. The notary contacted the family and possible heirs. Everyone accepted the proposal of the notary wherein the inheritance would be handled by me and the heirs

would accept the inheritance beneficially. Hereupon I made an overview of his possessions – a small apartment with lots of books, a tiny financial reserve capital (sufficient for a simple funeral), some clothing and a small archive. The total value was estimated by an assessor. I bought the apartment and the books from the inheritance. The taxman, the heirs and the notary are satisfied in accordance with the law of succession.

With data from his archive and from other archives I have reconstructed the life his parents after his mother had said farewell to him in the beginning of 1942.

In May 1940 – just after the invasion by the other German regime in Netherlands – his mother is converted to the Catholic faith. His mother baptized him in June 1940 according to the Catholic use. For his circumcision a conclusive medical declaration is put on paper. With documents of the Catholic Church, I concluded that his mother and he were converted to preserve sufficient freedom of action and safety; at that time the scarce messages from Germany were very worrying. They followed the example of the Jews in Cordoba who in the bewitched time after the Spanish King took possession of Cordoba in 1236 AC., also opted for survival by an outer conversion to the Catholic faith. In Amsterdam in the 20th century there were enough priests who wished to help with this pragmatic conversion. He and his mother were officially registered as Catholic in Amsterdam in June 1940 as religious status. In January 1942 he moved according to civil status to Rotterdam. His name was changed in Hermanus Maria Jacobus Leben and the track to his family was blurred through various relocation. It has given me great difficulty to retrieve parts of this trace of Man Leben to South Limburg.

His mother moved in the beginning of 1942 back to Frankfurt am Main to take care for her sick parents. She was arrested by the end

of 1942 for aid to Jews. As penalty she was sent to the Dachau concentration camp near Munich. Here, disease and exhaustion caused her death in May 1944.

The grandparents of mother's side were deported to an extermination camp. The father of Man Leben hid in Amsterdam. In the beginning of 1944 his hiding place was found. He was deported to Auschwitz and there he died shortly after his arrival.

The former small apartment of Man Leben and his books are now my residence when I am in the neighbourhood of Amsterdam. The interior of the apartment I've adapted to suit my needs – the books I have retained. In this way, I still put my paces in his footsteps.

I continued his quest to Carla Leben. I could not find her name under her family names or under the surname Leben in the birth register in Frankfurt am Main. Former neighbours of the hiding place of the mother and grandparents of Man Leben remember that a small baby was present at the arrest of his mother. A further track is missing. Later I encountered Carla Leben in another appearance at the stage "Interconnectedness" on the Odyssey for "Who are you".

[1] See also: Turow, Scott, *Innocent*. New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2010 p. 1 – 3.

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

[3] See also the film "*Why has Bodhidharma left for the East*" produced and directed by Bae Yong-kyun – see hyperlink: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Why_Has_Bodhi-Dharma_Left_for_the_East%3F and the film "*Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter*", directed by Kim Ki-duk – see hyperlink: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spring_Summer_Fall_Winter..._and_Spring

About the Composer

CARLA Drift is my writer's name

During her youth, Carla lived in the middle of South Limburg - the Netherlands.

After her cum laude diploma Gymnasium β , Carla studied at the Delft University of Technology. Carla moved to Amsterdam after her Bachelor Mathematics and Technical Physics. She graduated with honour a study Humanities at the University of Amsterdam. After her study she carried out field research in many places in the world. The last 20 years of her life she was especially occupied with investigations into crimes against humanity, commissioned by different authorities. The investigations have resulted in a large number of influential publications.

Her hobbies are reading, music, travelling, cooking and walking. Carla reads many books on philosophy, religion, literature and human science.

Carla is one of the main characters on the Odyssey to "Who are you". The progress of this Odyssey can be followed on the weblog of the author Jan van Origo: www.janvanorigo.com

De Dutch version of the weblog can be followed on: www.janvanorigo.nl

Name

| Carla Drift

E-mail

| Private

Age

| 50+

Children

| All children of the world

Married

| No

Hobby

| Reading, writing, religion, philosophy, human science, culture, cooking, walking

Work

| Investigations to crimes against humanity

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– One long interview –
The reader is sitting in a chair
and listening to Man's life story.
Editor

About the life of one man,
and about everyone's life.
Editor



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