

Somewhere between Antwerp and Ronse, March 28, 2023

The sphere is the most uniform of all solid bodies, as all the points of its surface are equidistant from the center. For this reason and because of his ability to quietly rotate on his axis in one place, within his own confines, Plato fully supported the decision of the demiurge, who gave the world a spherical shape. He believed that the world is a living being, and in *De Wetten* (898), he stated that the planets and stars are also living. He thus enriched fantastic zoology with enormous spherical animals and denounced the short-sighted astronomers who did not want to understand that the orbiting motion of celestial bodies was spontaneous and voluntary. (Jorge Luis Borges, 'The Book of Imaginary Beings', translation Annie Sillevius, 1976)

Perhaps it is hidden in my naivety to harbor this desire to return to a state in which the things that surround us move in harmony with, through and towards each other. Nothing is less true. As Werner Herzog said: 'Even the stars up here in the sky look like a mess'. I am incredibly fascinated by stars and planets, although scientific articles about the universe mean little to me. The problem is that it all sounds so true. In the early seventeenth century, the German astronomer Johannes Kepler and the English mystic Robert Fludd disagreed over which of them had first come up with the idea that the Earth was a living being, whose breathing - like that of a whale - was already depending on whether his sleeping or waking state causes high and low tides of the sea.

In addition to being terrified, I also sometimes feel protected by a large floating body. What this pool of crazy truths and seemingly fixed principles does is give me the freedom to add anything to it. It feels like an obligation, in this nihilistic era in which I usually look on in confusion, to look for - even if only temporarily - a memory of a collective dream, for new rituals to function in this world. It is a dual quest between something we have forgotten or lost and something that has yet to emerge. A celestial vault becomes a taut mirror surface and what is behind it is not visible. Maybe it's just about that thin skin between top and bottom. Without plus and minus it doesn't crackle.

And "Who wants to shine, must burn!" says Lucebert.

Somewhere in a pool of water a glowing core is formed. A body seems to awaken but is also preserved as in permafrost. An enlarged figure from a hammer-tapping game hangs on the wall like an idol, geometric in its shapes but all the more clumsy. The Sun Warrior! They are objects in which something is brought to a standstill. A fleeting movement, wires under tension, a cosmic egg seems to have broken out of its mold, but reappears in a glimpse. Chess knights return to their primal form, torn away from the rigid order of the board, on a surface where an almost militaristic drum sounds in the distance, once again calling them to order.

Nachdenklich betrachteten wir mit Neugier den webifelnden Blauen Mann auf der Leinwand, sahen uns an und Begannen von vorne. (Der Zweifler, Bertolt Brecht, 1937)

Text: Toon Boeckmans