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Couperus and the Corpus Hermeticum[1]

Hermes to his son Tat:

Dost thou not know thou hast been born a God, Son of the One, even as I myself?[2]

The Corpus Hermeticum

In the late 19th century there was a great outburst of interest in doctrines which claimed to reveal to a select few initiates a true knowledge (gnosis) of God by means of magic and mysticism, and to give them the means to act on the universe by magic. These doctrines came to be combined with the belief, very strong at the time, that man could be perfected by education. A prominent figure in this movement was Madame Elena Blavatsky, who wrote *Isis unveiled* (1877) and *The Secret Doctrine* (1888), drawing on Rosicrucianism, freemasonry, Kabbalism and Eastern doctrines. (The first two of these beliefs are held by organizations who propose to improve man and society - originally by mystical means. The Kabbala really is ancient, a secret Jewish religious philosophy perhaps dating back to the Babylonian captivity, which claims to unveil the secrets of Creation and of the divine nature). Madame Blavatsky compiled these beliefs to form the doctrine, for which she borrowed the name theosophy, that we all share one consciousness, within which all existences are contained and develop in a cyclical process. Man possesses elements of essential divinity and can be helped through the secret divine wisdom to discipline and purge himself and thus rise to ever higher planes of existence.

In 1906 G.R.S. Mead, Madame Blavatsky's last secretary, published a translation of an important older document that proposes similar ideas, namely an eleventh-century compilation of ancient Greek gnostic beliefs called the *Corpus Hermeticum*. It had been rediscovered by the monk Leonardo of Pistoia, who presented it to Cosimo de Medici in Florence in 1460; the latter had it translated by Marsilio Ficino, who published his version in 1471. Its success was unprecedented, and it had an enormous influence on the humanist Renaissance. Scholars widely assumed that both Moses and Plato were influenced by the ancient Egyptian Hermes Trismegistus (a god, but they believed he was really a prophet or ruler); the hermetic writings were believed to be the sources of the biblical religion and the Greek philosophy.[3] After the Renaissance, interest in the hermetic writings declined considerably, but lived on in the circles of

theosophists, Rosicrucians and freemasons. We see it notably in the opera *The Magic Flute* (1791),whose composer (Mozart) and librettist (Emanuel Schikaneder) were both freemasons. Nowadays we find traces of hermetic wisdom in, for example, the work of Harry Mulisch[4].

Couperus seems to have read this work. In *Uit blanke steden onder blauwe lucht* ("From white cities under blue sky"), his travel stories written between 1910 and 1912 and collected and published by Veen (1912-1913), he describes the famous mosaic floor in the Cathedral of Siena, on which Moses and Hermes Trismegistus are pictured together.

When with the Assunta [the Blessed Virgin Mary at her Assumption] this entire wonder of beauty, this marble floor, almost too magnificent to tread upon, is unveiled before our eyes, we are struck by the scenes from the Old Testament, particularly of Moses and David, the allegorical one of Fortune, and the curious depiction of Hermes Trismegistus, the Egyptian semi-divine prophet, philosopher and legislator, who is also said to have predicted Jesus Christ: "God, who made himself visible in His own Son: the Sacred Word..."[5]

By far the most references to the hermetic wisdom in Couperus's work, however, occur in his novel *The Tour, A Story of Ancient Egypt* from 1911. It certainly is a travel story,[6] but a travel story with a double meaning. For the goal of the journey is not the journey itself, not the tour from Alexandria to Memphis and beyond, but first and foremost it is the quest for the word of wisdom that is needed to cure the sick soul of the protagonist Lucius. This literary quest, during which Lucius is eventually initiated into sacred mysteries and thus recovers his divine state, is part of a comprehensive artistic tradition which to a large extent is influenced by the *Corpus Hermeticum*.[7]

In this essay I will show what wisdom from the *Corpus Hermeticum* is taught to the protagonist in *The Tour*. Like *The Magic Flute*,[8] it is concerned with rebirth, being reborn as god. To become a full human being, the searcher for Wisdom has to become conscious of the divine within himself.[9]

The plot of The Tour

Lucius, an immensely wealthy Roman, goes on a tour to Egypt in his quadrireme (luxurious private ship), accompanied by his tutor Thrasyllus, his uncle Catullus, the little black slave Tarrar and the female slave Cora, to find out where his beloved slave Ilia is, whose sandal is all that is left to him. Thrasyllus hopes rather to find a cure for Lucius's lovesick state.

The travellers land at Alexandria and take up residence in a *diversorium* (inn). At night Lucius and the innkeeper go across Alexandria to visit the sibyl Herophila, who deceitfully conjures up Ilia for him. Lucius, however, sees through the deception (82). Later Lucius and his entourage visit the temple of Serapis at Canopus, where he hopes to learn more about Ilia's whereabouts via a dream inspired by the deity. A prophet gives him an interpretation of the dream, but it tells him little. After the explanation of the dream the majority of the Serapis worshippers go to pleasure-houses and taverns (126), but Lucius does not join them. His rejection of mere physical love is further shown by his disillusion and disappointment after a night with the hetaira (high-class prostitute) Tamyris.

The next stop is the temple of Isis at Sais. There Thrasyllus has a meeting with the high priest Nemu-Pha. From him the tutor hopes to learn the Word of wisdom, and actually does so: *Be a god unto yourself*. But that saying does not satisfy Thrasyllus, and he continues his search: "But there is Memphis, there is Thebes. I still have hope, Cora ... that I shall find the divine word which will cure him" (170).

"In the huge dead city of Memphis, inhabited by hardly a few thousands" (182), Lucius feels the enchantment of the past. "How small we are when we look into the past ... and when we gaze into the centuries, the centuries that have buried themselves so deeply!" (195). During a visit to the pyramid in Memphis an old priest tells Lucius the ancient story of another sandal, that of Rhodopis, which is now a tourist attraction. Lucius sees this story as an omen and asks to be alone with the priest. The latter confirms what Lucius himself already suspected, namely that Ilia was kidnapped by a Cypriot "whom he had once found with Ilia among the oleanders! A thing which Ilia had never been able to explain!" (211). He reluctantly admits that he knows about Ilia thanks to the priests and sibyls. It remains for him to put his infatuation behind him and to correct the flaws in his character.

After a long journey the travellers arrive at the temple of Amon-Râ. The temple has fallen into decay; pilgrims hardly go there any more. A centenarian priest initiates Lucius. For five days and nights Lucius meditates with the priest in the temple, and "After five days and nights Lucius knew." (247) Together with Tarrar he symbolically buries Ilia's sandal.

What is the truth Lucius has heard? *Be a god unto yourself*, the same words of wisdom that did not particularly impress Thrasyllus in Sais. But this wisdom does give Lucius strength and pride. Sorrow and suffering are no longer in him: "I suffer no longer. My grief has departed from me. The world and life are beautiful" (253). A reborn Lucius continues on his journey. At the end of the journey Lucius takes Cora as his wife, and - since the emperor Tiberius has confiscated all his possessions - goes to Cos and establishes himself as a sculptor.

In no other work by Couperus can so many references to the hermetic wisdom be found. In Canopus the hierogrammats (interpreters of holy texts) guard "the secrets of the Hermetic wisdom" (113-114). Thrasyllus is searching for this wisdom and hears from the old priest Nemu-Pha "that both Plato and Pythagoras spent years and years on the steps of the temples of Isis before they were deemed worthy of learning one word of the Hermetic wisdom" (174). In Memphis the characters pass along an avenue with sphinxes and the narrator knows that "Here the Pharaohs themselves had passed in sacred processions! Here Moses had walked and Hermes Trismegistus" (180). Thrasyllus lectures about the great pharaohs of former times, at their old palaces: "They were ten in number. Joseph, the Jewish interpreter of dreams, was a powerful governor under one of them; Moses, who knew Hermes Trismegistus and learned the occult wisdom from him, all the wisdom that can be known, was saved, as a babe, by the daughter of a Pharaoh" (194). Later he complains that today "the priests are venal and no longer know the Hermetic wisdom," but Lucius, who is already initiated, suggests: "The priests must be hiding

the Hermetic wisdom on purpose" (*ibid*). The Hermetic Wisdom is mentioned for the last time on page 263 and Hermes Trismegistus, again in the company of Moses, on page 267.

Given all these references and the frequent use of the word "wisdom" in the novel, I think *The Tour* is certainly more than a travel story. The subject of the novel is much rather a quest for the Ancient Wisdom. But what then is this Wisdom? What is eventually presented as Wisdom to the reader? That of the *Corpus Hermeticum*? First we must consider the character whom it heals.

The Characters

The main character in this novel is Lucius, an immensely rich young Roman who is subject to uncontrollable outbursts of violent passion, but whom fortune has favoured with "genius and soul" and an interest in every art and every science. Thrasyllus knows this positive side; in Lucius' eyes gleams a deep spark of intelligence, and he has joined for but a short time in "the mad orgy of the young Romans of his own rank" (30). He has devoted himself to science, particularly astronomy, philosophy and magic. He is artistic: he amuses himself with modelling and sculpture. As an art lover he collects pictures and statues, old coins and old glass. His collection of Etruscan antiquities is famous all over Rome. But for the time being these good qualities do not stand him in good stead, because of the loss of Ilia and the grief this arouses in him.

The relationship between Lucius and Ilia is that between master and slave. He sees Ilia as his property. As such she is an object of art for him; he hardly regards her as a living human being.

> Did she not sometimes have to turn and turn for an hour, while Lucius lay looking at her, to turn on a revolving pedestal, which two slaves under the floor moved round and round and round, and did not Lucius grow angry if she stirred? (18)

When Tarrar is sad because one of his little snakes is dead and the other gone, Lucius realizes that he himself is miserable because he has also been robbed of "his plaything" (88). In short, the fact that Ilia has eloped with Carus the Cypriot must at least be partly due to his irascible, possessive nature. On the other hand, nothing in Ilia corresponds to Lucius' artistic side: she wants physical love and not spiritual love. Love could never have flowered between them.

From a few places in the novel it becomes quite clear that Lucius rejects love if it is merely physical. This is most evident, perhaps, after the night-time rendezvous with Tamyris. She describes physical love in the "language of initiation": "And in my embrace you shall know what otherwise would have always remained a secret to you." But this knowledge does not give Lucius satisfaction: "But he returned, the next morning, disillusioned and disappointed" (146).

After Lucius' transformation he falls in love with another of his slaves, Cora. She is Ilia's opposite, capable of more than physical love. A dancer and singer, an artistic woman, for her love first and foremost entails "total self-sacrifice". When Lucius has come to realize that Cora loves him, he treats her as human. In contrast to Ilia, who had to stand still like a statue, Cora has to move, to dance for him (168). When he hears that Caleb the innkeeper is in love with her and would like to

buy her, he allows her to choose. She stays with Lucius of her own choice.

Thrasyllus, Lucius' tutor, is a typical scholar, a man of facts and acquired knowledge, he searches for the Word of Wisdom as though it were a magic formula that he could use to cure his pupil. He thinks he can find it in old libraries: "I have sought for five days among the dusty papyri of the neglected library in the temple of Amon; it is as though all that is worth knowing were hiding itself" (251). If Ilia represents the body, which is less than the whole person represented by Cora, Thrasyllus represents the mind, which is likewise less than the whole person Lucius becomes. The mind cannot liberate us to be "a god unto ourselves." When he hears that exhortation from Nemu-Pha, the priest at Sais (170), it does not satisfy him, because it has not come from within himself; he feels it is rather a type of schoolmasterly wisdom.

Themes

Love is an important theme in this novel, but it merges almost imperceptibly into that of wisdom, as it does in *The Magic Flute*. Arrived at the temple of Jupiter-Amon-Râ, Lucius no longer asks where Ilia has gone, he asks the high priest for the Truth. Clearly he is ready for initiation, and just as Tamino may enter the Temple of the Sun in the opera, Lucius may enter the "House of the Sun". Lucius is initiated into the Hidden Wisdom during five days and nights of fasting and meditating.

For the correct interpretation of the Wisdom, a third theme has to be distinguished: that of the decline of old religions and the rise of new ones. The message of this theme is clear: no single religion has the right to claim that it is the only correct one. The ancient Egyptian religion, the religion of Isis, Osiris and Horus - now largely buried in desert sand and degenerated into a tourist attraction - is presented in this novel as essentially one with the Jewish religion of Adam, Eve and Abel, and the new Christian religion of Mary, Joseph and Jesus: they are only variations on the same theme. What matters most in all these religions is that man becomes conscious of his divine descent and is able to recapture his divine state. In this respect *The Tour* shows a strong parallel to other "wisdom stories" such as *The Magic Flute*. In the opera the animal side of man is represented by Papageno, the spiritual side by Tamino. The latter is in love with Pamina, but before she may become his wife and the lost unity can be repaired, the two must endure several hardships, as ordered by the priest Sarastro. These ordeals make them conscious of their divine state.

Thrasyllus looks in Egypt for the Wisdom that could cure Lucius of his lovesickness (147), because Egypt is the birthplace of all wisdom (12). Thrasyllus says: "There is wisdom left in Egypt. And in the wisdom which we shall find you will be cured. Listen, my son: there is the sacred word of the Kabbala, which Moses himself received from the godhead on Mount Sinai. That word has never been graven on tablets of stone, but Moses whispered it to his sons and those sons to theirs. It is the key to happiness. He who utters it has the power to avoid suffering and to know all that can be known on earth" (148-149). Unfortunately he does not recognize this wisdom himself. He does not understand the saying "Be a god unto yourself," because it did not arise from within himself through meditation and fasting (170): to him it is just book learning. Lucius, on the other hand,

does accept this saying as proud and sacred, having meditated for five days with the centenarian priest at the temple of Jupiter-Amon-Râ (246) - while the schoolmaster Thrasyllus had been searching in the dusty library of the same temple!

Lucius' journey begins with the search for a woman, a woman who is in fact unsuitable for him, but in whom he saw Beauty. Slowly he learns more about what actually happened - which is already known to everyone else - and gradually his goal changes. To the priest of Amon-Râ he says that he wants to know the Truth, and for the priest this is reason enough to initiate him (246). The wisdom Lucius learns means: you are divine, you have a divine nature, bring that divinity within you to the surface.

The Corpus: Wisdom and Rebirth

We must now ask: does Lucius indeed learn wisdom originating from the *Corpus Hermeticum*? Does the saying "Be a god unto yourself," or words of similar meaning, occur in one of the tracts (books) of this Corpus? The answer is not entirely simple. In the first tract we indeed read that man may become God, in the sense that man can become one with the Godhead by meditation. After having left behind his bad qualities in different zones, man arrives in the eighth zone and the ascent to God follows:

> And then, with all the energisings of the Harmony stript from him, clothed in his proper Power, he cometh to that Nature which belongs unto the Eighth, and there with those-that-are hymneth the Father. They who are there welcome his coming there with joy; and he, made like to them that sojourn there, doth further hear the Powers who are above the Nature that belongs unto the Eighth, singing their songs of praise to God in language of their own.
>
> And then they, in a band, go to the Father home; of their own selves they make surrender of themselves to Powers, and [thus] becoming Powers they are in God. This is the good end for those who have gained Gnosis - to be made one with God.[10]

Becoming one with God in this way rather reminds one of the Christian *unio mystica*. But the saying "Be a god unto yourself" does not entail a mystical unification *with* the deity, on the contrary: one has to *be* the god, the god within oneself.[11] Man himself thus has a divine part within himself. So the central saying in *The Tour* does not match the wisdom doctrine in the first (and best known) tract of the *Corpus Hermeticum*. We will see in a moment that the thirteenth tract of the Corpus is more fertile ground for our search.

But first we should explain that the thought represented by the saying "Be a god unto yourself" is found in similar terms in all kinds of theosophical publications, in works that, with regard to the philosophy of life, are in line with the *Corpus Hermeticum*. For instance, in *Waarom theosofie*? ("Why theosophy") by H. Groot (n.d.), the question "How do we have to act, so that the result of the act increases the undeveloped Karma by as little "unfavourable" Karma as possible?" is answered by: ALWAYS ACT IN HARMONY WITH YOUR DIVINE NATURE,[12] and to me this imperative seems to have the same meaning as Couperus's "Be a god unto yourself."

We come even closer to Couperus' saying in

Levensvragen in het licht der esoterische wijsheid ("Vital questions in the light of esoteric wisdom" a translation of *Golden Precepts of Esotericism*), a work by G. de Purucker (1932). This theosophical leader closes the chapter on *The inner god* with the words: "*be* the god which you are in the core of the core of your being!"[13] So, without doubt Couperus' Word of wisdom can at any rate be found in theosophical quarters.[14]

As we have said, we can find in this novel closer echoes of the thirteenth tract of the *Corpus*. There Hermes speaks to his son Tat about rebirth. Man has evil spirits, or "tormentors", in him; they are "no few, my son; nay, fearful ones and manifold." [15] And Hermes specifies:

> Torment the first is this Not-knowing, son; the second one is Grief; the third, Intemperance; the fourth, Concupiscence; the fifth, Unrighteousness; the sixth is Avarice; the seventh, Error; the eighth is Envy; the ninth, Guile; the tenth is Anger; eleventh, Rashness; the twelfth is Malice.
>
> These are in number twelve; but under them are many more, my son; and creeping through the prison of the body they force the man that's placed therein to suffer in his senses. But they depart (though not all at once) from him who hath been taken pity on by God; and this it is which constitutes the manner of Rebirth. [16]

Many of the tormentors Hermes recites have also taken possession of Lucius. Grief, intemperance, unrighteousness, avarice, envy, anger, rashness, are all dealt with in the novel. But after the initiation by the priest of Amon-Râ, Lucius has changed entirely. Thanks to the initiation he is reborn, just as Tat is reborn and has become a god because of it: "Dost thou not know thou hast been born a God, Son of the One, even as I myself?" [17] This statement is closer to the above quoted theosophical statements, and thus to the word of wisdom which will guide Lucius in his new life: "be a god unto yourself." Thanks to his rebirth Tat has become a god and all his bad qualities "depart (though not all at once) from him", just as Hermes predicted.

Rebirth is a phenomenon talked of everywhere in the world of *The Tour*.[17] During the visit to the burial-places of the Ptolemies we read of the "resurrection, when the dead should rise and be baptized into the true new life, which was eternity" (50) Entirely in the same spirit, the mummy of Alexander the Great is said to look "like the chrysalis of a gigantic moth" (52) Two pages later this image is repeated: "Was this chrysalis all that remained of the great Alexander, whom the oracle of Amon had declared to be the son of Amon-Râ, son of the sun-god?" (54) One of the snakes that Lucius' little black slave Tarrar received as a present, is reborn, that is to say it sloughs its old skin (88). The godhead Serapis is reborn in a young bull every twenty-five years (183). Rebirth can also be seen in the transformation of religion: Isis-Osiris-Horis are fading away, Mary-Joseph-Jesus are rising (214-217).

But the rebirth that is pivotal in the story is, of course, that of Lucius. After a stay of five days in the temple of Jupiter-Amon-Râ his sorrow is definitely over: he buries Ilia's sandal and the past with it. From now on he is able to be happy in the present. His bad qualities are no longer dominant and his respectful love for Cora becomes more

defined. He loses money and goods, but it hardly upsets him; he is no longer materialistic. And last but not least, he becomes a god unto himself, in the sense that he becomes a sculptor, a creative artist.

Conclusion

If we interpret *The Tour*, like the libretto of *The Magic Flute*, as a story about the recapture of the lost divine state of the human soul, the interpretation will be like this. Lucius' soul is sick, it suffers. This has been brought about by the departure of his slave Ilia, but the cause of it is deeper. Lucius' soul has two sides: a negative side and a positive side. The negative side is dominant; to quote Hermes, there are "no few tormentors" in him - he is intemperate and materialistic, he regards women as lifeless objects of art. His positive sides (artistic, intellectual, sensitive) are potentially present, but have to be brought to the surface by hardships. Only then is Lucius able to regain his divine state.

Gradually, through sorceresses and oracles, Lucius learns the secret of Ilia's disappearance. But he also realizes that he has treated Ilia as a plaything and that he and Ilia are different with respect to love: she is a woman who desires "animal" love, he rather is a man of the higher spiritual love.

This insight brings him from love to Wisdom. He emphatically asks the priest of Amon-Râ for the Truth, and not specifically for the "truth about Ilia", as he asked the other oracles. He can accept the Wisdom that he learns after five days of initiation, because he realizes that his own grief "is but a grain of sand in a desert which blows in the wind and conceals all things"(195). He has left the past behind him. From now on his divine side is dominant. The wisdom "Be a god unto yourself" means: you have a divine spark within you, be that spark. Through his initiation by the centenarian priest of Jupiter-Amon Râ, Lucius is reborn. Of the many references in the text to the Hermetic Wisdom, the description of this rebirth especially echoes Couperus's acquaintance with ideas which can be found in the thirteenth tract of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, which is about rebirth. Grief, intemperance, concupiscence, unrighteousness, avarice, anger, rashness, malice: "creeping through the prison of the body they force the man that's placed therein to suffer in his senses."[17] But by the end of the novel Lucius no longer suffers: all these negative qualities have left him. Together with the harmonious, self-sacrificing Cora he forms an artistic and loving couple. Like Tamino and Pamina, the couple in *The Magic Flute*, they regain the divine state within themselves, and they do so in this life.

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NOTES

[1] I refer to the text of *The Tour*, the translation of Couperus's "*Antiek Toerisme*" by Alexander Teixeira de Mattos (1920). For valuable comments on earlier versions of this publication I thank E. Eweg, L.van Gemert, W.J. Lukkenaer, M.C. van den Toorn, and H.T.M. van Vliet, and in particular J. de Roder and P. Kralt.

[2] Mead (1906: XIII, 14)

[3] For an exceptionally clear elucidation and translation into *Dutch of the Corpus Hermeticum*, see Van den Broek and Quispel (1991). In Quispel (1992) an extensive collection of articles can be found on the *Corpus* and its influence throughout the centuries.

[4] See the special issue on *Literatuur & Gnosis of De Revisor* (1983/6), in which Piet Meeuse published an interview with Harry Mulisch about, among other things, the influence of gnosis on his work. In the same issue Meeuse also wrote an excellent introduction on "Literature and Gnosis". This article was also included in his collection *De slang die in zijn staart bijt* ("The snake that bites its tail"; Meeuse 1987).

[5] Couperus (1994: 187) A picture of this mosaic floor in the Cathedral of Siena is found on the jacket of Van den Broek and Quispel (1991). Couperus here translates in abridged form the Latin text in the mosaic floor, which reads in full: "Deus omnium creator secum Deum fecit visibilem et hunc fecit primum et solum, quo oblectatus est et valde amavit proprium filium, qui appellatur sanctum Verbum." This text reaches back to the Greek fragment of *Asclepius* 8 that is preserved in the work of Lactantius. It was read as a pre-Christian indication of the second person of the Trinity, the divine Logos, the Son. In reality it concerned the Cosmos as the visible Son of God. (I am indebted to Prof. R. van den Broek, who supplied me with this important information.)

[6] In his feuilleton *Incognito in Nice* Couperus, working on *The Tour*, puts quite a lot of emphasis on the touristic element: "Around me my old writers are open and historical atlases lie, and I am working on my 'Tour of Egypt' (the working title of what later will be named *The Tour*], in which I will tell you how in ancient times antique tourists traveled and went sight-seeing along the sacred Nile..." (Couperus 1993: 117-118). The fact that the goal of this sight-seeing is to become acquainted with an Ancient Wisdom, he apparently did not yet want to state in this serial.

[7] On this tradition much has been published in the past couple of decades. See, for instance, the articles on *Literatuur & Gnosis* in *De Revisor* (1983/6), Goetschalckx (1982), and several articles in Quispel (1992). Another important publication is Meeuse (1987).

[8] The idea of *The Magic Flute* is as follows. Man originally lived in paradise, in a peaceful world of unity, in which Light and Darkness formed a loving couple. That unity has been lost in this material world, with sin and sorrow as a consequence. Since he is still able to imagine the original paradisal state, spiritual man, in *The Magic Flute* represented by prince Tamino and princess Pamina, goes in pursuit of it. Priests, initiates, show the way: via a long route of initiation ordeals, man can recapture his divine state. "Mann und Weib reichen an die Gottheit an"and recap-

ture Light, Wisdom and (spiritual) Love. See Zweers (1992) for an excellent analysis of *The Magic Flute* and the relation of this opera to the *Corpus Hermeticum*.

[9] In the 1980s two scholars of Dutch literature studied *The Tour* intensively, i.e. Lukkenaer (1989) and Kralt (1983, 1984, 1988, 1989, 1991). The latter has also summarized his findings in the *Lexicon van literaire werken* (Kralt 1994). In this essay I use these publications as a basis. For the interpretation of the novel I have been especially guided by the thirteenth tract from the *Corpus Hermeticum*, a work that has not been studied by either Kralt or Lukkenaer.

[10] Mead 1906: I, 26.

[11] The phrase "the God within us" occurs in an earlier work of Couperus, *Ecstasy* (*Extaze*, 1892; see Klein 1983: 87). Couperus probably derived this idea from Emerson, who, in turn, seems to have read it in Plotinus.

[12] Groot, (n.d.: 56). The capitals are by Groot himself.

[13] De Purucker (1932: 72). The italics are by De Purucker.

[14] I think it very likely that the Couperus took his formulation of this theosophical wisdom from some theosophical work or other that was published in his time. Unfortunately I have not been able to trace the origin of this saying. In Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine* we do find remarks like "Man tends to become a God and then - GOD, like every other atom in the Universe." (Blavatsky 1888, I, 159).

[15] Mead 1906: XIII, 7.

[16] *Ibid.*

[17] *Ibid.* XIII, 14.

[16] This observation also plays a role in Lukkenaer's analysis (1987: 153, 158).

[17] Mead 1906: XIII, 7.