

DR. WILLEM MARIUS KRUSEMAN 1902-1969

In the morning of the 24th January departed in peace in his home at Deventer, after a wasting illness, Willem Marius Kruseman.

With Dr. Kruseman passed away a very notable personality, gifted in many respects; his distinction is hard to appraise adequately, but easy to underrate. From the beginning of *Synthese*, and the present *Methodology and Science*, he had belonged to the General Editorial Committee.

He was born at Loenen aan de Vecht on 20th December 1902, there attended the public elementary school, next a secondary school at Utrecht, where, from 1922 to 1931, he also studied at the University. In 1931 he took his doctorate in the natural sciences (biology) on a thesis *De invloed van temperatuur en narcose op het transport der assimilaten* (The influence of temperature and narcosis on the transport of assimilates).

Meanwhile he had been appointed as a biology teacher at the then Theosophical Lyceum *Drafna*, Naarden. In September 1941 he was promoted as a biology teacher to the former Colonial Secondary Agricultural School, nowadays The Governmental College for Tropical, Subtropical, and Dutch Agriculture, at Deventer. He married, in 1948, Miss Elize Bendien and of this marriage two daughters were born.

In November 1967 he was struck by the serious disease which, fifteen months later, unexpectedly, carried him off; he was still full of plans and ideas. Kruseman was a highly modest and amiable man, with much criticism. He combined wisdom with generosity, and this may occasionally have given the impression of aloofness.

He was an indefatigable, persevering thinker and a deeply religious man; a good father for his family and a very charming and captivating colleague. For his pupils he was the paternal, interested friend and many times they spontaneously returned an often touching interest for his person and his family, especially in his last difficult months.

Kruseman's knowledge of literature, art, and, of course, natural sciences was large. He was an active fellow worker of the societies in these fields and, at Deventer, often a central figure.

His synthetic mind pushed him strongly in a philosophical, con-

templative and literary direction, yet his scientific and especially biological education always played a decisive part. The problems of biology intrigued him most. He was very good in the setting up of experiments, with which he richly illustrated his lessons and instructions. He was endowed with an appreciable talent for drawing; many of his works bear witness to his skill.

His poetic mind was quite pronounced; for the music of language he had a very fine feeling. Six poem collections demonstrate his nature and outlook on life.

It is a pity that his poems are not better known: they are transparent, honest, and pure. They always deal with all that animated him, and seldom picture contemporary events. In their creation he always had to overcome some inborn diffidence.

At the University of Utrecht he underwent the stimulating and, in a certain sense, decisive influence of Professor H. J. Jordan. Jordan's ideas and those propagated by the great promotor of vitalism, Hans Driesch, have captivated him during his whole life. In most of Kruseman's works he witnesses of these influences and of his own arguments against mechanism and materialism.

In this respect, his period 1930-1941 in *Het Gooi* – the most eastern region of the province of North-Holland – must have meant much for him. The Theosophical Lyceum *Drafsna* was a rather remarkable and *free* institution; in later years he often spoke about the time he worked there.

There, in particular he got to know a number of congenial souls, including the rectors of *Drafsna*, D. van Hinlopen Labberton and R. van Brakel Buys. He then also met D. Vuysje and J. S. Witsen Elias, who became his life-long friends.

These men, together with H. J. Jordan, G. Mannoury, M. H. J. Schoenmakers, Martin Buber, Leo Chestov, Hans Driesch and many others, all met each other as collaborators of the journal *Synthese*, which was started by D. Vuysje in 1936. When, in the same year, the *International Society for Significs* was founded, Kruseman was among the devoted members. Via *Synthese* and the *Society* he explored the fields of philosophy, logic and ethics. Signific questions closely related to many fundamental problems of philosophy, ethics, biology, together with his vitalistic view of life, formed the main-stays of his thinking and penetrated his many works. These years formed him as the author of biological as well as other scientific works, which he later on produced, with growing skill, deepness and completeness. In his writings a distinctly synthetic element comes gradually into the foreground. In the

beginning they were purely biological or scientific, more or less popular, but always fine compositions. Later they are more and more written with philosophical backgrounds, growing into almost natural-philosophical contemplations of rather large originality; always exceedingly instructive, with literary qualities and artistic illustrations, but making demands on his readers. Twice he was President of the Philosophical Circle, first in *Het Gooi*, afterwards in Deventer (for about sixteen years). To this circle Kruseman successfully introduced several people of prominence and closing the sessions, he always gave a surprisingly neat and concise summary of the discussions.

Sometimes he co-operated with other authors. His co-operation with the important literary man and philosopher J. A. Rispens resulted in a very fine and extremely instructive *History of Philosophy*.

Kruseman was, first and foremost, a rather unique teacher and pedagogue. He had an enormous need of communication, and human contact and company with adolescent youth, too, was almost indispensable to him. Cordially supported by his wife he admitted to his colorful home, and family, many pupils for their duration of study. Each and every student always found much attention for his difficulties, and with many students and student societies the Krusemans had personal ties. He even dedicated to the students, the societies and the schoolcommunity an attractive booklet, written in a sometimes strikingly rhythmic prose: *Mijn Landbouwers I and II* (My Agriculturists).

Most noticeable was Kruseman's great surprise, a characteristic aspect of a true philosopher. The mystery of existence and life captivated him above all, and this possibly explains his great diffidence, his modesty, but at the same time his charming naturalness that camouflaged him unintentionally.

Never, in the daily discussions, did he press forward his opinion; he was a good listener. The result of this listening, and co-ordinative thinking, he could communicate in appropriately chosen and never offending words.

Now that he is no longer with us, his personality seems to gain in what may perhaps be termed focus. With pain one experiences this not to have occurred before. Future must prove whether later generations will take an interest in his life and work; it seems possible.

It was good to have known Kruseman. May it be light now around him, and may he rest in peace.

S. Bloembergen, Diepenveen, The Netherlands

LIST OF KRUSEMAN'S PUBLICATIONS

1. Ph. D. thesis: De invloed van temperatuur en narcose op het transport der assimilaten. Purmerend 1931.
2. Vitalisme en mechanisme. *Synthese* I 1936, p. 21-24.
3. Prikkelverschijnselen bij plant, dier en mens. *Synthese* I 1936, p. 118-120, 180-183, 252-255.
4. De *Gestalt* - theorie van Köhler. *Synthese* I 1936, p. 355-357.
5. De historie van het vitalisme. *Synthese* II 1937, p. 24-27, 185-188, 438-442.
6. De onzekerheidsrelatie in de biologie. *Synthese* III 1938, p. 280-285.
7. Organisme en samenleving. *Synthese* III 1938, p. 456-463.
8. Leven en niet leven. *Synthese* IV 1939, p. 244-253.
9. Actie in de plantenwereld. Baarn 1941.
10. De wonderere wereld van de biologie. Baarn 1941¹, 1961².
11. De wonderere wereld van de chemie. Baarn 1941.
12. De wonderere wereld van de physica. Baarn 1941.
13. De problemen van het leven. Rotterdam 1941.
14. Kijk uit je ogen. Seven volumes edited by W. M. Kruseman and R. Tolman. Assen 1947-1949.
15. Dwars door de natuur. Eindhoven 1948.
16. Nieuwere inzichten in het leven. Rotterdam 1948.
17. Het denkende en handelende dier. Assen 1948.
18. Biologie, in *Geestelijk Nederland*, volume II, p. 191-212 edited by K. F. Proost and J. Romein. Amsterdam-Antwerpen 1948.
19. De geest der massa, Bussum 1948. This is a translation of Paul Reiwald's *Vom Geist der Massa, Handbuch der Massenpsychologie*. Translated in co-operation with J. A. Rispens.
20. Gradation of language in biological systematics. *Synthese* VIII 1950-51, p. 175-181.
21. Van alchemie tot industrie. Bilthoven 1955. A Dutch edition of Bernard Joffe's *New world of chemistry*.
22. Van Hellas tot heden. Delft 1956. Edited with J. A. Rispens.
23. Het wonder van de levende cel. Amsterdam 1960. A translation of J. A. V. Butler's *Inside the living cell*.
24. Het mysterie van het leven. Amsterdam 1962.
This book - The Mystery of Life - is Kruseman's most important publication. It reviews the development of biology seen against the background of philosophical currents, and clearly displays his vitalistic and signfic criticism.
25. Mijn Landbouwers I and II. Deventer 1948 and 1966.
26. Van Kruidje-roer-mij-niet tot chimpansee. Amsterdam 1967.

Textbooks:

27. Leerboek in de biologie ten behoeve van het Middelbaar Onderwijs in Indonesië. Three volumes and translated in Bahasa Indonesia by Gernardi Prawirosudirdjo and others. Bandoeng-Djakarta 1960.
28. Leerboek in de biologie ten behoeve van het Middelbaar Onderwijs in Nederland. Six volumes. Zwolle 1960-1964.