



Marc Colpaert

[EVELYN]

Two weeks ago we spoke with Hamza Saïdi. Hopefully you found it as interesting and enriching as we did. Today we let Marc Colpaert speak.

Today we are guests of Marc Colpaert. Thank you, Marc, for welcoming us here at your home. We interview you today for our podcast 'Is it still allowed?', where we talk about believing in all possible forms and how we can take that out of the taboo sphere, especially by talking to each other. We believe that you have a lot of meaningful things to say about this, starting from your personal story.

So as a first question, would you like to introduce yourself? Who are you? Where are you from? What have you been doing in your life? And what do you do now?

[Marc]

Thank you. A whopper of a question, when you're 78.

That means I was born in 1945. And I had nothing to do with that war. That is, I have not experienced that. But that war marked me for a whole life. In the sense that it made me curious about what happened in that period, before my life began. And what do you carry with you for the rest of your life that has not been resolved? And what has not been solved is, among other things, that even today, although things are much better now, it cannot be talked about.

I have not had any 'wrong parents', on the contrary. But I do have a past that brought me to Germany. So I went to study in Germany. And that's where I actually got to know the story of the loser.

And it was near the Iron Curtain that I actually stayed there and did social practice, 'Praktikum'. That meant that I had to deal with a lot of women from... I was eighteen. And those women were adult women with children, up to and including old women. Because the men were dead, or the men were gone, or the women were raped. And as a young man of eighteen, that is quite a challenge. Then you think, where have I arrived? What do I need to hear here? But that did make me... Not marked in the sense of traumatic, but marked in the sense of, 'now I know what I have to do and in which direction I am going to continue living'.

Namely, it has always been, 'I'm going to take a look on the other side.' I'm going to take a look at the *downtrodden*, is that what it's called, at the bottom, or at those who have been forgotten, or that affair of *justice* and of justice in the also religious sense, huh. So there's not a single denomination that doesn't talk about righteousness, if you go into the sources.

Well, that's where I took my first steps. Now I'm getting ahead of myself, because I studied here in Sint-Niklaas, did lectures, Greek-Latin. Graduated in 1963 with Anton van Wilderode, who signed me, again, in the good sense. I had two years of Greek, Latin and Dutch from that. Hence my choice for the songs.

I come out of that, from that high school, and... I don't know anything about what I just said, but I do know that 'die Lorelei' was a song that struck me greatly. But I got half an hour of German a week. That is, one hour every fortnight and one hour of English.

And God knows why, but that German, that suited me. I was good at that too. I was curious about how that grammar fits together, and so on.

Good. That made me say yes to a teacher who has become very well known in Sint-Niklaas by, at least, my generation. That was Daniël Evrard.

Daniel Evrard was a priest, priest-worker, who spoke French very well and who taught us French, and so on. But who also had a tactic to see... Which boys are walking around here who can be roped in, to possibly create a calling. Eighty percent of my teachers were priests. I come from that time. So steeped in Catholicism. And Flemish, from the situation at the time, the struggle for emancipation. And thirdly, give opportunities to young people like me back then, that they should also be allowed to go to university, which *was not done*. Good.

He is actually talking about a Europe, Daniel. A Europe actually, which still does not exist. Social Europe, ecumenical Europe... Economic Europe, we know that. Coal and steel and all that, that's how it started. But I thought, that ecumenism in Europe, that says something to me. And we are starting, said Daniël, in Maastricht a training called Europe Seminary. Not Europe College of Bruges, but Europe Seminary. There were only older people, late vocations and me.

What was the intention? The intention was actually to live as a dominant religion in an area where you are a minority. And so you could choose, including liberalism. You could choose between Finland, Sweden, all the difficult countries, France, the godless. And in my case, I chose Northern Germany. And that meant that I would live in an 'evangelisches Gebiet'. But you had to prepare for that because Germany and theology is university.

So we got a very good education in the 60s, there in Maastricht. It no longer exists, it was dissolved very quickly. Because they did not want to pay for that progressivism. The cardinals of all Europe have said, we are not going there anymore... After six years, we are going to stop that. But I have experienced it. I blossomed there. And that was, if you have a little knowledge of the tradition, Vatican II.

So the Second Vatican Council begins. I had seen the Pope, who had died a few weeks later. Because I went on a school trip to Rome with the class and there he went, John XXIII. And we saw all those stands of those cardinals who had to think about the future there. And that was all freedom, happiness, in our minds. This was also promoted in Maastricht. We had professors from Leiden University who came to explain our German culture, to learn German themselves.

So I was ready, after a year and a half. And then it was that we had to do Praktikum and that I was above Braunschweig in Helmstedt, right on the border, Iron Curtain, the other side, where the brothers and sisters of those who lived on this side lived, the total *Stumming* or fragmentation, the rupture in that country itself, which is now coughing up, belching up, the AfD. So the Alternative für Deutschland today, which is going on now - and I follow it closely - has everything to do with that break. Well, there I heard that story of the women and there the war opened and started in a different way for me.

Because it is an area where no Catholics live, I am asked to study theology in the south, Fulda.

And that Fulda Seminary and that Maastricht Seminary is just a complete, complete difference. And I'm 18, 19 and I think, the world is opening up for me and in Fulda the world is closing. And I thought, that's just me... I speak for believers now. It's just me, I don't do that well. Maybe I don't have a calling, maybe I'm not religious. And I get very sick. Not crazy, but sick. And the supervisor from Maastricht comes by and says, you have to go back home, we are not going to do that. He figured that out.

He said, I have something for you, I have a host family in Switzerland on a farm and you can come there. I don't know what possessed my parents, but they allowed it.

Poor people, tenants, beautifully situated, forty hectares. I was just left untouched. I slept in an attic room and everything was fine. If I went out in the field, I went digging up potatoes, that was good. Went to the dairy with horse and cart, that was good. They never said, 'you have to do that'. Do you want to do that? No, you can do that. They never asked, do you feel better yet? Is something wrong with you? What happened? Nothing. Zero, zero, zero.

And I recovered very quickly there. And then I could speak German very well. I read the German literature on the cows I had to herd, which I liked to read. Among others Grotesk Theater, Bertolt Brecht, Peter Weiss, all those modern theaters. I had a good time.

And then I came back and I could do Leuven Germanic. That wasn't for me, I have to go cramming... That was just generous freedom again. And enjoy that literature. Whether it was edifying or not edifying, that is irrelevant. So basically waking up and in life... find your way.

Once that was done, I never let go of that spiritual track. It is the same today. It has taken on completely different forms, has become broader, has become broader. Less frightening.

You know I'm on chemotherapy and that's my destiny, my destiny. Thich Nhat Hanh, that Vietnamese monk who says, no death, no fear, no coming, no going, no birth, no dying. 'BEING'. Punto. And it will... I don't just try to do that, I think I do.

Now, on that path, at the university, I come into contact with Protestant theologians who have helped shape me. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who founds that Confessing Church in the middle of the *shit*. And who is then killed. Five to twelve with the time of the war. Had to die if necessary.

Dorothee Sölle, whom I met myself. I went to her home and interviewed her. And I have heard and read and written beautiful things there. How did I come to meet them? Very soon that urge to write is there.

I was first a teacher in the humanities here in Sint-Niklaas. And then quickly to a college in Antwerp and did some teaching there. Almost to be able to, cousins at... to occupy myself with that path of spirituality.

In that case, that was the diocese of Antwerp. That didn't collapse, but that just blossomed. I am now talking about the seventies.

Where all those people said, we're going to do it ourselves. Parish teams, priests, much less than now, are leaving. But we are going to be ready to take over. Today, none of that has been true because it was not allowed. So that remains a thorny issue. What did the institute do that it committed such suicide?

And still. But that's not my thing, because then I'll get sick again. So I stay on my track and I think, this is not sickening. The sources are not sickening, not at all.

And then: I want to see the world. Surely it cannot be that Catholicism, Protestantism, is the only one?

And then I became a journalist in 1981. And from then on it is a straight line, with meandering of course, but still au fond, straight line...

First I was sent to Pakistan. That was the first trip in 1983. And India. Pakistan is Islam. India is where Islam is not allowed to be at home now. And where everyone had to tell what had happened in the split. 1948. Crumbling of coloniality. That is the history of us, colonizer, in this case Great Britain. Afghanistan. Then to Myanmar. Then to Thailand, border Cambodia, where I was actually confronted with war. And with the Khmer Rouge who were locked up.

Or were imprisoned, but then children and women. Interviewed them, but with an interpreter of course, because I don't know Khmer. And been stunned and amazed and also seen the beauty.

So it's a story of shit. And see the beauty in the shit. And I don't know not romanticizing and not saying 'those people are poor, but they are happy'. I think they are not happy that they are poor. But there is something radiating from it that I don't have. And I take that with me. And so in a dozen countries.

And here too the polarization. I couldn't say anything. The magazine I wrote for was called Worldwide and it is now called MO*. That magazine, that was very good. And MO* has also remained rock-solid. And we were not accepted by the people here. Because they said... You pollute the nest. You don't write the things we want to read. And you don't go to uncle father and aunt nun enough to see what it's like, while we did. But those missionaries and nuns I met, they were very nice people. Who helped me enormously as a journalist, because they could speak the language. And they didn't like us here. They didn't say, I like to come home, on the contrary.

Anyway, between those two worlds it went in and again.

And then I started in 1991 at the Mechelen University of Applied Sciences, Thomas More today. Because I had German as a second language and a German diploma, I was allowed to teach German right away. But I thought, I'll do it for one more year and then it stops. Because that's not what I'm made for, to teach grammar.

And then I asked the college if I could teach anthropology. Then I was allowed to set up a training course. And it's called CIMIC. It existed for 27 years. And there you come close to your desire. How are we going to start that dialogue? How are we going to do that? In such a nest in which we live here, of monoculturalism. How do you actually teach the man or the woman or a student: it's about interculturality.

And I always say, my garden was full of little trees and trees. The question is not, do I have a multicultural garden? Or do I have a multiarboretum? The question is, how do those plants relate in such a way that I have a beautiful garden? And that also applies to humans, who are also trees or plants or animals, partly.

So how are we going to do that now? And yes, new cultures have come in. If you realize that I had parents who never uttered the word Islam. The first Turkish man came, a Moroccan man in the 60s, early 60s. And my father said, the neighbor is from Turkey, but he comes here to work. You have to be friendly and polite to it.

That was it. And we did that. That's why the first generation had a good feeling. But then of course it starts to eagerly and bubble here. And this country says it can't handle that. But that's not really what it's about. It is about the spirituality of a country and the culture of a country. Or who is able to deal with strangeness. And without them having entered, the foreigners, one could not yet do it with one's own foreignness.

So actually, spirituality should put you on the trail of your own strangeness. And then sing a tone lower and then try to gain a little wisdom and get a little success through life. Getting a bit of a sewer experience and then crawling back up and then saying welcome, welcome.

Judaism also fascinates me very strongly. Today's Israel is anti-Jewish, you have to know that well. That's totally contradictory to his own sources.

There is an expression in Judaism that says, the stranger, they have four words for that, I don't know them by heart in Hebrew. One is such a stranger who behaves well, of which I am glad that there is and to whom I ask as an autochthonous, old word, do you want to remain a stranger for as long as possible, so that I can still learn a lot?

So I was able to set up that training with a lot of friends. We had 200 teachers who came and who all said the same thing from different angles. And the students said, if they all speak like that, from different disciplines, then that must be part of the truth. And that was effectively about the processing of the colonial past, about what people there say we would be, and the criticism they have of us, which has exploded today, unreliable up to and including, as a culture, now. But I made friends there - and stayed. And they came here to teach. Come and

tell it yourself. I'm not going to say again, 'they say that'. No, you come and say that. And that ceased to exist six years ago.

That's why I make that newsletter with friends back, because I said: you can always write. Stencelen, that's what we used to do. If you still remember that word. We can also put something in the mailbox door to door. So I'm not going to wait for great successes from publishers who say, we miss you or we miss you. We are not going to wait. And so we come to know things that... Of which people say afterwards, where did you get that now? Yes, because we have those connections.

But that's all about spirituality, which you need to stay afloat in that shit. And the answer is already, you know, love. And if you've forgotten that, how that works, then you have to suffer a bit. You have to lie down in the sewer a bit. Or get to know setbacks.

Your woundedness, the fact that you have a wound, from birth. That's what she says, she's an anthroposophist, Christine Gruwez. Everyone has that. Everyone has their wound. It is the same wound for everyone, a primordial wound. In Christianity you could say, original sin, fall into sin. But you don't have to. The wound is 'alienation'. So basically you are born cut off.

And the whole urge with all the literature that I can recommend to you, Rumi included, from the Muslims, Buddha included, you name them all, you go back to your origin. It was just a wave, your presence. But actually, you are ocean.

[Ben]

Quite a story. What strikes me right now is, what you say, what I end with, is love. In our previous conversation, the end was: love one another. So I think we are already at the same point from a completely different angle.

[Marc]

But it is strange that we have to repeat that now, but that it has been 2600 years. The first axial period with Plato, Aristotle and all the greats. Zarathustra, Zoroaster, Buddha. What was that about then? And that hasn't stopped. There was Platonism, okay, give it a name. And then it was Sufism, all right, give it a name. And then it's Christ, okay, good. But this is a message that has not been different. If you get to it, huh.

[Ben]

We are going to take an additional step. We asked you, because we are also quite involved with music, what is music that appeals to you very specifically, has appealed to you? And what did that do in the end, not only at that moment, but what does it still mean today?

[Marc]

Then you have to do an interview with the Flanders Boys Choir. I was in that as a child, as a boy from the college. From the age of twelve. I sang every day and rehearsed every day. Okay, Gregorian chant, for a mass, for a performance, but as a child you sing. And of course, that was the music of that time, which I still love. I could also have chosen Gregorian chant, but that's where it started. And then went into choirs. Went on a trip with those young guys, were allowed to perform. Classical music discovered.

That doesn't mean that I don't like Bart Peeters, or that I don't think Herman Van Veen is fantastic. That's all my music, so to speak. But when it comes down to it, I'm schooled in classical music. And that means that as a Germanist, then in Leuven, I took a minor in music history. Because I think it's obvious and important. From religious music, very strong, to cultural classical music. A highlight for me is Bach.

And Bach would not be Bach without Luther. That is obvious. Then I read Luther. Not all of what he writes is so pretty. Anti-Semitism, I find it difficult to give it a place. But in his time, you know... I didn't rant, but I did say... Church, what are you doing? That can't go on any longer, can it? And then against the indulgences and all that corruption that existed. Anyway, there are a lot of people, Lutherans, especially those I know... for which I must say thank you. Also in music, huh.

And so the choice I propose now, for example, is: two things. That exuberance, that cheerful note too, but that passionate music of Joseph Haydn, when he takes that *Schöpfung*. And I find today... I am grandparent of the climate, at the moment. I am in favor, I plead for a great commitment to this climate, of which I am a part, to give it another chance for the grandchildren.

And look, when we listen to that music, by Haydn, die Schöpfung, and the duet I have proposed, that is our anthem of Mieke and me, it overflows with love and beauty. And everything is named. The animals, the plants, the elements, the air, the water, everything is named. And give thanks with our breath, we thank God's breath. That's it. That's why I chose that. We cry when we hear that. That's that kind of spark.

That's another thing that comes back. What spark do you live from? It is Eckhart who says that. The spark is actually the deepest, deepest, deepest part of the soul, where God cannot even dwell. He can't get in there with his Trinity. That is from the Godhead. So there you find the Godhead. And so thanks to artists and so on, even today new artists, tout court, what is called art, creativity. I have to rely on language. I would like to be able to play the keyboard or paint, but I don't have it. These are the articulators of what is unspeakable.

When I read Hadewijch now, because that's a different music. Because that's what is sung. Song seven is spoken. It has now been discovered that those songs were sung. So these are real songs. We still got them from Van Wilderode as strophic poems by Hadewijch. No, those are songs. And that music, you think of Hildegard of Bingen, that is medieval music. And now they have discovered it, found it. Of, I don't know how many, of all her songs.

I think that's particularly beautiful, because love is represented there. And Haydn's love, which speaks from his music, with that duet of Adam and Eve, or Hadewijch's love for life and for the divinity, in her period, and which she calls 'minne', that is the same for me. Not the same, but that's one line. You can't say either, or. That's and, and.

*Ah, the 'minne' is new every hour
And every day she renews herself.
She continually allows the new to be reborn in new blessings.
Alas! How can the old one endure?*

*who feels fear of love!
He lives, very old, in bitterness,
always without salvation.
For he was getting away from the new ones
and he is denied the new,
that is contained in the new 'minne',
in the nature of new love.*

She works it out and she says the old ones, who are they and when are you old? But the solution is old and new together. You shouldn't throw away the old and from the old you will give the new chances.

And then in the eighth song Hadewijch always starts with a natural phenomenon.

*One can always sing of love,
whether it is autumn, winter, spring or summer,
and to challenge her power, for
he who is brave will not avoid her.
But we, slow, often say with concern:
'Does she have to force me like that now?
I would rather mingle with those
who have chosen convenience,
and stay at home; why should I go away
to be consumed?*

Then you say... But that's today, isn't it? Why make it difficult when it can be easy?

Don't throw away the old, the new will come.

[EVELYN]

Another question we asked you in advance is which book has been decisive for you for your vision of life, philosophy of life, image of God, whatever we want to call it.

[Marc]

There are many books.

[EVELYN]

Yes, indeed. Choosing one book was very difficult. What would you like to share with us?

[Marc]

We have to work with Islam. Personal. So that you would know that the people you cannot reach at the moment, who nevertheless live in a kind of segregation – and that is our own fault so far, but that you know about the sources from which they live. And if they don't use their sources properly, then so be it. We have done the same.

They are used poorly. There is no criticism to be made, except that we are born into it and will have to die, but that does not alter the fact that I can know the sources and enjoy them. The same goes for Buddhism, which we supposedly have no problem with.

If only we were all Buddhists who did mindfulness, and yoga, and zen, and kung-chi, and kung-fu. That has been accepted. But Islam is not accepted. While we are much closer to Islam. Although, the book I chose is very close to Buddhism.

I'm going to choose that book now. Master Eckhart. And a number of sermons that have been translated here again by Frans Maas.

But I have a cupboard full of Eckhart. So I really looked into it. Just because I'm so curious and to my great surprise I'm with Rumi and with Ibn Al'Arabi, Hadewijch. Do you know that it's all 13th century?

You have that axial period, 500 BC. Those were the greats who were all then... And I also end up in the 13th, 14th century. Where those greats are now very strongly present for me, for my own life.

And Meister Eckhart. He is such a person. What I find myself in, also project myself in, I think. That was in the large provincial of the Dominicans in Turingen, Erfurt. But he was responsible for Groningen. And he walked up to forty kilometers on foot a day. And always with a colleague, because they never went alone. On foot. By walking and moving and living nomadically, at least partially, you can't take your books with you.

So that has to be eaten here in the mind and in the body. But because he was so genius... Actually, he was a philosopher. Because he has more in Latin than in German. But we know that German, because he was one of the first to say... People don't understand Latin. And when it comes to God, we have to speak their language. And that language is particularly beautiful. Particularly beautiful.

What touched me about Meister Eckhart? And that's what they call him. Er war ein Lebemeister und er war ein Lesemeister. He wrote and he read. But he 'lebte mit dem' (lived with them). So life is not separate from what I am trying to process.

Most call Eckert a mystic. My sources say he was... Spiritually certainly genius. But he was a philosopher. And the two should not be separated either. We are always ready to divorce. You shouldn't do that. And as a philosopher, human being with a talent for intuition and experience... because if you only go on foot through the Turinger forest, you can say, you should do that then.

Then surely the robbers came from behind the trees, and the bears came. So it's not nothing. So you experience it. We have lost that. But the experience of nature, which is part of my philosophy, we have to rediscover.

So, his theme... The grounding of the soul. Separation. Birth of God. Grounding of the soul. They are. Breakthrough in the deity – *Durchbruch*.

And Eckhart, master Eckhart, constantly practices letting go. But in such a way that you become empty. And if you can become empty, he says, the deity has no choice but to bulge out. Then let themselves be born in you. But if you're a full bucket, you won't be able to do that.

Good. And then the question is asked, often towards the end. All nice in theory, and what do you do with it, and how manageable today, and what is the ethics of it? I would like to read that.

The separated human being (Abgeschiedenheit it is called) is free for the will of God. And what is that will? The will of God is the concrete situation and what is to be done there. That is what man does, and he does it from within, from his own ground, which is God's ground.

Eckhart's works without why and working from the inside out are about something more thorough. From within means to him from that ground where all and everything is one and where reality is no longer divided into opposites of time and space and interests. The reborn man, or the righteous man, has found that soil in himself and from it springs his trade.

This becomes most clear when Eckhart speaks of charity. When you love yourself, you love all people as yourself. And as long as you love a single person less than yourself, you do not truly love yourself.

If you don't love all people as much as yourself, in one person all people. And this man is God and man. God and man.

Loving yourself is not opposed to charity or God's love, as is also emphasized in the equality of the first and second commandments, on the contrary, if you do not love all people, regardless of whether they are your friend or unknown overseas, then you do not really love yourself either. The root of charity, God's love and love for yourself, is the experience that we are all one. And for Eckhart, tapping into this experience is called finding human nature or humanity within yourself.

With a somewhat imposed metaphor one could say: the unity of God, all in all, is not a vision of a distant future or of a high heaven. Everyone carries this vision as reality. And from within, this reality can become reality.

Eckhart's mysticism does not provide us with ethics in the sense of a program of what is to be done and what not to do, tailored to our concrete situation. However, he does give us a picture of what it is like to be mature religious and to come to yourself. From this it can be concluded how to do what we have to do.

So far. The thirteenth-century, fourteenth-century Meister Eckhart.

Where Emanuel Levinas says about the same thing. To believe, if you still want to have the word, to believe is to know what you have to do. On the many encounters I have had in continents, that I always asked people in their local language, what does faith mean, the word. And that took a while. Before they said, but I had an interpreter with me, 'not this, what you call faith'. It is a different word, and I knew it from the translation, that is what we call trust.

So I would almost say to all the people who struggle with that, if I may, that may be arrogant, I don't know.

[Ben]

No, feel free.

[Marc]

Drop the word faith, for now. This is called a moratorium. Use it for several months, years, I don't know. Because in my culture, which is secular, saying 'what do you believe', then I am actually doing *contradiction in terms*, then saying 'I believe what I don't really know'.

You shouldn't believe that, should you. That is a Sinterklaas belief. Something else is, what do I rely on? What can I trust? Can I trust you? Can I trust life? Can I trust myself? Then you get very close to religiosity.

And that needs a form. That is what she writes, Christine Gruwez, about the wound. There is in me, in us, a desire to make something come true of the so many potentialities we have within us.

That means, not true, to shape. And you will see, when you are twenty, you think, I can do anything. That is all open. And when you're 78, you have to ask yourself... There's something about it... I have moved a little bit here and there. I have done something, but in the great cosmos, the cosmic way of thinking of Teilhard de Chardin and so many others... What did I think I was? Or where I am? But I always have to go back to them, to these books. That's my cosmology. And that's what I do with it, because I have nothing else.

[Ben]

The title of a book by Greta Vosper, that is a Canadian pastor in a unitarian church, who has gone through a whole search, a whole movement and actually at a certain moment, while she had been serving as a pastor in that church for years, simply had to acknowledge: I am actually atheist. But, that doesn't have to scare you off. That doesn't scare me, because we're just looking together. And she describes that for a part in that book with that title, translated or: With or without God. Why the way we live is more important than what we believe in.

[Marc]

I think that the way we live is always permeated by an ideology, a vision, a conviction or a belief. And God is a concept for me and is filled in by us.

And that's good. There must always be space and time to let go of or broaden the concept.

The main thing is that the concept sets us free. And we know that this is not the case. Not necessarily.

And I say us, because our behavior always has an impact on the people around us. I can have a religion, but that has an impact on others and vice versa.

Our lives, I think, should not be totalitarian indoctrination towards ourselves. And no longer to others. So it's about becoming free, becoming an integral human being. And that goes hand in hand with expansion of consciousness.

And it is my conviction, scientifically even, that this is increasing. So I think, if you follow the scientists and I also think of Teilhard De Chardin, but so many others after that, who have refined it. That consciousness is also in an evolution, so you have to see an entire theory of evolution from the first transition from the bonobo to homo sapiens as an unstoppable fact.

Our consciousness is part of that, and that's how broadly I want to see it. If you ask me, I follow Ibn al-'Arabi, the great mystic. For me, God Wahdat al Wujud is oneness of being. That is the reality. Allah is the 'unity of being'. No one knows who or what Allah is. No one knows who or what God is, but it stands for unity of being. Spinoza, *deus sive natura*, is that. And at the same time, in Arabic that word wujud also means 'you will find it'. 'Being' equals 'finding'.

And yes, I say I give up, my life is complete. You have to be careful with that, a life is never complete. At least not if you say so. But that is delicate, because it is now in the air for all elderly people in the Netherlands. Who say, my life is complete, but how do you know that now? But what happened that you say that? That's something else, isn't it? And, how much suffering do you have to bear and what is happening to you now? But it is not the intention. Life is an unfinished symphony.

Or for me, Thich Nhat Hanh is fine, huh? For him it is 'man is ocean and wave'. And man must know that they... But wave is not, no, wave is the water of the ocean. And you can complain about the wave. But you shouldn't do that too much.

He had every reason to complain about America, the Vietnam War, l'Indochine: French people who murdered and what they did there, he experienced it all, 40 years of exile.

For Hadewijch, exile means misery. Conversely, when she uses the word misery in Middle Dutch, it is exile. And if the 'minne' doesn't function, doesn't work and I yearn for it. I want to love and I can't, is that exile. That's nice, isn't it? So it is not either or, but both.

And yes, I've already said that, I read here 'as a species, as a human species, we are on our way with all the wisdom that is available, an unfinished symphony, vulnerably wounded'.

But the ancient guideline, which is really 2500 years old, says, 'be a little good', be a little righteous. In Arabic it is haq. HAQ. Ibn Al'Arabi, writes.

To everyone his haq. So basically, everyone is entitled to a little justice. He can also demand back there.

And finally, goodness, justice, which is actually truth in Arabic. So the Plato goodness, truth, beauty... truth is justice, or justice.

A beauty means: stimulate what is beautiful for you and do not hold back beauty.

We cannot fall out of the given reality. I can't fall out of that, shouldn't be afraid. Reality *as such* is already a safety net. When people say, I don't have a safety net. You have to look closely.

And in the evolution that we continue from the bonobo, are we, me now at 78 and you?

[EVELYN]

36

[Marc]

36 Co-creator, you co-create. And that co-creation is present in every philosophy or wisdom tradition.

For Islam says: Allah has entrusted it to you, has asked the mountains and they said no, and to the waters they said no, the firmaments, they all said no. And man in his stupidity said, yes, I will do that then. And so, man is given a lot of carte blanche. For the angels said, 'Allah, what are you doing now? You know how stupid it is. And you let him take responsibility for the planet.' And Allah said 'mind your own business'

[EVELYN]

Beautiful.

[Ben]

Very good, broad reflection.

[Marc]

Yes, this about faith. Ibn Al'Arabi has also written fantastically about this.

As a human being who is partly animalic and vegetates, you have to... I have to do something with my fear. I should feel safe when I go outside, right? A demented person can no longer do it. He has to be guided already, because he is going to get lost, I am not yet. But that I put together something for that in my brain that I can do it well. That's allowed, isn't it? He calls that knot. And every person has knots to feel at ease in that reality. Are you going to compare the knots now? Accept that those others have just made a knot to be able to live here, in that reality. And he says: Allah will speak in your button language at the Last Judgment. And, you sure go, you see, I was right. It's about experiencing unity and giving diversity a place. But not fighting diversity in the truth. No one has the truth.

Two have said that. Jesus and Al Hajj, a kind of Jesus figure 12th century. Hanged too, tortured to death by the Muslims, because he said, 'I am the real one'. But that man didn't say, I'm the real one, who said, I'm so empty. I am so nothing, that reality speaks in me. And, there was

the same thing with Jesus. I guess. Similar yes. 'I am the way, the truth and the life'. Yes, he may have said that, but what did he mean? Namely, If you follow that path of mine that I am trying to follow, then I am not even there anymore. Me, that ego. And all wisdom traditions fight with that ego, but ego is not the same as fat neck. That is not the case, ego is broad. Owning, career, not looking in the mirror, not having a self-image. And so you flee like that too, don't you? Flight into consumption.

[EVELYN]

Thank you Marc, We have heard a lot of wise words, I think, a lot of inspiration that may be new to many people, but is actually centuries old so thank you very much for that. We are also very curious about reactions from listeners. Thank you for being our guest.

[Marc]

You are welcome.