

Who was Michael Agerskov?

A biography by Sverre Avnskog



Michael Agerskov's mother, Andrea Louise, née Stephensen, 1835-1908, with her daughter Henny. Photo: Private.



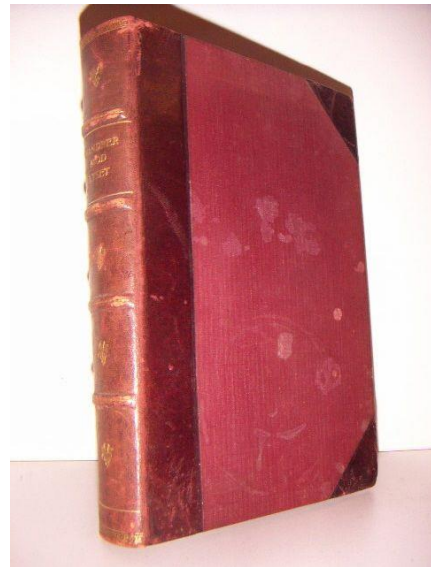
Associate professor and author Kaj Michael Andreas Agerskov, 1870-1933. Photo: Private.



Michael Agerskov's father, Henrik Frederik Michael Agerskov, 1824-1902. Customs officer in Nykøbing, Sjælland. Photo: The Royal Library.



Michael Agerskov and his wife, Johanne Elisabeth Agerskov, born Malling-Hansen, 1873-1946. Photo: The Royal Library.



*Michael Agerskov's hardback edition of *Towards the Light!* Photo: Sverre Avnskog.*

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Introduction.

Kaj Michael Agerskov's name will forever be inextricably linked to the great religious, ethical and scientific work, *Toward the Light*, which he published in 1920. Agerskov himself was not the author of the work - it was received through intuitive inspirational thought from the extrasensory world by his wife, the medium Johanne Agerskov, 1873-1946, born Malling-Hansen. But the publication would never have been possible without Michael Agerskov's involvement - his importance as a helper and supporter of his wife's work as a medium can hardly be overestimated. Their personalities complemented and supplemented each other, and their work will forever stand as a shining example of the strength that lies in a harmonious co-operation between thought and will - the female and the male primal force, when they form an unbreakable unity. Johanne contributed with her very well-developed ability to 'hear' the speech of the spirits, Michael with his rock-solid belief in his wife's abilities and the truth of the messages she received.

It was precisely this co-operation that made it possible for the light to emerge victorious from the battle against darkness in the spiritual world, as Michael and Johanne Agerskov, in deep trust in Christ, took pity on the being that mankind had feared for millennia - he who, through his evil plans, had been responsible for the wickedness of the world and all the terrible sufferings of mankind - Satan. In March 1912, Christ led him invisibly to the home of Johanne and Michael Agerskov. In the spheres, before the 'Fall', he was one of the foremost leading figures in the service of the light, but at a decisive crossroads he imperceptibly allowed pride and self-satisfaction to creep into his mind and wanted to be 'God' himself, unaware that in so doing he was making himself the unwilling slave of darkness. Broken down by suffering and remorse, he - the devil - through his thought asked Michael and Johanne Agerskov for forgiveness for all the evil he had done to them and to humanity, and Michael and Johanne Agerskov forgave him out of the pity of their hearts and prayed a heartfelt prayer to God for his salvation! In that same moment, darkness forever lost its power over his divine will and thought, and although darkness still has great power over mankind, darkness has become without conscious leadership, and it is only a matter of time before light has fully triumphed on earth!

Those who know *Toward the Light!* know that it is only a matter of time before this work will be world-famous. For although God's mill grinds slowly, sooner or later his plans will always be realised. How long it will take before *TtL* is known by the vast majority of people, no one knows, not even God. Maybe it will take 10 years - maybe 100. What is certain is that Michael and Johanne Agerskov's name will forever be written in gold in the sky! Through their sacrificial and trusting efforts, it is only a matter of time before the truth about the origin of mankind and the struggle between light and darkness will be known to all. *TtL* lies there like a gold mine, waiting to reveal its grains of gold to all who seek God's truth!

And the couple's prayer for *Ardor* has probably played a major role in the enormous progress humanity has made in the century since. There are fewer and fewer armed conflicts, illiteracy has almost been eradicated, there are fewer and fewer life-threatening epidemics and more and more countries have become well-functioning democracies.

Toward the Light! thus became Michael Agerskov's major life task and life's work. In addition to this, he worked as a lecturer, examiner at the Danish teacher training program and textbook author, and also produced his own fiction.



*Johanne Agerskov was a very honourable person who never compromised her conscience. According to herself, she basically only had special abilities in one area, namely as a medium, but her God-given mediumistic abilities were refined to the absolute sublime.
Photo: Private.*



*Michael Agerskov came from a very solid family, which for many years acted as builders and supporters of society, and several of his immediate ancestors held highly trusted positions in the customs service, where honesty and reliability were the mainstay of trust in them. Through his education and work, Michael Agerskov himself was a highly trusted man, both as a lecturer and as an examiner at teacher training college exams in Denmark.
Photo: The Royal Library.*

Unfortunately, there are not many descriptions of Michael Agerskov from people who met him in person. One of the few exceptions is the journalist Chr. Houmark, who interviewed Johanne and Michael for *Berlingske Tidende* in October 1923 in connection with the publication of Agerskov's book, *'Nogle psykiske Oplevelser'*. Houmark describes Michael Agerskov as *'a respected educator and scientist'*, and he says that *'Mr Agerskov's previous books: "Toward the Light" and "Greetings to Denmark" have created a considerable and interested readership for him, even outside the supporters of psychical research. All in all, he is a personality whose education is deeply rooted, just as his knowledge seems both grounded and comprehensive. There is no hysteria here, but everything is characterised by seriousness and an almost heavy truthfulness.*

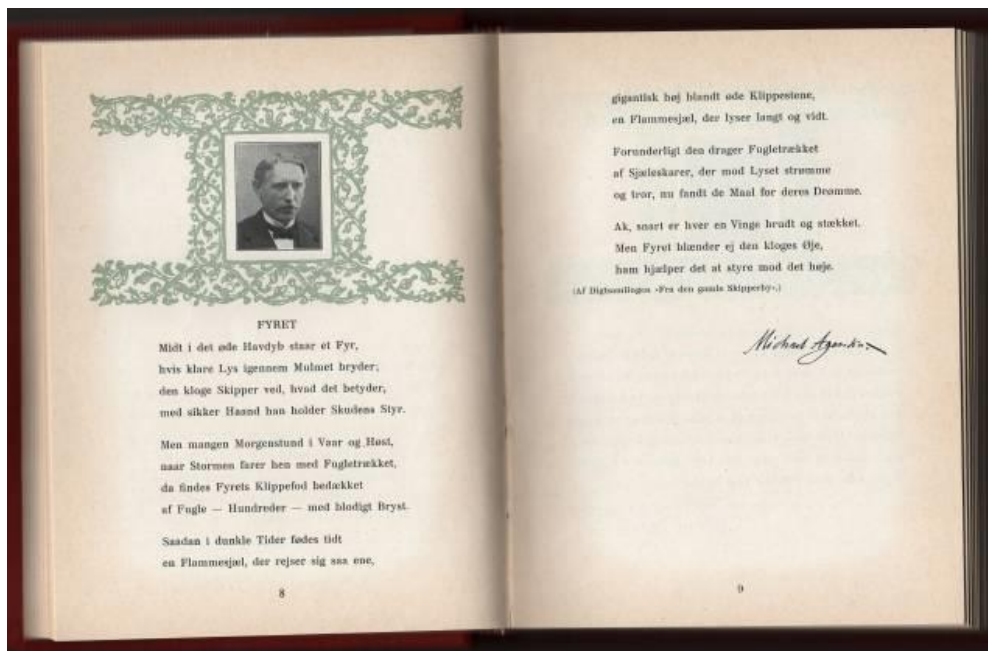
Mr Agerskov is so completely devoid of all external mysticism. He is as far from heavenly, blue-eyed bliss as he is from dark spiritual weightiness. He speaks stylishly about what for him has become the obvious.

The author Chr. Jørgensen, 1887-1968, who met Johanne and Michael Agerskov on several occasions, wrote about Michael Agerskov in his memoirs that *'he was a highly educated man*

whose particular specialty was Danish literature; but he was also well versed in the literature of other countries as well as in history and philosophy'. In 'Politikens Konversationsleksikon' from 1910 it says about him: 'Agerskov, Michael, b. 1870, Danish author and language historian. Co-publisher of handbooks in Danish and Swedish literature. Also, poems (From the old Skipper's Village) and stories ('The source of life' 1897). He was also an examiner in Danish for schoolteacher exams, but I did not know him from my own exam...'

Michael Agerskov thus appears to be a very respected and highly educated man, with a very trustworthy nature, characterised by his truthfulness and his respectful approach to the subjects discussed in the books he published. Neither he nor his wife ever felt the need to boast about themselves or emphasize their own efforts; on the contrary, they always presented themselves with humility and respect for the truths they had conveyed through TtL! And there was never any attempt to take credit for what they had communicated - they always emphasised that they had only written down and passed on the content word for word - the content came from the spirits of light!

From TtL we know that Michael and Johanne Agerskov were incarnated with the special purpose of assisting Christ and his circle, who from the middle of the 19th century, as discarnated beings, sought earthly helpers to carry out what God called the 'shortcut', or 'genvejen' in Danish. For this work, God needed people of a very special kind, who were able to trust that deceased persons can contact earthly people, and who had sufficient personal strength, integrity and honesty not to fall for the temptation to exploit their experiences for their own gain. And in Michael and Johanne Agerskov, the spirits of light found precisely the qualities they sought in their earthly helpers, and God's plan to win Ardor and the earthbound spirits back to the light fully succeeded.



This is how Michael Agerskov was presented in the Danish Authors' Association's 25th anniversary book, published in 1919.



The Agerskov family, photographed in the early 1890s. From left: Anna married Lindahl, dentist (b. 1873), Michael, author and lecturer (1870-1933), Christian, engineer (1859-1928), seated, Andrea Louise née Stephensen (1835-1908), Michael, customs officer (1824-1902), Halfdan Kongsted, lecturer (1857-1894), Henny, married Kongsted (b. 1857). The two children are the daughter and son of Henny and Halfdan Kongsted. Photo: Private.

For those who know how the unconscious, astral qualities are passed on from generation to generation, it is extremely interesting to study the past of the Agerskov family. It was populated by a number of very fascinating and gifted personalities who greatly influenced their contemporaries. And it is very easy to recognize the character traits that were so prominent in Michael Agerskov in several of his ancestors. It is probably not too much of a stretch to say that the strength of character and honesty that characterised Michael Agerskov was built up as an astral genealogical heritage in his family through many generations. From TtL we know how the youngest ones often incarnated in several successive generations in one and the same family, in order to build up a family heritage in which different talents and characteristics were very prominent, so that the ingenious abilities of the youngest ones would have the best possible conditions to develop. The instinctive part of our personality is a highly active part of our consciousness, and according to TtL, personal growth can be seen as a way of refining it so that we pass on a legacy of cultivated personal qualities and talents to our descendants.

In the Agerskov family, it is believed that the family originally came from the small town of Agerskov in the very south of Jutland. But there is also a place with the same name in Viborg in the centre of Jutland, and nothing is yet certain about the family's place of origin. Michael's ancestors can be traced back to the beginning of the 18th century, and the census from 1787 tells us that a Chrestian Agerskou, 72 years old, unmarried, Conference Council and deputy in Rente Cammeret, was the master of a numerous household in Vester Kvarter, Nye Kongens Gade 326. His very successful career can be read about in the first edition of Dansk Biografisk Leksikon and the biography of him ends with 'He died 2. Dec. 1789, recognised as an extremely zealous, honest and skillful official.'

Aggerskov, Christian Pedersen, —1789, Deputeret i Finanskollegiet. I Aaret 1742 blev han Fuldmægtig i Assignationskontoret i Rentekammeret, efter at han «i de sidste 9 Aar havde tjent ved Kammeret i Hof- og Militæretatens Kontor og, medens den forrige Renteskriver og Fuldmægtigen i samme Kontor begge paa én Tid formedelst Svaghed vare fraværende, ved de der forefaldne Forretninger vist Prøve paa sin Habilitet». 1754 blev han Bogholder ved Assignationskontoret, 1759 Kammerraad, 1760 Revisor ved den almindelige Pensionskasse, s. A. tillige Kommitteret i Bygningskommissionen, 1762 Revisor ved Overskattedirektionen, 1768 Justitsraad, 1771 Medlem af og Revisor i Overbygningsdirektionen, 1776 Etatsraad, 1781 Konferensraad, s. A. Deputeret i Finanskollegiet og 1788 paa Grund af Aldersdomssvaghed dispenseret fra sit Embede med Bibeholdelse af sin Gage og Forpligtelse til at bistaa Kollegiet med sine Raad i paakommende Tilfælde. Han døde 2. Dec. 1789, anerkjendt som en særdeles nidkjær, redelig og dygtig Embedsmand.
G. Kringelbach.

The biography of Christian Pedersen Agerskov, 1715-1789, from the first edition of Dansk Biografisk Leksikon. Conference Council Agerskov was the brother of Michael Agerskov's great-grandfather, but the great-grandfather's name is not yet known. How the name was spelt was not so carefully considered at the time, and it was not uncommon to add an extra consonant, such as in Aggerskov, if you thought the name should be a little 'nicer'.

In this very first known member of the Agerskov family we find exactly the same qualities that characterised Michael Agerskov; honesty and skill. And already at this point, we can see that the Agerskov family had built up a strong position in Danish society. And the fact that they must have been very wealthy can be seen from the number of servants in the household, because they had seven of them; waiter, coachman, farmhand, housekeeper, chambermaid, maid and cook. The master himself was unmarried, but his brother's children lived with him, and one of them was also called Chrestian Agerskou, 34 years old, unmarried and at this time secretary in General Told Cammeret. He later became the very first chief customs inspector in Copenhagen and was Michael Agerskou's grandfather.



The photos at the bottom of page 7: From left: Kaj Christian Hass Agerskov, 1822-1898, ship designer at Södra Varvet in Stockholm. Photo: Maritime History Museum. Christian Vilhelm Hass Agerskov, 1809-1892, professor and teacher of Danish at the Naval Officers' School and Efterslægtsselskabet Skole. Photo: The Royal Library. Andreas (Anders) Julius Hass Agerskov, 1811-1872, Commander and Director of Education and Knight of Dannebrog. Henrik Frederik Michael Agerskov, 1824-1902, customs officer in Nykøbing, Zealand. Photo: Private.



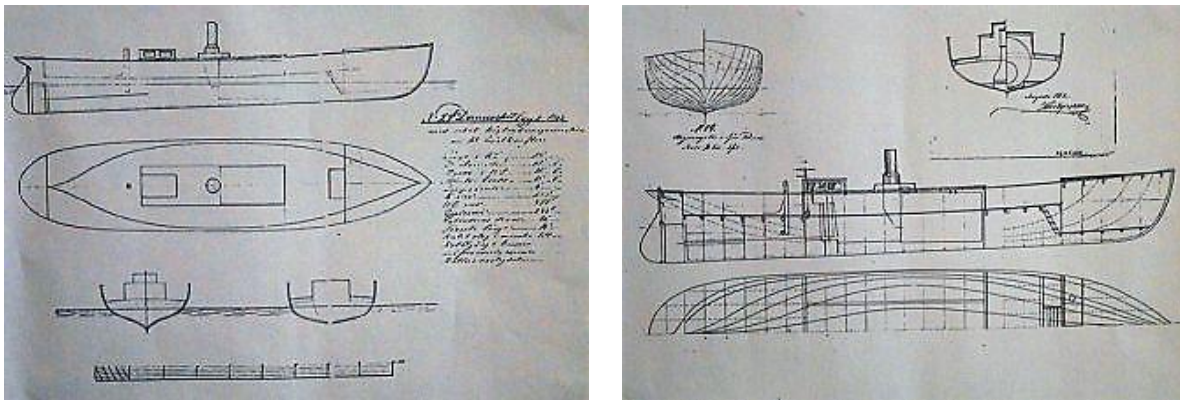
Copenhagen Customs as it looked in 1820, when Michael Agerskov's grandfather, Christian Agerskov, 1753-1832, was the first chief customs inspector in Copenhagen.

Unfortunately, it has been very difficult to track down source material about chief customs inspector and counsellor Agerskov. What we do know is that he married relatively late, to the widow of his colleague Henrich Haas, 1771-1817, Johanne Christine Christensen, 1784-1859 (in some places her name is written Hanne Christiane). She had already given birth to four children, but Christian Agerskov adopted them, and the couple had only one son together, in 1824; Henrik Frederik Michael Agerskov, Michael Agerskov's father.

Christian Agerskov was buried in Our Lady's Church, and in an old document in the family's possession the following was written: *'In Our Lady's Church: A sandstone pillar with a white marble plate, which reads: Here is hidden the dust of the faithful husband and father, War Assessor and Royal Port controller Henrich Haas. The mortal remains of Inger C. Christensen born Hansen, born 21 Aug. 1771, died 17 March 1817, who died 24 Decbr. 1825, 76 years old. At their side rests the dust of Christian Agerskov, Council of State and first customs inspector in Copenhagen. Born on 3 Jan. 1753, died on 20 May 1832. For more than half a century he served his king and his native country faithfully and honestly. A dear wife, 5 children and 2 sisters mourn in him their faithful friend and support - Above the monument is a white marble vase.'*

Unfortunately, we do not know much more about chief customs inspector and State Council Christian A. Agerskov other than what is presented above. Hopefully, future research will reveal more detailed knowledge about him.

It was not uncommon for an unmarried man to ‘take over’ a widow and her children at the time when Agerskov was alive, and often an office or a fortune came with it. We do not know whether this was the case for Agerskov, but a few months after his and Johanne Christiane's own son, Henrik Frederik Michael, was born in November 1824, all four Haas children were authorised by royal decree to add the name Agerskov after their own. In addition to the brothers pictured above, Johanne Christine and Henrich Haas also had a daughter, Christiane Wilhelmine Hass Agerskov, born in 1813. She was married to a merchant in Copenhagen, Bernhard Theodor Emil Petræus, born in 1814, but thereafter all traces of her disappear for the time being.



Two of Kaj Agerskov's drawings from 1862 of the steamship Domnarfvet.

The eldest of the brothers, Kaj Agerskov, 1822-1898, emigrated to Sweden and had a very long career as a ship designer at Stora (Södra) Varvet in Stockholm - he worked there for 44 years. One of the boats he designed, Tomten, is actually Sweden's oldest steamboat still in operation. Kaj Agerskov was first a naval cadet and then trained at a commercial institute before completely changing direction and studying shipbuilding at the Crown Shipyard in Copenhagen. According to an obituary in the Royal Swedish Sailing Society's yearbook for 1899, Kaj Agerskov designed more than 200 sailboats and steamships during his time at Stora Varvet - until he retired in 1887. *‘As long as he had the strength to do so, he fulfilled his responsible calling with extraordinary zeal,’ the obituary reads. ‘He gained a great reputation as a skilful ship designer, and at many exhibitions both here in Sweden and abroad, such as in Stockholm, Copenhagen, London, Paris, Vienna, etc. he won prizes for his excellent ship designs. For many years Agerskov was our most favoured yacht designer.’ And the obituary concludes with the following words: ‘Kaj Agerskov was in the fullest sense of the word a man of honour and also a person who, by his straightforward, open and friendly way of dealing with people, made himself liked by everyone with whom he came into close contact. It could be said of him with good reason that he was everybody's friend and nobody's enemy.’*



To the left above is Domnarfvet as it appears today. To the right above: Tomten - Sweden's oldest steamboat still in operation today - it was also designed by Kaj Agerskov.

The next son of Henrich Haas, whom Christian Agerskov adopted, Christian Vilhelm Hass Agerskov, 1809-1892, was one of Denmark's most prominent cultural personalities in the 19th century. In 'Illustreret Tidende', for example, there was a full-page obituary with a photo about him, written by writer and schoolman, Knud Bokkenheuser, 1869-1936, and here it appears that Christian Agerskov socialised or corresponded with virtually all the great poets and writers in 19th century Denmark, and he also became a very good friend of the Norwegian poet, Henrik Wergeland. His outstanding abilities as a literary critic were obviously highly valued, and in many cases, he was like a 'midwife' for young writers. In the obituary in 'Illustreret Tidende' it is said that Agerskov did not get on well with Hans Christian Andersen, 'whose vain character was an absolute contradiction to the modest Agerskov. Occasionally it even came to a clash between them, or rather: Andersen was sometimes not entirely pleasant towards Agerskov. One day they met in Strandstræde. Agerskov smilingly greeted Andersen, whereupon Andersen stopped and said in an angry tone: *'You must also always be in a good mood - and show your white teeth, because mine are black.'* Agerskov tried to set him straight and took him home with him for a glass of wine. *They had hardly entered Agerskov's room before Andersen rushed to the bookcase. When he saw his own writings displayed on one of the shelves, he turned round, touched, took Agerskov by the neck and said: 'You are a good man after all !'"*

Christian Agerskov worked as a professor and teacher of Danish at the Naval Officers' School and at the Efterslægtsselskabets skole in Copenhagen - the same school where his nephew, Michael Agerskov, graduated in 1889. Michael Agerskov may very well have had his own uncle as a teacher during his education.



Professor Christian Agerskov, 1809-1892 and his wife, Amalie Juliane Agerskov, 1831-1911. Both images are from The Royal Library.



The obituary of Christian Agerskov in 'Illustreret Tidende' was written by one of Professor Agerskov's former students, Knud Bokkenheuser. The morning class at Efterslægtsselskabets Skole, photographed in 1889, the same year that Michael Agerskov graduated from the school. Michael's uncle, Professor Christian Agerskov, is sitting second from the right in the front row.

The author Knud Bokkenheuser, who was himself a former student of Professor Agerskov, gives some very flattering characterisations of his teacher. He writes: *'It was almost a matter of course that Agerskov had to be an excellent teacher of Danish. This was his subject of instruction both in the secondary school and at the naval officers' school. He knew how to win over his pupils by his rarely amiable nature and his gentle manner of behaviour.'* And Bokkenheuser ends his obituary with these words: *'And all of us other students of Agerskov, we looked up to him and loved him like no other of our teachers, and when we went out in life, we kept in gratitude the memory of his kindness and goodness towards us. And as often as we think back to the school, his character will stand as a shining example to us.'* Not bad praise for a teacher to receive from one of his students!»

Of all the people I have come to know from Michael Agerskov's ancestors and from his family in general, Professor Christian Agerskov is certainly the one he had most in common with, both in terms of their interest in literature and personal character traits. Like his uncle, Michael Agerskov also worked as a Danish teacher, and in the family he is remembered as the most amiable and friendly person imaginable. When you read about Christian Agerskov's friendly and wise nature, it is therefore very easy to think of Michael. In the absence of personal portraits of Michael from people who met him, I therefore think it may be appropriate to include another small portrait of Professor Agerskov, this time from Jørgen Hatting's book about the Efterslægtsselskabets skole:

'Professor Christian Vilhelm Hass Agerskov was one of the most beautiful men in Copenhagen. One of his students describes him as follows: 'He was of medium height, rather slender, but finely built, carried himself easily and elegantly. He had the most chalk-white silky hair and round beard you could see, big blue eyes with large horn-rimmed glasses, classically clean features and a gentle and wise expression on his noble face. He always wore a black diplomatic coat and a small white tie, which gave his appearance a certain dignity,

which he did not, however, particularly care for. On the contrary, he was exuberantly lively, even and straightforward, passionate in all his speech, with a classical education that found a distinguished expression in all his conversation. Agerskov was born in 1809; in 1837 he became a teacher at the school when his close friend, H. P. Holst, had to give up some of his classes. Holst had to give up some of his lessons, and he continued to teach his descendants until his death. His white hair, it was said, had turned chalk-white overnight after the death of an eight-year-old daughter.

In his youth, Agerskov had played such a prominent role in student life that he never took a degree. However, it was not so much as a senior member of the Student Association that he made a contribution, but as a close friend of a long line of the greatest poets of the time. He never produced anything himself, but with his fine taste and great literacy he became an invaluable advisor and judge of taste for men like Bødtcher, Hertz, Christian Winther, Kierkegaard and H. P. Holst. Holst, whose poetry he proofread. To his Danish students, he stood as the one who spanned the whole of Danish literature; he linked the old traditions to the present.

It is said that as a young man he had played l'Hombre with a man who had known Holberg personally. For his student exams, he was examined by Rahbek, with whom he drank Dus as a young student. He had stood by Oehlenschläger's deathbed and had been an intimate friend of Søren Kierkegaard. And in his old age, he became a close friend and advisor to Sophus Schandorph. The eighteenth century, Romanticism and Realism were united in his person."



Michael Agerskov had much in common with his uncle, Professor Christian Agerskov, 1809-1892, both in terms of their interest in literature and personal character traits. Photo: The Royal Library.



Michael Agerskov graduated from the Efterslægtsselskabets skole in 1889, at the same school where his uncle, Professor Christian Agerskov, was a Danish teacher. When you read how Christian Agerskov is described by those who met him, it is easy to be reminded of his nephew - the gentle and beautiful face, the classical education and not least the friendly nature. Photo: Private.



Andreas Julius Hass Agerskov, 1811-1872, naval officer, commander and commissioning officer in the Danish navy. He had a solid career in the Danish navy, as a ship's master, commander and enrolment officer and naval commissioner. It is difficult to say how far he could have gone in his career, as he died aged just over 60.

The youngest of Michael Agerskov's paternal uncles was also the one who died first - of an asthma attack, according to the sources. We

do not know much about the personal characteristics of Andreas (Anders) Julius Hass Agerskov, 1811-1872. The information we do know is based on a chapter about him in T. A. Topsøe-Jensen and Emil Marquard's book, *Officers in the Danish Navy from 1935*. The portrait of Andreas Agerskov shows a very stately man, with an aura of calm and gravity, in addition to the firmness of character that was so typical of the men in the Agerskov family. He was the third of the brothers who was the biological son of customs inspector Henrich Haas, but who was adopted by his colleague Christian Agerskov in 1825, five years after Haas had died. Andreas Julis Agerskov married Kathinka Elisabeth Jacobine Pahl in 1853, daughter of royal court jeweller Samuel Nicolaj Pahl, 1800-1885. Agerskov began his career in the navy as early as 1832 as a cadet and was promoted to second lieutenant in 1832. He sailed for a few years to the West Indies and the Mediterranean, was for a time an enlistment officer in Stubbekøbing, before in 1848, when he was in Altona in Schleswig-Holstein, he received orders to gather a crew for and equip the schooner *Elben* as soon as possible. However, Agerskov reported from Altona that the ship had been seized and he himself was under arrest because he would not swear allegiance to the provisional government in Schleswig. After having been commander and master of various steamships for a few years, Agerskov resigned from the navy in 1855 and was appointed chief of enlistment and naval commissar. He took the last step in his career ladder on 1 July 1869 when he was appointed chief of the 3rd enlistment district before he died on 27 March 1872 in Svendborg.

As mentioned above, Johanne Christine and Henrich Haas also had a daughter, Christiane Wilhelmine Hass Agerskov, born in 1813. She married a Copenhagen grocer, Bernhard Theodor Emil Petræus, born in 1814, but unfortunately it has not been possible to find further information about her. Henrich Haas died in 1817, only 35 years old, and Johanne Christine married Haas' almost 20 years older colleague, customs inspector and government advisor Christian Agerskov, 1753-1832. Together they had a son, Henrik Frederik Michael Agerskov, born in 1824, and in 1825 Agerskov adopted Johanne Christine's four children from her first marriage. It is also very interesting to note that Christian and Johanne Christine Agerskov actually named their only son together after her first husband, Henrich. A very nice gesture, which I think says a lot about the Agerskov character. In the obituary of one of the adopted sons, Professor Christian Agerskov, in *Illustreret Tidende*, customs inspector Christian Agerskov is also mentioned as a very rich man. He was probably the heir to his uncle, Christian Pedersen Agerskov, 1714-1789, who was unmarried and had made an outstanding career as a deputy in the finance college in Copenhagen, and in addition to that, it is not unreasonable to imagine that a fortune also came with it, when Agerskov "took over" Haas' widow with four children. It was not unusual for this to happen at this time.



*Michael Agerskov's father, customs officer in Nykøbing, Sjælland, Henrik Frederik Michael Agerskov, 1824-1902. In the photo on the right, you can clearly see the twinkle in his eye and the smile lurking on his lips. Agerskov was a man of strong character, but extremely friendly and kind-hearted, and Michael Agerskov writes about him in *Nogle psykiske Oplevelser* from 1922, that his granddaughter Inger Agerskov was very enthusiastic about her grandfather, and that he actually appeared to her after his death in 1902. Photo in the middle: The Royal Library. The other two are from the descendants' private collection.*

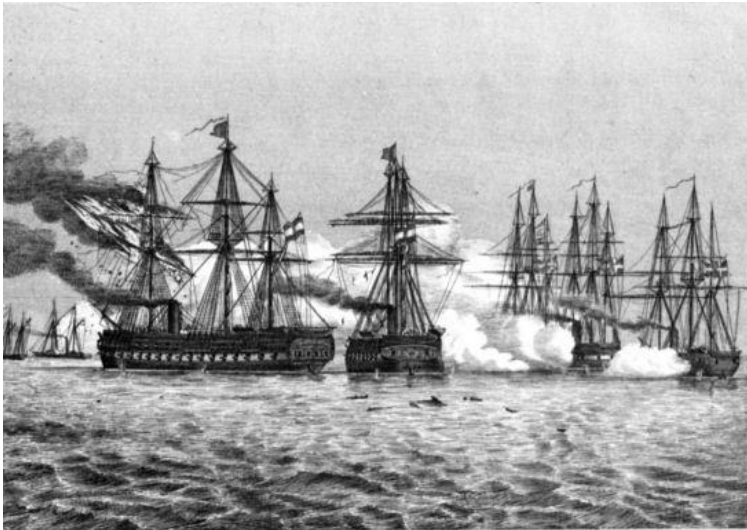
With Henrik Frederik Michael Agerskov, 1824-1902, we have arrived at Michael Agerskov's parental generation. That customs officer Agerskov was abundantly blessed with the good qualities of the Agerskov family is very clear in a portrait that Rune and Jette Sckerl have written about him, based among other things on obituaries from magazines and newspapers from 1902. Jette is a true Agerskov - a direct descendant of Michael Agerskov's sister Henny and her husband, Halfdan Kongsted.

'According to Tidsskrift for Toldvæsen, 20th year, August 1902: 'Customs officer in Nykøbing on Zealand, Henrik Frederik Michael Agerskov, who died on the 4th of February, was born on the 7th of November 1824 in Copenhagen and was the son of the customs inspector there, Etatsraad C. A. Agerskov. He was originally destined for the naval officer path but had to give up his education at the cadet school due to a severe typhoid disease. He then spent a few years as a coffer driver, took a trade examination and worked at Pontoppidan's office in Hamburg until, after the outbreak of the First Schleswig War, he was appointed lieutenant of the month (formerly the name for ship captains, mates or other seamen who were engaged for a shorter or longer period to perform lieutenant's duties aboard warships during wartime) and came to command a gunboat under Captain Lieutenant Gottlieb. The healthy young man did so well in this position that in the autumn of 1849 he was awarded the Dannebrog Men's Badge of Honour.

After the war he was employed in the Customs Service and worked in Southern Jutland until the end of the next war in 1864, when he was dismissed as a conscientious objector by the Federal Government. He then came on the 31st of December this year as const. Customs Assistant with continuous service there. In 1870 he was employed as a customs inspector in Rørvig and in 1880 he was appointed customs officer in Nykjøbing on Zealand. In 1893 he was appointed Knight of the Dannebrog. Over the years, he was entrusted with a number of public duties; at the time of his death, he was a conciliator and State Representative for the Odsherred and Tølløse Railways."



Michael Agerskov's father, Henrik Frederik Michael Agerskov, 1824-1902. Photo: The Royal Library.



According to his family, Henrik Frederik Michael Agerskov took part in the Battle of Heligoland on 9 May 1864 aboard the frigate Jylland. The illustration above shows Jylland (no. 2 from the right) in close combat against Prussian gunboats. On the right: Jylland photographed in 2005, according to Wikipedia the world's longest wooden boat.

According to an obituary in the National Tidende, 'the old customs officer' had an uncommon urge for enterprise; any endeavor he considered beneficial, and any movement forward in the direction he considered right, always found the best support from him; he did not scold himself, but gladly put himself in the harness to pull the load, and he also knew how to win employees and especially to get the younger ones on board. At the Customs Association's excursion a couple of years ago, Agerskov gave a speech to the young people - a speech so eloquent that it was reportedly reminiscent of Bille's oratory. Politically, he was definitely of the Right, and for a number of years he was the chairman of the local right-wing association and probably its greatest personal force, and in his time, although with no prospect of victory, he stood for election to Parliament as the right-wing candidate in the Odsherred district. But Customs Officer Agerskov was first and foremost a patriot, with his beloved Southern Jutland as his child of pain. And anyone who was around him will remember how strong he could be in his joy and sorrow when it came to Southern Jutland. Agerskov was married in 1857 to Jørgen Stephensen's daughter Andrea Louise Stephensen, the then Provost of Broager, with whom he had the happiest marriage. She and 4 children - one son is an engineer at Copenhagen's Free Harbour - survive him.

In 'Nykøbing-Posten og Odsherreds Avis' for 12th July this year, we read, among other things: 'With the death of customs officer Agerskov, a zealous and dutiful official disappeared, who even the day before his death carried out his official duties through conferences with the customs staff, which during his brief illness occupied him completely, both in a waking state and in dreams. As a human being and as an official, Agerskov was equally amiable and equally willing to be of use and help his fellow human beings with advice and assistance, and no one turned to him in vain when there was any question of help at all. The funeral took place on the 12th of February from Nykøbing Church, with a large attendance from town and country. In the entourage were noted Landsthingsmand Lunn and Folkethingsmann P. Madsen.'

Rune and Jette Scherl, descendants of the Agerskov family write the following about Agerskov:

After leaving the Customs Service, Michael Agerskov built 'Agrisilvana' in Nykøbing, Zealand, a villa that still exists (1999) at the railway crossing south of the station. There were 2 apartments and a marvellous view of Nykøbing Bay. The villa was built around 1900. According to the family, Michael had participated in the Battle of Heligoland on 9 May 1864 on the frigate 'Jylland'. He was extremely kind, very sociable, entertaining and a bit of a 'genius', a real civil servant as they were back then. He had a brother who was a professor at the naval officer school and another brother was a ship designer at 'Stora Varvet' in Stockholm.



Agrisilvana (Latin for Agerskov) - the villa designed and built by Henrik Frederik Michael Agerskov in Nykøbing around 1897. The house is magnificently situated overlooking Nykøbing Bay. The picture is from 1907 and shows the two families who lived in the house then. Photo: Private

A friend writes in 1887: "I have followed you with great interest on your travels during the last election campaign as a pioneer for the just cause of the Right, and I have admired the tenacity and fearlessness with which you have stood at the counter and fought, despite the fact that it was hardly doubtful to you that your work at least this time would not give the Right Party access to a seat in the Folketing - However, it is to be hoped that your efforts in this direction have not been entirely fruitless, but that you may have succeeded in preparing the ground so well that when the experiment is to be repeated a year hence a more favourable result may be obtained, for even now to set one's hopes on a complete victory would almost be tantamount to preparing oneself for a bitter disappointment. Here in the region, and I might even say the constituency, the population is as radical as possible, and we therefore never, or only very rarely, politicise, as we are only a few right-wingers here in the city, who know from experience that when the conversation is led into the political sphere, it usually ends in clashes, and one should preferably

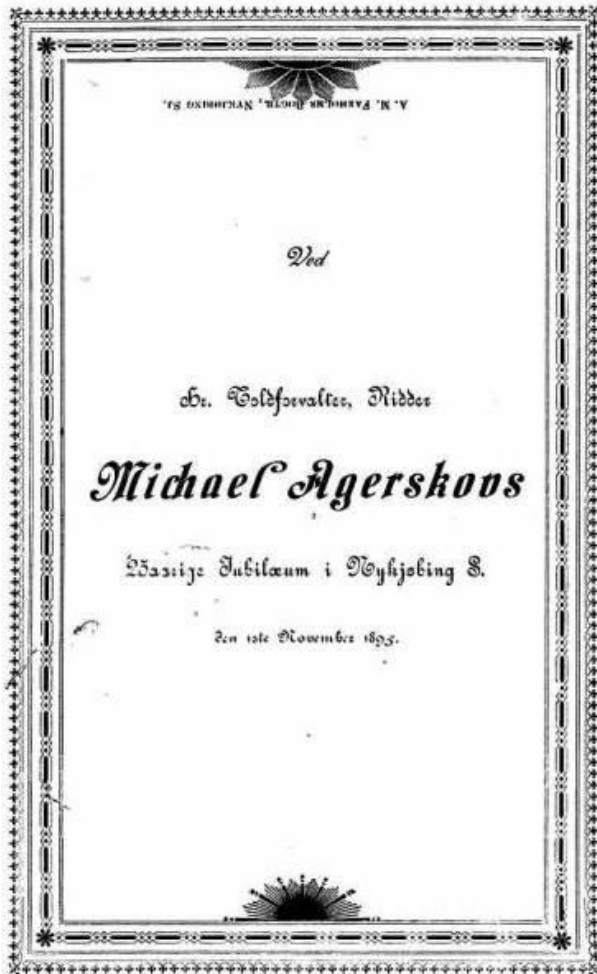
avoid - When Council of State Juel was found to be too moderate, they sought and found Tutein, who also passed the test -"



The Agerskov family gathered in front of 'Agrisilvana' towards the end of the 1890s. Michael is not in the picture, so it is reasonable to assume that he is the photographer. At the back left is his fiancée and later wife, Johanne Agerskov, 1873-1946. Next to her are two maids. To the left in front of Johanne is Michael's mother, Andrea Louise Stephensen, 1835-1908, and next to her is his brother's second wife, Laura (Selma) Liedberg, born in Sweden, died in 1948. To her right is Michael's father, Henrik Frederik Michael Agerskov, 1824-1902. In front is Michael's older brother, chief engineer Jørgen Christian Michael Agerskov, 1859-1928 with his son, Gunnar Agerskov, 1895-1952. Photo: Private.



In a book on Danish customs history, I found this old photo from a customs office. The picture had no date or caption, but I was pretty sure I recognised the older, white-haired man on the left of the picture. It is without a doubt the game customs inspector in Nykøbing Sjælland, Michael Agerskov.



Me! Hvis et godt Raad.

Livsskibet gik for klodsrebet Seil,
Magsveir og Storm rask over Vande,
Styret var rigtigt — Intet feil,
Han sig vogted' ved Kuling at strande.
Rask og besindig var hans Færd,
Ja derfor Lykken stod ham nær.

Rastløse Daad, det var nu hans.
Kvart Seculum til Pulten bænket,
Tiden med Tak ham fletted mangel Krans;
Ved Kjærminder han følte sig lænket
Alt sig formed i Rosenskjær,
Et „Leve“ lyde Fjernt og Nær.

Lykke var Gjenlydstonen overalt,
Husalfer var og ere tilstede.
Faer, Moer og Børn eied Attisk Salt,
Nei og Ja var harmoniske Kjæde.
Alt sig formed i Rosenskjær,
Et „Lyde“ lyde Fjernt og Nær!

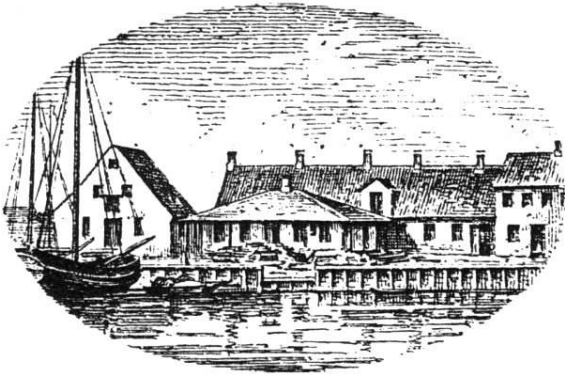
Theodora Schepeleern.



The local history archive in Nykøbing Sjælland contains the original of this song, which was written for customs inspector Michael Agerkov's 25th anniversary in Nykøbing in 1895.



Andrea Louise Stephensen, 1835-1908, Michael Agerkov's mother. The photo is from 1857, the same year she married Michael Agerkov's father, Henrik Frederik Michael Agerkov, 1824-1902. In the Royal Library's image collection, there are two photos that are said to be of Andrea Louise. According to Rune and Jette, there must have been a swap of photos, because they are certain that one of the photos is not of her. Photo: Private.



I searched for a long time in various archives for a photo of the harbour in Nykøbing, where customs officer Agerskov had his workplace. First the drawing of the customs booth appeared - the low building in the center of the drawing. Quite a long time later, I realised that the Royal Library had a photo of exactly the same motif. Photo: DKB.



From the large group photo of the Agerskov family photographed in front of 'Agrisilvana', I have created these fine portraits of Michael Agerskov's parents, Andrea Lovise, née Stephensen, and Henrik Michael Agerskov. Photo: Private.



A photo of the living room in 'Agrisilvana', the house that Michael Agerskov sr. had built in Nykøbing. I found the photo in Inger Agerskov's photo album, and she states that the photo was taken in 1922. As far as I have realised, it was Henny who stayed in the house after the death of her parents. Photo: Private.

In 1857, customs officer Agerskov married the beautiful daughter of the then dean of Broager, Andrea Louise Stephensen, 1835-1908. From Rune and Jette Sckerl I have also received a copy of a letter Andrea Louise wrote to her parents already in 1847, on their wedding day. Rune and Jette write the following about her:

"Andrea Lovise Stephensen was an extremely energetic wife. In a letter to her parents on their wedding day, written in German and with a sweet floral drawing on the front that was probably drawn by herself, Andrea writes the following:

"Precious parents.

On the first days of this year I remember vividly all the favours you have shown me during the past year. How could I therefore fail to offer you my congratulations on the same occasion. Above all, dear parents, I wish you unspoilt health in the new year, because that, above all else, is the prerequisite for the joy of life. Then I also wish that the loving and all-good God will pour out the cornucopia of his salvation upon you, bestowing upon you all good things in this life and thus providing you with a long life. Dearest father, dearest mother, I hope to receive your love and your favour also in this year. I will endeavour to bring you only joy.

Your dearly loving Andrea Stephensen.

Broager 1. Jan. 1847."



The vicarage in Broager, where Henrik Frederik Michael Agerskov's wife, Andrea Louise Stephensen, 1835-1908 grew up. Her father was dean of Broager for many years. The vicarage does not exist today. Photo from 1952 by Jette Sckerl.



Andrea Louise Stephensen's parents, Michael Agerskov's grandparents, Jørgen Stephensen, 1791-1856, provost and parish priest in Broager and Henriette Christine née Grove, 1801-1872. Photo: Private.

If it has been difficult to follow Michael Agerskov's family on his father's side further back than the 18th century, the situation is very different with his mother's family. Several people have researched this branch, and it can be documented at least 15 generations back, all the way back to the 14th century. These include the two English grandees Knight of Berwick and Chillingham, Thomas Grey, and Duke of Norfolk, John Mowbray. And likewise the landowner in Bork, Niels Eriksen Gyldenstjerne and his wife, Edel Saltensee, who was of a well-known Zealand noble family of the same name, whose ancestor, Toke Nielsen, was married to a grandson's granddaughter of Skjalm Hvide. Many people have contributed to the very detailed family tree of Michael Agerskov's mother! I have been fortunate enough to work closely with a descendant of the Agerskov family, Jette Sckerl and her husband, Rune, and they have sent me their very comprehensive genealogical table of more than 80 pages.

The following can be read about Stephen Jørgensen's career in F. S. Grove-Stephensen's biography of him in one of the yearbooks from the Broagerland local history archive:

"Jørgen Stephensen was born in Elsinore in a family of craftsmen. He became a student in Helsingør in 1809 and cand.theol. in 1814.07.23, on 31 January employed as a catechist at Helliggejst church and preacher at 'Det Harboeske Kloster' in Copenhagen. He became parish priest in Ærøskøbing in 1824.05.28, provost of Ærø in 1833, and then parish priest in Broager 1834-1856. From 1848, Jørgen Stephensen's life was characterised by the wars, with temporary dismissal by the provisional government, where the family was forced to take up residence in Ketting with part-time work at Augustenborg. On 1 January 1850, Jørgen Stephensen was reinstated in his office in Broager, where he worked until his death in 1856. He was also dean of Sønderborg deanery, where he was ordained in 1851. He was a Knight of the Dannebrog and died of tonsillitis.

Jørgen Stephensen came from a wealthy family of craftsmen, and his father ran a lucrative cooperage business - that is, he manufactured and repaired barrels. However, his father died in 1806 and his mother in 1812, and the family's possessions were sold at auction, bringing in a considerable sum of money, which, however, soon disappeared when the barrel was written down to 5/48 of its original value just a few months later. By then, Stephensen had two years left of his civil service studies and did not have much to live on. At the same time as Stephensen was taking his civil service exam, the Peace of Kiel was signed, and suddenly there was a lot of competition for civil service positions in Denmark, as it was no longer relevant for Danes to hold office in Norway.

About his wife, Henriette, the biography states

"Henriette Grove's maternal family was from West Schleswig and from the time of Frederik V's accession to the throne had been closely associated with him and especially his second queen Juliane Marie. The connection had been passed on to the Crown Prince and his children, and when Christian VIII and his consort Caroline Amalie visited Ærø in 1830, it was decided that Jørgen Stephensen should apply for an audience to draw attention to himself by vacating a suitable office. This happened in 1834 when the vicarage in Broager became vacant and the successor to the throne's recommendation of Jørgen Stephensen for the office was followed by the king."



Henriette Grove's maternal family was closely linked to the Danish royal family, and Christian VIII, 1786-1848, who was then heir to the throne, nominated Jørgen Stephensen for the position of parish priest in Broager - a recommendation that the then king followed. The original manuscript in the Broager yearbook states that Christian visited Ærø with his consort Louise Augusta, but she was never married to Christian VIII, who in 1830 married Caroline Amalie, 1796-1881 (pictured). Louise Augusta, 1771- 1843 was the mother of Caroline Amalie. Christian VIII was also briefly King of Norway - from May to August 1814 under the name Christian Frederik.



This picture of Michael Agerskov's grandparents on his mother's side is a real treasure, as photography was in its infancy when this picture was taken. Jørgen Stephensen died in 1856, and it was not until the 1850s that the new photo technique was adopted in Denmark. I got the picture from the local history archive in Broagerland, where Stephensen was parish priest.

En Broager provst

F. S. Grove-Stephensen

Jørgen Stephensen
sognepræst i Ærøskøbing 1825-1834
sognepræst i Broager 1834-1856
provst over Ærø provsti 1831-34
provst over Sønderborg provsti 1856, konstitueret 1851
* Helsingør 3. januar 1791
+ Broager 9. november 1856
00 København 20. marts 1825
Henriette Christine Grove
* København 24. november 1801
+ Flensborg 6. februar 1872

DEN, der efter at have haft en økonomisk jævn opvækst senere kommer i gode kår, har en tilbøjelighed til at beskrive sin oprindelse som god men fattig. Jørgen Stephensen havde mulighed for selv at vælge, hvad han kunne sig om den ting. Sålænge hans fader levede til 1806, kom han fra et velstueret håndværkerhjem i Helsingør, hvor faderen at dømmen efter hans ejendoms størrelse må have haft en betydelig bødkervirksomhed i Stengade. Efter faderens død er værkstedet gået over på andre hænder, og moderen har efter inventariet over hendes efterladenskaber formentlig levet af at handle. Da der i alle årene til hendes død i 1812 var krig, har det sikkert ikke været det store sus.

Boets indbo var intakt i 1812 og på auktionen, der blev holdt fordi en søn var forsvundet i Rusland, og en var mindreårig, ser man, at det efterladte blev solgt til velhavende kaperkaptajner og til byens honoratiories. Der var købere med navne som Olrik og de Meza.

Auktionen indbragte temmelig mange penge, men da daleren en måned derefter blev omskrevet til bankdaler og nedskrevet til $\frac{5}{16}$ del af den gamle værdi, var der ikke mange penge at rutte med for en studerende, der havde to år tilbage af sin studietid.

Freden i Kiel kom samtidig med J.S.'s embedseksamen og mange af dem, der skulle have haft embede i Norge stod nu med i køen om et dansk embede.

I første række blev det derfor kun til et embede som kateket ved Helligåndskirken i København, der noget senere udvidedes med betjeningen af kapellet i det Harboeske Fruekloster i Stormgade.

Her lærte han sin senere hustru at kende og blev gift i 1825, da det

77

Thanks to the above article in one of the yearbooks of the local history archive in Broager, we have relatively comprehensive information about Michael Agerskov's maternal grandparents. His grandmother, Henriette Grove Stephensen, was from the Grove family, many of whom were officers in the Danish navy. The Grove family is a very old Danish family, which has been thoroughly researched and documented in several books.

There is little doubt that Jørgen Stephensen was a skilful and well-liked priest in Broager. However, his ministry was characterised by the Danish/German wars from as early as 1848, when Stephensen was deposed by the provisional government. In his biography, Stephensen-Grove writes this about his ministry:

"The rebellion was a special experience for the busy priest and his 10 children, they were expelled and were away from the parish for a year, when they were reinstated it happened to the cheers of the population, but it is a special story that Jørgen Stephensen himself has told in the church book. When Jørgen Stephensen celebrated his 25th anniversary as a priest in 1839, the congregation had already honoured him at a party in Broager's largest room and presented him with a magnificent Bible. But the reception the family received on his return in 1849 was an even greater joy. In 1851, when Sønderborg's dean of several years asked for his resignation, Jørgen Stephensen was appointed dean, a position he held until his death on 9 November 1856. The appointment itself came a few days before this date. Two discrepancies have been found in his relationship with the congregation, partly with regard to a Moravian

family that he would not recognise, and partly with regard to his daily relationship with Ottemændene, who sat on the treasury. They were persistent with the congregation's money when it came to building the church and vicarage, but the visible memories of Jørgen Stephensen's activities in Broager today are not so few. The diaconate, the now demolished poorhouse, the windows that were in the nave of the church in 1924/27 and the design of Broager town park, the vicarage garden, which was transformed from a kitchen garden into an English garden and leased to the municipality for 99 years from 1901."

On 4 December 1856, the Danish newspaper Den danske Slesviger wrote:

*A faithful, noble soul has left us
A life dear to us all is extinguished.
Heavy fell on our hearts the night of sorrow
when this eye was closed in death.*

*Broager vicarage, once so rich
of domestic joy and true family happiness
How poor now in sorrow you shroud yourself.
In the grave lies hidden your best jewellery.*

*To the house of sorrow you look down in grace
Where measures the depth of the great pain.
Here broke a bond of true love,
the tenderest, the best father's heart.*

*Yes, look down in mercy, all-good God!
Thou knowest the depths of pain and canst still it.
Send to the mourners your Christmas message,
and lead them to the fountain of grace.*

Jørgen Stephensen's wife, Henriette Christiane Stephensen, outlived her husband by more than 15 years. After his death, she moved to Flensburg, where she died in her home in Mariegade in February 1872. We don't know much about Henriette's personality, but it should be enough to look at her portrait to see that this was a very warm-hearted and friendly person. The couple had a total of 10 children together, the sixth of whom was Andrea Louise, Michael Agerskov's mother. We have succeeded in obtaining photos of a total of nine of the siblings, all except number five, Christian Frederik Grove Stephensen.

Here is what the family pedigree says about the ten siblings:

Jørgen Stephensen was married to Henriette Christine Grove, married 1825.03.20 in Frue Church in Copenhagen,

Children:

i **Henriette Christine Stephensen**, born 1826.01.15, never married

Henriette Christine Stephensen lived in Rønnekamps Stiftelse near Næstved. In 1873 to 1898 and afterwards she is at Christiansdal Kloster on Funen.

ii **Marie Andrea Cathrine Ragnhilde Stephensen**, born 1828.02.22 in Ærøskøbing, died 1913.10.27 in Trudsholm, Mariager. She married Christian Carl August Schwensen, married 1855.03.23 in Hørup, Als.

iii **Hans Andreas Grove Stephensen**, born 1829.12.21 in Broager, died 1874, never married
occupation: Austrian Sea Captain.

iv **Petrine Regine Wilhelmine Stephensen**, born 1831.12.03,26,10 never married

Petrine Regine Wilhelmine Stephensen lived in Nyboder in Copenhagen and she had the family's young people living with her as they came to Copenhagen to study, Henriette Agerskov, Christian Agerskov, Svend Einar Bjørn Rønne. She appointed her nephew Christian Agerskov to distribute her money among nieces and nephews by will.

v **Christian Frederik Grove Stephensen**, born 1833.12.08, never married, occupation: Shipbuilder, Kalundborg.

1. vi **Andrea Lovise Stephensen**, closely related name Andrea Louise, born 1835.10.24 in Broager, died 1908.04.17 in Nykøbing Sjælland. She married Henrik Frederik Michael Agerskov, married 1857.05.29.

vii **Peter Carl Grove Stephensen**, born 1837.06.18, died 1905.07.18, never married
occupation: Farmer.

Peter Carl Grove Stephensen was a farmer, Riverhead, Auchland, New Zeland

viii **Tycho Emanuel Grove Stephensen**, born 1837.06.18 - 1839.09.09, died 1878.09.13,37
occupation: Pharmacist, New Orleans.35

ix **Christine Jørgensigne Stephensen**, nickname Signe, born 1841.11.28 in Broager sogn, Nybøl herred, died 1907.01.01. She married Peter Falk Rønne, married 1864.05.27

x **Andreas Christian Gotthilf Grove Stephensen**, born 1843.12.12 in Broager, died 1918.04.22 in Hals, occupation: Fyrmester.44,45

Andreas Christian Gotthilf Grove Stephensen grew up in Southern Jutland during and after the Three Years' War. He went to sea and experienced an incredible amount in the years until he went ashore to join the lighthouse service in a job at Kronborg. There he met his wife Ulrikka and they had a long, happy life together where adventure still characterised the family. He later became lighthouse keeper in Egense, Romsø and Helnæs. He married Ulrikka Caroline Sabroe, married in 1886 in Copenhagen, Vor Frelser Church.



Henriette Christine Stephensen, 1826-1902, nun. Photo: The Royal Library.



Marie Andrea Stephensen, married Schwensen, 1828-1913. Photo: The Royal Library.



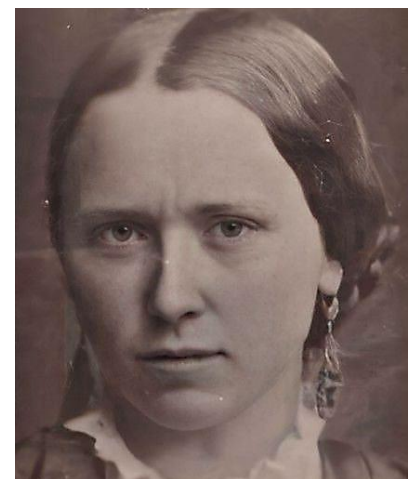
Christian Carl August Schwensen, 1811-1899. priest, Maria Andrea's husband. Photo: The Royal Library.



Hans Andreas Grove Stephensen, 1829-1874, sjøofficer. Foto: Det Kongelige Bibliotek.



Petrine Regine Wilhelmine Stephensen, 1831-1904, teacher. Photo: Private. There is also a photo of Petrine Regine in the Royal Library's picture collection, but according to the family, it is not her who is depicted.



Andrea Louise Stephensen, 1835-1908, married Agerskov - Michael Agerskov's mother. There are also two portraits in the Royal Library's picture collection that are stated to be by Andrea Loiusen, but only one is of her, according to the family. Photo: Private.



Peter Carl Grove Stephensen, 1837-1905, farmer in New Zealand. Photo: The Royal Library.



Tycho Emanuel Grove Stephensen, 1837-1878, pharmacist in New Orleans. Photo: The Royal Library.



Andreas Christian Gothilf Grove Stephensen, 1843-1918, lighthouse keeper. Photo: The Royal Library



Christine Jørgensigne Stephensen (Signe), 1841-1907, married Rønne. Photo: The Royal Library.



Signe's husband, Peter Falck Rønne, 1825-1887, priest. Photo: The Royal Library.



Signe Rønne with one of her children on her lap. Photo: The Royal Library.

After this review of Michael Agerskov's close family on his mother's side, I would also like to mention that there are people further back in his maternal family who deserve to be mentioned. In fact, there are portraits of some of them, all from the Royal Library's very extensive image collection. The first one I want to mention, one of Michael Agerskov's great-great-grandparents, is mentioned in the family pedigree:

Johan Christian Grove, born 1713.12.18, baptised 1713.12.21 in Trinitatis church in Copenhagen, died 1784.10.09 in Copenhagen, position: Councillor, Head of Office at Holmen Copenhagen.

Johan Chr. Grove came 18 years old in the service of his later father-in-law, Notarius Publicus Rasmus Æreboe. In Johan's family's possession is a recommendation of 28 Dec. 1734 from Rasmus Æreboe, which shows that this future son-in-law has served him as a boy and scribe (copyist) for 3½ years. He later became clerk in the 3rd Division's clerk's office, 13 Dec. 1759 Registrar at the General Commissariat, 24 Dec. 1769 Clerk of the Mint, 28 March 1772 Departmental Secretary in the College of Admiralty and Commissariat, 12 May 1779 Council of State.

*Under difficult circumstances, the parents gave a rare numerous group of children a good upbringing, and it was in the spirit of the times that Mynsterskriver Grove on 23. On March 23, 1771, Mynsterskriver Grove was granted exemption from all ordinary and extraordinary taxes "for the sake of his 7 sons", and that the plaque on his mother's coffin read: "The state never owes her the education of its citizens". These nine all entered the civil service and reached quite prestigious positions. No fewer than 4 sons and 6 grandsons of this couple were naval officers in addition to several descendants of the male and spider side in later generations, including the late Lt. Commander, Minister of the Navy H. H. S. Grove and Vice-Admiral G. F. W. Wrisberg. Han blev gift med **Mette Marie Æreboe**, gift 1755.11.06.*

So Johan Christian Grove was the son-in-law of perhaps the most famous person from Agerskov's maternal family: Rasmus Æreboe, who was to become one of Agerskov's great-great-great-grandparents.

Rasmus Æreboe, born 1685.04.26 in Svendborg, christened 1685.04.19, died 1744.10.24 in København, buried 1744.10.31 in Holmens kirke in København, occupation: Notarius Publicus in København.

Rasmus Æreboe was carried to the baptism by Birte Kyllings and godparents were Hans Nielsen, Niels Bornholm, Erick Schippers wife, and Peder Mattzens wife. Rasmus became Notarius Publicus in Copenhagen after his service in the Danish legation in St. Pedersborg in Russia.

His father, who was in poor health, died already in 1693. Inspired by a love of reading, the poor boy, whose wealth consisted of 2 marks 8 shillings and silver buttons for a sweater, was allowed in his 12th year to follow his uncle to school in Næstved. On May 19, 1705, he took 'Bakkalaur', which means that he had received a solid theological-philosophical education. He had to endure much hardship during his schooling and as a student but was very diligent and learned to write and speak Latin with skill, which 1709, after he had taken Attestats, earned him a place as secretary to Just Juel, who traveled as Envoy to Russia. From this

moment on, his poverty came to an end, and his student friends gave him both a silver-handled cardboard box and a curly wig, and his friends called him "the new Æreboe". He also soon learned to mix with the nobility, and by his presence of mind, fidelity and adaptability won Juel's favor. By quickly learning the Russian language he made himself even more useful, and he kept diaries both for himself and wrote down for the envoy about their experiences in Russia in the turbulent years when Tsar Peter (after the Battle of Pultava) began to succeed in raising Russia to an unknown reputation. His fine understanding of sound transitions in the Russian language has aroused the admiration of even a modern linguist like Karl Verner. He became known to posterity through his autobiography, which provides much information about student life here at home 200 years ago, naively enumerates his 26 more or less "extreme dangers of life", from which he regularly saves himself only by unusual boldness and cunning, and which especially tells of many strange antics of Tsar Peter and his immediate circle. Æ. contributed to gaining Just Juel Vice-Chancellor Schafirof's favor by teaching his son and was on intimate terms with the excellent and influential cleric Feofan Prokopovitsch.

One of his toughest trials was when, in the autumn of 1713, he was sent with 12 men in an open dinghy that was only two feet deep to Peter the Great in Finland at great risk of being brought up by the Swedes. He reached Kronstadt with the exhausted crew, where Admiral Cruys wept at the sight of his pitiful figure with the clothes unravelled on his body, and Peter the Great noted in his diary that the Danish king's secretary had made this journey in an open boat. When Rasmus Æreboe returned home, he applied for the priesthood, but in 1715 the King appointed him notary public in Copenhagen, for which his language skills in German, French, Dutch, Latin, English and especially Russian made him particularly qualified, because a livelier trade connection with Russia was then expected, for which reason Rasmus Æreboe apparently also prepared the mighty manuscript with extracts of Russian commercial law in Danish translation, which was dedicated to the King and is still in the royal library. Bibliothek. He was the first person who had ever been given this responsible position without being a lawyer. On 17 September he sent a long letter of thanks to the King for his appointment (this letter is also in the Royal Library), and on 1 March 1715 he started in his new position. Rasmus Æreboe was a fairly wealthy man for a time, but his management of the first 'Kjøbenhavnske Fajancefabrik', of which he was co-owner and which he, Nicolai Burmeister, Jørgen Kirckstein, Peter Wartberg and Jens Lassen applied to start on September 2, 1722, caused him some annoyance. The king granted them very favorable privileges on 22 November 1722 for this factory, which was one of the first of its kind in Denmark-Norway. As Rasmus Æreboe was the managing director, his initials were, as far as is known, marked on the goods for the first few years. In the fire of 1728, he lost a significant part of his business, and a brother-in-law's bankruptcy hit him hard. In the estate inventory after his first wife in 1726, the factory is valued at 11,500 rigsdaler, of which Rasmus owned a fifth, a fairly large fortune at the time, including the farm, mill house, small houses, land, goods and tools.

Rasmus Æreboe writes, 'And as I had this sorrow at home, (his wife was very ill after a birth) so another not small sorrow came to me when on the 20th of October 1728 in the evening at 9 pm the great unfortunate fire in this Royal Residentz - and Capital - City, which for two days and nights laid two thirds of this formerly beautiful city desolate together with 5 churches, the entire academy and school, the libraries and colleges with one part of my temporal welfare and for me primarily with the city, of which I must keep the bread for me and mine, a large

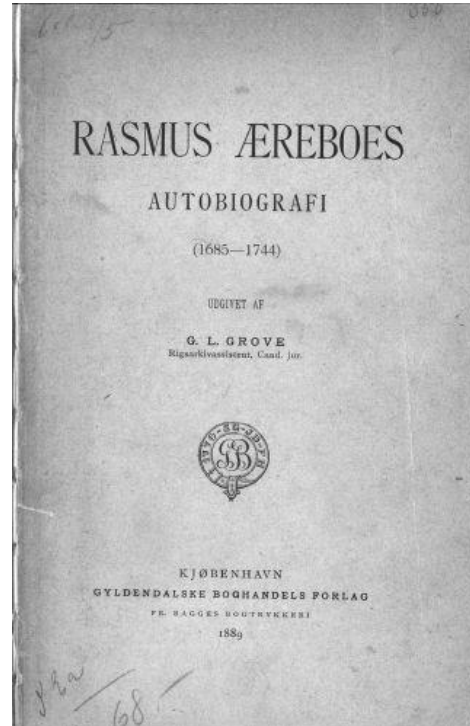
part of my occupation or income. How deplorable and desirable a state of affairs there was in the city in these two and the following days is not easy to describe.

*He married (1) **Karen Wartberg**, married 1717.01.22, christened 1696.07.20, died 1724.03.22 - 1724.09.22, buried 1724.09.27 in Holmens kirke in København.*

*He married (2) **Catharina Maria Alsberg**, married 1726.09.26, born 1706.07.11 in København, buried 1754.06.19.*



Perhaps the best known of Michael Agerskov's ancestors, Rasmus Æreboe, 1685-1744, Notarius Publicus in Copenhagen. Photo: The Royal Library.



The reproduction of the painting by Rasmus Æreboe is taken from his autobiography, which was published in 1889 by G. L. Grove, presumably one of Æreboe's descendants, and thus probably also a relative of Michael Agerskov.

Another of Agerskov's great-great grandparents was:

Nicolai Jacob Jessen, born 1718 in Preetz in Schleswig Holstein, died 1801 in Helsingør, occupation: Valet.

Nicolai Jacob Jessen was a valet to Fr. V's Sabelfabrikant, State Council and Financ Officer at the Øresund Customs Chamber. After serving as a valet, Jessen tried his hand as a file cutter and sabre maker in Rådvad, but failed in 1765, after which he became a wine merchant on Amagertorv. With his knowledge of the nooks and crannies of Christiansborg, he became a good guide for the conspirators in the showdown with Struensee during the imprisonment of

Caroline Mathilde, Brandt and Struensee. As a reward, he received large gifts of money, 2000 Rdl and in 1780 an annual allowance of 400 Rdl, and was appointed State Council.

*He married **Marie Christine Jacobi**.*

Another very colorful person from Agerskov's maternal family was:

Johan Christian Ollufsen Hundsgaard, also known as Olsen, born 1641, died 1704 - 1705 in Hellestrup, buried in Asminderup church, position: Riding Master in England.

Johan Christian Hundsgaard was Master of the Dragoons and Stable Master with Prince George in England, he later became an equestrian farmer in Denmark from 1696 in Hellestrup, Sdr. Asminderup in Holbæk county.

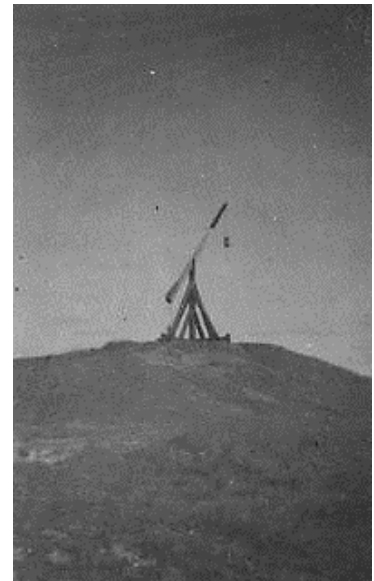
*Johan Chr. Hundsgaard is known as the stable master for Prince Jorgen in England. Where he previously came from and how he found Maria Grove has not yet been clarified. But it is mentioned in a book (?) about Prince Jorgen in England that some of the courtiers were hired on site and did not travel home with the others. Anyway, he turns up in Sdr. Asmindrup parish near Holbæk, where he takes over from his brother on a farm in the village of Hellestrup around 1686. He was discharged as an equestrian farmer and in the 'Portions- og Jordebog' from 1696, you get the impression that he is exceptionally enterprising and skilled. His wife, Maria, dies around 1695, but he seems to have lived for about 10 more years. In one of the first church book entries in Sdr. Asmindrup, Else Johansdatter of Hellestrup is mentioned, which fits to be a child of the two. He married **Maria Elisabeth Andersdatter Gyldengrove**.*



Nicolai Jacob Jessen, 1718-1801, valet and councilor of state. Copyright: The Royal Library.



Shire bailiff and lighthouse keeper Jens Pedersen Grove, 1584-1639. Copyright: The Royal Library.



Jens Pedersen Grove's lighthouse in Skagen, scanned from "Slægtsbog over Frederik Julius Grove og hans hustru P. Pedersen" published by Slægtshistorisk Institut, Viborg.

I could mention many more very interesting and colorful people from Agerskov's maternal family, but I choose to end with the man who is painted together with his living and dead wives and children on the epitaph on the next page, and then we go back five generations from Michael Agerskov:

Jens Pedersen Grove, born 1584 in Wiigstrup, died 1639 in Helsingør, occupation: County Bailiff, Lighthouse Keeper .

Under an epitaph in Sct. Olai church in Elsinore, Grove is written in brackets, which shows that Jens Pedersen was not baptized Grove, but - as was common in those times - was named after his hometown. The place of birth is given as Wingstrup and has been assigned Ungstrup in Lysgaard herred, which is far from Grove. There can hardly be any doubt that it must be Wiigstrup or as it is also sometimes written, Wivstrup, which according to Professor Oluf Nielsen around 1600 was a now extinct place name in the current Grove parish (then Haderup parish). Around the time of Jens Pedersen's birth in 1584, only one man lived in Grove, Peder Sørensen. Grove was probably the name of the farm. His father, shire bailiff Søren Christensen, was married before 1559, so the dates fit perfectly. He has Pedersen after his father and Jens probably after his grandfather, so he must have been the second oldest son. That the grandfather was called Jens is evident from an account in Jens Abildtrup's book: "Selvejerslægten Bjødstrup 1380-1740". A Mrs. Karen Nielsdatter pays a peasant debt first to Søren Jensen and after his death to Villads Jensen, who is probably Søren's brother. And finally to Peder Sørensen in Grove, who is presumed to be the brother-in-law of the two brothers, whose father must have been called Jens. Jens Pedersen (Grove)'s eldest brother is also mentioned in this book. In 1610, his name appears at Varberg Castle as a scribe for Mogens Gyldenstjerne. In 1620 he settled in Elsinore, where he was a member of the company that leased the customs and trade with Norway. He also made a great contribution to the development of the Danish lighthouse and in 1626-1627 he converted Skagen's Lygtefyrtårn to Vippedyrtårn, which today forms one of Skagen's landmarks and was depicted on stamps in 1960 on the occasion of the anniversary of the Lighthouse and Guard Company. In 1632, he was ordered to take care of Denmark's lighthouse for as long as he lived. He owned two farms, a barnyard and a garden in Elsinore, a farm in Landskrona, a ship 'Neptunus' etc. and left over 5000 daler.

Jens Pedersen (Grove) was first shire clerk and later shire bailiff and came from a distinct shire bailiff family, as 4-5 of his immediate ancestors were all shire bailiffs. In those times, this position was often hereditary and transfers were quite common. The high position that Jens Pedersen (Grove) and his descendants later occupied in society was a continuation of the position his ancestors occupied before him.

The impression you get of Jens Pedersen in private is not entirely sympathetic. He seems to have been a somewhat combative and very persistent gentleman who was constantly on trial and constantly losing, and who also used unnecessarily harsh language in court. Jens Pedersen owned a two-story house in Stengade in Elsinore and seems to have had a penchant for investing money in real estate. He also owned a smaller neighboring property, a beach house, a farm in Stengade even larger than the one he lived in, a cove in the city park and three adjacent homes and must be described as an absolutely wealthy man as a lighthouse keeper.

He married (1) Anna Andersdatter Skovgaard, married 1613.01.22 in Helsingør, born 1586 in Helsingør, died 1633 in Helsingør.23, He married (2) Dorthe Mortensdatter Rasch.



Jens Pedersen Grove, 1584-1639, his two wives and their children. Photograph of the painting in Sct. Olai church in Elsinore. In a genealogical book published by Slægtshistorisk Institut, Viborg, the following is written about the people in the picture: "From the left: Sons Peder, Anders and Axel, Jens Pedersen (Grove), his first wife with 2 daughters who died young, his second wife and daughter Anne. Of the 5 small children in the cloud, the 3 are probably the deceased children of the first marriage, Helle, Mette and Maren." Copyright: The Royal Library. The image is reproduced in the book "Danske maledede portrætter" by E. F. S. Lund from 1903 - volume 9.

After this review of Michael Agerskov's parents and their predecessors, I will present Agerskov's siblings, who were also highly gifted and resourceful individuals. Michael had an older brother, Jørgen Christian Michael Agerskov, born 10.02.1859 in Kappel, Southern Jutland, died 10.10.1928, buried in 1928, position: Chief Engineer, Copenhagen Freeport, confirmed 01.10.1876.

Christian was married three times, first to Inger Marie Jensen, who died on November 1, 1919, and later to Laura (Selma) Liedberg, born in Sweden, who died in 1948, and finally to Henriette Stevelt, born in 1862.

In the first marriage they had the daughter Ella Jensen born 1889, and the second, Gunnar Agerskov, born 23.07.1895, died 1952 in Paris, buried 1952, position: Foreign driver in Paris, confirmed 03.04.1910. The last marriage was, as far as we know, childless.

Christian Agerskov was a trained engineer and was best known for leading the major expansion of Copenhagen Freeport, where he was chief engineer. He was also an inventor, and invented a steam valve, which he called Admonitor, and according to the family, they were regularly paid profits from this invention right up to the present day.

We do not know what Christian's attitude was to his brother's spiritual activity and the publication of *Toward the Light*, but we know from Johanne Agerskov's letter that he was very interested in the model of the universe made by the blacksmith A. Ander. Ander made of the universe, according to TtL's description.



Above: The elderly Christian Agerskov. Photo: Private. To the left: The four Agerskov siblings gathered on one tray. From left, behind: Johanne Henriette (Henny) and Christian. In the middle in front, Anna and to the far right, the young Michael. Photo: The Royal Library.

Christian Agerskov was mentioned in Dansk Biografisk Leksikon with a biography of his own:

Agerskov, Jørgen Christian Michael, 1859-1928, engineer. F. 2. Oct. 1859 in Kappel by Slien, d. 10. Oct. 1928 in Copenhagen, urn buried in Nykøbing S. Parents: Beach inspector in Stevelt, later customs officer in Nykøbing S. Henrich Frederich Michael A. (1824- 1902) and Andrea Louise Stephensen (1835-1908). Married 10. May 1894 in Nyland, Norrland, Sweden to Laura (Selma) Liedberg, b. 19. May 1863 in Engelholm, daughter of hotel owner Johan Frederik L. (1825-94) and Hedda Gustafva Hamnqvist (1822-1916). A. received a very comprehensive technical education. After taking the Preliminary Examination from Efterslægtens Skole in 1877, he was apprenticed at Sodra Shipyard in Stockholm. In 1878 he entered the Royal Navy Yard as an apprentice engineer, graduated from the School of Engineering and Shipbuilding in 1881 and was then employed at the Navy Yard. In the 1880s, he traveled to London several times to inspect the construction of the Navy's torpedo boats at Thornycroft on behalf of the Ministry of the Navy. At the same time, he prepared for the polytechnic entrance examination and in 1888 took the first part of the polytechnic examination; although he lost his right eye during his studies in some chemical experiments with the invention mentioned below, he took the second part of the examination the very next year.

He worked for a couple of years as a machine inspector at the Lighthouse Authority, but in 1892 he was employed in the company in which his life's work was to fall, namely as secretary of Frihavnsaktieselskabet, where he also worked as a projecting and supervising engineer in the construction of warehouses, silos, cranes, power plants and electrical installations. A. solved the related tasks with great skill and not infrequently with considerable originality. From 1899 he was also a consultant for Copenhagen's customs inspectorate. For a number of years he was an examiner in mechanical technology at the Polytechnic College. When in 1917



Michael Agerskov's older brother, chief engineer at Copenhagen Freeport, Christian Agerskov and his second wife, Selma. Photo: Private.

an Ingeniørorganisation for the Care of the Economic Conditions of Privately Employed Engineers, Ingeniørforbundet af 5 March, he was one of the leading members. In 1889, A. obtained an exclusive licence for a thermo-alarm device to protect bearings against heat runaway. - R. 1904. Tekn. Foren. Tidsskr, XIV, 1890—gi, S. 94. Ingeniøren, 1928, S. 521. Povl Vinding.

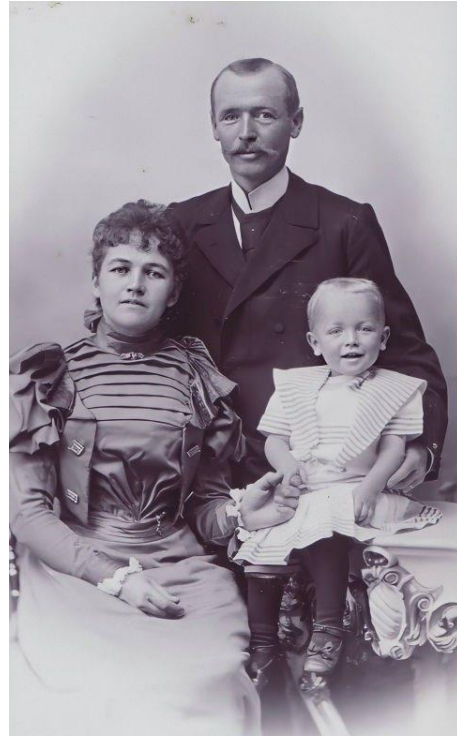


Christian Agerskov lost one of his eyes in an accident, and the article above claims that it was caused by a chemical explosion. According to the family, it was due to a vapour explosion, but there can be two ways of describing the explosion.

At the bottom of the previous page: Three portraits of Christian Agerskov. The two on the left are from the Royal Library, while the picture on the right is private.



Michael Agerskov's two sisters, Johanne Henriette (Henny), b 1862 to the left and Anna, b 1873 photographed with Henny's two children, Torkild Kongsted b 1889 and Andrea Elisabeth Kongsted, b 1891. Photo: Private.



Christian Agerskov, b 1859 photographed with his second wife Selma, d 1948 and their son Gunnar b 1895. Photo: Private.

HILDEBRANDT & CO. FREDERIKSBORG. KJØBENHAVN, K.	PATENT ADMONITOR PATENT FOR SKIBSMASKINER	HILDEBRANDT & CO. FREDERIKSBORG. KJØBENHAVN, K.
	FOR LÅNDSMASKINER	
FOR JERNBANER		
VERDENS PARIS 1889 UDSSTILLING		

A ADMONITOR FORHINDRER BESKADIGELSER VED FRIKTIONSARMEN
HILDEBRANDT & CO KJØBENHAVN.

An advert for Christian Agerskov's invention, which he called Admonitor. It was a steam valve that could be used in all steam engines and prevented overheating. According to the family, they received income from this invention right up to the present day. As the advert shows, the invention was exhibited at the World Exhibition in Paris in 1889. Copyright: Private.



Michael Agerskov's eldest sister, Henny, 1862-1946, teacher and mother of two children. According to the family, there are many hundreds of descendants living after her and her son, Torkild Kongsted, 1889-1970. position: Cand. polyt., civil engineer and director.



Henny's spouse, Halftan Kongsted, 1857-1894, assistant professor and cand. theol. died young and left Henny with two small children. Torkild Kongsted, 1889-1970 and Andrea Elisabeth Kongsted, 1891-1972. Position: Cand. pharm. Head of Laboratory, Aarhus. Called Andre` Lisbeth. Photo: Private.

The next in line of the Agerskov siblings was Johanne Henriette, 1862-1946, who was called Henny. She was a teacher in Randers and Lyngby. I have had personal contact with one of her descendants, Jette Kongsted, married Sckerl, and I have rarely met more pleasant and welcoming people than her and her husband, Rune Sckerl. When I started searching around in Danish genealogy, I came into contact with the two of them and we became very good friends thanks to our joint research to find people in the Agerskov family. We shared all our findings, and I was fortunate enough to be invited to their home, where I was given access to all their archives relating to the Agerskov family. It was an unforgettable experience. They had a large collection of letters to and from the Agerskov family, as well as the entire collection of books and photo albums of Johanne and Michael Agerskov's daughter, Inger Agerskov, 1900-1968. The albums contained a few photos of Johanne Agerskov, but many of Michael and his daughter. My gratitude was indescribable when they donated the entire book collection and photo albums. Among the books were both Michael's and Johanne's original editions of 'Toward the Light!'

Henny experienced a profound tragedy as a young woman when her husband, Halftan Kongsted, 1857-1894, died when they had only been married for a few years, leaving her as a single mother of two children. Halftan Kongsted was educated as a lecturer and cand. theol. and was described as a cheerful man by his friends, and his death caused great sorrow throughout the Agerskov family.



A few more portraits of Michael Agerskov's sister, Johanne Henriette (Henny) married Kongsted, 1862-1946. The picture to the left is a section of a family photo from the family's photo collection. The picture in the centre is from the Royal Library. The picture to the right of the older Henny also belongs to the family.



This portrait of Henny Kongsted's husband, Halfdan Kongsted, 1857-1894, is also a detail from a family photo. Photo: Private.



Henny and Halfdan had two children together. Their son Torkild Kongsted, 1889-1970, was married twice. In the first marriage he had four sons, and in the second he had four daughters. The family tells us that there are a large number of descendants of Torkild. Jette, with whom I have had close contact, is one of Torkild's daughters. Photo: Private.



The daughter of Henny and Halfdan, Andrea Elisabeth Kongsted, 1891-1972. Like everyone in the Agerskov family, she was a gifted woman, and trained as a cand. Pharm. And worked as a laboratory manager. Photo: Private.

We know nothing about how Christian Agerskov or Henny Kongsted viewed their brother's psychic research and the publication of 'Toward the Light!', but the youngest sister, Anna Lindahl, together with her husband, Karl Lindahl, participated in the seances in the Agerskov home where they received messages from the extrasensory side. The third couple who were faithful participants were Johanne Agerskov's sister, Juliane Danckert and her husband Maximilian Danckert. There were several people who participated sporadically in the beginning, but it was these couples who were encouraged by the transcendental side to stay together, and they did.

So it was during these seances that these loving and warm-hearted people prayed for a large part of the spiritual personalities who were deeply lost and stuck in the crushing grip of darkness, and in this way helped them home to their heavenly dwellings in the Kingdom of God. This included the most deeply fallen, the slave of darkness, the most evil of the evil ones, Satan himself. And he, too, found hope for forgiveness when Christ led him to Johanne and Michael, who forgave him from the depths of their hearts and prayed for him in God's name. This brought about a fundamental shift in the history of mankind, and in the time since this turning point, the living conditions on earth have changed dramatically in a better direction for people.

Now the darkness lacks intelligent leadership, but the ether images (=evil plans) Ardor created before his return are still causing great harm, despite the fact that both God and his helpers are making enormous efforts to give us the strength to resist the evil influence of the ether images. But unfortunately, many people still allow themselves to be controlled by the power of darkness.

Together with Johanne and Michael Agerskov and Juliane and Maximilian Danckert, Anna and Karl were active contributors to making this fundamental victory for the light in the transcendental world possible.



Anna Regina Agerskov, b. 1873, and her husband, Jens Adolf Karl Kristian Lindahl, b. 1875. They were married in 1901 and were both dentists. They faithfully participated in the seances together with Mr and Mrs Agerskov. Photo: Private.



The other couple who assisted Johanne and Michael in their psychic research in the seances where they received many suffering spirits and prayed for them. And as we know, this work resulted in the creation of the great ethical, religious and scientific work 'Towards the Light!'. Life on earth will never be the same after the remarkable work of these people. The light has triumphed! Photo: DKB.

Like the other three Agerskov siblings, Anna was a very talented person who was ahead of her time in many ways. In the local history archive in Randers, you can read the following about her:

'When the first girls started at Randers Statsskole, honour was strictly enforced: at morning singing they stood among the teachers, and at recess they stayed in the headmaster's apartment. With Anna Regina Agerskov (later married Lindahl), however, this was a superfluous protection, because even with a quick brain and a witty retort, she mastered the male superiority without help.

Miss Agerskov was the daughter of the customs officer in Nykøbing Sjælland, and she was slightly older than her classmates when she became the first female student in Randers in 1896. She then went to Copenhagen and became a dentist in 1899, after which she immediately began private practice, first in her hometown Nykøbing and soon after in Copenhagen. In 1901, she married Jens Lindahl, who was also a practising dentist in the capital.

From 1875, Danish school legislation allowed women to take the matriculation exam, but it was almost 20 years before the first girl ventured into Randers School of Learning, which in turn had a 350-year-old school tradition.

Today, more than two thirds of Randers State School's students are girls, which would have pleased Anna Regina Agerskov, née Lindahl, who at a ball at the school gave an ironic speech about 'the justification of man's criticism of woman.' married Lindahl), however, this was a superfluous protection, because even with a quick brain and a witty retort, she mastered the male superiority without help.

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Anna Agerskov photographed with the male students in 1896. As the only female student in Randers, she had no trouble asserting herself. And in 1899 she became a dentist. Photo: Randers local history archive.



According to the family, Anna is eight years old in this photo. She turned out to be a very talented woman, and together with her husband she was a loyal supporter of her brother. Photo: Private.



Anna photographed with her brother, Michael. The two siblings were very close throughout their lives and collaborated on the psychic research that led to 'Toward the Light!'. Photo: Private.



Karl and Anna Lindahl had two children together, Agnes, left, and Mogens, right. Unfortunately, we don't have much personal data about these two, but according to the family, Mogens was mentally handicapped and didn't live to be very old. They also say that Agnes was born in 1902 and became a dentist, but did not have a good life. She was fascinated throughout her life by a married man, and it did not end happily. Photo: Private.



Anna Agerskov photographed with a friend. I wondered for a while if it could be Johanne Agerskov, but closer study made me discard that idea. Photo: private.



We don't know exactly when Anna passed away, but according to the family, this photo of her with her cat is from 1933. Photo: private.

Lindahl, Anna Regina, f. Agerskov, født 16. Marts 1873 i Rørvig, Holbæk Amt. Datter af Toldforvalter Michael Frederik Agerskov og Andrea Louise Stephensen. — Studentereksamen 1896 fra Randers Statsskole. Tandlægeeksamen 1899. Assistenttjeneste i Danmark 1899—1900. Praktiserede i Nykøbing Sjælland i 1900. Praktiserer i København siden 1900.

Gift 28. December 1901 med Tandlæge Jens Adolf Karl Kristian Lindahl.

Lindahl, Agnes, født 15. August 1902. Datter af Tandlæge K. Lindahl og Anna Agerskov. — Tandlægeeksamen 1925.

Lindahl, Jens Adolf Karl Kristian, født 17. September 1875 paa Frederiksberg. Søn af Assurandør Valdemar Lindahl og Cecilie Lindahl. — Præliminæreksamen 1892 fra Vesterbros Realskole. Prokurist i Forsikringsfirmaet »Grøn og Witzke«. Tandlægeeksamen 1909. Studieophold i England, Frankrig, Tyskland og Schweiz 1909—10. Praktiserer i København siden 1912.

Gift 28. December 1901 med Tandlæge Anna Regina Agerskov.

In a Danish encyclopaedia of Danish dentists, I found these short biographies of Anna and her husband, Karl, and their daughter, Agnes.



Two photos from Inger Agerskov's photo album, which I received as a gift from Jette and Rune Sckerl. The photo at the top was taken in 1926, and from the left you can see Torkild Kongsted, Michael Agerskov, Mogens (Anna and Karl Lindahl's son, Anna Lindahl, unknown woman (possibly Torkild's wife), Agnes (Anna and Karl's daughter), Henny Kongsted and Karl Lindahl. The two children are probably two of Torkild Kongsted's sons. The photo below was taken in 1929 and the two adults are Michael Agerskov and his sister, Henny Kongsted. The four boys are Torkild's sons, Olav, Eiler, Halfdan and Helge. Photo: Private.

In 'Some Psychic Experiences', in which Michael Agerskov gives a very full and fascinating account of the circumstances surrounding his and his wife's work on receiving and publishing *Toward the Light*, Michael tells a very moving story about how he and Johanne 'met' once as children. It's a very fascinating story that shows how, from an extrasensory point of view, bonds can be forged between people who have promised before their earthly lives to work together.

'I now come to an event from my own childhood, an event that made an indelible impression on me, and which then and still many years later was quite inexplicable to me.

One day - I must have been 9 years old at the time - I was close to my home, the customs inspector's house in Rørvig, on a field road leading up to a row of dunes, Højesand, which stretches from somewhere north of the town to Dybesø close to Kattegat.

Suddenly a little girl stood beside me. I did not know her, she did not say her name, and I did not ask; but I immediately liked her immensely. She put her hand in mine, and together we walked along the track to the high sand; here we stayed for some time, and then we went home again. What we talked about I do not remember at all; but we had much to say to each other, and she made an infinitely sympathetic impression on me, an impression which remains with me to this day. Then she was gone in a flash, just as suddenly as she had arrived.

I made a few unsuccessful enquiries with a few people about the little girl, but otherwise did not confide in anyone.

When my wife came to Rørvig for the first time at the age of 15, she was surprised that Højesand seemed so familiar to her, while otherwise the town and its surroundings were foreign to her. J. often said that she could not understand how she knew the place, and since at that time she had not been to places where there were dunes, heather and the like, the knowledge could not be attributed to landscape similarities.

None of us thought then or in the first years of our marriage that the explanation must be sought therein: that J. was the aforementioned little girl who, while she was once ill with fever in her home in Copenhagen, had been my playmate for a short time during a sleep deprivation - in Rørvig. But 30 years after I as a 9-year-old boy had had this experience, when we had come into contact with my late father-in-law, Pastor R. Malling-Hansen, we received an explanation that was completely valid for us, but which will seem more than fantastic to those who are unfamiliar with occult phenomena, and perhaps earn me a reputation for being less well protected.

My father-in-law told me the following: Before our incarnation, my wife and I had promised to find each other in earthly existence in order, as husband and wife, to possibly become the mediators between the sensual and extrasensory world that were so much needed. (See 'Towards the Light', page 221). In order to create a psychic connection between us, J.'s guardian spirit had brought her spiritual self to my home during her illness and materialised her by means of light emanations, so that she appeared to me as a living being, a child like myself.

My wife had no recollection of this metamorphosis (except, as previously mentioned, the impression of the landscape); and when I got to know her at the age of 15, I did not connect her with my experience, although I immediately felt attracted to her.'




Three children's photos of Michael Agerskov's wife, Johanne Agerskov née Malling-Hansen, 1873-1946. The two pictures from the left belong to the descendants' photo collection. The photo on the right is from the Heiberg Museum in Sogndal, Norway. The two pictures on the right are sections of group photographs.



The young Michael Agerskov. Detail from a group photo of the four Agerskov siblings. They also had another brother, Kai Andreas Agerskov, born in 1864, but he died as an infant. Photo: The Royal Library.

A very interesting painting, painted by Michael Agerskov's cousin, Kathinka Agerskov, 1859-1890, in 1879, entitled 'Rørvig Toldbod'. At the time, Michael's family lived in Rørvig, where his father was a customs inspector, and perhaps Kathinka painted the picture in connection with a visit to her relatives there? Kathinka Agerskov was the daughter of Michael's uncle, commander and discharge officer Andreas Julius Hass Agerskov, 1811-1872, and his wife Kathinka Elisabeth Jacobine née Prahl in 1831. The picture now belongs to the library in Nykøbing Sjælland.

Jan 24^{te} Januar.



Du uortige Langben
 Hvis Du ikke skriver
 inden den 29, saa faar
 Du ingen Fødseldags
 present, hør Du det!
 saa kan Du have det
 saa godt. Fra den
 lille Johanne

og det dufter dog saa yndigt
 over hele Marken. Min
 Hanekam er allerede udspru-
 gen. Henriettes Tulipaner ere
 næsten sprunget ud.
 Til Fru Hildebrandt Karl
 Alfred og Georg.
 Michael Agerskov

In their collections, both the descendants of the Malling-Hansen and Agerskov families have letters and greetings written by the young Johanne and Michael. On the left, little Johanne writes to her sister Engelke, whom she refers to as 'Langben'. On the right, Michael writes to his siblings in a letter from 1880. Copyright, both letters: Private.

MIN BARNEKÆRESTE.

Jeg husker nu kun dette solgyldne Haar
 og hendes Øjne, blaa, blide,
 men hvad hun hed, og hvem hun var,
 jeg véd ej, fik det aldrig at vide;
 hvorfra hun kom, hvorhen hun gik,
 jeg véd ej, fik det aldrig at vide,
 men jeg kender endnu hendes Haand i min,
 jeg ser os mellem Kornmarker skride

Hvorom vi talte? jeg mindes det ej mer,
 men jeg husker drømmevagt en Blomster-
 vrimmel,

alle Vegne Sang, Lærkemusik
 fra den blaa, høje Himmel;
 og jeg husker en grønnende Skrænt, hvor
 vi sad,

Haand i Haand, Side ved Side,
 og en Sol, som laa om et gyldent Haar
 og i disse Øjne, blaa, blide.

26

Som en Drøm gled Timerne — Aften det blev,
 Aften, graa Nat, før vi det vidste,
 og da vi sagde hinanden far vel,
 var det som Hjertet maatte briste.
 Hvem hun var, hvorfra hun kom,
 jeg véd ej, fik det aldrig at vide,
 kun Mindet leger end med et solgyldent Haar
 og to Barneøjne, blaa, blide.

At the bottom of the previous page: Do you think the aforementioned 'meeting' between the very young Michael and Johanne was the model for this poem? We don't know, but it's very likely that the inexplicable experience of childhood inspired this poetic presentation. The poem, 'My childhood sweetheart', is taken from the book 'Fra den gamle Skipperby og andre digte' by Michael Agerskov from 1909.

As they had promised before their incarnations, Michael and Johanne found each other in earthly existence, and became engaged and married. They knew nothing at the time about what awaited them but lived an ordinary life like any Danish couple. In 1900 they had their daughter Inger Johanne Agerskov, 1900-1968. Michael had a master's degree and eventually became a lecturer. He had his own literary production of both poems and novels in addition to the publication of 'Toward the Light!'. He worked at Marie Kruse's girls' school and was also an examiner at the Danish teacher training program.

But it was the ethical, religious and scientific work, 'Toward the Light!' that was his main publication. The work was produced by intuitive thought inspiration through his wife, Johanne Agerskov, who was a medium. Johanne Agerskov was the daughter of the well-known Danish director of the Royal Institute for the Deaf Mutes in Copenhagen, as well as a priest, inventor and scientific researcher, Rasmus Malling-Hansen.

Michael Agerskov's literary production consisted mainly of poetry collections, but also some novels. And together with Erling Rørdam, he authored reading material for primary school, middle school and secondary school. The reading material was also adapted and published in Swedish.

In the early 1900s, the Agerskovs came into contact with the spiritualist community in Denmark and very quickly had some extremely sensational experiences. They were called from the transcendental world, and Johanne Agerskov learnt that she was a medium, and had promised before her life to be a communicator of the transcendental truths to mankind. Through weekly séances that lasted for several years, Johanne Agerskov received thought poems from various deceased spirits, and the other séance participants - six in all - contributed by posing questions on religious, ethical and scientific subjects and by writing down the answers Johanne Agerskov received.

The result of this work was the book *Toward the Light*, published by Michael Agerskov. The book was sent to all the Danish bishops and 60 priests, who, according to the spirits of light, had all promised to help reform the Danish church on the basis of TtL. But the expected reformation did not materialise - despite TtL gaining a number of supporters among the common people, it was met with silence from the church. Michael Agerskov later published several books related to the main work. In the book 'Nogle psykiske Oplevelser' (Some Psychic Experiences) he tells of the experiences that led to the couple publishing *Toward the Light!* TtL is currently published in a number of languages, including English, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian, French, Swedish and Norwegian.

Michael Agerskov's literary production:

*Two People and Twilight, poem 1893

*Adaysta, novel, 1897

*The Source of Life, story, 1897

- *The Voices of Twilight, poem 1899
- *The Great Gunpowder Conspiracy, novel 1902
- *From the old Skipper's Village and other Poems, 1909
- *The Way of Truth and Life, Spiritual Songs, 1928
- *On the Mountain of Explanation - A Circle of Poems
- *The Long Walk, first part 'Deo Gloria', a poem. Written in 1930, published in 2020.

School books (in co-operation with Erling Rørdam):

- *Danish Reading Book for middle school, secondary school and primary school, in several editions from 1904 to 1933
- *Reading book in Swedish
- *Danish Literature before 1800, published in 1919
- * Danish Poetry with emphasis on the 1900th century

Books related to Towards the Light!

- *Greetings to Denmark, 1915
- *Toward the Light! 1920
- *The Doctrine of Atonement and the Shortcut, 1920
- *Some Psychic Experiences, 1922
- *The Church and Christianity, 1923
- *Questions and Answers I and II, 1929-30



Johanne Agerskov's father, Rasmus Malling-Hansen, 1835-1890, superintendent, priest, inventor and scientific researcher. Photo: private.



Johanne Agerskov's mother, Cathrine Georgia f. Heiberg, 1841-1876, daughter of principal Søren Johan Heiberg, 1810-1871. Photo: Private.



Johanne Agerskov's father, Rasmus Malling-Hansen, was very talented and became internationally recognised for his invention of one of the very first mass-produced typewriters, the so-called writing ball. The first official model was launched in 1870, and was built into a wooden box. Photo: Sverre Avnskog.



Malling-Hansen worked continuously to improve his invention throughout the 70s and early 80s. The most famous model was the transportable, tall model, which won a gold medal at the World Exhibition in Paris in 1878. Photo: Auction Team Breker.

‘Towards the Light!’ unfortunately did not have the major impact either in the church or elsewhere in society that had been hoped for from the spiritual side. The amount of publicity it received in the Danish newspapers was rather limited, and the Danish bishops and priests did not follow up the publication as they had promised before their earthly lives. However, according to Johanne Agerskov, from a spiritual point of view, there was only a small possibility that the church would reform its doctrine on the basis of TtL. But God's mill grinds slowly but steadily, so we can be absolutely certain that TtL will form the basis of humanity's common faith at some point in the future.

We know of a few interviews with Johanne and Michael in Danish newspapers, and shortly after the publication of TtL in 1920, Johanne was interviewed in Berlingske Tidende:

‘Interview with Johanne Agerskov in Berlingske Tidende 31 March 1920.

Strange mediumistic messages.

Mrs. Michael Agerskov receives through her deceased father, among other things, a speech from Christ to mankind. The Mrs. tells about it to B. T.

The series of strange spiritistic phenomena, of which this season has been so rich, has now found an embodiment in a work of more than 300 pages, which was published yesterday, and which is published by Assistant Professor cand. mag. Michael Agerskov containing a number

of announcements due to the assistant professor's wife, a daughter of the long-deceased well-known pastor, Malling Hansen.

Yesterday we had the opportunity to talk to the lady about her strange work, and her explanation did not make it any less strange.

-How have you received your messages?

-In a different way from most others who receive messages of a mediumistic character. I have received them under constant control.

-Of yourself?

-Yes, I have not been in a trance.

-You have not written 'automatically'?

-Like Julius Magnussen? Not at all. I've got it all to give. And the message is not due to my superconsciousness or subconsciousness, and I know that I have only been the necessary tool for the intelligences that have manifested themselves.

-What were you given?

-An explanation of the whole existence of the universe, of Christ's relation to mankind, of all the incarnations mankind must go through before they reach the final purification, the struggle of darkness with light, the struggle of evil with good. In addition, various speeches, including a speech from Christ to mankind. It is all accompanied by a commentary by my father, Pastor Malling-Hansen.

-He's dead?

-Yes.

-When?

-I 1890.

And when did he give his commentary?

-The book was written in 1914-1916.

-So he made himself known to you?

-No, I got in touch with him in 1910.

-From your late father?

-Yes.

-How did you know it was him?

-He immediately gave me proofs, but they were of a private nature, so I cannot produce them.

-But they were conclusive?

-Yes, absolutely. To begin with, I was quite outside mediumism. But from that day on I made myself available. I realised it was my father because of those proofs. Some of them I mention in my book, but others were so private that I cannot put them forward.

-Have you received nothing from your father after 1916?

-Yes, but the book was written in 1916, and then I was informed that I had got through it faster than I had planned. Therefore, I had to put the book aside for the time being. So that's what I did.

-And when did you hear from your father again?

-1. November.

-How did it come about?

-Through thought Inspiration.

-And what was it?

-Now I was to take the book to Græbe's printers, so it would come out in the last days before Easter.

Agerskov's book 'Nogle Psykiske Oplevelser' in 1922, and was printed in B. T. on 3 October 1922. I will first reproduce an extract from Johanne Agerskov's letter, and then the interview. As can be seen from her letter, she was not particularly satisfied with the work of the journalist, Christian Houmark.

Dear Mr Jørgensen! Jørgensen!

Today I will have to write to you a little in response to your enquiry about how the press has received our latest book, 'Some psychic experiences'. Well, how it has been received there is easy enough to answer - we have not seen more than one review in Berlingeren about a month after the book was published. The review was very short, quite favourable, but the content of the book was not mentioned. Shortly afterwards we had a visit from Mr Chr: Houmark from B. T. His interview makes more of an impression of being favourable than of being successful! Many of the things we said he has misunderstood or put in the wrong places, so that it has little in common with what we meant. I send you this interview, and you can judge for yourself.

B. T. 3. October 1922.

'I know more than the eighteen hundred million people on Earth'.

Master's degree Michael Agerskov Agerskov and the Spiritists.

There is still and increasing unrest within our domestic spiritualist world, and a book published in these days: 'Psychic Experiences', will cause the waves of unrest to break, because the author is the respected educator and scientist, cand. mag. Michael Agerskov. Mr Agerskov's previous books: 'Towards the Light' and 'Greetings to Denmark' have created him a considerable and interested readership, even outside the supporters of psychical research. All in all, he is a personality whose education is deeply rooted, just as his knowledge seems both grounded and comprehensive. There is no hysteria here, but everything is characterised by seriousness and an almost heavy truthfulness.

Mr Agerskov is so completely devoid of all external mysticism. He is as far from heavenly, blue-eyed bliss as he is from dark spiritual weightiness. He speaks quietly about what for him has become the obvious - I would so much like, says Mr Agerskov, or rather, my wife and I, because we have experienced everything together, we would so much like to put an end to violent spiritualism. The one that is cultivated socially, with the outrageous eulogising of the dead and much, much more, which is a mockery of the holy, the great and beautiful powers, which not everyone is aware of, at least in the right way; People who have not seriously trained themselves in psychical research are exposed to mistakes, to assaults from the stronger, spiritual intelligences on the other side, and it is to commit a gross sin against the rich, wonderful values bestowed upon us in the invisible world to cultivate them as entertainment.

-What do you want with your strange books?

-Strange, oh yes, you could call them that, they are aimed at that part of humanity that longs to walk towards the light.... What I want..... among other things I also want to cleanse the Church of all the dust it has collected over the years, rid it of all superfluous dogmas.....

-Which?

-The doctrine of atonement must fall.....

-Why?

-Because a single being, great as he may be, cannot atone for what we have done wrong. Each individual must do so, and for that we have the many earth lives, the individual incarnations.

-How will you explain it?

-We have been here, and we will be here again until we have learnt to master the evil in ourselves. When that has happened here on earth, we continue our spiritual development until we have reached as high as we can, namely the Kingdom of God. For that is where we all meet.

-Where is the Kingdom of God?

-I can answer you: as Giordano Bruno made human beings homeless with regard to the Kingdom of God by claiming that there is nothing 'upwards' but only something 'outwards', so we have, through our research, met the Kingdom of God as a real place to which we can turn our thoughts. The Kingdom of God is real, and the Kingdom of God carries the whole universe.

-Where is hell?

-There was a hell where the most fallen spirits were held fast by the power of their own wickedness, but hell is extinguished, and the devil has returned to God, where he has been forgiven for everything.

-How do you know this?

Mr and Mrs Agerskov say simultaneously and with deep seriousness in their voices:

- We know it. We know it through the messages that have been given to us through the high spirits bestowed upon mankind as its invisible leaders.

-What are these spirits?

-Many of them, says Mr Agerskov, have lived here on earth: Jesus of Nazareth and Paul and many others.

-Do you believe in Christ?

-We believe in Jesus of Nazareth, as the exalted man, as our good brother.

-The poems you published, inspired by the late Golden Age poets - what were they?

Mrs Agerskov answers: -They were submitted to my husband, but I did not think that was proof enough that it was the very spirit of the deceased speaking through him, for he writes himself. I told him that I would only feel convinced when the poets spoke through me. I was able to write two lines that rhymed. But then it happened. Some of the poets of the Golden Age gave me in my sleep, when my spirit was liberated, proof of the existence of personality even after death. I learnt the poems in my sleep and wrote them down in the morning in a waking state. My husband knew both word choice and rhythm. Sometimes it was Aarestrup, sometimes Grundtvig or Chr. Winther. I knew none of the poems, they were all new to me, all without exception.

-Where were you while your spirit was liberated in sleep?

-I was in the sphere where the poet was who would inspire me - I myself have no concept of poetry.

-What did the critics say?

Mr Agerskov replies:

-They made a fool of it.... it was a falsum.... a cleverly realised pastiche.... So we were charged with outright fraud, for the lowest speculation. I should be impossible as a teacher if such a thing were the case.... And if that book was as excellent a pastiche as they wrote, why should I not take the honour home.... I, too, am a human being.

-Isn't it hard to be surrounded by Aander on a daily basis?

The lady replies with a deep sigh:

-Aah yes.... Of course we are often tormented by the suffering of spirits - but we can also draw strength and vigour from them.

-Have men a free will?

-Yes, says Mr Agerskov, we do. And we have a Guardian Spirit who helps us. God does not force anyone to do what is right. What we have sinned against God and the eternal laws, God can forgive us when we repent. What we have sinned against men, men must forgive us. Every human being who dies is brought to the sphere where his spiritual self belongs, and there we receive all the help and care that is necessary.

-By whom?

-By the spirits of light. And there we all meet. No one is lost. If only one were lost, God would not be omnipotent, for then something of God himself would be lost; we all contain a divine spark of life. I knew that. I know more than the eighteen hundred million people on Earth

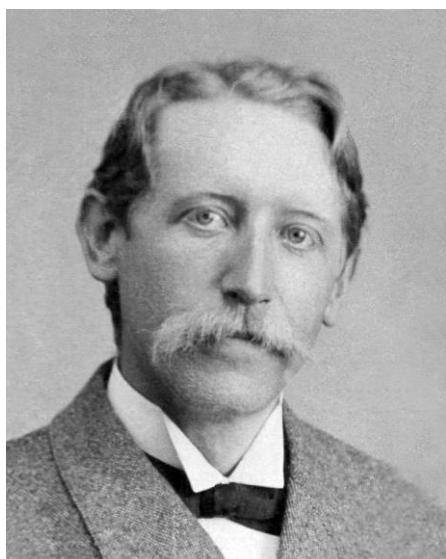
-How dare you say that?

-I can say it rightly, because for a number of years we have been bestowed with messages from the highest spirits of light, but we are not spiritualists. We renounce vulgar spiritualism and go our own way, under the guidance of the Most High.

Christian Houmark.



Christian Jørgensen was a very good friend and supporter of the Agerskov family. Unfortunately, mother and daughter broke off contact with him due to a disagreement regarding the so-called 'Bishop's letter' from 1938. But he continued to support them for the rest of his life. Photographs from 1905, 1920 and 1936. Photo: Private.



Above: The original interview in Berlingske Tidende from 3 October 1922, by journalist Christian Houmark from B. T. The pictures to the right: Michael Agerskov, together with his wife, Johanne Agerskov, was incarnated for the purpose of assisting Christ and his helpers in realising the 'shortcut' - the direct contact between the spirits of light and mankind. Thanks to the Agerskovs' trust in the spirits of light, all the earthbound spirits, including Ardor, were won back to the light, and God was able to erase the sphere of hell. Then began the painstaking work of receiving the account of the origin of the struggle between light and darkness, the creation of man, and the true relationship between God and man. Both photos: Private.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that both Johanne and Michael Agerskov were people of a very special mould. They came from families that had played an important role in Danish society and had proven their reliability and great talent over generations. Johanne came from the great Danish-Norwegian Heiberg family, and her father was a personal adviser to the Danish queen. Michael came from the great Grove family and several of his ancestors were officers and highly trusted officials in the Danish customs service.

Michael is described as cultured and stylish, and a very warm and friendly man. He worked as a teacher at Marie Kruse's girls' school for many years, and I'm sure he was an extremely skilful and caring teacher for all the girls who were educated there. He was also an examiner at the Danish teacher training programme and had his own literary output.

Johanne was probably perceived as a somewhat more authoritative and strong-willed personality, and she also worked as a teacher for a few years before marrying Michael - at the Branner sisters' girls' school in Slagelse. Two of her sisters, Emma and Marie, also worked there. Johanne was an ordinary housewife for several years after the couple married and had their daughter, Inger Johanne Agerskov, 1900-1968, and little did they know at the time what awaited them a few years down the line.

John's sister, Juliane, had come into contact with the rich spiritualist community in Denmark at the time and encouraged her sister, Johanne, and her husband to take part in a séance. Johanne, who was somewhat sceptical by nature, wasn't particularly keen on the idea, but was nevertheless persuaded to give it a try. It soon became clear that the psychic spirits wanted to get in touch with Johanne in particular. At the séances, small tables with three legs were often used to evoke tapping sounds in order to spell, and the table was raised in such a way that it pointed towards Johanne. At first, Johanne did not like this at all, but several events of a special nature eventually convinced her that the extrasensory side had a special message that they wanted to communicate to her.

And that was the start of some incredible years, during which Johanne and Michael made themselves entirely available to the spirits. A very important reason why they were convinced of the reality of the enquiries was that Johanne Agerskov's deceased father, Rasmus Malling-Hansen, 1835-1890, contacted them in a séance, and the evidence he was able to provide that he really was her father was of such a nature that no one else could have known the same. Johanne became a very faithful and persistent 'secretary' for the spirits of light, and her husband was her equally faithful supporter. Together with Michael's sister, Anna and her husband, Karl Lindahl, and Johanne's sister and her husband, Maximillian Danckert, they formed a group that held weekly séances for several years.

Once Johanne had been convinced that she had promised to take on the task of being the supernatural world's helper in her earthly life, she dedicated herself fully to this task. She had been very fond of her father and took it very hard when he died when she was only 17 years old. Meeting him as an adult obviously made a strong impression on her, and gave her the motivation to co-operate with her father's heavenly spirit, Leo. She abstained from virtually all social life and other experiences during these years because she realised that it weakened her mediumistic abilities. She also avoided strong sunlight for the same reason.

From the TtL books, we have learnt that Michael and Johanne belong to a group of the youngest, who over many centuries have assisted Christ in the one great task: To win back to the light the prince of darkness, the fallen angel, who was at the forefront of the battle against good. God had laid out a plan for the youngest, the so-called 'shortcut', and if it succeeded, brighter times would dawn for the earth. Christ and his helpers sought out the elders in the hellish sphere and brought them to the Agerskov couple, who prayed for them, so that many of them were won back to the light and could be brought home to the Kingdom of God. While the youngest spent long, hard times in the horrible darkness of the infernal sphere searching

for the fallen, Johanne and Michael were incarnated on earth to pray for all the pre-darkened but gently hopeful spirits who had suffered for centuries and millennia. And Johanne and Michael prayed for them out of the compassion and love of their hearts, and hundreds upon hundreds returned home.

In the end, almost only Satan and his dual remained. Satan desperately tried to escape, for he was convinced that God in his rage would crush and destroy him. But Christ found him, thanks to his infinite patience, and by means of his loving behaviour he raised Satan's hopes that God would not crush him, but rather meet him with love and forgiveness. The way was then open for the light to finally win back God's lost son, the evil one himself. But according to God's laws, the power of darkness over Satan could not be broken until an earthly person proved stronger than the power of darkness, and gave Satan his forgiveness and said a prayer for him. At the word of Christ, Johanne and Michael Agerskov prayed a loving prayer for the prince of darkness and thus he was released from darkness, and Christ could bring him home to the Kingdom of God, where God received him with his loving forgiveness, and the joy in the Kingdom of Heaven was indescribable.

Finally, after many millennia, Christ and his helpers had succeeded in their greatest and most important mission - to win the prodigal son back to the light. And with this great victory of light over darkness, a whole new era in the history of the universe and human life began.



An anniversary photo of the staff at Marie Kruse's girls' school in Fredriksberg. According to the book it was printed in, the photo is from 1927, but based on Michael Agerskov's appearance, I would say that the photo must have been taken after 1930. Michael is sitting in the front row, next to the school principal. Michael Agerskov contracted a severe case of the so-called Spanish flu in 1928, and one after-effect of the disease was increasing muscle paralysis that eventually affected his heart. He was very weak in the last years of his life and died in 1933.

For those of us who know *Toward the Light!* and the whole story of the great endeavour to win the evil spirits in the hellish sphere back to the light, so that God could erase ‘hell’, there can be no doubt that Johanne and Michael Agerskov, together with Christ and the other youngest, were the ones who made this breakthrough for the light possible. But both Johanne and Michael were modest and faithful people, who never sought anything for themselves. Just as Jesus never sought power or fame for himself when he lived on earth as Jesus. And nothing would have been possible without God's help and support, and the great trust of all those involved in God's help in difficult times.

Johanne was even so modest on her own behalf that she collected photos of herself from her closest friends and got some of her friends to destroy them by burning them. The motivation for doing this was to avoid any focus on her, or any personality worship. One of those who participated in the burning, Børge Brønnum, has written a declaration stating that Johanne Agerskov would be regarded as nothing more than a secretary for the spirits of light and nothing more.

Personally, I think Johanne Agerskov's assessment was completely wrong. There is nothing that creates personality worship more than when you lack information and certain knowledge about historical persons. We see this very clearly in parts of the Danish TtL community. They regard Johanne Agerskov as an infallible medium and have no room for a single critical thought about what Johanne did. THIS is what personality worship is all about. For my part, I have devoted decades to finding historical knowledge about these people, because I believe it is the very best method to see them as real people, with possible flaws and shortcomings, but also strengths.

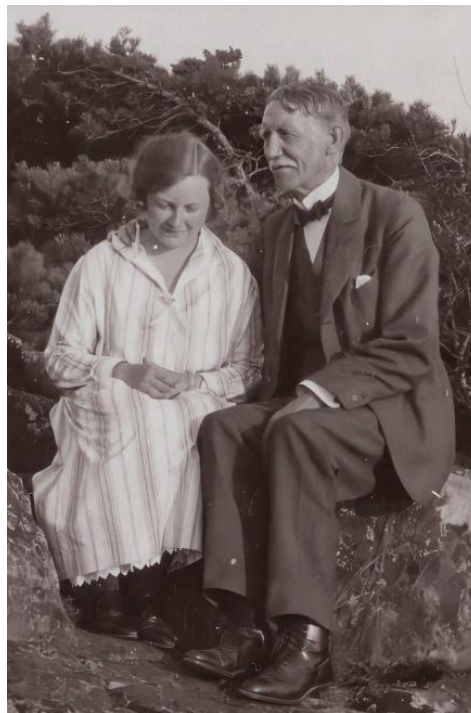
I hope I've managed to show that they were highly credible, modest, well-rounded, conscientious and talented, but also just people, who can make mistakes.



Michael Agerskov photographed with his niece Agnes (left), sister Henny and daughter Inger (right). The photo appears to have been taken outside Agrisilvana, the house his father Henrik Michael had built in Nykøbing. Photo: Private.



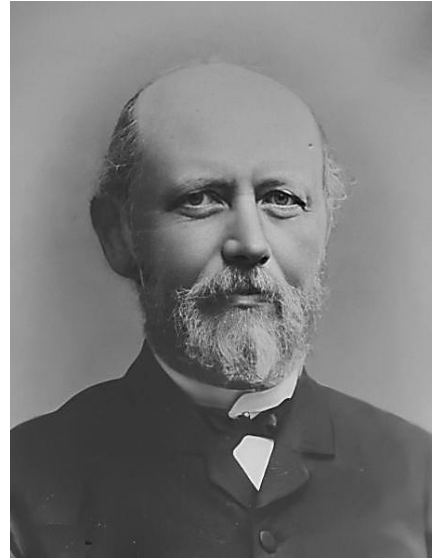
Three children's pictures of Johannes and Michael's daughter, Inger Johanne Agerskov, 1900-1968. The picture on the left is from 1902 and the picture on the right is from 1905. We don't know too many details about Inger's life, but she received an academic education, specialising in German, and is referred to as a German teacher. In the family, they say that Johanne was a fairly strict mother, who kept Inger on a tight rein. Inger's photo album contains many pictures of her on various trips with her father, and many loving cards and greetings have been preserved from her. When her father died in 1933, she stayed with her mother and cared for her, just as she had done with her father during his illness after the Spanish flu. Inger was active for many years in the Toward the Light community and was on the board of the Society for the Dissemination of TiL. She also translated TiL into English together with Poul Ørsten in 1950. Unfortunately, Inger suffered mental health problems towards the end of her life and was admitted to a psychiatric hospital. I have been fortunate enough to be given her entire collection of TiL books by descendants in the Agerskov family. All photos: Private.



Inger Agerskov had a very close and loving relationship with her father, and her photo album shows that they went on many trips together. The photo on the left is from Silkeborg in 1927. The photo on the right is not dated, but the nature is reminiscent of the surroundings in Nykøbing. Both photos: Private.



Johanne Agerskov and her daughter Inger Johanne Agerskov. They cared for Michael in the last years of his life, and both continued their commitment to TtL until 1938, when Johanne published the much-discussed 'Bishop's Letter'. Photo: Private.



It was the spiritual encounter with her father, Rasmus Malling-Hansen, that convinced Johanne Agerskov and led to her dedicating herself fully to being a helper of the higher spirits on earth. Photo: Private.

Michael Agerskov's last days.

One of the most important supporters of the Agerskovs was author, teacher and librarian Christian Jørgensen. He was deeply fascinated by *Towards the Light*, mentioned the work in a number of articles and books, and was a strong advocate for the book. Large parts of *Questions and Answers II* are based on questions posed by Jørgensen, and he also supported the publication financially, receiving a small return on his investment. In other words, it was only a matter of a few paltry kroner in dividends, because the supplement hardly sold in the first few years, 3, 12 and 18 copies in the first three years.

Over the years, his relationship with the three Agerskovs developed into a very close and warm friendship, which was unfortunately destroyed in 1938 when he could not accept that the Episcopal Letter came from the spirits of light. He repeatedly asked Johanne Agerskov to contact Leo in order to get him to elaborate on the Bishops Letter, but Johanne replied that Leo had nothing to add, and both Inger and Johanne Agerskov made great efforts to make their views clear to Jørgensen. But when he still maintained his scepticism, Johanne Agerskov finally declared that she would have no further correspondence with him and that all his future letters would be returned unopened. So it's safe to say that the dispute over the Bishop's Letter is not new. It is sad to read how the close friendship between Johanne Agerskov and Chr Jørgensen was destroyed by the dispute between them over «The Bishops Letter».

This time it was Michael Agerskov's illness and death that I wanted to talk about. In 1933 Jørgensen was still a close friend of the Agerskov family, and already the day after Michael's death, 12 December 1933, Johanne Agerskov wrote to Chr Jørgensen:

Dear Mr Jørgensen!

Yesterday at 12.2 am my dear husband went home. He slept quietly and calmly, conscious to the last. The disease had recently attacked his heart muscle, he had only very little pain now and then in his heart, he suffered mostly from an overwhelming fatigue. My daughter and I are only grateful that he is now at rest and will be himself again, but we will probably miss him when we think of the good and happier days of former times, he was a rare lovable person, I have only good and wonderful memories of him from our long life together.

A short time ago my husband asked me to bring you a cordial greeting when I wrote to you of his passing, and to thank you for your friendship for him and for us all. And on behalf of my daughter I must thank you for the German style exercise you sent her, she thinks it is excellent!

As only 3 copies of Supplement II were sold in the annual statement of sales, we have put aside the few kroner that have been received for next year's statement. As far as I can understand from Mr Architect Brønnum, there is a mess in the accounts of the books sold. Bookseller Fugl's accounts thus show a different result than the publisher's. Mr Brønnum has objected to this on his own behalf and ours, and the publisher has promised to check all remaining books and have the errors corrected in next year's statement. So we must be patient for the time being.

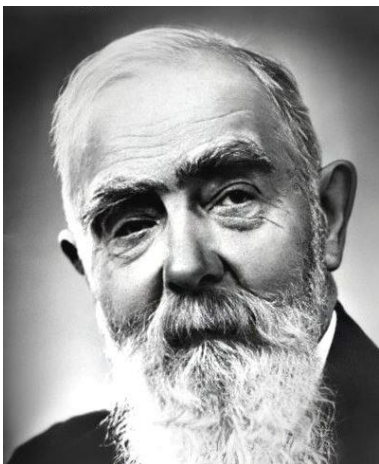
Now I hope that the next time you come to Copenhagen you will delight my daughter and me with a visit - after all, my husband was already too busy to visit you. My husband was too tired to see and talk to our good friends.

Cordial greetings from my daughter and yours

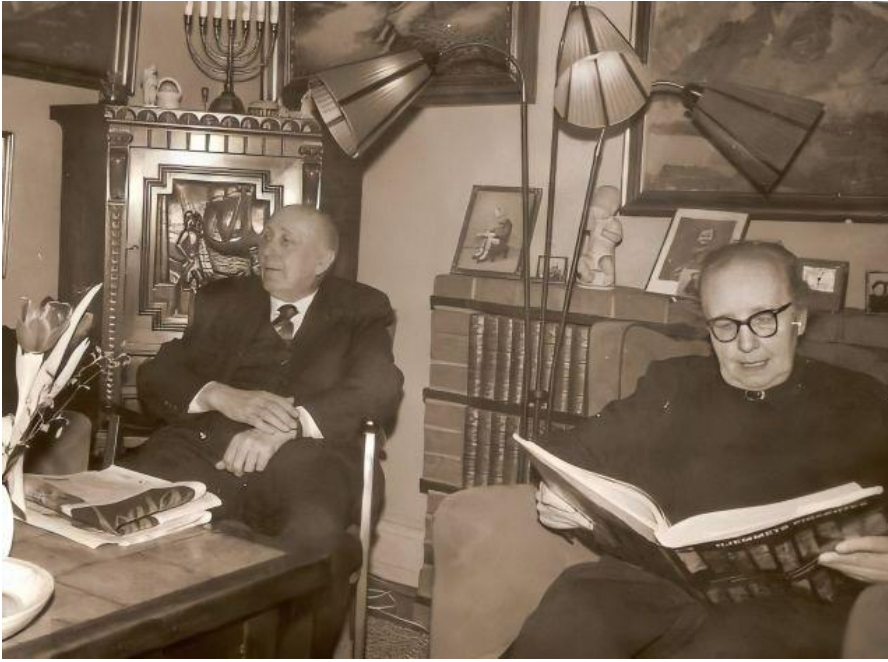
*Johanne Agerskov
f. Malling-Hansen*

In a letter written to editor Christian Brinch on 31 December 1932, reproduced in one of the copy books, Johanne Agerskov writes the following about the cause of her husband's illness:

Yes, unfortunately my husband is very ill and weak. About four years ago he had a bad attack of influenza or Spanish flu, the after-effects of which have become a nervous and muscular disorder, which has caused him to resign as a lecturer. He is so weak that he cannot walk from one room to another without assistance.



On the left: Christian Brinch 1859-1952, editor of The spiritualist magazine, 'Light across the land'. On the right: Christian Houmark, 1869-1950, who interviewed Johanne and Michael Agerskov in Berlingske Tidende in 1922.



Christian Jørgensen was a very close friend and supporter of the Agerskovs for many years. Although his friendship with Inger and Johanne Agerskov was destroyed by a disagreement in 1938, he remained a staunch defender of both TiL and Johanne Agerskov throughout his life. He is photographed in his old age together with his sister in her home. Photo: Private

On 6 June 1933 Johanne Agerskov writes in great detail about her husband's and her own illness in a letter to Chr Jørgensen. A misunderstanding had arisen that the Agerskov family regarded Jørgensen as a stranger from whom they did not want unannounced visits, and Johanne Agerskov does much to clear up this misunderstanding. Among other things, she writes

You can never be or become a stranger to us, we consider you one of our best friends, and we cannot thank you enough for all you have done for us and for 'V.m.L.' But it was true that I had asked the architect (Knud Brønnum, SA's comment) to tell you if you visited him: that we could not accept visits from anyone, because both my husband and I were ill. On the whole, we only accept unannounced visits from my and my husband's closest relatives. It has been necessary to say this to all our friends, because my husband is so ill and weak that he cannot bear to talk to anyone. And many times, we have had to ask our friends and my husband's colleagues from school to leave before getting to greet my husband. It has always pained me, and so I asked the architect to tell you about my husband's illness, so that you would not go in vain.

Yes, it is a sad time for us all, my husband is getting weaker and weaker every day and more helpless, so we have had to take a nurse to help us; an amiable, elderly, helpful and careful lady, whom we are very fond of, she comes in the morning at eight and stays till seven in the evening; but when I have my gallstone attacks she stays till about ten and helps my husband to bed.

The doctors who treat my husband agree that his disease is a nerve and muscle atrophy that slowly weakens the whole body, but it may take years before death occurs. The disease has now lasted for more than four years - and no one knows how much time is left. At present we have only our family doctor, but Dr Levisar - consultant at the Nerve Department of Frederiksberg Hospital - has examined him and prescribed various injections of poison to possibly stop the disease. For a long time, he was in contact with our family doctor, who

informed him of the condition, but then at Christmas time Dr Levisar thought that we had better give up the injections, as there was no improvement. - From the middle of January until a fortnight ago I have been quite well with only a few and small seizures, but then I had a bad period with 6 to 7 very large seizures, probably because I was overworked holding my husband up one day, he was about to faint while the nurse and I helped him. We must always be two about him, as he cannot keep himself upright by his own help. Now, however, I hope that this bad period may be over for this time, the last few days I have felt much better...

Well, then, I hope, dear Mr Jørgensen, that you will not often think of yourself as a stranger to us. Jørgensen, that you are not often of the opinion that you are a stranger to us, on the contrary, you are one of our best friends and we will always be grateful to you and are always happy to see you. But in the future, you will probably be so kind as to inform us by telephone or letter when you can look up to us and then you will have to be content with my daughter and me, as no one outside the immediate family is allowed to talk to my husband. From 3 to 5 o'clock he always lies on the sofa in the dining room, so that the rest of us can receive visitors during that time; but there are days that are so bad for my husband that we cannot even do that, so I would like to know in advance when we can expect you, it would hurt me very much if you had to go in vain.

Thank you once again and many kind greetings to you from all three of us.

Yours, Johanne Agerskov



One of the very last pictures we know of Michael Agerskov, taken in the Garden Society's garden in 1931. You can clearly see that he is much reduced at this time. The others in the picture are Anna and her son, Mogens, behind, and Michael's daughter Inger Agerskov next to her father. Photo: Private.

*Historie Vandrer mod byset
Michael Agerstov-gaard hjem*

Kjøbenhavn 3' Juledag 1933.
Kæreste Hr. og Fru Prior.

Først og fremmest hjertelig Tak for Deres kære Julebrev og det forudgaaende Brev. Da jeg ikke havde Mr. Jensens rigtige Adresse et Brev til Dem gaaet tabt, men nu skal jeg nok skrive til den rigtige Adresse, saa at det ikke sker oftere. Postvæsenet er ganske uskyldigt.

At jeg sender Dem dette Brev midt i, eller rettere lige efter Juledagens Komsamer, skyldes, at jeg har lovet Fru Agerstov, at skrive til Dem og fortælle Dem, at vor elskede og prægtige Ven Lektor Agerstov nu er gaaet hjem; han forlod denne Verden den 11 December ved halvtiden, stille og ganske usmerkeligt for ham selv.

Fru Agerstov, der har saa meget at tage Vare paa, kan ikke faa Tid til at skrive til Dem endnu, derfor bad hun mig om det, da jeg var op hos Fru og Frøken Agerstov nogle Dage efter.

Da De jo ved, at Hr. Agerstov i de sidste to Aar har været meget svag er vi alle kun glade over, at han nu har faaet Helse, men vi nær ham, det er en betydningsfuld Plads, der nu er tom; en meget betydningsfuld Mand, en af Verdens Store, og dog ukendt i Verden udenfor den Kredse, der kendte ham og elsker ham. Hvor er det ejendommeligt at tænke paa, nu er han ikke mere Hr. Agerstov, men fuldstændig sig selv, en af de Mand, der har fuldendt sin Opgave her i Verden, nu er han hjemme, og for os langt nærmere, naar jeg tænker paa ham, og jeg, som vi alle glæder os til atter at møde ham, naar Tidens Fyld kommer. Vidunderligt bliver Fru Agerstov fortalte os, at Hr. Agerstov om Morgenen vildt stødte som sædvanligt, men fælte sig alligevel saa træt, at han bestemt blev og blev liggende, og da han ved Tolv-tiden skulde have Frokost, saa han ikke saa godt i Sengen, hvorfor de hjalp ham, saa han kunde slæbe sig Benene ud af Sengen. Han blev pakket godt ind, og Fru Agerstov stødte hans Ryg med en Pude, meden Sygeplejersken begyndte at give ham lidt Mad; da Fru Agerstov kom ind lidt efter, bad Fru Agerstov hende stotte Faderen, saa vilde Fru Agerstov hjælpe Frøkenen, og da Fru Agerstov

foran ham og spurgte, om han nu sad godt, svarede han: Ja, det er rart at Taa Benene ud af Sengen! og saa rallede han et Øjeblik, bøjede Hovedet ned til Siden og var død. Stille, uden selv at mærke det mindste til, at hans Legeme nu ikke mere var Bolig for hans aandelige Jeg.

Samme Aften blev det dede Legeme ført ud til Krematoriet, og nogle Dage efter fik Fru Agerstov at vide at Brændingen havde fundet Sted, og derefter blev det officielt meddelt.

At vi allesammen føler Savnnet er jo kun vidunderligt; thi den man elsker, savner man altid; naar han ikke er til Stede, men bliver saa ikke Gensynet saa langt rigere, langt skønnere? Jo, absolut! Og det ved vi, at vi alle vil komme til at opleve, og derfor er det saa hyggeligt at sidde ude hos Fru Agerstov og tale med hende og Frk. Agerstov, nu hvor vi ved, at han har det godt, er fri af sine Lidelser, er hjemme! —

Ja, kære begge To, det er hvad jeg dennegang maa fortælle Dem, jeg havde haabet, at jeg kunde have svaret mere indgaaende paa Deres Brev, men Tiden er løbet fra mig, og jeg kunde ikke lide, at De skulde vente længere paa dette Brev. —

Nu har De vel faaet de længe ventede Billeder m. m., saa at De har kunnet fejre Julen i rolig Beviethed om, at Billederne er i Deres Eje, vil De hilse hele Kredsen fra os og bringe Dem vor hjerteligste Nytaars-hilsen, som vi ogsaa sender Dem begge To vore kærligste Hilsener og alle gode Ønsker for det Aar der, naar Brevet er Dem i Hænde, er begyndt.

Med den hjerteligste Hilsen fra os begge to ved Deres
meget hengivne Ven,



In a letter to Eric and Bodil Prior from 3 Christmas Day, 1933, architect Knud Brønnum describes Michael's last day of life.

Knud Brønnum about Michael Agerstov's last day!

In the Danish Immigration Archive in Aalborg, there are a lot of records from Agerstov's good friend in the USA, Eric Prior. In this collection I found some letters written by architect Knud Brønnum, who was also a close friend of Agerstov's, to Eric Prior and his wife at the time, Bodil, née Kjær. In one of these letters, Brønnum describes Michael Agerstov's last day in great detail. I reproduce here Knud Brønnum's entire letter to Eric and Bodil Prior:

Copenhagen 3' Christmas Day 1933.

Dearest Mr and Mrs Prior:

First and foremost, thank you very much for your dear Christmas letter and the preceding letter. As I did not have Mr Jensen's real address, a letter to you has been lost, but now I will write to the right address so that it does not happen more often. The postal service is quite innocent.

The reason I am sending you this letter in the middle, or rather just after the Christmas holidays, is that I have promised Mrs Agerstov to write to you and tell you that our beloved and splendid friend senior lecturer Agerstov has now gone home; he left this world on 11



Danish-American Eric Prior, a close friend of the Agerskovs and Knud Brønnum. Photo: Private.

December at half past twelve, quietly and quite imperceptibly for himself. Mrs Agerskov, who has so much to take care of, cannot find time to write to you yet, so she asked me to do so when I visited Mrs and Miss Agerskov a few days later.

As you know that Mr Agerskov has been very weak for the last two years, we are all only happy that he has now been granted home leave, but we miss him, it is an important place that is now empty; a very important man, one of the world's greats, and yet unknown in the world outside the circle that knew him and loves him. How strange it is to think that now he is no longer Mr Agerskov, but completely himself, one of the youngest who has completed his task here in the world, now he is home, and for me much closer when I think of him, and I, as we all look forward to meeting him again when the fullness of time comes. It will be marvellous.

Mrs Agerskov told us that in the morning Mr Agerskov wanted to get up as usual, but still felt so tired that he changed his mind and lay down, and when he was to have lunch at twelve o'clock, he did not sit well in bed, so they helped him so that he could sit with his legs out of bed. He was wrapped up well, and Mrs Agerskov supported his back with a pillow, while the nurse began to give him some food; when Miss Agerskov came in a little later, Mrs Agerskov asked her to support the father, then Mrs Agerskov wanted to help the missus, and when Mrs Agerskov stood before him and asked if he was now sitting well, he answered: Yes, it's nice to get your legs out of bed! and then he rattled for a moment, bent his head to the side and was dead. Silently, without even noticing in the slightest that his body was no longer the home of his spiritual self.

That evening the dead body was taken to the crematorium, and a few days later Mrs Agerskov was told that the burning had taken place, and then it was officially announced

The fact that we all feel the loss is only marvellous; for the one you love, you always miss; when he is not there, but is not the reunion so much richer, so much more beautiful? Yes, absolutely. And we know that we will all experience that, and that is why it is so nice to sit out with Mrs Agerskov and talk to her and Miss Agerskov, now that we know that he is well, free of his ailments, at home!

Yes, dear both of you, that is what I have to tell you now, I had hoped that I could have answered your letters more thoroughly, but time has run out, and I could not bear for you to wait any longer for this letter.

Now that you have received the long-awaited pictures etc., so that you have been able to celebrate Christmas in the calm certainty that the pictures are in your possession, you will greet the whole circle from us and bring you our most cordial New Year's greetings, as we also send you both our best wishes and all good wishes for the year that, when the letter is in your hands, has begun

With the warmest regards from both of us by your very devoted friend Knud Brønnum



Eric and Bodil Prior became some of the Agerskovs' best supporters and good friends. All three Prior brothers, Eric, Kay and Viggo, became very dedicated supporters of TtL, as did Eric's son, Harry Prior. Photo: The Danish Emigration Archive.



Perhaps the most committed supporter of TtL was architect Knud Brønnum, 1878-1953. He was one of the founders of the Society for the Propagation of TtL and wrote several books about the work. He also organised church services based on TtL, and a loyal audience followed these in the 1930s.



*All three Prior brothers were supporters of TtL and made an active effort to publicise the work. Eric, left, wrote a number of articles in *The Pioneer*, a magazine for expatriate Danes in the USA Kai, centre, made a translation of TtL into English in 1975 Viggo created a drawing machine that could draw the planetary tracks of the parent suns in the universe, based on Knud Brønnum's drawings.*



Not many photographs exist of Michael Agerskov's wife, Johanne née Malling-Hansen. This is primarily due to the fact that she got some of her friends to destroy the photos she had of herself. But her daughter had saved some pictures of her mother, and some had been donated to the Royal Library's picture collection. I found the above picture inside one of the books Inger Agerskov left behind, and I'm pretty sure that the older, white-haired lady on the far left is Johanne Agerskov. It looks like the photo was taken in a hospital, but I don't know where. Photo: Private.



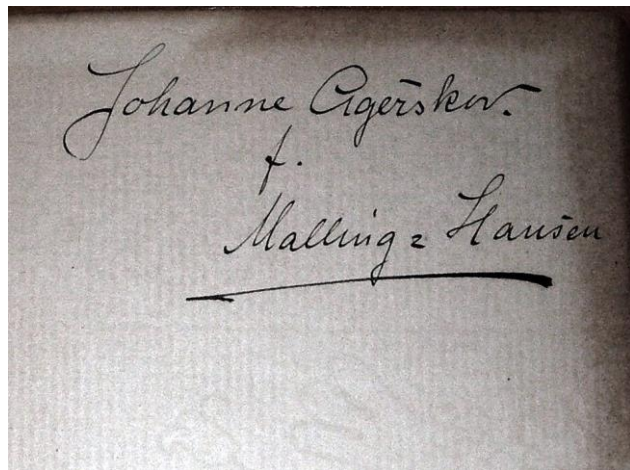
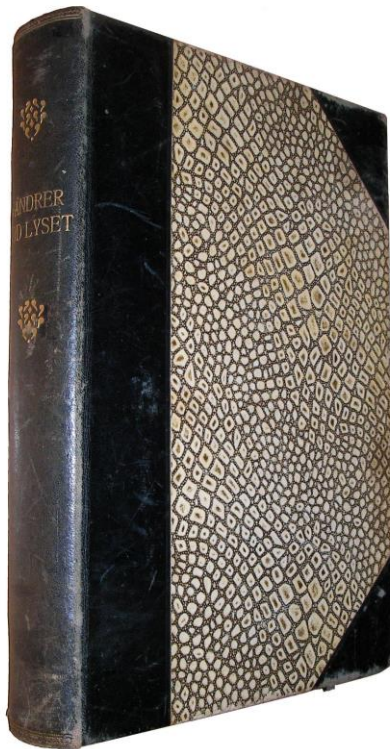
All the Prior brothers were dedicated supporters of TtL, as was architect Knud Brønnum. Here you can see Viggo Prior and his wife, Gertud, together with Brønnum at what was to become their house. The photo is from 1937 and I have found it in the Danish Emigration Archive. Eric Prior donated his entire archive to them.



Here, on the second floor of Grundtvigsvej 3, Michael Agerskov lived with his wife and their daughter Inger Johanne Agerskov, 1900-1968. Photo: Sverre Avnskog.



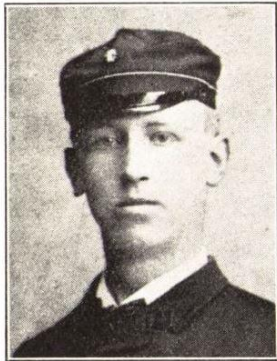
Michael Agerskov worked at Marie Kruse's School in Frederiksbergs Allé 16 for most of his working career. Photo: The Royal Library.



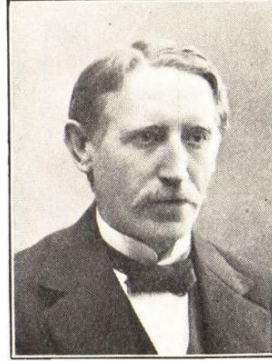
To the left: Johanne Agerskov's own hardback edition of TtL. She has numbered all the lines in pencil. To the right: Johanne Agerskov's signature in the book. Photo: Sverre Avnskog

KAI MICHAEL ANDREAS AGERSKOV
CAND. MAG., GYMNASIELÆRER, KJØBENHAVN

Født 28. Juli 1870 i Guldborg paa Lolland, Søn af Toldforvalter Henrik Frederik Michael Agerskov og Andrea Louise Stephensen.



Skoleembedseksamen (Dansk, Tysk, Latin) 1895, Gymnasielærer i København; Medlem af Eksamenskommissionen for Seminarierne 1912; har udgivet en Del skønlitterære Værker og Skolebøger. — Gift 4. November 1899 i St. Jacobskirke i København med



Johanne Elizabeth Malling Hansen, født 13. Juni 1873 i København, Datter af Præst og Forstander ved Døvstummeinstituttet Hans Rasmus Johan Malling Hansen og Cathrine Georgia Heiberg.

This is how Michael Agerskov was presented in the student book of Danish students from 1897-1914 Both of these photographs are today owned by the Royal Library in Copenhagen. Agerskov later expanded his education to become an associate professor. He worked at Marie Kruse's school for girls in Fredensborg. He also worked for many years as an examiner at the Danish teacher training programme.



The other two couples who participated regularly in the seances together with the Agerskovs. From the left, Johannes' sister Juliane, 1866-1929, her husband, Maximilian Danckert, b. 1864. Then Michael's sister, Anna, b. 1873, and Karl Lindahl, b. 1875. All photos Private.

Michael Agerskov
 Gave for A. Andér.
 13/12 1920

Michael Agerskov's signature in the hardback edition of TiL, which he received as a gift from the blacksmith A. Andér. Andér was a great follower of TiL and made several models based on TiL's description of the universe. Photo: Sverre Avnskog.

Michael Agerskov's authorship

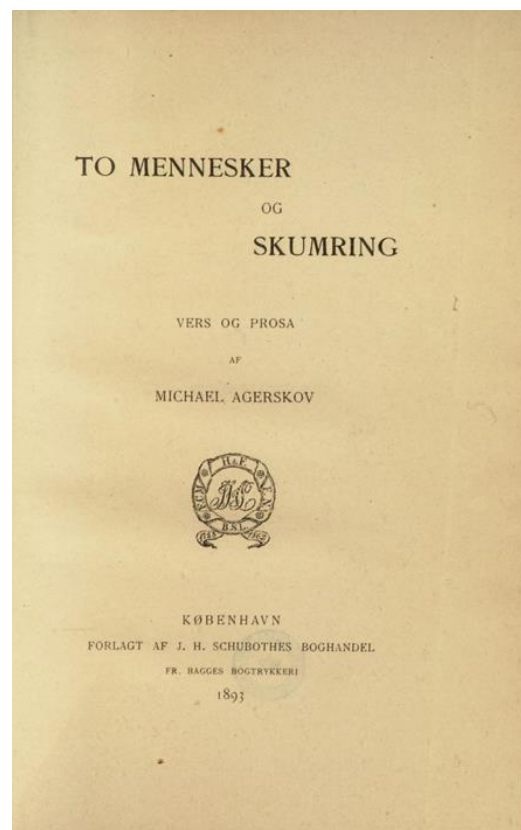
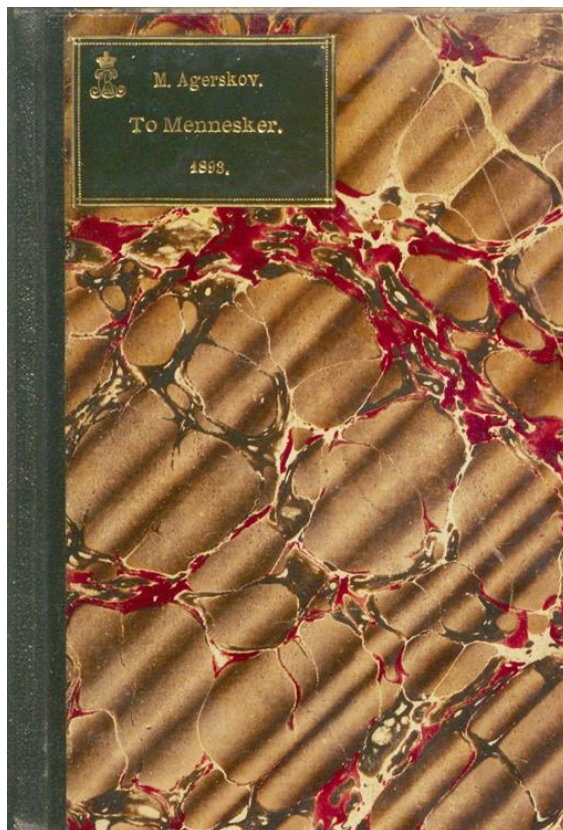
In addition to publishing 'Toward the Light' and all the books associated with this work, Michael Agerskov also had his own authorship. His first book was published in 1893, and in the years that followed there were more publications, both poetry collections and novels. Several of them received favourable reviews in the Danish newspapers.

Two pictures of the young Michael Agerskov. He became a student in 1889 and graduated with an MA in Danish, German and Latin. He later became a lecturer and worked for many years at Maria Kruse's girls' school and was also an examiner at the Danish teacher training programme. Both photos: The Royal Library.



'Two People and Twilight', 1893.

Michael Agerskov made his debut as a writer in 1893 with the poetry collection 'Two People and Twilight'.



Previous page: The cover and title page of Michael Agerskov's very first literary work, Two people and twilight from 1893. Agerskov was then 23 years old.

In other words, the book contains not only poems, but also some short prose texts. Agerskov was only 23 years old when he published his first work, a rather small book of 87 pages, pages containing 30 poems without titles, but numbered with Roman numerals. At the end of the book, six prose texts are printed, under the title 'Twilight'

At this time, Agerskov was working on his master's degree, specialising in Danish, Latin and Old Norse, and he was in a relationship (possibly engaged) with Johanne Malling-Hansen, whom he had met in 1888. So even though Agerskov was young, he was already a well-educated man, probably with a very good knowledge of Danish, Nordic and international literature. Trained literary critics can certainly find influences from various writers of the time in Agerskov's poems, but I must content myself with assessing the poems as a layman, albeit with a college-level education in Norwegian.

With very few exceptions, Agerskov's poems are written in rhyme according to classical verse forms, and I personally find a lot of depth and wisdom in his poetry. The poems in his first collection largely deal with the big topics in life, such as love, loss and dreams. The poems are often very romantic, dreamy and thoughtful - and rich in imagery, often from nature. For example, the very first verse of the very first poem reads:

A bird flew from a deserted coast
to spring and fair lands;
There it saw a vision that filled its breast
With trembling sweet, unspeakable lust.
It forgot its home, the dreamy, wild shores.

Author's comment: Agerskov's poems are not translated by an experienced translator, but with the help of a modern translation reading program.

Love is often a theme in 'Two people', and here are poems that praise and celebrate love in very romantic and lofty terms - without ever becoming trite or clichéd, in my opinion. It's as if you can vividly imagine Agerskov's great emotion at being loved by a woman, and I think that both the language and the images reproduce very well the feelings that seem to lie behind the words. In poem no. III it says:

'My soul can hardly comprehend the marvellous thought,
That thou art no other's, but mine, and mine alone;
I stagger as if I were walking between pillars of heavenly slenderness:
Thou lovest me, thou deity, thou gentle maiden.'

Agerskov seems to perceive love as a redemptive force that can save lovers from gloom and sorcery. But on the whole, a dark, threatening shadow hangs over love in much of Agerskov's poetry, which becomes even more evident in some of his later books, such as *Adathysda* from 1895. It is as if he carries a legacy of heavy grief over death and lost love in his innermost being, and this is expressed in several of his poems. For example, in poem no. XXIII:

'Sunny, quivering drops
On all the lowered firs.
And far, far I can see,
Where the road loses itself in mist.
Everything breathes in blissful anticipation.

Then comes a soft breath,
and all the sunny drops
fall down, become heavy
and dark as weeping
weeping - weeping over dead memories.'

If I did not know otherwise, I would wonder from the poems in 'Two people and twilight' whether Agerskov had not experienced deep grief at the loss of one of his loved ones in illness or accident. What is known is that his sister, Henny, lost her husband to cancer, which led to a great deal of grief in the family, but that was not until 1894, so that event cannot have had any impact on Agerskov's choice of theme in his first collection of poems. Agerskov and his wife had only one daughter, Inger, who was born in 1900, one year after their marriage.

In any case, illness and death and the grief of losing a loved one recur throughout his writing, and especially in the very first collection of poems. In poem number XXV, the poet despairs and cannot accept death:

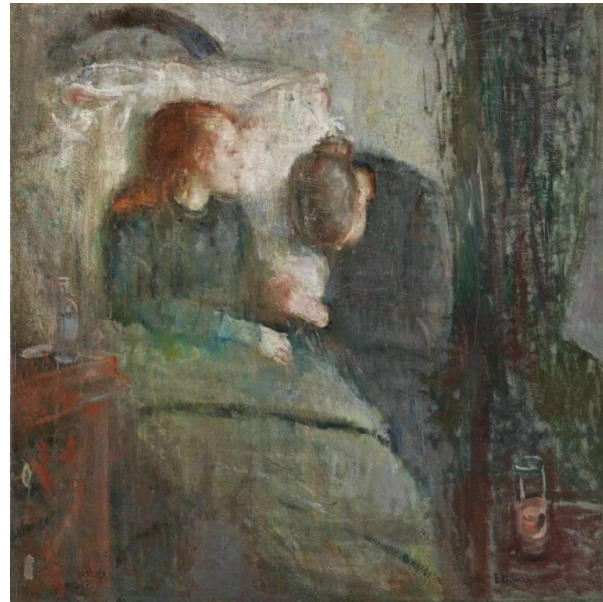
'Sick to death - I cannot believe it, it is not possible;
Shall all be now over?
Shall you die before you are allowed to live?
Shall the dawn be followed by night?
Yes, the doctor said: she cannot live;
I do not believe them, those heartless words.
Oh, you must not die - I will take care of you
So gently, so gently,
as the west wind blows the flowers of spring,
so that the poor little ones, despite the harshness of winter
yet grow up and thrive.'

But then, in poem number XXVII, he reconciles himself to the fact that death will end his beloved's life, and he still finds peace within himself:

'Then she would fight with death.
Gathered were kin and friends.
There she lay and hugged the blanket
with her transparent hands.

Soon a muffled weeping was heard
Soon there was a soft calling,
and incessantly between
the hoarse rattle of the dying.

I stroked her hair from her forehead,
I sought the dear eyes,
I wept and prayed and called,
alas, she knew me not.



Edvard Munch's painting 'The Sick Child' from 1885-86. It is assumed that the painting was inspired by the illness and death of his sister Sophie.

I dared not stay in there,
 that lay like lead on my heart;
 I walked and walked for hours
 in nameless, despairing pain.
 But when at evening time
 I came home to the familiar dwelling
 and heard that she had now passed away,
 I was strangely calm.'

In one of the verses of one of the last poems in the collection (XXX), there is a passage that can almost be interpreted as prophetic, as if Agerskov, at a deeper level of his consciousness, had an inkling of what awaited him later in life. He and his wife, Johanne Agerskov, had a very rich life ahead of them, in which they had promised to be helpers of the light to convey many of the heavenly truths to earth. In this connection, a great deal of spiritual knowledge was revealed to them, which they were not to pass on. The outer frame of poem no. XXX is admittedly about Agerskov remembering an old loved one who has long since died, but towards the end of the poem he writes the following:

'Now I go trembling into
 Into the strange forest.
 But before I go there,
 Before the sorcerous song whispers me oblivion
 And weaves its veil
 over my youth.
 I will raise you dear
 A building stone.
 On that stone shall be carved
 the whole saga of our bright
 saga of our bright youth.
 On that stone shall be carved a chorus,
 whose full richness
 only you and I can comprehend.'

'Two people and twilight' ends with six prose texts, the first of which, "I en båd" (In a boat), deals with the same theme that recurs in many of the poems - the love of two lovers and a threatening atmosphere of betrayal and death. In this short text of just over four pages, we meet a young couple in love, rowing out on the fjord one evening. Already in the introduction we sense a threatening atmosphere: 'Out on the sea, the soft glow of the evening red still lay, and in the quiet evening you could hear the waves licking against the dark bridge, which curved into the sea like a black arm.' And when the happy couple are well out on the fjord, they sit down together and let the boat drift with the wind, and he tells her an old legend about the 'elf girl'.

One evening when the 'elf girl' was out, she stood close to a pair of lovers who sat 'arm in arm, lip to lip. They were whispering about love, which they thought was eternal; the future was buried in bright nights; they saw only the ineffable happiness of love. Not its boundless sorrow.' 'The elf girl' also loved the young man, and as the couple get into a boat and row out onto the fjord, she calls out to her lover, the oarsman, and fires him up against the man, who she claims has tried to steal her love. And the oarsman lets the storm take the boat, so the

young couple perish. The tale ends with the realisation that ‘in between the pipes, where the fog is thickest, sat the “elf girl”; and she wept.’

The mood is sombre for the young couple after he has finished telling the story. ‘The two of them sat close to each other in a strange infatuation. They dared not say anything.’ ‘It was late before he steered the boat towards land again.’

If Agerskov himself did not experience the great sorrow of losing a loved one, what could be the reason why this theme has such a central place in his writing? Given that it is the publisher of the work ‘Toward the Light!’ we are talking about, one might wonder if it is memories from deeper layers of his consciousness that are emerging, from previous lives? Hidden memories of lost love and threatening darkness. There could even be underlying memories of paradise lost - more specifically, the fall of his eldest siblings to the power of darkness, when the youngest lived in harmony and happiness in the Kingdom of God. A threatening mood, characterised by his hidden memories of the struggle of darkness against light - and the youngest's endless grief over evil's temporary victory over light and love? I wouldn't rule out that this could explain Agerskov's choice of theme for his first book.

In the next text, ‘Late Times’, the mood is possibly even more sombre. The text is about the last two living people on earth, ‘The earth shivers. For icy cold begins to cling to its heart, and its blood is frozen.’ Then the woman and the man also die, and all life on earth is extinct. ‘All over the earth no breath of life.’ Then death itself appears, and he says that his ‘work is over’, and he buries the last human being in tears, and ‘When the dawn began to colour the snow, Death, the tall and silent figure went away to a foreign land.’ Is this Agerskov's description of the final erasure of darkness from the earth?

The theme remains the same in all the remaining texts in Michael Agerskov's first small volume of poetry. Perhaps the texts can be seen as one of the youngest's very compassionate mourning for suffering humanity, which has to endure so much suffering, illness and death? Through his poetry, Agerskov comes across as a man with great depth of feeling, with empathy, care and consideration in abundance towards human suffering. And I am reminded that he must have been particularly well-equipped to carry out the saving act of love he and his wife had planned to carry out in their earthly life: the forgiveness of and prayer for Ardor - the prince of darkness, the slave and ruler of evil. No one could have been better suited to this labour of love than the loving man, Michael Agerskov.

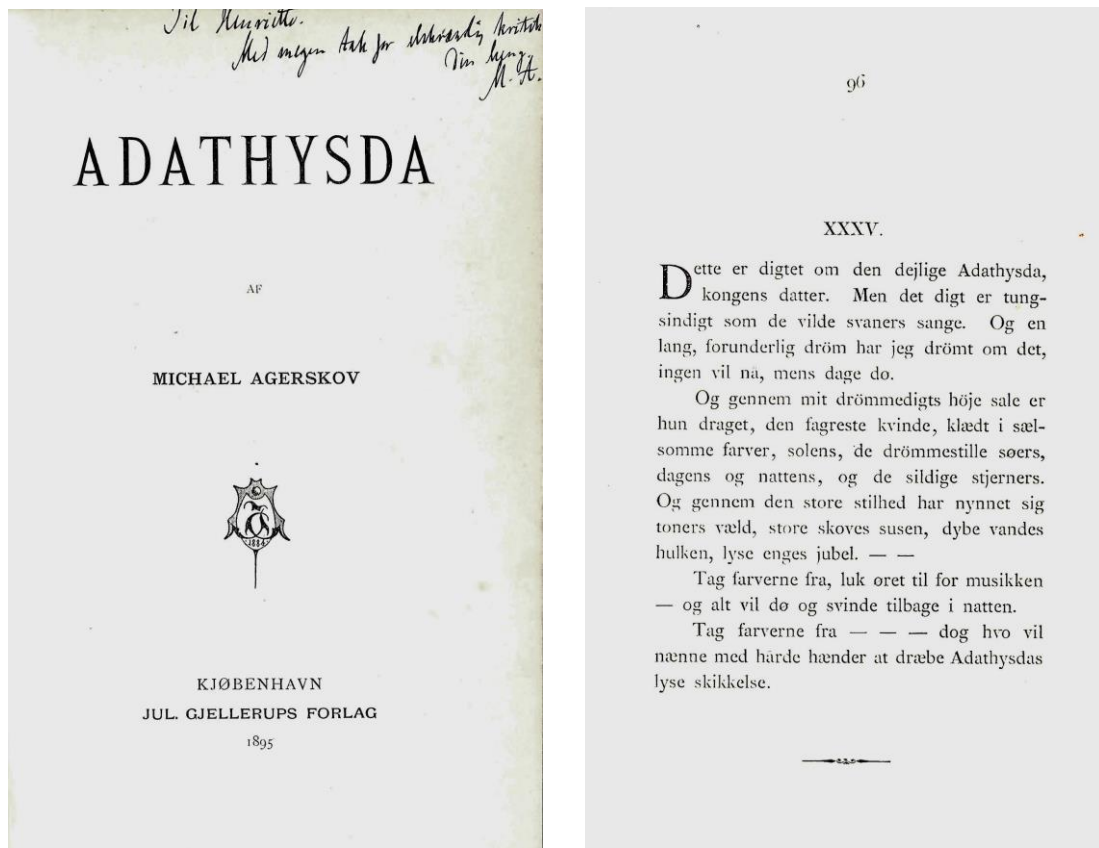
Adathysda, novel 1895.

With Adathysda from 1895, Michael Agerskov published his first novel, and it is a marvellously small book of only 96 pages. I must admit that I am not familiar enough with world literature to be able to say whether the name Adathysda has any reference to mythological figures, but my mind is certainly drawn to the great love tragedies, such as Tristan and Isolde, Romeo and Juliet, Bendik and Årolilja or Papageno and Papagena from Mozart's Magic Flute. The theme of Adathysda is the greatest and always recurring, namely love and the conditions of love in earthly life.

So it's no small matter that Michael Agerskov sets out to describe. The book's plot is fairly quick to summarise, as not much actually happens in the course of the book's 96 pages, and the plot progresses quite slowly in a very image-rich and almost mythical, dreamlike language. The narrator himself calls the story a poem, and it is also made up of 25 very short

chapters or verses, each about 2-3 pages long. We learn that Adathysda belonged to a people who lived a long time ago in the land of Urahan, and that she died of grief when her great love, the young Verleno, was killed because her father could not accept their love. There is a dark and gloomy atmosphere at the beginning of the story, where we read on page 2:

‘Take off the colours, close your ears to the music, and everything will die and fade back into the dark night from which I have conjured it! Take away the colours - - - - however, who will have the courage to kill Adathysda's bright figure with hard hands.’



Title page and last page of Michael Agerskov's novel, Adathysda from 1895. As you can see, he has written a dedication to his sister, Henriette, also called Henny: With many thanks for gracious criticism. Photo credits Sverre Avnskog.

Adathysda's mother, who was much loved by her people and by her husband, the king, lost her own life when she gave birth to her daughter, and the king never really got over this loss. His grief toughened him and made him hard and bitter, and he was never able to love his daughter as she deserved, pure and innocent as she was in her mother's death. As a result, love suffers in the king's kingdom, ruled by an evil and ambitious counsellor, Athyriel, who eventually falls in love with the king's beautiful daughter.

Adathysda wants to find the answer to the riddle of love and vows to marry the suitor who can best explain the meaning of love to her. Many suitors arrive to take part in the competition, but Adathysda's love is awakened by the wise and beautiful young Verleno. The king's evil advisor, Athyriel, on the other hand, has the king's favour and is secretly scheming to secure Adathysda as his bride, and the king promises that this will happen regardless of Adathysda's will.

But Adathysda does not betray her love, and she runs away with her Verleno to escape the forced marriage. But they are caught by the king's men and Verleno is killed. Enraged by the tragedy, the people attack Athyriel's castle and kill him, but the tragedy is inevitable; Adathysda dies of her grief at the loss of her beloved.

The last chapter or verse, number XXXV, reads as follows:

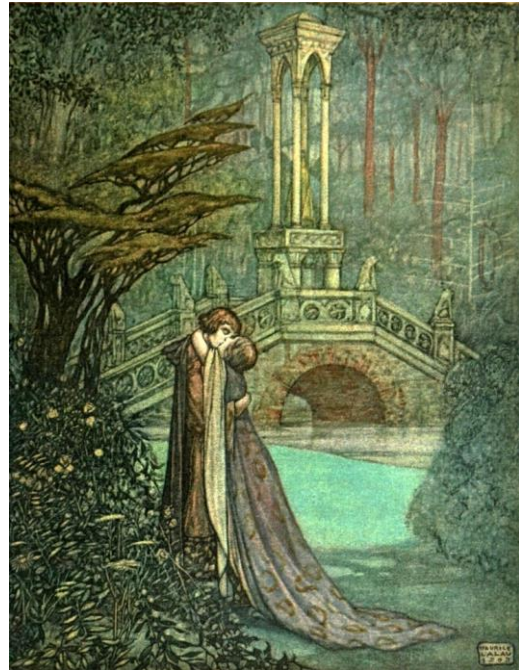
‘This is the poem of the lovely Adathysda, the king's daughter. But this poem is as melancholy as the songs of the wild swans. And a long, wondrous dream I have dreamed of it, none will reach while days die.

And through the high halls of my dream poem she has passed, the fairest woman, dressed in strange colours, the colours of the sun, of the dreamless lakes, of day and night, and of the silvery stars. And through the great silence has hummed the wealth of tones, the rustling of great forests, the sobbing of deep waters, the cheering of bright angels.

Take away the colours, close your ears to the music - and everything will die and fade back into the night. Take away the colours - - - - yet who will dare with hard hands to kill the bright figure of Adathysda.’

For anyone familiar with TtL, which would later become Michael Agerskov's great life's work, it is easy to recognise the idea of light and darkness in Agerskov's small, beautiful story about Adathysda and Verleno. The finest quality of light is love, and I think Agerskov describes very well, in poetic, fairytale-like language, how love is suffocated by its opposite, darkness - the absence of kindness, consideration and understanding. It is not the king's soldiers who kill Adathysda - she dies of grief over the murder of her great love, carried out by evil, jealousy and possessiveness.

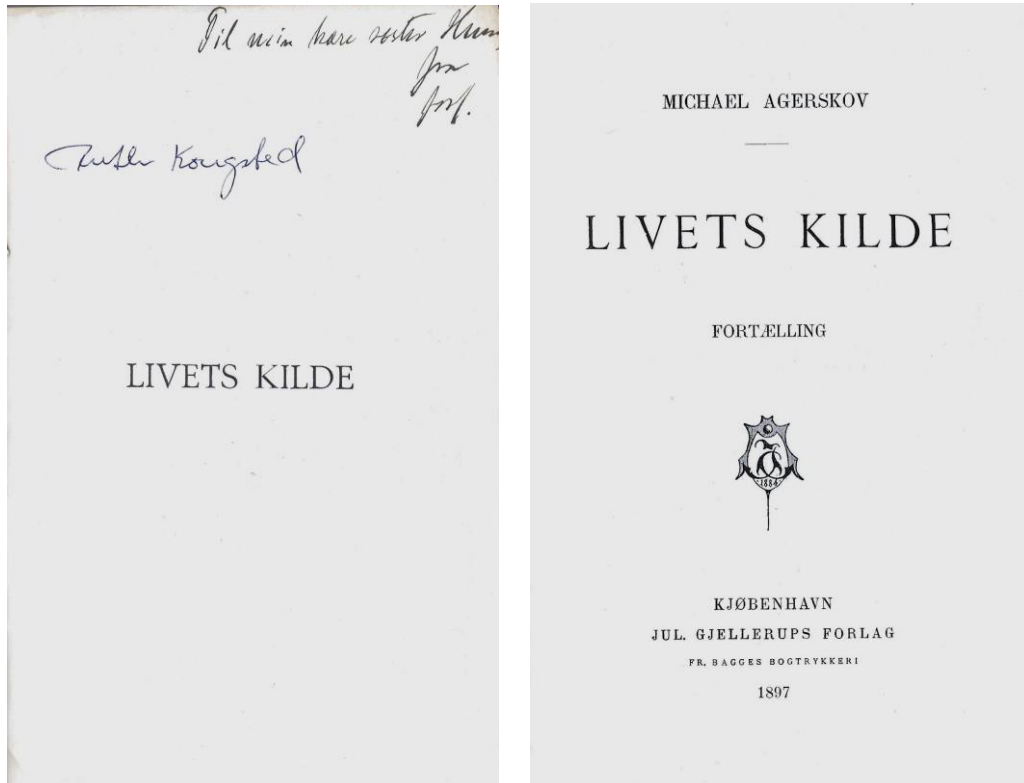
Adathysda is a book that is easy to fall in love with, and which is nice to return to in moments of reflection. It contains passages of very beautiful, solemn and poetic language, and describes eternal values in a way that sticks in your mind. Even though it is tragic, it is beautifully written!



Another classic love story was the legend of Tristan and Isolde. Here depicted by the artist Maurice Lalau.

'The Source of Life' - an autobiographical novel?

Novel, 1897 by Michael Agerskov. *About the fervour and errors of love.*



Michael Agerskov's novel 'The Source of Life' from 1897. The author has written a dedication to his sister, Henny. She has passed the book on to her granddaughter, Ruth Kongsted. I got the book from Ruth's sister, Jette,



Illustration from the book. Unfortunately, the illustrator's name is not given.

Part 1

I had great expectations when I started reading Michael Agerskov's novel from 1897, 'The Source of Life'. On the title page, Agerskov calls the book a 'Narrative' and has dedicated it to his parents. It was very exciting to think about whether this book is actually a biography of

the early years of the relationship between Michael and Johanne Agerskov. To get first-hand information about the young couple, who would later mean so much to the spread of light on Earth, would be amazing. So my expectations when I started reading were high.

By the way, I have to tell you that my copy of the book was given to me by Jette and Rune Scherl from Denmark. Jette is the granddaughter of Michael's sister, Henny, and knew Michael very well when he lived with her family in his younger days. On the title page of the book is a dedication to Henny from the author, and underneath is written the name Ruth Kongsted. I assume that this is the sister of Jette, who was also called Kongsted before she got married. They are daughters of Henny's son, Torkild, whom she had with her husband Halfdan. Torkild was married twice and had four sons in his first marriage and four daughters in his second.

In the first part, Chapter 1, we meet a milieu from the upper middle class in Denmark, which was probably very well known to Michael Agerskov. The first person mentioned is Mayor Fürst and his scribe, 'old Clausen', who is in the mayor's office. One immediately thinks that Agerskov's father must be the model for Mayor Fürst, but quickly realises that this cannot apply to his appearance, because the description of Fürst bears no resemblance whatsoever to the customs officer in Nykøbing Sjælland, Henrik Michael Agerskov.

When describing Mayor Fürst, Michael Agerskov already reveals that he has an excellent ability to portray environments and people.

“His figure is short and massive, his face open, round and somewhat reddish Beneath heavily bushy eyebrows shine a pair of small, exceedingly kind and wise blue eyes. A small nose that just barely holds on to the lorgnette - the mayor is a bit vain and prefers to use the lorgnette. A large gap between the nose and mouth, which makes the wide, sharp-cut mouth even more pronounced. A small, energetic chin and small ears pressed close to the head. The arms - short and floppy - are used a lot as a means of expression by the agile man; he speaks quickly and is restless in his movements. (p. 10)

Fürst holds a very central position in the small market town of Strøbæk, with 2,000 inhabitants; he is mayor, town bailiff and police chief. And when we first meet him, he is working on the “poor accounts”.

The mayor is somewhat anxious this day, and we learn that he is expecting the return of his first born and beloved son in a few hours. He is coming home after completing his student exams. “His dear, diligent Kai, the pride of the family, the first student the town had produced.” (p. 11).

If you are looking for possible autobiographical features in Agerskov's novel, it is worth noting that he had Kai as one of his first names, but he was not the eldest child in the Agerskov family but had both an older brother and sister. The description of the mayor's very central position in the fictional market town of Strøbæk, on the other hand, is very reminiscent of Agerskov senior's role in Nykøbing, Sjælland. He was described as an important driving force in the local community and was appointed to several key public offices. He also had the same very friendly nature and the same wise and kind eyes as Mayor Fürst.

After the detailed and colorful description of the mayor, the author shifts the scene to the mayor's home, which he describes as a large and spacious apartment, located just a long walk

from the mayor's office. The apartment is on one floor of an old, large brick house with old, drafty windows.

“But how cozy and friendly was the old house; how cordial it looked to everyone through its many windows. There it stood like a relic of the good old days, when there was enough space and there was no need to build storey upon storey.” (p. 12).



An old photograph from Nykøbing Sjælland where the Agerskov family lived from 1881 and Agerskov sr. was a customs inspector. Photo: The Royal Library.

In this spacious and warm home with three living rooms, we first meet the family's extremely lazy and spoiled cat, Mini. And even this cat Michael Agerskov takes the time to give a very comprehensive description of. And this is typical of his narrative style - his characters are described very vividly and in great detail. It's almost tempting to say that he's almost bursting with narrative joy and imagination. And behind all these vivid descriptions, we must assume that there is a keen ability to observe the people the author has met and known.

Agerskov's description of the Fürst family's home cannot be the multi-storey brick house that Agerskov sr. had built in Nykøbing at about the same time as Agerskov jr. published 'The Source of Life'. If the author had a model for the description, it could perhaps be their home in Rørvig, where they lived until 1880, or the customs house in Nykøbing where the family lived until the house 'Agrisilvana' was completed at the end of the 1890s.

The next person we are introduced to is “a red-cheeked young woman with a large summer hat on her head and no gloves....” (p. 13). We immediately learn that she, too, is looking forward to Kai's return home, and we quickly realize that she is his slightly younger sister, and eventually it becomes clear that the two have a very close relationship.

“Pretty she was not, little Jenny Fürst, the mayor's seventeen-year-old daughter; but there was so much wisdom and goodness shining out of the clear blue eyes that resembled her father's. No, she was not pretty at all; for the ruddy face was too round, the nose too blunt, and the mouth too large; there was also something stray about the big curly brown hair.” (p. 15).

Agerskov did indeed have a slightly younger sister called Anna, and it is easy to believe that it is she who served as a role model for the novel's sister, Jenny. Michael and Anna had a close and intimate relationship, and as we know from events later in their lives, Anna and her husband were one of three couples who stayed together throughout the years when they prayed for the fallen and earthbound spirits, and eventually had "Toward the Light" dictated from the supernatural world.

Later in "The Source of Life" we also learn that Kai has three more younger siblings - two boys and a girl, Hans, Christian and Ellen respectively. But they don't play a particularly central role in the book. But I can mention that Agerskov himself had an older brother called Christian. He was an engineer and responsible for the development of Copenhagen Freeport.



One of Michael Agerskov's uncles was also called Kai, and was a ship designer in Sweden. He designed several steamships that have been restored and are still in operation. One of them is Domnarfvet, pictured above. Photo from the internet.

And then we finally meet the young student that everyone is waiting so longingly for, Kai Fürst, who arrives on the boat from Copenhagen. And we quickly realize that he has a rare nature for a young man. His mind is filled with dreams, and he is restlessly searching for new understanding and new realizations. Kai is a true romantic, a fairy spirit and a poet, and he is almost overwhelmed by everything he will achieve in the future, as he sits on the boat and dreams away.

“Kai Fürst felt as if he already owned most of the world of values, and would soon gain the rest. It was for him as if he had just entered a marvelously lovely region that stretched out smilingly for all eternity and every spring brought pleasure to the soul and new wealth.” (p. 17).

Personally, I am fairly convinced that Michael Agerskov is actually describing himself in the guise of Kai, and throughout the book we are given many examples of the author's poetic

abilities through both songs and poems. Agerskov published several collections of poetry, in addition to all the works that were received through the inspiration of his later wife, Johanne Agerskov.

When the young student finally arrives home, we also finally get to meet the last person in the family - his mother, who obviously loves him as much as all the other family members.

“Hello, hello, my own dear boy.” “It was the little mayor's wife who welcomed them in the entrance hall and hugged her tall, slender son to her heart and kissed him countless times.” (p. 22). The description of Kai's mother is like reading a description of Michael Agerskov's own mother. She was an extraordinarily loving and kind mother with plenty of warmth.

“She was the quiet and yet all-consuming good genius of the home. Her gentle eyes did not penetrate the soul; but the soul gave itself under their warm light and found rest. She forgave all, and added to forgiveness the softest words of comfort. And yet she was strong and unbending; she never wavered from what she believed to be right. She could speak to all: the sincere and original words of the heart are understood by high and low, and to many she brought the deepest relief.” (p. 25).

Time and again I am impressed by Michael Agerskov's rich ability to describe love in his very poetic and solemn language, and I almost feel that my own words are too poor to do him justice. And more than once I am reminded of Paul's beautiful words from the Bible, about heavenly love, which demands nothing, but tolerates everything, forgives everything and endures everything.

The mother disappeared into the kitchen again, but soon “her gentle face” appeared in the kitchen door as she declared that the food was on the table.

Once everyone had taken a seat around the dining table, old Clausen presented the student with a welcome poem, which he proclaimed loudly when asked to do so:

“Barely grown up you are a student;
That father and mother are happy, will easily be seen
In their eyes that now rest on you.
From Axelstad to the little town of Strøbæk
The youth went, whom all love.
Therefore, noble souls, shout out!
Student Kai Fürst he lives loud hurrah,
For the joy of every man and woman in Strøbæk!”

By then, most of the main characters have been introduced, and as the book progresses, Agerskov gradually expands the gallery of characters, giving us an insight into what life was like for the wealthy and well-educated classes in Denmark at the end of the 19th century. And in the Fürst family, the purest idyll and harmony reigns, and rarely has one read about a family so characterized by love and consideration for each other.

The family is very much what you would call a cultured family, cultivating music, literature and poetry. But to use Agerskov's own penchant for using the weather as a metaphor, a black darkness and threatening clouds rest imperceptibly over the family. And the tragedy will affect both the family and, not least, Kai himself, who will experience how easily a romantic,

loving and considerate young man can become entangled in a destructive love affair that he doesn't really want but is drawn into almost out of consideration for a woman's feelings for him.

Now this is not an unknown phenomenon for women, who by nature can easily come to feel that they must remain in the relationship for the sake of the man, but the main character in Agerskov's novel is a man with a very compassionate heart, perhaps unlike most men, but obviously there are also men who are so richly emotionally gifted. I know Michael Agerskov best from his involvement in the prayers for all the fallen and suffering spirits on the earth plane and in the hell sphere, and his very rich ability to empathize with the suffering was of course highly necessary to be able to empathize with their suffering.

I think this very rich capacity for love is very typical of the youngest, as the highly evolved spiritual beings who incarnate as humanity's helpers are called in "Toward the Light". And their experience of the intensity of their feelings can occasionally cause them problems, because few others have the ability to grasp the depth of their experience. But once in a while they meet and recognize their equal, just as in the case of Johanne and Michael Agerskov, and together they can fulfill their heavenly mission.

But as a human being, this capacity for deep compassion for the suffering of others can also translate into a sense of obligation to persevere in a love relationship for the sake of others, so that they do not suffer. This love should in no way be confused with the passionate, physical attraction between a woman and a man, which in our time is almost elevated to the goal of cohabitation. It is not easy for a young, immature person to distinguish so clearly between the different aspects of attraction, and passion can often be confused with genuine romantic feelings of the heart.

We soon learn that a woman appears in Kai's life, one of his sister Jenny's friends, who gradually arouses the young student's interest. The first time he hears about her is on a trip with his sister, Jenny, and she reminds Kai that she has written to him about her friend, the vicar's daughter Therese Winther.

"Maybe you've just touched on it. What else is she like, this Ms. Winther; do you like her?" the brother wonders (p. 34).

And the sister replies: "Yes, she is very nice; but the priest is great, although he is so terribly quiet. Therese doesn't say much either."

"How old is she?" The brother wonders. "Just about my age. I hope you don't fall madly in love with her. She has such lovely gray big eyes (Jenny envied everyone with big eyes) but she's so terribly pale." (p. 35).

And then Jenny says that Therese lost her mother a year ago, and I immediately think of Johanne, the daughter of the priest Rasmus Malling-Hansen, and her mother who died in 1876 and her stepmother in 1897, the same year that "Livets kilde" was published. But Malling-Hansen was probably not known for being particularly quiet, but he was happy to express his opinions, and he died as early as 1890.

We realize quite early on in the novel that it is Therese who will become Kai's true love. The Winther family are neighbors to the mayor's house and Jenny brings her brother to visit them

while Kai is home on Christmas vacation. And it's almost as if we sense that Kai has a premonition of how much Therese is going to mean to him. His heart beats and his face blushes when he meets her. And he secretly studies her.

“How soft and dark the hair fell around the white forehead. But also the cheeks were white, too white. Her skin seemed to him like light. Her lips were full and very red. Was she beautiful? No, rather very peculiar. He already felt the mystery of her being taking possession of him. And yet he had not yet quite seen her eyes, deep, gray-dark mandrakes, over which two dark eyebrows drew themselves irregularly, like threats of death after the secret sweetness of life, like evil, black rocks over brilliant, misty grey waters.” (p. 49).

Kai's love for Therese is soon awakened, but he feels insecure, unable to speak openly with her, and tormented by his own silence. This is not an unknown phenomenon for sensitive young people. You can talk openly and freely with all the girls you don't have any feelings for, but when it comes to your heart's favorite, you become mute and awkward. She means so much to you, and you'd love to show her your very best sides, your humor and your wit. But then you're completely dumbfounded by the one person who means so much more than the insignificant girls.

“Then he fell silent and looked at her stealthily. No, he had to say something. And his heart beat violently with emotion as he pointed to a large growler that came dangling through the air and said: “It's funny how such an animal can make music.” “Yes, it is undeniably amusing;” she raised her big gray eyes slowly for a moment from the pea pod. Pause. He felt tormented, unhappy. He burned to say to her the thousand serious, heartfelt things that could bring their souls together. And then he was completely powerless.” (p. 57).

But Kai often meets his beloved in various social contexts, and like all young men falling madly in love, he follows her every move. And his jealousy is aroused every time she shows interest in other young men, laughs at their jokes and talks to them for too long, in Kai's opinion.

He is now completely infatuated and has no idea how to arouse her interest and her feelings. In despair, he opts for the age-old tactic of pretending he has no interest in her at all and ignores her completely. But it's rarely a good tactic, and usually only affects the swooning young man himself, which is also what happens in Kai's case. His behaviour leaves Therese very confused. Like when they've been to a ball together and Kai, in revenge for Therese's attention being focused on another young man, ignores her and gives his bouquet of flowers to a ‘miss indifferent’, but then suddenly dances like crazy with Therese for the rest of the evening anyway.

The day after the ball, Therese quietly thinks about ‘Jenny's strange brother, whose behaviour had been completely incomprehensible to her’ (p. 130). Yes, love did indeed cause the young student great difficulties. But how well one recognises oneself from one's youth when one was just as sensitive and insecure.

Therese is a clergyman's daughter, and it gradually becomes clear that she is a very devout Christian herself and finds the small market town where they live a great disappointment in this respect. There is obviously no fertile ground for either Christian associations or congregations. This is in stark contrast to Kai Fürst, who is a pronounced freethinker and is

far too flighty and restlessly searching in his thoughts to find peace in a fixed, ready-made mindset.

And his sister, Jenny, who is almost a little jealous of his intense infatuation with Therese, confronts her brother with the big difference between Kai and the love of his heart. But he just brushes it off, declaring that he's willing to give up everything he owns and become a Christian, if only he can have his beloved. And you think he might be rather naive in his declaration of love. Jenny asks him if he's willing to sacrifice his own life's work for the sake of love. And he is.

But in this connection, I think it was good that Michael Agerskov and his beloved Johanne in real life turned out to have the same planned life deed, and neither of them had to sacrifice anything, but together carried out the task they had undertaken for the supernatural world.

It is also very interesting to read many of these intimate conversations between Kai and his sister, in which she tells him that life in the small market town is getting a little too boring for her and that she has begun to wonder if she should train as a teacher. The model for the description of Jenny, Michael's sister, Anna, did indeed go on to higher education, becoming the very first woman in Denmark to study dentistry. And together with her husband, Karl Lindahl, who was also a dentist, she was a regular member of the small seance circle that also included Michael and Johanne. The last couple was Johanne's sister, Juliane, and her husband, Maximilian Danckert.

After completing the first semester of his philological studies, Kai returns to the city of his childhood during the Christmas holidays, and for the first time since the summer, he finds himself alone with Therese on a walk, when they happen to end up next to each other, and the tour group walks slightly ahead of them. And for the first time, Kai dares to make a move to show his feelings for her. He asks if he can get a photograph of her. But, no, she blushes and thinks it's rather inappropriate. But Kai is persistent and insists, and in the end, she has to promise that he will take a portrait. But he notices that she doesn't ask for a photo of him in return.



When Kai returns home for the summer, we are introduced for the first time to his 'quarter cousin', Annie Fürst, whom Kai and Jenny used to call 'mad Annie' in their youth, but who has now become engaged to a rich merchant after only three days of acquaintance. Annie turns out to be a very vibrant and bubbly young woman with a beautiful laugh, but when Kai looks at her, he only sees the image of his own favorite Therese and her enigmatic eyes. But unbeknownst to Kai, the events of the future will bring him together with Annie in a very unhappy love affair. Yes, this is how events can take a path that at one point may seem the most unlikely.

But Kai is in deep trouble when Annie appears to get close to him, almost courting him, declaring how alike they are and then kissing him. Is he so easily led astray from his great love; we wonder. And in fact, he seems to be wondering that himself.



The small illustration of a couple walking together on the previous page concludes Part 1 of 'The Source of Life'. I guess it's supposed to show Kai and the love of his life, Therese, while they were still lovers. The illustration above, which introduces Part 2, speaks volumes. Kai finds himself in an irresolvable dilemma between his own free-spirited faith and his girlfriend's insistence that she can only be his if he becomes a devout Christian. Both illustrations are from the book.

Part 2.

In part two of Agerstov's novel, we move two years forward in time, Jenny is engaged and has taken her teaching exam, and we meet Kai on a cold December evening in Copenhagen. Kai hasn't abandoned his resolve to become a Christian, and we learn that he reads three chapters of the Bible every day and goes to church every Sunday. And he hopes that this will lead him to Christianity. But it turns out that this causes Kai some anguish, because he's not very happy that this is something he's only doing to win Therese's love, and not something he's really doing for his own sake. And some days he can't be bothered to read anything in the Bible. And as if to reinforce the description of the inner struggle in the young student's mind, we learn that outside there is the sound of a winter storm

Kai found it extremely difficult to relate to what an acquaintance had told him about becoming a Christian; you didn't have to think for yourself, just believe and then pray and pray. He realised that this was completely contrary to his true nature. And it led to almost unbearable inner strife and anguish, when at the same time he was convinced that it was absolutely necessary to become a Christian if he was to win Therese's love. The only thing that calms him down a little is when he can take out Therese's picture and kiss it.

When he's home for Christmas holidays, he can't even go to church because he's so ashamed of his duplicity. But then, finally, he feels compelled to declare his love for Therese. The intensity of his feelings, his anguish and his doubts drive him to her to finally get an answer to his uncertainty. He seeks her out in her home. At first, they sit for a while in agonising conversation and Kai has to force the words out of him, and he hesitates to declare his love for

her. But then he can't hold back any longer, and after the long period of intense dreams, longing and anguish, his mind has become almost like a pressure cooker under high pressure. In his overwrought state of mind, his declarations of love are not made with particularly romantic or gentle, loving words. On the contrary, he blurts out his love for her almost in an emotional state and asks her to be his wife without further ado.

But it seems to come completely out of the blue and she is both surprised and taken aback. She soon realises that she intensely dislikes what is happening and says she wishes he had never said this to her. She refuses to answer whether she can return his love and finally asks him to leave. But he doesn't budge, and almost demands an answer. She ends up crying in despair and he finally has to give in. She only responds almost inaudibly to his goodbye. This is hardly what was in the young student's mind when he finally managed to tell her of his love. He must have been devastated.

After this, the author makes a time jump, and the next time we meet Kai and his beloved Therese Winther, they have nevertheless found each other, without us learning anything more about how this might have happened.

During one of their highly emotional conversations, she finally uttered the words he had wanted to hear for so long:

'Kai, I want to tell you something, Kai,' she said so softly that he could hardly hear. He fell back. She threw herself around his neck and whispered: 'I am yours.' He covered her face, her hands with kisses, and stammered all the confused, heartfelt endearments of love, but overwhelmed by his violence, she forcibly tore herself free and said tremblingly, 'Kai, you must not go now.' And then she rushed into the kitchen and closed the door behind her. He stood for a moment, considering; then he left the house.' (p. 221).

But then it turns out that doubt, this man's greatest enemy, awakens in Therese's mind, and she cannot settle for the fact that her boyfriend is not a professed Christian. She finds more and more things to criticize about his attitude to life and sees more and more signs that he in no way has the right Christian attitudes to the life expected of a Christian.

Kai, for his part, makes a few tiny attempts to get her interested in his world of poetry, literature and wondering about the mysteries of life. But she doesn't find his world alluring at all, in fact she finds it almost uninteresting and incomprehensible. And she increasingly doubts the sincerity of his attempts to become a Christian and criticises him for going to church to meet her rather than because he wants to meet Christ.

Indeed, she eventually gets the feeling that God himself disapproves of their relationship and asks her to break up with Kai. For my own part, I'm tempted to add that it seems as if the young Therese attributes to her God all the doubts and disapproval that are really her own. Only very few of us have such close contact with divine thought that we can distinguish between what God wants and what our own desires are. Doubt is very human, and unfortunately it can sometimes prevent us from indulging in the love we really feel deep down. Very conscientious people can sometimes be so afraid of acting against their conscience that they don't dare to believe in love when it's actually right in front of them.

Parallels can also be drawn with people who have had very bad experiences in a love relationship and, out of sheer fear of experiencing the same thing again, do not dare to enter

into a new relationship because of the fear of the bad experiences reappearing. It's not without reason that the English idiom is 'once bitten, twice shy'. But as in the case of Kai and Therese, it often takes a very persistent person with a deeply felt love for the ability to love to finally be released again.

We don't learn much about what kind of God Therese believed in, but at that time the Christian church was characterised by a strict deity who condemned all sin and placed great demands on the individual's lifestyle. We can say that Therese seems to have been characterised by this strict God and a correspondingly strict conscience and was almost afraid to act against God's wishes for her. And in the end, Therese is about to give in to what she believes are her God's wishes. His strict demands on the sincerity of her beloved boyfriend's Christian faith seem to stand in the way of her own young girl's love for the man of her dreams.

She asks Kai to come to her house, because she has something important to tell him, and as a harbinger of more 'disasters' to come for the young man, he meets a family friend who has been there to tell him about a tragic suicide. A woman experiencing unrequited love first tried to shoot the man who didn't want her, and then shot herself in the head and died. It's a powerful literary move that foreshadows what awaits Kai Fürst in the future.

Kai is quite worried when he meets Therese afterwards, and he quickly realises that something is wrong. Therese is reluctant to tell him how she feels for a long time, but it's clear that her doubts about the sincerity of his Christian faith and the big differences between them have almost overwhelmed her. And finally, she comes forward with her doubts:

'Kai, I don't think we'll ever be happy. I don't love you the way you deserve.' (p. 228).

As we can vividly imagine, Kai is deeply affected when she tells him this. He had fought so hard to win her love, and had experienced winning it in the end, when she had declared that she wanted to be his. But in this dramatic and heated conversation, Therese tells him about the doubts that plague her. And Kai reacts with both disbelief and accusations that she really loves someone else and doesn't love him at all. These allegations hurt Therese deeply, because her motives were nothing of the sort, but she was driven by her own anxiety that their love was not what God wanted from her.

They talk for a while longer and find a kind of peace together, and Therese is happy that she at least got Kai to agree to postpone the announcement of their engagement and keep everything a secret for the time being. Kai, on the other hand, is ashamed that he has once again led Therese to believe that he really has found Christianity. Because it's not true.

'Yes, Therese, I am a Christian, I think I'm a Christian, although there's a lot I can't go into yet. You said this summer that I should read the Bible, pray and go to church; I've done it, and I think I've come closer to Christ every day. (The last untruth he cringed hard at saying; but she had to be won and reassured above all.) But I have yet a long way to go, and you must lead me. But I still have a long way to go, and you will lead me, and I know you will, don't I?' 'Yes,' she answered tonelessly, avoiding his gaze. (p. 230).

But do any of them really believe this? It doesn't seem so.



An old photo from Copenhagen, where student Kai Fürst lived and received his education. Photo: The Royal Library.

‘Then the next morning he travelled back to the big city, and how sad he was. The parting with Therese had been embarrassing; he had stood there cold and stiff ... but perhaps that was because the father had been present.’ (p. 232).

We next meet the young couple in Copenhagen, where he is continuing his studies and she has moved in with a relative. They have some good times together, on long walks and in deep conversations, but Therese is increasingly overcome by her doubts, until they finally seem insurmountable, and she has to tell Kai.

Both of them are desperate and grief-stricken, but she sees no other way but to end it, because she is convinced that it is God's will.

‘Yes, Kai, I have prayed so earnestly to God, especially of late, to give me counsel; and I have felt so firm and sure that he looked with angry eyes at our connection; I felt that God was not with me when I longed for you; he did not want me to lay my life on you. -’ (p. 246).

And with that, Kai's whole world came crashing down. He could no longer study, he wandered restlessly and was overcome by thoughts he himself experienced as evil, such as that Therese ‘...had deceived him, that she was an abominable coquette who had robbed him of his happiness in cold blood; and this thought soon came to the fore as a fixed idea, without its one-sidedness becoming clear to him. Nevertheless, he was fully aware that he was on his way to becoming a bad man - but he did not care to be good any longer; everything was over.’ (p. 250).

In his despair, he writes countless poems, like this one:

‘Here I stand alone late in the autumn
And trample wildly on my dead memories;

Author's comment: The poems have not been rewritten, but translated using modern translation software.

I scream - hardly knowing my own voice,
 In pain I scream - - every hope vanishes.
 What is, what is your will for me, God!
 Surely thou wilt avenge me - deny me not.
 I could tear out her eyes,
 They drive me wild and mad, those dark looks.

I could hurl the worst words of language
 With scorn to my former love,
 Till she was sick and tired of this earth.
 Alas, no, I only torment myself to death;
 to no avail I stamp against the fire,
 and write wicked, foolish laments.'

'Yes, he felt that anyone who could write such things was evil, but he did not like to be anything else. And then the books appeared again; once again, they spoke to him those dry, sensible thoughts that slowly cast their grey cobwebs around everything, love and hate, empty dreams and eternal longing - - - - -' (p. 252).

It's a troubled man we meet in the final instalment of 'The Fountain of Life', and it's about to get worse. Shortly after the sad events with Therese, Kai receives a letter from his father telling him that his mother has become seriously ill. Although his father doesn't say it outright, Kai realises that the illness is life-threatening. It's a hard blow for Kai, who is already in a fragile state, so his mother's illness hits him hard.

'And there in his soul, where for so long a woman had stood, clothed in hatred, passion, and spite, there he now entered, the infinitely gentle, lovable woman who had given him life. He suddenly saw her before him, so clearly, with the flaming hair and the warm lustre in her eyes; but she was suffering and sad; she looked at him reproachfully, as if to say: 'And you could forget me for so long!'' (p. 254).

Kai is overwhelmed by memories of his mother, right from the early years of his childhood and throughout his childhood and adolescence. His mind is obviously very mobile after his painful love story with Therese. And the memories of his mother are many and good and move him greatly.

Five days before Christmas, a telegram arrives from his father telling him that his mother is dying, and Kai takes the boat home to Strøbæk with his relative, Jørgen Sander. He is welcomed by his two sisters, Jenny and Ellen - the two younger brothers are staying with relatives while their mother is ill.

It is a very emotional and touching meeting between mother and son. The mother had been told in a dream one night that she was going to die when the first starling whistled out in the yard. She had been afraid that her last day would come before she had time to talk to her son, and it says a lot about her nature that she wanted to have time to ask him for forgiveness. Forgiveness for feeling that she hasn't been able to be a good mum to him in recent years. She has noticed that he has struggled a lot but feels that she hasn't been able to accommodate him and comfort him for his problems.

But Kai categorically denies that she has let him down. 'Mum... mum,' he sobbed, 'I have nothing to forgive you for, you've always been my own mum. No, no, I have nothing at all to forgive you, it was all my own fault.' He snuggled up to her and kissed her deeply on the cheeks.' She begs him so earnestly to let her know what has been troubling him in recent years, and he unburdens his heart to her and tells her all about his unhappy love. And she comforts him, as she has done so many times before, with '...soft and loving words...' (p. 262).

His mum was still alive for a few weeks, but her life was clearly coming to an end. The weather became milder, and Kai and his two sisters took advantage of the warmth to go for a walk. When they got home, they stood out in the garden for a while, and Kai suddenly turned pale.

'What was that sound above his head? - A starling whistling, and there it came and sat down on the garden fence. 'No - there's the starling, the first starling,' cried Ellen excitedly. But at that very second, Jenny vehemently opened the door to the yard. She looked completely lost. 'Come in, for God's sake come in; mother has had another seizure. They all rushed in; and there she lay, pressing her hands convulsively against her heart; her face was completely contorted, and her eyes were bulging out of their sockets.' (p. 265).

She did not die immediately, but it took a long time before she was able to release her pain. The new year began at the stroke of midnight, and at the same time she drew her last breath and set out on the last long journey, as Agerskov calls it.

'They sat in there all that long, terrible night at the dead mother's bedside, and only little Ellen fell asleep in the morning, exhausted from her crying. The next day Kai noticed another starling in the yard; it gave him strange thoughts which he dared not utter.' (p. 269).

The reader immediately realises that this is a harbinger of even more suffering and death. This was the time before the great, deadly epidemics had been eradicated and before penicillin had been discovered and was able to stop the many serious infections that killed many lives. It was rare for an entire group of children to grow up without any of them being affected by a deadly disease. And that's exactly what happened in the Fürst family. A fortnight after the mother's death, when the most acute grief over her death had begun to ease, word came that the two little brothers had been carried off by a severe case of diphtheria.

It was almost unfathomable for the hard-hit family members - they had cried themselves almost out of tears and were almost unable to absorb any more grief. For a long time, they walked in a blur of grief and sadness. But, as always, life had to go on, and gradually the bright memories of his loving mother and lively boys began to return to Kai. And at times, he also thought about his lost love for the inscrutable Therese.

Udkommet er
Michael Agerskov:
Livets Kilde.

Denne Bog har vakt Opmærksomhed, idet den ved sit lyse, ideale Livssyn da er en skarp Modsætning til den moderne Literaturs mørke Pessimisme. Den egner sig derfor særlig til Festgave for unge Mennesker.

(Af Bladenes Udtalelser):

Nationaltidende: Denne Bog, 340 Sider stor, indeholder gode og kønne Ting.

København: Man kommer til at holde af de Mennesker, Forf. skildrer, man interesserer sig for dem, man lever med dem — — — det er en Bog, som man maa ønske mange Læsere.

Højskolebladet: — — •Den foreliggende Bog vil læses med Glæde og Udbytte af baade ældre og yngre. Den fine og kønne Maade, hvorpaa Hjemmets Liv udfolder sig paa dens Blade, vil skabe den Venner just i Hjemmene.

Nordjylland: — — den rummer megen Friskhed og bæres frem af et lyst og hyggeligt Blik paa Livet.

Loll.-Falsters Stiftst.: Forfatteren skildrer sine Personer sandt og troværdigt; det er ikke nogen ringe Kunst at fortælle saaledes som han om det første unge spirende Kjærlighedsliv.

Randers Dagblad: •Livets Kilde• er en meget underholdende Bog — — man interesserer sig og fængsles af den hyggelige Tone, der gaar igjennem den.

Nordlev. Søndagsblad: Den sarte Æmhed, hvormed de lyse Billeder fra det hyggelige Borgmesterhjem i Strøbæk ere tegnede, giver denne Bog dens egenlige Charme. (758)

Pris 2 Kr. 75 Øre. Eleg. ib. 4 Kr.

Jul. Gjellerup,
 Sølvgade 87.

«Livets Kilde» ble omtalt i flere av de danske dagsavisene, og fikk gjennomgående positiv kritikk.

his father advises him to seek out his former student friends. And why not visit his cousin, the vivacious Annie, who had delighted him so much the last time they were together?

But the latter turns out to be fateful advice. Her father obviously doesn't realise that Annie's marriage has turned out to be one long tragedy. She feels trapped in an environment where she can't find any joy in life, and her husband has revealed himself to be an easy-going and unreliable man, who has obviously only acquired a beautiful and attractive wife to show off in the social circles where they hung out. But he himself led a double life and had countless women on the side and was in no way to be trusted.

Kai had no idea what he was getting himself into when he went to see his cousin on his father's recommendation. It eventually turns out that his entry into her life is the salvation she

Kai knew only one way to alleviate his sadness, and that was to immerse himself in his studies. It had been his solace in the past, and in a way it helped this time too. Reading at least made the time pass without him having to dwell on all the pain, but there was still a shadow of sadness hanging over him.

And then came exam time, and the young student was really well prepared to perform well. 'But life had a new deep disappointment in store for him; tormented as he was by nervousness and overexertion, he had to give up at the last written assignment. Like a sleepwalker, like a condemned man, he walked home from the university, and only in the evening was he able to write home; at the same time he asked his father for a small sum of money so that he could go away somewhere.' (s. 272).

Kai's father is an understanding man and realises how difficult the recent events have been for his son. He suggests that the two of them go away together for a while, so that his son can hopefully get over his depression and put the sad experiences behind him. The father applies for leave from work and comes to Copenhagen, and he and his son travel to Norway together. Fortunately, the trip turns out to have a very favourable effect on Kai. He comes out of his gloom and the crushing thoughts and hopes of a brighter future awaken in his mind. Full of confidence, he resumes his studies.

Fearing that his son would isolate himself and once again be plagued by depressive thoughts, his father asks: 'Why not visit your cousin, the vivacious Annie, who had delighted you so much the last time they were together?'

has felt she so desperately needs, and awakens her hunger for love, which has been deeply violated by her unfaithful husband.

And what about the young student? Is his own longing and love aroused by her obvious excitement at their togetherness? Does he play along and encourage her longings? Yes, he is more or less consciously drawn into their interaction because of his own longing and desire for a love relationship. But he can never be satisfied that this is a relationship that he himself wants. He has never forgotten his Therese and is tormented more and more by his guilty conscience for encouraging his cousin to believe that their relationship is something that can lead to something.

But for a young man like Kai, it's easy to get trapped in a relationship that he increasingly realises he doesn't want. Both because he doesn't want to hurt the young girl, but also because those who act against their conscience become increasingly weak in their ability to make decisions. Kai is a man of a completely different mould than ruthless seducers who have no feelings for those they seduce. For Kai, ending a close relationship with a woman who has become attached to him is a long shot.

But in the end, his remorse becomes unbearable for him, and he is forced to tell Annie that they must end their relationship. This hits her hard, and her desperate crying is difficult for Kai to cope with. But he sticks to his guns, even though it causes him great anguish to see her in such despair. For Annie, Kai's decision must have been a disaster, shattering all her new hopes. But then she had to do something about her own life and her relationship with her husband. Her relationship with Kai was just a kind of escape from confronting her husband with his way of offending her.

Kai wanted to make her happy and content. It was part of his nature not to want to make others unhappy. But if he were to stay in a relationship with Annie, he would be betraying his own ideals and his own longing for another woman, who he was convinced was meant for him. And he couldn't take it upon himself to be a kind of saviour for a woman who had entered a completely failed and loveless marriage.

I don't know how common it is nowadays to experience a love for a woman that is so strong and all-encompassing that you become convinced that you are destined for each other. We know from 'Toward the Light' that we all have a dual, who is our other half and whom we will always long for. And in our earthly lives, many of us are lucky enough to find our dual in a love relationship. But you can also meet your dual on earth as a sister, a mother or another close friend or relative. I interpret Agerskov's depiction of Kai's deep longing and heartfelt love for Therese to mean that he himself has experienced this dual love for his Johanne, whom he had already met when he wrote 'The Source of Life'.

Only the youngest have the ability to experience a love as deep and intense as the one Agerskov describes. And when Kai suffers so violently from the feeling of having betrayed his innermost desires, it testifies to a deep capacity for love that not many people are able to experience.

So how is our long-suffering young hero, who has been through so many hardships? Is he down in the dumps because of his break-up with Annie, or is it just a relief for him to get out of this relationship that has caused him so much anguish?

‘Two very different feelings dominated Kai in the first days after this event, first a strange, uncertain, uneasy joy of liberation; it seemed to him that he had escaped a terrible accident that must have been fatal to his whole life; but then also a feeling of indescribable shame and regret.’ (p. 318).

Kai took long walks in solitude and the painful experiences became more and more distant. He picked up his books once again and started studying again. And now that he was free of all the things that had plagued him for a long time, a little green sprout awoke in him again: The dreams of the woman he had loved so much - Therese, and of the time when they had been happy together. He received a letter from his sister, telling him that Therese had been through a serious illness but had recovered, and that she had talked about Kai.

Kai travelled home for Christmas, but it was a sad time for him. ‘Outside a fierce snowstorm raged. Inside they all sat silent and looked at each other; all joy was killed by heavy thoughts’ (p. 320).

The memories of the previous Christmas, the illness and death of their mother, and the sudden passing away of the little boys from diphtheria, characterised them all. Even the customary toast to the new year brought them no joy; on the contrary, they all had tears in their hearts.

Kai had both dreaded and looked forward to the possibility of meeting Therese during his time in his hometown, but she had travelled early to Copenhagen to convalesce from the serious illness she had suffered. Kai's sister, Jenny, who had met Therese and spoken to her, told Kai that Therese had confided in her that she thought she had committed a great sin against Kai, for which she wanted to be forgiven. But Jenny hadn't been able to find out any details beyond this.

We can easily imagine that this message must have raised a little hope in Kai's mind, that maybe she hadn't completely given up on him, but that she had something on her mind that she very much wanted to share with him. Kai travelled back to Copenhagen, and after the strong, silent frost after Christmas, Kai joined a skating club. It was there that he saw his beloved Therese one day. He was deeply moved by the sight of her - so moved that he didn't dare return to the ice rink for several days. But the deep longing for Therese drove Kai back to the ice rink a few days later, hoping to meet her. That's when he saw her again, and they both became aware of each other.

From a purely literary point of view, I notice that Agerskov sets this scene in an ice rink during a period of severe cold. It creates an atmosphere of frozen love between the young people. And to build on Agerskov's own image, one wonders: Will the same intense emotions that used to reside inside the ice be released when it melts?

But she was skating with a young man, and Kai was worried about who it could be. Surely, she hadn't met someone else? The two young people eventually met face to face but were both very embarrassed and ashamed. To his relief, she introduced her date as her cousin. And it was much easier for Kai to talk to the young man instead of revealing his embarrassment to Therese. But he finally plucked up the courage to ask Therese if they could walk around the track together, and they did a few laps together.

As a reader, we wonder what might come out of this chance meeting between the two after their long absence from each other. What does Therese want to ask forgiveness for? Has she

finally realised how unique and strong Kai's love for her was, and that it was a mistake to reject it?

Livets Kilde.
 En Fortælling
 at
Michael Agerskov.
 — — — „Livets Kilde er Navnet paa en Fortælling af Michael Agerskov; den er i disse Dage udkommet paa Gjellerups Forlag. Bogen er i det Hele **velskreven**, og navnlig er et Borgmesterhjem i en lille Købstad skildret **smukt og levende**. Iøvrigt handler Bogen om en Kærlighedshistorie mellem en ung Student, Søn af det ovenfor omtalte Hjem, og en ung Pige, Præstedatter fra samme By. Efter adskillige Brydninger, der forårsages af den unge Piges strænge Fordringer i religiøs Henseende, vinder Studenten hende. Bogens **kvindelige Hovedperson, Therese**, er noget uklart skildret, men iøvrigt indeholder Bogen **meget kønt og godt, og den vil sikkert finde mange Læsere, maaske mest mellem unge Piger**.
 — — — Den rummer megen Friskhed og bæres frem af et lyst og hyggeligt Blik paa Livet.“
 Pris 2 Kr. 75 Øre. Eleg. indb. 4 Kr.
 Faas i alle Boglader og hos Forlæggeren,
Jul Gjellerup,

‘The Source of Life’ received a lot of favourable coverage in the Danish newspapers. Here is the review in the newspaper København from 21 October 1897.

she was now thinking of him.’ (p. 323).

‘Would that miracles had happened! Would that the flower of love had opened! Would that the sweet secrets of the great deed had begun to be solved! And there alternated continually in his soul a hope, green as the singing spring, and a dark despair of despair. Agonised and troubled, he fell asleep late, with Therese in his thoughts and Therese in all his dreams.’ (p. 324).

The two are drawn to each other, and the ice rink has now become the venue for their meetings. Agerskov writes that they run lightly and rhythmically together. And we sense from this sentence that something is about to arise between them again. They don't talk much the next time they meet, but both enjoy the rocking, rhythmic movement. And it soon becomes clear that Kai isn't the only one longing for their relationship to go back to the way it was. When he confides in her about how happy he is to see her again, she replies that she feels the same way.

From today's perspective, it can be difficult to understand how she could choose her faith over love, at least in our part of the world. But Therese was a priest's daughter, and a very conscientious and serious believer. Still, as I read, I sincerely hope that the two of them will find love together, after so many trials.

The conversation didn't go smoothly. But after exchanging a few pleasantries, Kai finally manages to push through: ‘It's been so long since we've spoken, Therese.’ ‘Yes, it's been a very long time.’ The conversation was so poor, and yet it seemed to Kai to be the richest he had had in a long, long time. When he went home, he thought that something new, significant and joyful had happened to him. He felt so unfaillingly that she too had longed for him, that she was now thinking of him.’ (p. 323).

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For those of us who love a happy ending and for love to prevail, it's very touching and moving to read that the two seem to find their way back to each other. But it soon turns out that Kai is the same old Kai. When they meet Therese's cousin again and she tells him that he is a Christian, his jealousy runs so deep that he flees home because he can't bear to see Therese skating off with her cousin.

This conflict regarding his lack of Christian faith is probably far from over. But how strong is her demand that he must become a convinced and devoted Christian in order for them to be lovers? For Kai, at least, there was no doubt whatsoever about his feelings.

'He fought and fought. There was nothing to be done; the great love of his life was upon him again. And he felt so keenly that if he did not win her now, he must perish; it was a fight to the death; he would not have the strength to rise again. - And the next day, when the sun was setting in a frosty blue sky, it drove him out again - - he had to see her, talk to her again.' (p. 327).

And when they meet again, it turns out that she, too, has had a sincere desire for them to become close friends again and talk to each other in the same confidential way as before. And it emerges that she has been plagued by a guilty conscience and has been afraid that he might have got the impression that she had just been playing with his feelings without taking them seriously, and she wants to apologise for that. But Kai is able to reassure her that he never thought such a thing, and in the time that follows, it turns out that they very quickly find their way back to a close and intimate relationship.' (p. 327).

And for the young Kai, it feels like entering a dream world that lifts him to unprecedented levels of deep emotion and excitement about life. I hardly know how to do full justice to Agerskov in his descriptions of how his character experiences love. His language is so rich, so romantic and solemn, and it makes a deep impression on me.

I can't say for sure where Agerskov gets his inspiration from, whether it's from his own life and emotions or from world literature, but it's infinitely beautiful to read about the two young people's love, which was fully reawakened and found its final fulfilment in a breathtaking and beautiful scene at her uncle's house:

'Silently, the two young people stood looking at each other; then Therese stepped closer and stretched out her arms as if in prayer. 'Kai...' She whispered. And she shivered with emotion as he wrapped her in his arms. Without words, their lips sought each other in hot, fierce kisses. She gasped softly, and again she pressed herself against him, seeking his lips. And they dared say nothing in this sacred, mesmerising moment; it was the devotional meeting of two human souls; the ineffable joy of life read in the open, radiant eyes' (p. 334).



Student Kai Fürst has finally finished his university studies. Illustration from the book.

Alas, how beautiful it is, the way Agerskov depicts the two young people's love encounter. This is not about the superficial, physical attraction that many people confuse with the deeper love of our time, it is the deeper, soulful and heavenly love that not many are privileged to experience. But as we've seen between Kai and Therese, overcoming the many challenges that can stand in the way of this deep love isn't easy.

And in the case of the two young people in Agerskov's novel, they are so deeply convinced of the authenticity of their faith and their serious convictions that it is not easy to accept that the beloved does not share their own world view. And this difference does not disappear even if the two find love together. Therese still wants Kai to be a devout Christian just as much as ever, and with her help he wants to commit himself to it, but he knows very well that it goes against his searching nature to join a faith that has been fixed once and for all with a set of unchanging dogmas.



Kai is once again on the boat home to Strøbæk, just as he was at the start of Michael Agerskov's novel. This time he has finished his studies, found love with his Therese and dreams of conquering adulthood with his beloved. But as the reader, we realise that they have not yet finished figuring out their differences. You can't force your faith on others - it has to come voluntarily out of your own desire. Illustration from the book.

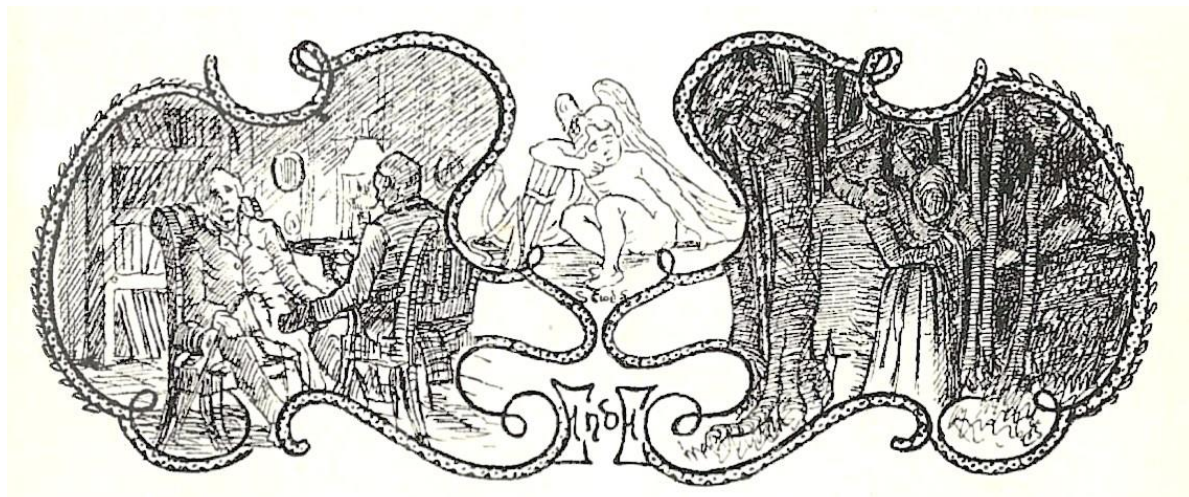
Agerskov's novel ends with Kai, who has now finished his studies, sitting on the boat home to Strøbæk. 'How much had happened in this long time; he had lost so much: but what had he not gained. Then he had travelled towards the unknown, filled with longing and strange yearning for the presumed riches of life; now he travelled towards certain happiness, knowing

that what he had sought for so long was his. He knew that his youth was over, that he was on the threshold of his manhood. He swore that by *her* side it would be a manhood full of golden striving for all the best in life, not of barren, unclear dreams' (p. 340).

It's wonderful to read about such good and optimistic dreams, and in your quiet mind, you hope that Kai and Therese will find unity and happiness together. But from my own experience, I can confess that it's certainly not easy to get along if you both have deeply held beliefs and convictions that you want so badly to convince the other of and share together. It *can* become a source of perpetual conflict and insurmountable disagreements.

As a young man, I was very much like Agerskov's character in the novel, Kai, and distanced myself early on from the dogmatic world of Christianity. In time, I found my faith again in the great work, 'Toward the Light', which was created by Agerskov's wife, Johanne, who was a medium and with Agerskov as publisher. Here I found the answers to all the questions I had had growing up.

My first wife was a traditional Christian, and at the start of our marriage I had the same optimistic attitudes as Kai. But while I hoped that our faith would enrich our marriage, it became a constant source of intransigence. She didn't want to give up her childhood faith and I hoped and hoped to convince her of its errors.



'The Source of Life' ends with this illustration. The two young people's fathers get together and talk about the lost times of the past, but the young couple walk together and dream of their bright future. Ill. from the book.

Better than trying to convince your spouse of her/his mistakes, is trying to find what you have in common and then agree on it. In my second marriage, I'm married to a Buddhist woman from Thailand, and between us it's been much easier to find common ground in our different beliefs. And in fact, there's a lot from 'Toward the Light' that can also be found in Buddhism.

Those who read my review of Michael Agerskov's 'Livets Kilde' (The Source of Life) will quickly realise how enthusiastic I am about his book. This is probably because I feel a close kinship with the main character in the way he experiences love. I myself have always fallen in love with someone and then remained faithful to my feelings for her for many years. I was

like that ever since I was a boy. I had a crush on one of the girls in my class and had a long-distance crush on her for many years. But she never knew anything about it.

But these deep feelings and dreams about a particular person can also easily lead a man (or woman) astray. You can be fooled by your own deep emotional life and hold on to a relationship for far too long, long after you should have realised that it's not worth it. And being considerate in your dealings with other people can also lead you to be so considerate of the other party that you'd rather suffer yourself than inflict the pain of your partner breaking up with you.

Michael Agerskov describes all this in a very convincing way, with beautiful language and very good depictions of both the environment and people. I am deeply fascinated by the book. Especially because I believe it contains many autobiographical features from Michael Agerskov's own life and his relationship with his wife, Johanne Agerskov.

<p>37,000 Kr. og 10 Arbejdere, der holdt 25 Mars Jubilæum, have hver saet udbetalt 2000 Kr.</p> <p>Ridt for Kl. 12 samlede Carlsberg Fondens Direction og Bryggeriets Director hos Onkel Jacoben og paa Bryggeriets Flagstang vovede det gal. Spilslag — Sletens sagnlige Anerkendelse for Bryggeriets forjensfulde Virksomhed.</p> <p>Kl. 1 1/2 laadte der en Froskost Støb i den underste Etage i Bryggeriets store Løget vægning, der var smukt dekoreret og oplyst med elektrisk Lys. Der var bakket til ca. 800 Personer. Director og Prof. J. O. L. for Ol. Carlsberg og Ruff Niels Larsen for J. C. Jacobsens Vinde. Der holdtes endnu en Wængde Taler. Stemningen var meget animeret. Der blev afjunge forjensfulde Sange og en Rantate; Wærdens Orkester muserede</p>	<p>som Forfatter. Han har blot benaet sin „Ungdom“ og sit Hanne Litråst, er der ingen Tvivl om, at han vil kunne blive af de Forfattere, der have baade et fjendt og et godt Navn.</p>
<p>Et Besøg paa de Spedalskes Ø.</p>	
<p>Interessen for disse ufælselige Lidende, disse Menneffeligens Variator, er i den senere Tid for Alvor bleven vakt overalt i Kulturlandene. Dette viser ogsaa den internationale Lepros- eller Spedalskeføngres, der er afholdt.</p> <p>Nu for Tiden betegner man som Spedalske en kronisk Sygdom, fremkaldt ved en særegen Bacille; Sygdommens uboerlige Tegn viser sig ved ganske udbønlige Wærges paa Huden, Stimpinderne, Næver og Knokler.</p> <p>Ridt efter lidt blide ogsaa de andre Organer angrebne af den.</p> <p>Sygdommen begynder ofte med temmelig almindelige Forstyrrelser af Almindeligheden; dertil kommer saa senere Pubertærens Forandring og dernæst Udøstning af Skraber og Gylber. Sygdommen gaar saa under af skrøbelige Venlafælle og Afstumpning af de angrebne Legemsdele med Døden som eneste Hjælp. Lepros forekommer særlig i de sydlige Lande, ogsaa i Sydafrika, dernæst, om end i ringere Omfang, højt imod Nord.</p> <p>Hvem der for nogle Aar tilbage har besøgt Kaplandet, har sikkert der truffet Elarer af Spedalske paa forskellige Stadier af Sygdommen: der viste det sig aldeles nødvendigt at isolere de Syge, hvorfor Kap-Parlamentet besluttede at indrette et Asyl til dem paa Robben Island, en Ø, beliggende ved den Vagt, der tillige danner Haven for Kapstaden.</p> <p>I Folkemunde har denne Væt Jerd saet mange forskellige Navne, „Ulufes-Den“, „Lepros-Øland“ og de „Spedalskes Ø.“</p> <p>En Dampet gaar engang om Ugen fra Kapstaden over til Den medbringende Post og Proviant, denne Vej benyttes ogsaa af de Syges Slægt og Venner, der ville spørge til dem.</p> <p>Den Besøgende, fra hvem disse Meddelelser ere sendte „Krisel. Dbl.“, sit sammen med en europæisk Væge, der var paa Studierejse, Væstighed til at besøge Stedet. Landingsforholdene ere besværlige; man bliver af Regere baaren fra Waaden gennem Værdingen ind paa Strandbredden, hvor man stog bliver modtaget af en Væstidbetjent, der staar der med lidt Gæner: Foruden de Spedalske er der nemlig ogsaa Kandsbooge og Straffefanger paa Den.</p> <p>De medbragte Anbefalinger aalme os alle Døre; under Væstidbetjenten af en Væstid betjente vi de Kandsbooges Væstid og saa derved, hvor de ufælselige Spedalske ere stationerede.</p> <p>Dette Distrikt er igjen inddeelt i forskellige Afdelinger efter Sygdommens forskellige Stadier og Arter. I Midten er den egentlige Wægning. Der er væstid betjente forskellige Steder, som skulle vaale, at de for de Syge gjærdende Forfættre blide overholdte.</p> <p>Fæstid saa vi Europæernes Afdeling, der var for Tiden 6 Mand; vi påstjerede lige</p>	
<p>Firnets Kilde.</p> <p>En Fortælling af Mich. Agerskov.</p> <p>(Sul. Gjællersup. Forlag, Kjøbenhavn.)</p>	
<p>Naar man i vore Dage læser en Bog af en Forfatter, som maa henregnes til de Unges Kreds, saa gjør man saa ofte den Erkjendelse, at det, man i Bogen træffer mindst af, det er Ungdom og Friskhed. Dærtimod, det synes mangan Gang, som om de Lange blandt Forfatterne have taget Patent paa at le paa Væstid og Menneffene gennem sorte Wæstid.</p> <p>Ag saa have de Lange en ganske forunderlig Lyft til at udtale deres Wæstid paa en saadan Waade, at godtroende Læser let saa den Wæstid, at Bogen, de læse, fyldes en eller anden Døsting, som har lidet ved sit Skærbord med væstidende Waaden og nedregnet de mange smættelige Erkjendelser og bitre Staffeljer, han har oplevet i sin Tid.</p> <p>I det Væstid taget er Ungdom en meget fjærdend Waare i de Unges literære Produktion. Men det siger sig selv, at Producenterne ogsaa ere dæstere. Kædelige og trættende, uoverbeftige og affættende, det er de Wæstid, som maa tilfjendes en stor Del af de Unges Wæstid.</p> <p>Wæstid gløbere overrasket bliver man da, naar man træffer paa en Bog af en ung Forfatter og saa opdager, at Forfatteren ejer Ungdommens Friskhed og Waarne og det lyse Sind og formaar ligesom at gjennemlyse sin Bog med sit eget Wæstid. En saadan Bog er „Væstidens Kilde“ af Mich. Agerskov. Had saa være, at man nu og da maatte finde en vis Wæstid i Forfatterens Søn og i hans Fortælling, og at han ved ogsaa engang imellem ikke er helt fri for at være lidt ubehjælpelig. Væstid er lidt Wæstid og lidt ubehjælpelig hos en ung Forfatter end de tomme Fortællinger paa at agere særdig og suldt ubøstet og erfaren, som man saa ofte bliver Wæstid til hos de Lange.</p> <p>Mich. Agerskov fortæller gjennemgaaende jævnt og naturligt, og i Skildringen af det unge Par, Roi og Theres, som ere Bogen's Hovedpersoner, er der saa meget Kjønt og Waarmt, saa megen Ungdomsfriskhed og Wæstid, at man søler sig tiltalt deraf. Ag og som flere af Bogen's Personer gjærdet det, at de ere regnede med lyst og fjerde Waaden, saa de komme til at staa lystevende for Wæstid.</p> <p>Mich. Agerskov synes at have gode Wæstid</p>	

Nationaltidende 5 October 1897 - review of 'The Source of Life'.

Michael Agerskov's novel was mentioned in several newspapers when it was published. Most of the reviews were positive. The review in Nationaltidende is signed with the signature A. F., but unfortunately, I have not been able to find out who is hiding behind these initials. He has several positive things to say about Agerskov's story, although he also has his objections. He writes the following:

‘This book, 340 pages long, contains kind and good things. There are descriptions from the protagonist's home - he is the son of a master baker in a small market town - which appeal with a cordiality that is consistent with the fact that the author has dedicated his work ‘To my Parents’. (Unfortunately, the reviewer has made an error here. His father's name was Fjirst and he was not a master baker but a mayor, town bailiff and chief of police. SA.) One could go further and say that the whole story gives the impression of being true and drawn from life, although of course not in detail. It is likely enough that it is much the same in several good Danish families, that the relationship between brother and sister in the book during the first youth of both has numerous counterparts in reality, and that the same applies to the young man's

relationship in several ways, including his love affair with a Miss Therese.

At first it seemed so boyish and based solely on fantasy, as many an infatuation probably is. However, he gives her a yes, which is probably dictated more by the kindness of a childhood friend than by erotic passion; but surely many a Danish engagement is formed just like that. The fact that she is very religious and an infinitely greater believer than he is may also be a part of life and reality; his doubts and misgivings during his studies in the same way.

A challenge of a different kind meets him somewhat later, while Therese has cancelled the engagement because she does not feel much in love with him and is afraid of his religious obscurity. The young Mr First is then tempted by a young and attractive cousin living in Copenhagen, unhappily married to a wholesaler, who is quite indifferent to her and, for the rest, flagrantly unfaithful. She has no children, and now falls passionately in love with her cousin, and does not fail to offer herself as his mistress. However, he is so pure and remains so true to his ideal - even though the engagement, as I said, is cancelled - that he rejects the beautiful cousin. Here again, one can only say that this is exactly how, if not every young person, something would behave. However, he is immediately united with his beloved Therese, either because she has become a little older and somewhat more accessible to eroticism, or because she simply feels more strongly called to lead him on the right, religious path. It is enough that they become definitely engaged and very happy, with the hope of agreement as far as writing is concerned.

All this is neither incredible in itself nor improbable in contemporary Denmark. All our homes and the spiritual life in them, all our young people are certainly far from being so 'European', so light in a moral sense and so empty in a religious sense, as one would think by merely judging by the content and tone of several books and newspapers. What one finds in 'Livets Kilde', which, incidentally, has absolutely no moralising, let alone ecclesiastical preaching character, would, on the contrary, seem to be in better agreement with national culture in Denmark.

Unfortunately, the story is rather deficient in terms of interest and art. Even if one claims that this is often the case, so soft and naive are many people, so idealistic do many people feel and live - and by no means the least - it is still difficult to be captivated by these people, especially by the young people who are the book's main characters. They could be amiable enough, but they are too insignificant, and the author's treatment on the whole corresponds only too closely to this. 'The Source of Life' made a nice, but very pale impression.

A. F.”

Skive avis - review of "The Source of Life", 12 November 1897.

A very positive review was published in 'Skive avis'. The introduction deals with the reviewer's complaints about the younger authors' tendency to be overly confident and lecturing, and that their literature almost appears as old people's pessimistic view of life. And the reviewer continues:

‘...One is all the more happily surprised when one comes across a book by a young author and then realises that the author possesses the freshness and warmth of youth and the bright mind and manages to permeate his book with his own life content. One such book is 'The Source of Life' by Mich. Agerskov. Let it be said that one may occasionally find a certain naivety in the

author's vision and in his narrative style, and that he is probably not entirely free from being a little clumsy from time to time. Better a little naivety and awkwardness in a young writer than the comical attempts to act complete and fully developed and experienced, which one so often witnesses in the young.

Mich. Agerskov's narrative is smooth and natural throughout, and in the depiction of the young couple, Kai and Therese, who are the book's main characters, there is so much beauty and warmth, so much youthful freshness and enthusiasm, that one feels drawn to it. And several of the book's characters are drawn with a firm and sure hand, so that they come alive for the reader. Mich. Agerskov seems to have good abilities as a writer. If he can only retain his 'youth' and his beautiful outlook on life, there is no doubt that he will be able to become one of those authors who have both a well-known and a good name."

(Unfortunately, the review is not signed.)

Literatur.

—o—

„Livets Kilde“, en Fortælling af Mich. Agerskov. (Juhl. Gjellerups Forlag.)

Denne Bog, 340 Sider stor, indeholder sjønne og gode Ting. Der er Skildringer fra Hovedpersonens Hjem — han er Son af Bagermejer Først i en mindre Kjøbstad — som tiltale ved en Hjertelighed, der stemmer med, at Forfatteren har dediceret sit Vært „Til mine Forældre“. Man kan gaa videre og sige, at hele Historien gjør Indtryk af at være sand og greben ud af Livet, skjøndt naturligvis ikke i Enkeltheder. Det er troligt nok, at det gaaer omtrent saaledes til i adskillige gode danske Familier, at Forholdet mellem Broder og Søster i Bogen under begges første Ungdom har talrige Modstykker i Virkeligheden, og at det Samme gælder Unglingens Forhold i flere Maader, deriblandt hans Forelskelse i en Frelsen Therese. Først syntes den saa drengagtig og kun alene grundet i Fantasteri, som sikkert mungen Forelskelse er. Dog afsnæder han hende et Ja, der vel snarere disteres af en Varningsvenindes Godhed end af erotisk Lidenskab; men sagtens stiftes mungen dansk Forlovelse netop saadan. At hun er meget religiøs og ulige mere troende end han, kan ogsaa høre Livet og Virkeligheden til; hans Tvivl og Ansægtelser under Studeringerne i lige Maade. En Ansægtelse af anden Art møder ham noget senere, mens Therese har havet Forlovelsen, fordi hun ikke føler sig ret forelsket i ham og ræddes for hans religiøse Uklarhed. Den unge Hr. Først fristes da af en i Kjøbenhavn bosat, ung og indtagende Kusine, uheldig gift med en Grosserer, som er hende ganske ligegyldig og for Hesten flagrant utro. Hun har ingen Børn, og fatter nu lidensabelig Elskov til Fættteren, ja undlader ikke ligejæmt at byde sig til som hans Elskerinde. Han er imidlertid saa ren og forbliver sit Ideal — skjøndt Forlovelsen, som sagt, er hævet — saa tro, at han afviser den smukke Kusine. Atter her tør man kun sige, at just saadan vilde, om ikke ethvert ungt Menneske, saa dog et og andet stille sig. Imidlertid forenes han paany med sin elskede Therese, enten fordi hun er bleven lidt ældre og noget mere tilgængelig for Erotik, eller fordi hun blot føler sig kraftigere

satbet til at lede ham paa ret, religiøs Vej. Nok er det, at de blive definitivt forlovede og meget lykkelige, med Haab om Ewigheid, hvad det Kristelige angaaer.

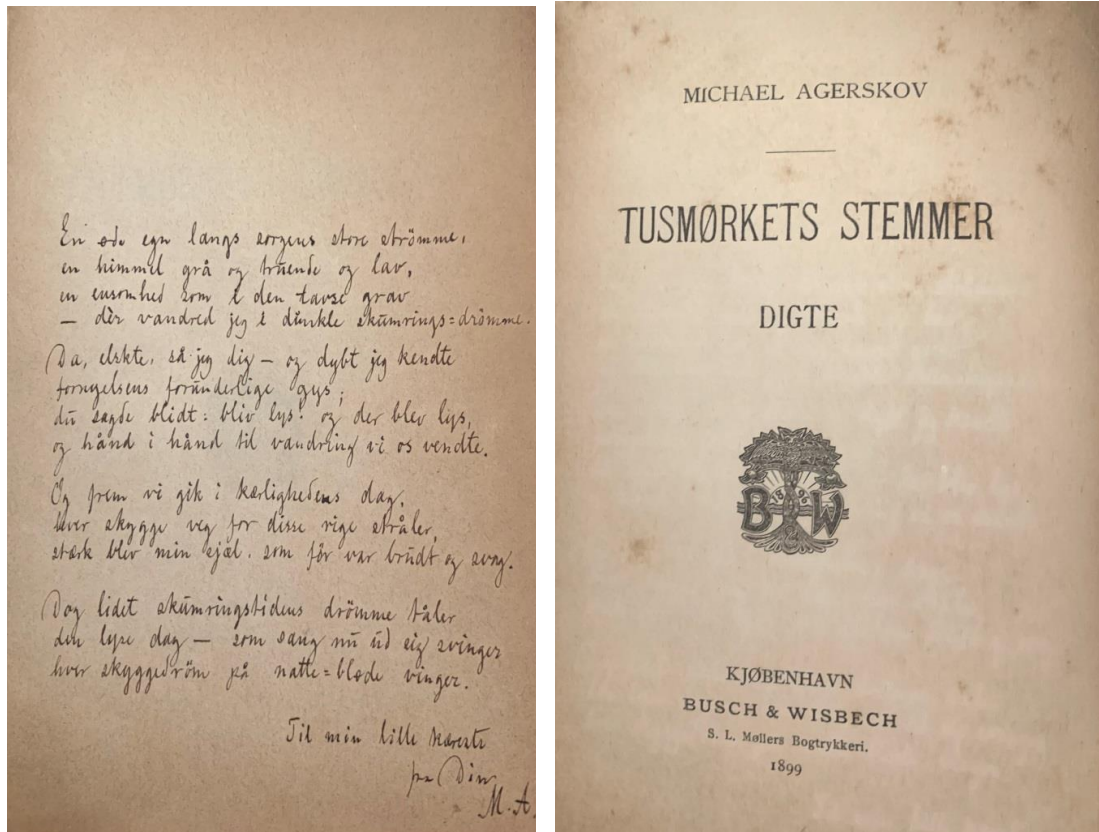
Alt dette er hverken utroværdigt i og for sig eller usandsynligt i det nutidige Danmark. Alle vore Hjem og Landslivet i dem, alle vore unge Mennesker ere jo tilvisse langt fra saaledes „europæiske“, saa lette i sædelig og saa tomme i religiøs Henseende, som man skulde tro ved blot at domme efter adskillige Bøgers og Avisers Indhold og Tone. Hvad man finder i „Livets Kilde“, der forøvrigt aldeles ikke har nogen moraliserende, end sige kirkelig prædikende Karakter, tørde tværtimod staa i bedre Overensstemmelse med national Kultur i Danmark.

Uheldigvis er Fortællingen lovlig mangelfuld, hvad Interesse og Kunst angaaer. Selv om man hævder, at saadan gaaer det ofte til, saa bløde og naive ere mange Mennesker, saa idealistiske og leve ikke saa — og ingenlunde de Ringeste — har man dog svært ved at sængstes af disse Mennesker, særlig af de Unge, som ere Bogens Hovedpersoner. De kunne være elskværdige nok, men de ere for ubetydelige, og Forfatterens Behandling svarer i det Hele kun altfor nøje hertil. „Livets Kilde“ gjør et rart, men saare blegt Indtryk.

A. F.

The review of 'The Source of Life' in Nationaltidende on 5 October 1897.

“Voices of Twilight”, poems, Michael Agerskov 1899.



Michael Agerskov's second collection of poems was published in 1899 and was called 'Voices of Twilight'. It's probably not too much of a stretch to say that it deals with the darker sides of human life. But we also see hope and optimism in some of the poems. In my version of the book, which I have received from family descendants, Agerskov has dedicated the collection of poems with a love poem to his girlfriend and wife, Johanne Agerskov,

With this small collection of 50 numbered poems, Agerskov published his second poetry collection. As usual, his language is beautiful and poetic, with many metaphors and images, especially from nature. The title 'Voices of the Twilight' gives the reader a clue that it is the dark and sad sides of life that are central to many of the poems. Although I'm not a trained literary scholar, it seems obvious to me that the poems are structured according to traditional verse forms - be they iambs or trochees. This is poetry with a classical structure in the best sense. And I myself am so old-fashioned that I prefer poems that rhyme.

It took quite a lot of thought before I dared to write a review of the collection, and I had to read many of the poems many times in order to understand the content and capture its mood. It's not always easy to understand the message of the poems, apart from the fact that many of them contain very beautiful depictions of nature. But when it comes to Agerskov, you always get the feeling that the poems have a far greater depth than the purely literal, and I find myself searching for a greater meaning behind his words.

In the first poem, called “Death and the Dream”, the first verse reads:



Illustration from the page with poem number 1. Unfortunately, the illustrator's name is not given.

‘Death and Dream met one night,
when the day went to sleep;
Than quivered the glowing sun-farewell
over the rustling woods.’

Author's comment: The poems are not rewritten in English, but translated using a digital translation programme.

This is of course a beautiful and poetic way of describing the end of the day and the approaching night, but the first line about death and the dream meeting this evening perhaps gives us a hint that the evening is actually an image of the end of life. Death is a central theme in Agerskov's literature, and he himself experienced the death of close family members - his brother-in-law died young in 1894, and his future mother-in-law in 1897. Apart from that, he grew up on the coast and probably experienced that death could be a threatening companion for the many who travelled at sea.

Nor should we forget that when Michael Agerskov grew up, the world was still characterised by several life-threatening epidemics that killed large numbers of people, and in a large flock of youngsters it was rare for everyone to grow up and reach adulthood. Penicillin had not yet been discovered and even pneumonia was life-threatening. Agerskov himself died from the after-effects of the so-called Spanish flu, a powerful influenza that killed many people.

The poem ‘Death and the Dream’ continues by describing a very sad red rose standing by a stream, crying its heart out. Both the dream and death pass by the rose without realising it. Finally, we learn that the rose does not dare to leave the forest to fulfil its longings, but feels trapped in a prison in its lonely existence. To me, it feels as if Agerskov wants to describe the unfulfilled dreams and longings that we humans may have within us, but which we do not dare to leave our safe existence and conformist life to try to fulfil. And of course, it is to

experience love - to love and be loved - that is the longing that lies deepest in people. And perhaps you could say that the poem is about a person's grief as death approaches, and he/she thinks through his/her unfulfilled longings that never materialised.

In 1899, Michael Agerskov was 26 years old, but obviously very insightful about the various aspects of life, and it is surely natural for such a sensitive and searching soul to be preoccupied with death. Life is not long from an eternal perspective, and existence is often so sadly painful for us humans. And then we all end our lives by being overtaken by old age and death. How can something as rich as human life have such a sad ending? Well, these are my reflections, but they are associations I get from reading many of the poems in 'Voices of Twilight'.

But fortunately there is also comfort to be found, and in poem no. 30, entitled 'Peace', the author writes:

'Behold, all is now bright again
everything with spring green silk!
Behold the leaves are unfolding
unfold on tender stems!

Through life flows
the young tones of spring;
New, happy songs
laugh in the crowns of the forest.

And I myself, who again
Have found peace of soul,
dare not cry hopelessly
Now in the twilight hour.'

A very beautiful description of the experience of inner peace, where one has reconciled with one's life and can enjoy new hopes. But we also recognise how fragile life feels, with the new leaves on tender stems. And behind it all, the dark thoughts are still smouldering, even though the poet does not dare to cry hopelessly. There is both hope and an underlying melancholy and sadness. Quite typical of Agerskov's poetry, I dare say.

I would have liked to have written a lot about every single poem in 'Voices of Twilight'. I think they are very poetic, deep and meaningful. I don't often read poetry, but I have to admit that I am both moved and captivated by Agerskov's beautiful poetry. Poem number 40 fascinates me and stands out from the others because I am reminded of Agerskov's later publication of 'Toward the Light'. The poem is called 'Bulmueurt', and for those who don't know this plant, I can tell you that it smells very bad and is very poisonous. The leaves are 'hairy', but the plant actually has a rather beautiful flower.



Agerskov's poem 'Balmueurt' seems to me to be about the cruel influence of darkness on those who fall for its power. And Balmueurt is, in my opinion, a very well-chosen image. Balmueurt smells incredibly bad, and the whole plant is highly toxic. Yet the plant has a flower that many would say is beautiful. A good picture of darkness - toxicity combined with temptation. Photo from the internet.

In my opinion, the poem seems to be a description of the power of darkness, and in this respect the choice of 'Bulmueurt' is a very good image. A poisonous and foul-smelling plant, but still with flowers that can appear beautiful. This is how the poem reads:

'Corpse grey flower!
corpse-poisonous flower!
How dare you so boldly
bloom here in the bright sunshine?

For you belong to the night;
that's when you get your power.
And the enemies of life they brew
in the silent hours
A foul drink,
which they pour into your cup,
that all living things may die,
who drink of thy chalice.

But I have known

a very unhappy man,
 His soul would lick itself
 at your corpse lips,
 accursed flower!
 But for that man rose
 no more sun,
 no more day;
 the night possesses his soul
 and the demons his heart.'

This could, of course, be a description of any person who has fallen to the power of darkness. But I, who know 'Toward the Light', am reminded that this could be Michael Agerskov's premonition of what was to come through Johanne Agerskov's mediumistic revelation, where we meet the one who has fallen the deepest and become the prince of darkness: Satan. But in TtL we meet the Satan who, thanks to Christ and the other youngest, has returned to the light and who asks us humans for forgiveness.

With poem number 50, we get to experience hope in the poem 'Heading towards light -'. And it feels good after many of Agerskov's poems have dealt with darkness, suffering and death. But even though he dreams of bright and good times, Agerskov can't help but dwell on suffering and death. It is obviously an aspect of his sensitive mind that he describes how much power darkness has over human existence. In this respect, I am also reminded of Jesus, who felt great compassion for suffering humanity. And Michael Agerskov is obviously a brother of Jesus.

'It goes towards light, it stumbles towards spring,
 It flames in the eastern slide;
 The crushing ice is breaking,
 And proudly the waves slip.

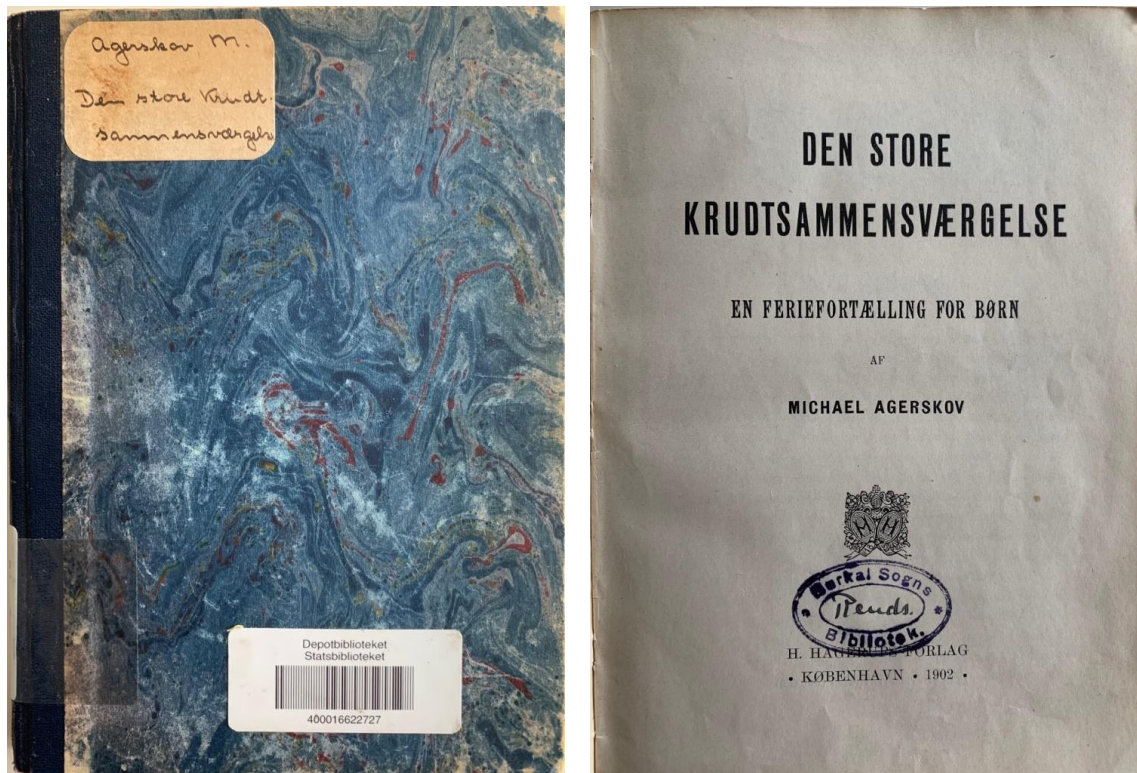
All the struggles of the day are rusting and beating,
 Who now dares to dream any longer!
 Come forth, my soul! Thou shalt perish
 In the rough, ice-filled streams.

It's coming towards spring, it's going towards light,
 In flames stands the dawn;
 I sense - I know the thrill of renewal,
 To life with victory - - or death!'

It is obvious to me that Michael Agerskov has had a distant recollection that before his birth as an earthly human being, Christ and many of the youngest were already working on the 'shortcut' to win all the elders, including Satan and his dual, back to the light. God promised them all that if the 'shortcut' succeeded, brighter times would dawn for humanity. And thanks to the unique co-operation between the discarnated youngest and their incarnated, earthly co-workers, of which the Agerskovs were a central part, they succeeded in winning the fallen elders back to the light.

Satan then began a whole new chapter in his suffering-filled existence, as the repentant, returned, most deeply fallen sinner, who was given the new name, Ardor. And brighter times will indeed dawn for humanity, despite the fact that it will take time, because Ardor, when he was still a slave to darkness, laid a plethora of evil plans for cruel events on earth. These plans will be active for centuries to come - unfortunately.

The Great Gunpowder Plot, 1902. 'A holiday novel for children' by Michael Agerskov.



Cover and title page of Michael Agerskov's "The Great Gunpowder Plot" from 1902. This copy was not included in the Agerskov family's book collection and therefore has no dedication or signature by the author. Fortunately, it was possible to borrow it to Norway from a Danish library.

Michael Agerskov also made his debut as a children's author with the book 'The Great Gunpowder Plot' from 1902. It is a very enjoyable and exciting little book of 91 pages, made up of six short evening stories in which an uncle tells his nephews and nieces about his exciting childhood experiences. 'Uncle Captain', as the children called him, or Hannibal Emilius Thramm, which was his real name, was a captain aboard the barque "Concordia", and he always brought a lot of excitement with him, both through his exciting stories, unknown sweets for the children and not least gifts in the form of nail knives, music boxes and dolls. Now he had come home to live with his sister's family, as he did every winter, and every little paragraph he told in front of the fireplace in the evening was perfect for reading aloud, a chapter every night.

'The Great Gunpowder Plot' seems to have many autobiographical features from Michael Agerskov's own childhood. His uncle's father was a customs inspector, and Agerskov gives a vivid account of his uncle's childhood in a small village by the fjord, which has many

similarities with Agerskov's own childhood landscape in Rørvig and Nykøbing Sjælland. It is easy to believe that Michael Agerskov himself is the model for 'Uncle Captain' and that it is his own childhood that forms the model for the stories. Agerskov himself was the uncle of a boy and a girl, the children of his sister, Henny. Funnily enough, one of the boys in the story is called Christian, just like Agerskov's own brother, the engineer Christian Agerskov, 1859-1928. And as in 'The Source of Life', the narrator's sister is called Ellen. And her uncle and mother's father was a customs inspector, just like Michael Agerskov's own father.

As usual in Agerskov's stories, the descriptions of the environment and the characters are both detailed and rich, and we get to know the children's friends and social circle well.

The first night (The old house by the beach - the troll stone).

In the first chapter, the uncle talks about the place where he lived with the children's mother and their family when he was a boy. And he asks the children to fantasise that they are flying off to 'the old house by the beach'. And soon they will hear more exciting stories from a summer when the uncle and the children's mother were children. It must have been idyllic for children to grow up down by the beach, in a big house with a huge, exciting garden, full of



'The great Gunpowder Plot' is illustrated by Svend Rønne, and this is how he imagines the view from the fjord, where you can see the troll stone in the foreground and the church in the background. Scene from chapter 5 showing the mill burning down after a lightning strike. Illustration from the book.

hiding places. And the children loved to swim and would run naked down to the beach every morning instead of being washed. There was also a small stream near the house, where the children could catch small fish and play in the water.

Uncle Captain then told the story of a huge boulder lying out in the water in the fjord, and this large boulder, called the Troll Stone, would play a central role in the book. The children

thought the giant stone looked like the head of a troll, barely sticking out of the water, and the story went on to say that it had ended up there because a powerful troll or giant had thrown the stone from the other side of the fjord to try to destroy the church, but had missed and the stone had ended up in the water instead, and the spire of the church still towered into the sky.



Most of the chapters in 'The Great Gunpowder Plot' start with detailed ornaments. The first, which appears in the introduction, is shown above. It is not possible to say whether they were also drawn by Svend Rønne, as they are not signed.



'The Great Gunpowder Plot' is illustrated by the artist Svend Rønne, 1868-1938. He was Michael Agerskov's cousin, as he was the son of one of his mother's sisters, Christine née Stephensen and her husband, Peter Falk Rønne.

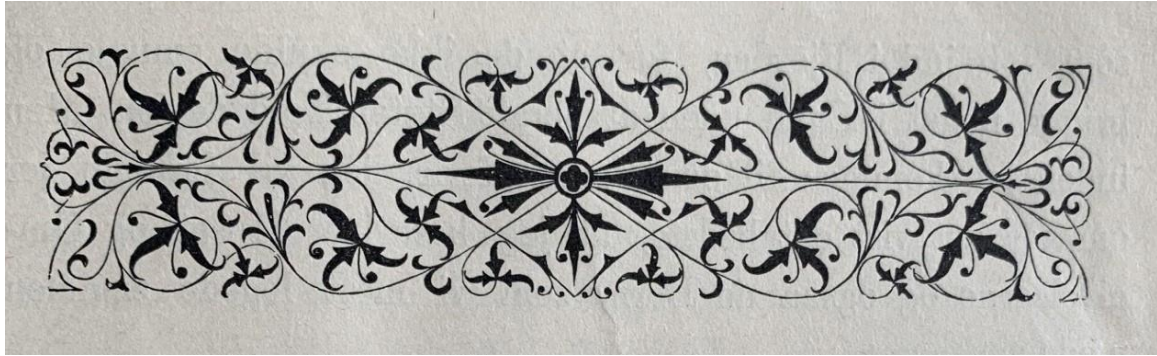
Uncle Captain says that the children were very interested in the Troll Stone. 'It looked strange, the troll stone. We children thought it looked like a troll itself, raising its ugly head above the water crust. But the people in the parish claimed that there were clear imprints of mighty (hands) on it - it was from the time the giant had thrown it.' *(I realised that there was a word missing in the text, but by then I had already handed in the book, so I inserted 'hands').

The stone was not in very deep water, and when the tide was low, the children could swim out to it when they bathed. Sometimes they also rowed out to it in the small customs boat. The stone had interesting shapes due to weathering, and there was also a hole, or a crack in it, where they could put the small children's hands in. And in winter, they could walk out to it on the ice that covered the fjord.

The ice was occasionally turned up and formed exciting icebergs that fascinated the children, and the uncle says that they had a lot of fun setting sail on their sledges and crossing the ice at great speed. In the spring, when the ice

began to melt, they also ventured out onto ice floes and pushed their way forwards. But this could be very risky, and once the ice floe his uncle was standing on was taken by the current and was heading out to sea. He saved his life by jumping off the ice floe at the last minute. You can only imagine what it was like to end up in the ice-cold water, which was up to his neck.

After such an experience, there was nothing better than sitting in front of the blazing tiled stove in the cosy living room of 'the big house'. And the children's grandmother was also a very good storyteller.



This is the ornament that introduces the chapter 'First Evening'.

It must have been a real highlight for the children back then, a long time ago, when there was no radio or television and most families barely had books.

Another person the children enjoyed listening to was their elderly Aunt Christiane, who was over 90 years old. She was wrinkled and could barely see, always sitting in her corner of the house, but the children loved her for her ability to tell funny stories. In addition to her, her mother, father and children, a kitchen maid also lived in the house. Her name was Stine and she had been with the family for many years. She liked to sing songs to the children, and they must have been so-called skillings songs, because they were often so sad that the children cried over the miserable fates in the songs. Stine had once been engaged to a sailor who disappeared at sea, and she had never since been able to forget him.

The family also had an old dog called Unkas and a cat called Marius Mikkelsen. Agerskov describes even these pets in a fairly detailed manner, and we learn how they ended up with the family and how they got their names. Agerskov is highly skilled at depicting the environment and the individual characters, including the pets, and the reader gets to know them all very well.

Agerskov gradually introduces several of the characters who play a role in the story. Skipper Hansen's house was right next door to the customs inspector's house, and there lived the children's best playmates, a boy and a little girl, William and Julie. William was an active boy who wanted to be a sailor like his father, and Julie was an exceptionally beautiful girl with long, light yellow curls and gentle blue eyes. She had an unusually friendly nature and was so kind that she was popularly known as 'the little angel', and some people thought she was too good to live on earth and that our Lord would soon call her to him.

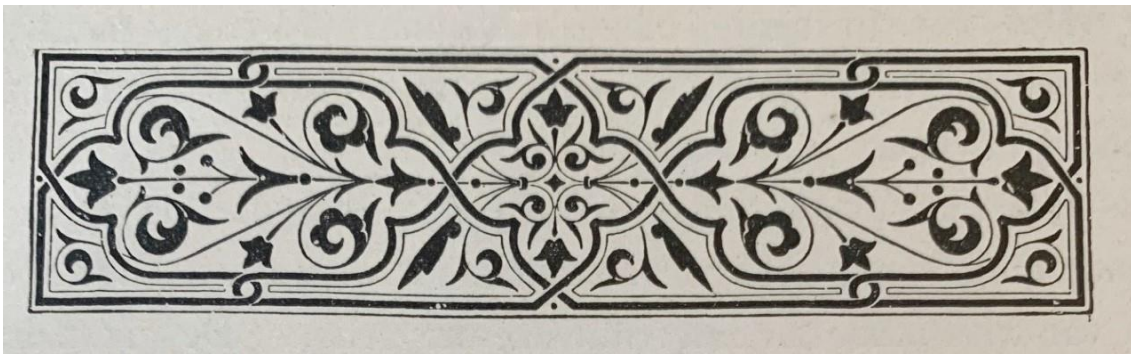
It was always fun in Skipper Hansen's house. It was filled with exciting treasures from around the world, from Skipper Hansen's many travels. And the garden was large and exciting with a dense hedge around it. The captain said that the children also often played with the schoolmaster's three sons, who were tall, thin and freckled. The children didn't like the eldest one very much, because he was a bit of a smart arse. Another person the children loved was the old customs officer, Jørgen Spids, who was nicknamed Spids because in his younger days he had captained a schooner called Spids. He used to sing songs to the children and tell them stories from his rich life, and carved little boats for them. Jørgen Spids was usually a good-natured man, but when he drank, he could get quite rowdy and then everyone stayed away from him. He was married to an angry wife, whom the children were terrified of, and out in the garden they had a red cow.

But with this, Uncle Captain decided that it would have to be enough for the first night, and to the children's great protests, he ordered them to bed.

In this book, Michael Agerskov certainly describes an environment that he knew very well from his own childhood and upbringing. And I can only imagine that the detailed descriptions of people, pets, nature and gardens must have been inspiring to read about for children and young people at the time. The cast of characters is diverse and colourful, and at that time, with no cinema, television or radio, and barely any electricity for many, children had to seek experiences in 'real' life. Exciting adults who could both sing songs and tell stories from their lives probably played an important role for young people.

And when the children had great freedom to play freely and explore both land and sea on their own, it's hard to imagine anything more exciting and challenging. It must have been a magical world for them. Those of us who remember back to our childhood can vividly imagine how incredibly fascinating completely new experiences in exciting surroundings could be. The magic of experiencing something for the first time, and of being an explorer ourselves, never returns for most of us. And the children in 'The Great Gunpowder Conspiracy' will really satisfy their urge to explore during the course of the book.

The second evening. (A dangerous journey.)



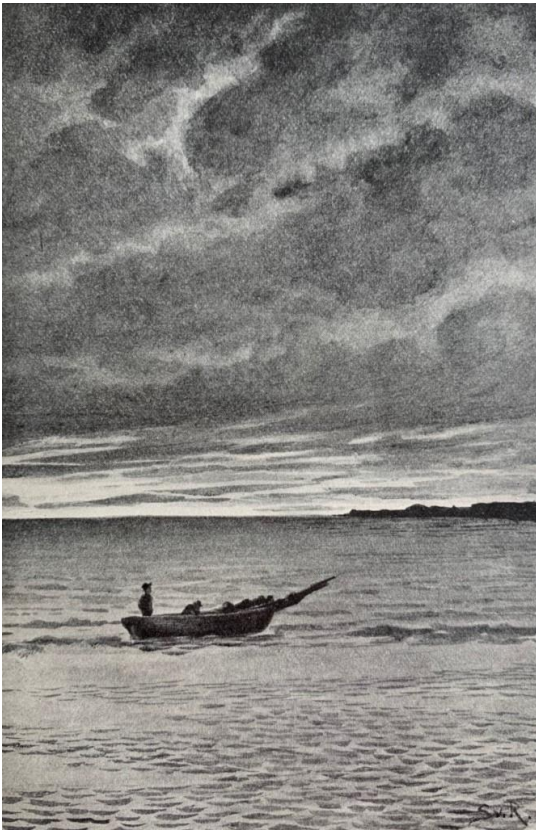
This ornament opens the chapter on 'Second Evening'.

On the second evening of Uncle Captain's visit to the family, the children are once again gathered around the stove's flames, eagerly awaiting what their uncle will tell them this evening. Whereas the first chapter was mostly about introducing the characters and the environment in the coastal town where the uncle grew up, we are now presented with a very dramatic event, and when writing for children and young people, it is essential to be able to present events that arouse the interest of young people. The drama we are presented with in this chapter is just the first in a long line of exciting, funny and sad experiences that the uncle recounts from this summer.

On this evening, the children's father, who was a wholesaler, was in his office and their mother was out on business, darkness had fallen over the 'big house' and the children's expectations were high.

Uncle Kaptajn says that the summer holidays had arrived, and he and the children's mother were very happy to get out of school for a while and enjoy the warm days without having to sit hunched over their schoolbooks. The children probably weren't that different back then than they are today. A couple of days into the holiday, the children were visited from the big

city by their relatives, Uncle Frans and Uncle Viktor. They were the same age as the captain and his sister, and they immediately became good friends, even though they had never seen each other before. The two uncles were very lively boys and full of exciting, not to say dangerous, antics. The younger boy, Frans, in particular, caused a lot of fuss because of his antics. They experienced this on the very first day of their visit. He had his suitcase full of 'Chinese pistols', as the author calls them, and I suppose they must be what we in English call firecrackers. As most young boys know, they can go off quite loudly, and Frans lit these firecrackers and threw them into the chicken coop, into the pigs and finally into the living room, and the bangs nearly scared old Aunt Christiane to death. After this, of course, there was a serious scolding and all the firecrackers they had left were confiscated.



This is how the illustrator Svend Rønne imagined either the children in the boat, or their father and Jørgen Spids looking for them. He seems to have chosen a scene where the water is still calm, and the mast and sails have not been raised. Illustration from the book.

Frans continued the day by falling from a large cherry tree in the garden and landing on top of the poor old toothless dog, Unkas, and in the evening he organised a fight between the great powers 'France' and 'Germany', represented by himself and his brother respectively, while Uncle Kaptajn was 'Denmark', which was subjected to a serious attack from the great powers. But by then, his grandmother had had enough of the noise and came to 'Denmark's' rescue by stopping the whole 'war' with stern words.

The two uncles wanted to get out on the water and go for a row, which they were allowed to do. After many exhortations to be careful, the uncles, as well as Uncle Captain, the children's mother and siblings William and Julie, set off in a boat, equipped with a large basket of provisions. They had been allowed to stay away until the evening. But the evening came, and the children had not yet returned, which naturally led to consternation and great anxiety among the adults. By the time the children had been ashore at their destination, enjoying the nest and lots of entertaining games and activities, it had already begun to get dark, and a fresh wind had started to blow. That's when William came up with the idea that they should put up the mast of the boat and a couple of sails so they wouldn't have to row the long way back.



An old photo from Rørvig harbour, where the Agerstov family lived until 1881. Photo: The Royal Library.

However, this proved to be a fatal mistake, as the wind came in ever stronger gusts, and although the boat was travelling at a good pace, it began to heel heavily in the gusts. It had also started to rain heavily, and Julie began to cry in despair and even the Copenhagen boys had completely lost their courage. The children eventually realised that the

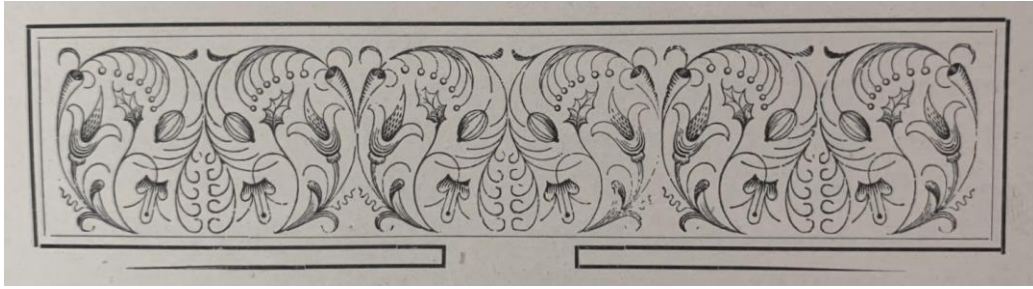
strong wind could cause the boat to turn over and agreed that they would have to put down both the mast and the sails and row home instead. But the wind drove them in the wrong direction and even the sensible William cried in despair. After much effort, with the rain lashing their faces, they realised that they were back where they had rested. Suddenly, the boat came to a standstill - they were stuck on a sandbank. As if that wasn't enough, a terrible thunderstorm started, and the sky was lit up by a blinding light that nearly scared them all to death.

Attempting to free the boat from the sandbank proved completely futile, and soon everyone was huddled together in the boat - discouraged, silent and full of fear of what would happen next. But, as the old Norwegian saying goes, when the need is greatest, help is closest. And that turned out to be true in this case. The children began to hope that perhaps their parents had begun to wonder where they had gone, and this seemed like the only way to get help. And then, in one of the bright flashes of light that lit up the sea, Uncle Captain thought he caught a glimpse of a boat. Their hopes were kindled that someone might be out looking for them. But it wasn't until dawn that they actually saw a boat. The girls had cried themselves to sleep and all the boys except William had also been knocked out by fatigue and despair.

But William stayed awake and was the first to spot the customs boat, and there sat the father and Jørgen Spids, who had been crossing the fjord all night in the hope of finding the children. But they had long since given up hope and were convinced that they had all drowned and were gone forever. But when they found the children alive, the father cried with joy, and the uncle said it was the only time he had ever seen his father cry.

The uncle finally says that the sea had had to give up on finding any victims this time, but that poor little Julie, who everyone thought was too good for this world, would later fall prey to the forces of evil. But then he wouldn't say any more, and Julie's fate was left hanging in the air.

Third evening. (The conspiracy, - The fishing trip to Rundesø.)



The ornament that adorns the third evening chapter.

After dinner was consumed on the third night of his uncle's visit, the children gathered around him and implored him to tell them more about the exciting summer of his boyhood. The father thought his uncle needed a little peace and quiet and admonished the children to leave the uncle alone. But as soon as the father had gone to his business, the children pulled their uncle over to the blazing stove. The mother also wanted to hear what Uncle Captain had to say that evening.

Uncle Hannibal begins by commenting on yesterday's frightening boat trip, which meant that the children were forbidden to row out into the open sea, but had to stay close to land. The uncle caught a cold after the ordeal and was ordered to spend the day in bed. Gale Frans, as they called the uncle, came under the guise of wanting to comfort and encourage him, but it soon turned out that the uncle's bed was full of beetles, which scared him to death and crawled around everywhere under his nightshirt. To take a suitable revenge, his uncle got the two girls in the flock to bring in some branches from the fir trees outside, with lots of pinecones, and they put him in Francis's bed, and his fright was at least as great as Hannibal's when he had



The narrator's mother, Uncle Kaptajn's sister, also appears in the stories. Here is a photo of Michael Agerskov's own mother when she was older. Her name was Andrea Louise Agerskov née Stephensen, 1835-1908. Photo: The Royal Library in Copenhagen.

been attacked by beetles. It all ended in a friendly fight, and in the end the two Copenhagen boys made some very confidential confessions. They wanted Hannibal and themselves to become blood brothers, and in a very solemn ceremony, they cut a wound in each other's arm and drank each other's blood. Hannibal learnt that he was now part of a brotherhood that was obliged to defend each other through thick and thin, and if anyone failed, the others had the right to shoot and kill them.

And the Copenhagen boys could tell that they had really big plans for the brotherhood. They had several members in Copenhagen, and they also wanted to let William in on the plans. The boys had already devised a major international conspiracy that would hit Germany. They had plans to blow up Berlin and eventually take over the whole of Germany. Perhaps it's not

surprising that the boys saw Germany as an enemy, as they had recaptured Schleswig and Holstein no later than 1864 in the German-Danish War. The boys had grand plans and imagined that they would all become generals. These relatively violent plans made a frightening impression on Hannibal, but nowhere near as much as the other conspiracy the boys launched - they had decided to blow up the troll stone itself. And he immediately declared that he wanted no part of it. 'Then we have the right to shoot you,' the boys objected. And what are you supposed to do about that?

The following night, Hannibal slept very restlessly, constantly waking up in fear and having the most horrible dreams. 'Soon the troll stone rose up before me, supernaturally large. It was a troll with a threatening, terrible face, and he opened a monstrous mouth to swallow me. At last, I lay bathed in sweat, but then finally fell into a sound sleep of exhaustion.'

The next day, William is also included in the brotherhood, but only afterwards is he also initiated into the 'gunpowder conspiracy' to blow up the Troll Stone. He flatly refuses to join in but is met with the same argument as Hannibal: OK, then the rest of us have the right to shoot you. But it doesn't seem to have any effect on William. He sticks to his guns.

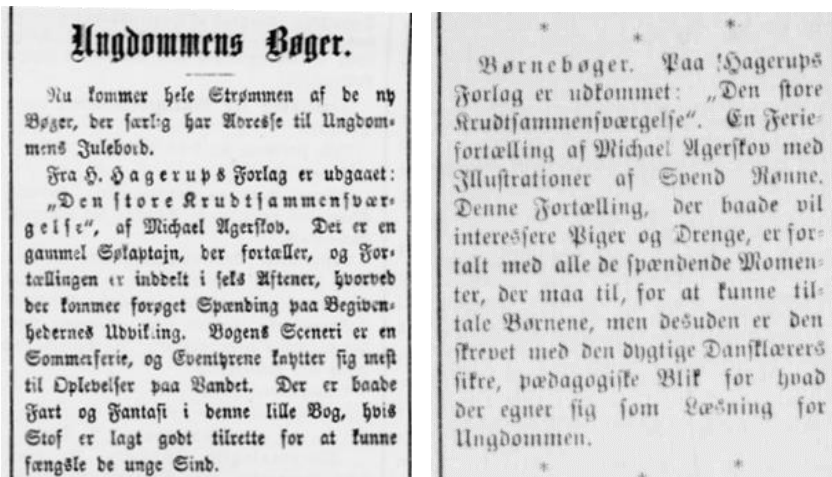
Later in the day, the whole family, apart from Dad, is planning to go by horse and cart to a nearby pond called Rundesø. Apparently, there's plenty of perch there, and they pack a picnic basket, coffee and fishing rods. Even before the journey, Crazy-Frans, as he has come to be known, manages to fall into the stream in an attempt to find live bait for fishing and gets soaked and has to lie down in the sun to try to dry off again. In this day and age, Frans would certainly qualify for a diagnosis of ADHD, as it's called in Norway, because he seems to suffer from all the symptoms that characterise the diagnosis. And it looks like this won't be the last time Frans gets into trouble on this day. Along the way, they are entertained by Jørgen Spids, who specialises in telling completely improbable tall tales, playing the harmonica and singing songs.

The trip itself was not without its problems, because on the way to Rundesø the carriageway passed through several areas of sand dunes, and the carriage began to sway dangerously from side to side, and before they knew it, it tipped over and threw everyone into the sand. After that, everyone preferred to walk on their own two feet for the last part of the trip, but soon they arrived at the pond and got into the boat with all the fishing gear. In Danish, fishing rods are called 'bedestenger' and I reckon that means rods with a fairly short line, tip and hook with bait. In Norway, we often use earthworms on such rods, and I assume the same applies in Denmark.

The fishing was really slow. Not a single bite for a long time. But Jørgen Spids knew how to raise the mood and took out his harmonica to add some fresh tones. And boy did that have an effect on the fish's willingness to be tempted. Suddenly, Frans shouted that he'd had a bite, and in his fright, he dropped his rod and fell headlong into the water. He screamed and fought for his life, because he couldn't swim. Of course, it shouldn't have come as a surprise to anyone that Frans should fall in, but fortunately there were several people who quickly intervened and rescued both Frans and the fishing rod - and the perch, which was a good size. The soaking wet Frans was ordered to run home, take off his wet clothes and get under the duvet. While the others continued to try their luck at fishing. And the fishing was like opening a ketchup bottle for the first time - first there's nothing, then nothing and then everything at once. The perch bit eagerly on the lures, and, to everyone's delight, they caught a considerable amount of fish.

All in all, everyone thought it had been a really successful fishing trip - except perhaps Crazy-Frans. Once back home, they had supper, and then it was off to bed. Frans was fast asleep with a few tears on his cheeks, and every now and then he would twitch and shout perch....perch!

And that was the end of Uncle Hannibal's story for the day, much to the children's protests. But they were of little help, as usual.



The Great Gunpowder Plot was mentioned in several Danish daily newspapers in very positive terms. However, it is not clear whether the review was written by the publisher or by the newspapers' journalists. To the left is the mention in Aarhus Stiftstidende and to the right in Bornholms avis and Amtstidende, from 2 and 5 December 1902 respectively.

Fourth evening (great preparations, the duel).

The uncle's evening stories took a break for a few days, but after he had finished his visits, all the children gathered around the stove to hear about his exciting experiences from his holiday in the coastal town. The great gunpowder conspiracy was being planned, and the four boys gathered to work out how they were going to get hold of the gunpowder needed to blow up the magic stone. William had also given in and become a co-conspirator in the conspiracy. There were many details to be discussed: where on earth would they store the gunpowder and how would they manage to drill a hole in the Troll Stone without being discovered?

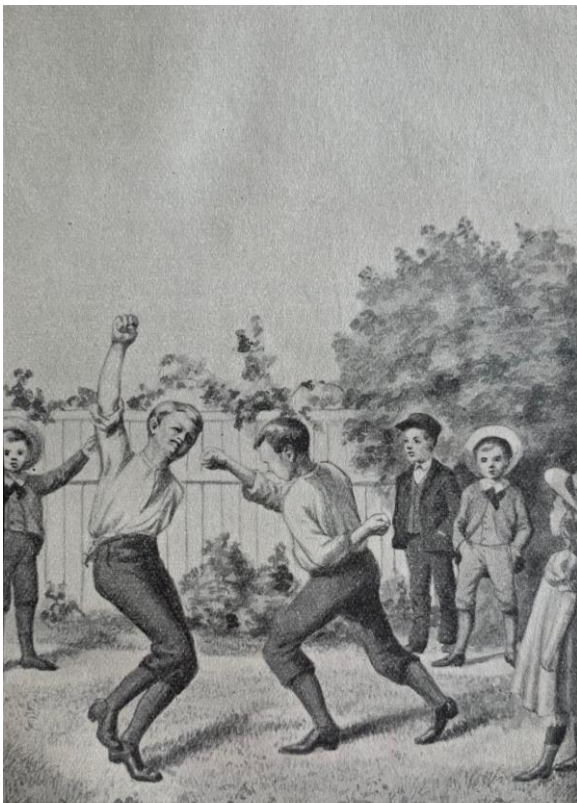
Uncle Hannibal realised that he could get hold of an old, empty 'Biskuitkasse', which translated into English meant biscuit box. It was watertight because it had a lid, and it could be buried anywhere. They all agreed to use it to store the gunpowder, which they didn't yet have, and came up with the idea of digging a hole not far from the house, in the sand under the heather turf, and then covering it with turf so that no one could see that anything was buried there. As they said, so they did. Soon the box was buried, and the heather turf put back in place on top.

But how would they manage to raise enough money to buy gunpowder? They dug into their pockets and gathered everything they had available, and it was virtually nothing. They wracked their brains to come up with ideas on how to earn enough for the gunpowder, and it was Frans, second in command of the conspiracy, who finally came up with the bright idea of picking cherries from the big cherry trees in the garden and selling them in town. He was sure that no-one would notice that some of the cherries had disappeared. However, it would eventually turn out that he was dead wrong, and the boys were both scolded and beaten and had to give up everything they had earned from the sale. This left them with no money for gunpowder.

Delighted to have made some money, and before they were discovered, the boys decided to build a small harbour for their ships. Hannibal and William had several beautiful ships, and they first set out to collect stones for the harbour. They dug out a lagoon that was protected by the harbour so that even the ships that went deep could be moored there. Frans, who had been home for a while to see if it was time for dinner, came back with a big, fat 'Skruptudse', which I assume must be a frog or a toad. He would certainly place it as mate on one of Hannibal's fastest boats, which he called the 'Arrow'. But it was absolutely against the wishes of the toad, which strongly resisted. 'It longs for its wife and small children,' concluded William, who took pity on the toad and put it ashore.

But then their mum called the boys in for dinner, and they agreed with William that they would meet before a party, to which everyone was invited later in the day, to 'play Pind'. We have a game in Norway called 'tilting the stick', and perhaps that was what they had planned. The party was in honour of the lovely Julie's birthday - she turned eleven. And Julie was Hannibal's great love.

His uncle admired Julie very much, and the feeling was mutual. That's why Hannibal was so annoyed when the schoolmaster's boys also wanted to play in the garden. The eldest of them, Holger, whom none of them liked, constantly wanted to hold Julie's hand and called Hannibal a Customs booth boy. In the end, Hannibal's temper got the better of him, and he straddled Holger's legs, causing him to fall over. Holger pulled out all the stops and the anger looked like it was going to turn into a real fight, until William intervened and declared that since they



Hannibal og Holger utkjemper en duell med en arm, over Hannibals store kjærlighet, den vakre, unge piken, Julie. Illustrasjon av Svend Rønne.

had both insulted each other, the matter should be resolved with a duel. A suitable place was found, and the rules were agreed, which meant that the fight should be fought with only one arm, while the other should be held behind the back. Hannibal went all out and landed several good blows, but suddenly he blacked out and felt blood running down his mouth. Holger had landed a real direct hit, and Hannibal lashed out at him in a completely uncontrolled, wild rage. The other boys had to intervene and declare the fight over. But the second-in-command of the Gunpowder Plot, Frans, came forward and claimed that both he and the other members of the plot had been insulted by Holger, and they would also demand their redress in a fight the next day. Holger was challenged to show up the next day with three co-conspirators so that they could have their final showdown with him. And Holger had to accept, albeit with a rather pale face.

Hannibal went down to the water to wash the blood off his face and nose, and his favourite, Julie, followed him and told him not to worry about what had happened. She told him that it was Hannibal who was dear

to her heart and that she thought Holger was disgusting. And she held his hand as they walked back up to the house.

The next day began in the worst possible way. The adults had got wind that the children had been helping themselves to the garden's cherry trees without permission and selling the berries in town. This resulted in lice, beatings and disgrace, and all the money they had earned from the sale had to be returned. It was, of course, very embarrassing, but was nevertheless relatively quickly forgotten, as the boys had far more exciting plans for upcoming events. A new and far more extensive duel was to be fought, and the boys waited with great anticipation for Holger to get a real beating from William, who had been appointed the boys' duellist. They were confident that William, who was a real powerhouse, would humiliate Holger.

Michael Agerskov:
Den store
Krudtsammensværgelse.

Med Illustrationer af Svend Rønne.
H. Hagerups Forlag.
Pris indb. 1 Kr. 50 Øre.

»Onkel Kaptajn« boer i Vintermaanederne, naar hans Skude lægger op, hos sin Svoger og fortæller i Mørkningen Søsterens Børn Historier fra sin Ungdom, da hans Fader, Toldkontrolløren, boede ved Indløbet til en Fjord. I Sommerferien kom et Par københavnske Fættre paa Besøg, og der blev lavet mange Spilopper, som naaede Toppunktet i Forsøget paa at sprænge »Trollstenen« ude i Fjorden i Luften.
Forfatteren fortæller naturligt og hyggeligt. (Vejle Amts Avis).

Fyens Stiftstidende and Berlingske Tidende also carried notices about the publication of 'The Great Gunpowder Plot' on 13 and 20 December 1902 respectively.

postpone that punishment for as long as possible, and stayed at the magic stone to examine it thoroughly and plan the blast. But when they saw that the schoolmaster had come out of the tollbooth and was returning home, they rowed ashore, moored the boat, and ran as fast as they could to a place called 'Kragekrattet', a thicket by the beach, where a large flock of crows always gathered.

Frans was not one of the most persistent and soon began to moan that he was hungry and wanted to go home, but the others thought they should stay in the thicket for as long as possible, hoping that it would cause their parents to be afraid of them, and would be relieved and satisfied to find them and not punish them so severely. So, they decided to stay where they were, and eventually the sun set and darkness descended around them. Eventually, they heard voices not far away and realised it was their parents looking for them. But what they

They arrived at the place where they had agreed that the duel would take place, and in the vicinity, they saw groups of children and young people, obviously waiting to watch the fight. But they couldn't see Holger or any of his friends. Hannibal and his supporters taunted and mocked the other team for their cowardice in loud words that could be heard all around them. But then they suddenly became a little quieter when they spotted the schoolmaster himself in the distance, and after a brief consultation the boys decided to run away.

They themselves thought it was an honourable retreat. They ran down to the beach, pulled out the tollbooth boat and quickly rowed out to the Troll Stone, and climbed up on it to stay hidden. From the Troll Stone, they still had a good view and could follow the schoolmaster's movements. They had no doubt that the 'cowardly dog Holger', as they called him, had ratted them out, and they realised that a real beating awaited them soon. But they wanted to

heard was not exactly what they had hoped for. Jørgen Spids, who was searching with them, called them 'damn boys', and their father wasn't worried at all.

This was by no means what they had expected, and together with Frans' ever-increasing moaning and whining, it didn't exactly create a good atmosphere. Rather, they became rather worried and nervous. And wouldn't you know it, they soon spotted some very scary creatures around the thicket. They were creepy and white, moving from the ground to hovering in the air. The boys were convinced that they must be ghosts. And at this terrifying sight, the boys ran home in a panic and straight into the living room to tell of their terrifying experience.



Et maleri av kunstneren V. Magaard med motiv fra Rørvig på 1890-tallet. Familien Agerskov bodde i Rørvig i flere år da Michael var gutt. Foto fra internett.

But the parents' reactions were not at all what they had expected. The mum was crying, but the dad was furious. He grabbed his cane and ordered them back outside to see what had scared them. And they were probably quite embarrassed when they saw that there were nothing but sheep grazing in the meadow. According to the uncle, there was a chance that they could feel the cane before they went to bed. But before he finished the evening's story, he wanted to share with them a dream he had that night.

'It is true - before I close tonight, children, I must tell you that I dreamed last night that I was again really standing outside the thicket in the field, and now the mound was really standing on four glowing poles; but I was not at all frightened when a crowd of white figures came floating towards me and told me to follow them into the mound to get the treasure.

I entered the mound, passed through one golden hall more splendid than another, and in the centre of the most beautiful hall, on a golden throne, sat little Juliet, wonderfully lovely, more lovely than I had ever seen her in reality.

I knelt before her and felt a bliss such as I have never known before or since, and was about to grasp her outstretched hand. Then someone grabbed me hard from behind. It hurt so horribly that I staggered, and now I realised that it was soreness from the beating I had received. - '

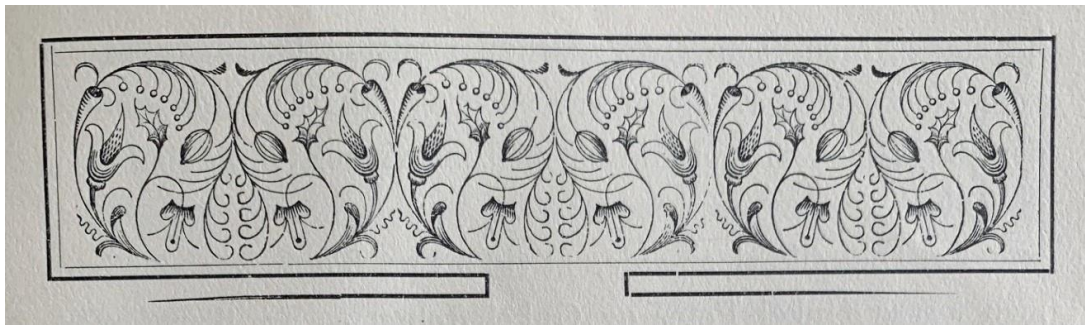
For those of us who know the whole story behind the creation of 'Toward the Light', as Michael Agerskov has told it, it brings to mind an experience from Michael's childhood. As a boy, he met a girl who made an indelible impression on him, and they spent a whole day together in the neighborhood where Michael lived, holding hands, but suddenly she was gone. Later, Michael tried to find out who this girl was, but nobody could tell him anything about her.

As an adult, when Johanne and Michael were married and had begun the great work of praying for the fallen spirits and eventually for the evil one himself, he learnt from the supernatural side that it was Johanne's spiritual personality he had met, and the meeting was

arranged from the supernatural side to forge a bond between Johanne and Michael, so that the chances would be great that the two would find each other as adults and fulfil the mission they had undertaken before God.

Personally, the hairs on my body stand on end when I read this dream, and I can only say that it is a dream of heavenly dimensions. The radiation of light is like a divine stream, and I would by no means rule out the possibility that this is a dream that was Michael Agerskov's own and was deeply about the relationship between him and Johanne.

Fifth night. (The comedy. - The storm.)



The ornament from chapter five.

The preparations for the big event - the blasting of the Troll Stone - continued over the next few days, said Captain Hannibal as the children once again gathered around him in excitement. They had been lucky enough to get some gunpowder from Jørgen Spids, so the bottom of the biscuit tin was already covered in black powder. Of course, Jørgen Spids hadn't been told what the gunpowder would be used for, otherwise he wouldn't have been so willing to give it to them.

However, drilling a hole for the gunpowder in the Troll Stone proved to be more difficult than expected. Perhaps the boys didn't have the best equipment - just a few large nails and a hammer - and that wasn't enough to make a hole in the large stone. The boys had originally thought that their uncle's birthday would be a good opportunity to celebrate with the big explosion but given that they were expecting some nice visitors and perhaps some monetary gifts that day, they decided to postpone it until the last day of the summer holidays. It would be a large-scale celebration of the end of the holiday.

The children were still enjoying their summer holidays, sailing their toy ships, visiting Jørgen Spids in his shed and having dried flounder and listening to tall tales, or he took them out to the ships sailing past the fjord, where they were treated to biscuits and the dry, hard bread that sailors ate.

The Copenhagen boy, Crazy-Frans, still pulled many pranks and once almost drowned after falling out of the customs boat. Another time he was attacked by a large flock of geese outside the blacksmith's shop up in the city, and cried and screamed in pain and terror, so the blacksmith had to go out to save him. And even worse was the time he was teased by Jørgen Spids' cow, which grabbed him by the horns and could easily have put an end to him, but fortunately he was again saved from the furious cow by Jørgen himself.

That's how the days went, with the children enjoying the good weather and the two Copenhagen boys getting colour in their cheeks from the healthy farm life in the countryside. But it wasn't quite as enjoyable when it started to rain heavily. Outdoor activities were no longer so tempting, so the children stayed inside and found various games to pass the time. But they soon got bored, and that's when Frans came up with the idea of dressing up the family dog and cat, and after a while Hannibal came up with the idea that they could all dress up together and play a comedy. The idea aroused great enthusiasm among the others, and their mother gave them permission to find all the family's costumes.

Their mum suggested that they should act out the fairytale of Sleeping Beauty, and that's what they decided to do. They were allowed to use the dining room to set up the theatre stage with a screen and shawl and rehearsed all afternoon. Chairs were set out for all the spectators, and they all had to pay 10 øre in entrance fees. All proceeds were to go to the conspiracy's war chest, but of course no one was told that.

The play was a great success, and all the spectators clapped and were enthusiastic. Of course, it was Julie who played Sleeping Beauty, and she was more enchanting than ever. The performance earned them as much as 70 øre for the war chest, and that sum was converted the next day into gunpowder, which they bought in the Brugsforeningens Udsalg. Fortunately, the gunpowder they had already bought had not been damaged by the rain and they now had a considerable amount of gunpowder in their coffers.



Dark clouds built up in the sky before the violent thunderstorm. Photo: Sverre Avnskog.

Later in the day, they rowed out to the Troll Stone to take a closer look at it. They had originally planned to drill a hole in it for the gunpowder, but that had failed. But then Frans came up with the idea that they could use the crack that was already in the stone for the gunpowder, and then seal all the openings from the crack with paper. They all realised this was a really good idea. They hurried back home, terrified that their secret would be revealed, but at the same time feeling a quiet joy at sharing the terrible secret of blowing up the Troll Stone.

The next day, the heat was oppressive and nobody could stand anything. Soon they were all alarmed that the barometer was showing earthquakes. They all had an unsettling feeling, and soon the adults realised that very dark clouds seemed to be gathering on the horizon. Surprisingly quickly, denser black clouds built up over the fjord, the leaves on the poplars began to rustle, and the children could feel the cool wind on their faces.

Suddenly the storm broke, there was loud thunder, lightning lit up the sky against the dark background and then thunder rumbled. Lightning struck in several places, and they could see the hydrant in the garden shatter. Soon afterwards, a violent hailstorm broke out, with hail of enormous size. Several of the windows in the house were smashed and the hail entered the living room. The children gathered in a frightened huddle in the living room, the dog crawled

around whimpering with its tail between its legs, and old Aunt Christiane was sure that judgement day was coming.

Eventually, the worst of the storm passed, and the children were sent to bed. But it wasn't long before it broke loose again, perhaps not as badly as the first time. But the father, who was out checking the splintered hydrant, discovered that there was a fire up in the town. Soon they could see that it was the mill that was burning. A large cloud of smoke rose above the town and the mill was surrounded by a shower of sparks. Attempts to extinguish the fire were unsuccessful, but it was not the only one. They could count as many as six fires around the village.

When the children finally got to bed, it was late at night, and they slept and slept well into the day.

Sixth evening. (A cheerful sailing trip. - The explosion.)



The ornament that adorns chapter six.



Photo from the internet taken at the harbour in Rørvig in 1926. Michael Agerskov's family lived in Rørvig until 1881.

The evenings of exciting stories from Uncle Kaptajn were drawing to a close. The summer was coming to an end, and events were beginning to reach their climax - which everyone was eagerly waiting to hear about: The long-planned blasting of the Troll Stone. The uncle had been busy for some time, so one can only imagine how the children's expectations had built up.

But finally they were gathered around the burning stove, and to their disappointment their uncle told them that this would probably be the last evening he would be able to tell them about the eventful summer of his and their mother's childhood. Little Ellen sat on her uncle's lap and the others sat in a circle around them.

After the violent storm and the fires in the city, the weather continued to be unsettled and unstable, their uncle began, and everyone was excited to see what the weather would be like on Hannibal's birthday on the 10. of August. It was a tradition for the whole family to go on a long sailing trip in the big customs boat that day - across to the other side of the fjord with a packed lunch and drinks. The whole week after the storm, it continued to rain and blow heavily, and the children had to stay inside most of the time.

But as soon as it cleared a little, they went out to the sand pit to check on their precious supply of gunpowder, which had grown a little after Jørgen Spids gave them a little more powder from his gunpowder horn. They had fooled him into thinking they were making fireworks, and to avoid arousing his suspicions, they also made some firecrackers. Going out to the Troll Stone to inspect it was not possible in the troubled waters.

The uncles and aunt who usually attended Hannibal's birthday celebrations and the customary sailing trip arrived in good time for the celebrations, but for a long time it looked very bleak for the trip to go ahead due to strong winds and rain. The children slept poorly the night before the planned trip but were dressed and ready to leave at the crack of dawn. Sure enough, the weather was improving, and the sun was breaking through, even though there was a fresh breeze that kept getting stronger and stronger. But they still chose to embark on the journey, much to the children's delight.

And the happiest of all was the birthday boy, Uncle Kaptajn, who received gifts galore, including several kroner from his uncles and aunt. And good friends William and Julie, who weren't going on the trip, also dropped by with gifts. William gave him a knife and Julie gave him a ring, which she had used herself and was very fond of, and they both realised that it meant they were engaged. A lovely little love story in the midst of the drama. Quite typical of Michael Agerkov's literary works, where deep emotions and love always play a central role. As do grief and tragic death, but we'll hear more about that soon.

It was an exciting and eventful sailing trip in every way. The children were put in charge of steering the sails as the boat crossed the fjord, but they soon had to lower the mainsail due to the strong wind to prevent the boat from capsizing. Both the children and most of the crew got soaked, and when they tried to light the portable charcoal-burning stove, it was impossible to get it going. Their mum thought they all needed a cup of coffee to warm them up, but they had to give that up.

As they approached the other shore, they launched the small tugboat that would pull the sailboat closer to shore, and then carry the passengers to dry land, which went well for most of them. But on the third trip, things went horribly wrong, and the boat capsized, the uncle rowing the boat fell into the water and the oars fell into the water and drifted away. Instead, he had to wade ashore with the boat in tow. And out on the fjord, the father and the other uncle were left in the sailboat, unable to get to shore. But they had plenty of advice. They shouted to those who had disembarked that they would sail to the settlement some distance away and go ashore there. There was also a pub where they could get something to eat. Everyone agreed to meet there later in the day.

Fortunately, they had managed to save most of the food, and now they also managed to fire up the coffee maker, and soon it smelled deliciously of hot coffee. The food tasted very good, and soon they were all very satisfied. Afterwards, the children were allowed to play while they waited for their uncle's clothes to dry. In the meantime, he had wrapped himself in a blanket held together by some pins, and everyone thought he looked very comical.

And they weren't the only ones who thought so. It was a long way to the pub where they were to meet their father and uncle, so they planned to try to get a lift for both themselves and the small dinghy on the first horse-drawn carriage that drove past. But that was easier said than done. When the first carriages approached them, and the horses spotted their uncle dressed only in a blanket, they were terrified, and the driver had his hands full keeping track of them. It happened several times that the passing teams rushed past, until an old farmer came along the road with an empty wagon and agreed to take them along. But there was no denying that people who saw them had a good laugh at their uncle's simple clothing.

It was now too late to think about going home, but fortunately they all had supper at the inn and there was also accommodation available. Apart from their mum and aunt, who were given the place's vacant bedroom, the others lay on straw spread out on the floor of the large living room and slept very well throughout the night. The next day there was a good wind to sail in, and the whole party made it home safely.



Svend Rønne's illustration from the book of the boys placing the cannonball in the Troll Stone.

On the following days, the weather was stable and mild, and everything boded well for the boys' plan to blow up the Troll Stone. The day of the event was set for 15 August and almost every day the boys checked how the gunpowder that would be used to blow up the stone was doing. They were in a kind of feverish fantasy, imagining all sorts of reactions from family and friends. Would there be scolding, punishment and what could be even worse? Or would many people be impressed and admire them, and would they actually become famous?

The boys had made a powerful cannonball from all the gunpowder they had collected and lashed it together with paper and twine, which they had obtained illegally from their father's office. For the fuse, they would use a hollow paper tube filled with gunpowder. Time would show that they might not have been entirely lucky with the construction of the fuse, but they were very happy with the self-made 'hell machine' they had created. It was hidden in the cave they had excavated in the sand pit, where the box of gunpowder had been hidden. The boys were probably quite ambivalent about what the next day would bring when they went to bed, and none of them slept particularly well, and Frans talked in his sleep throughout the night.

Then the day dawned to realise the great gunpowder conspiracy. In the morning, the boys rowed out to the troll stone and prepared everything for the secret explosion. The canonball

was positioned and all the cracks in the stone were sealed with paper. And with that, everything was ready for the big explosion.

Later in the day, the boys were given permission to stay out a little longer than usual and, unnoticed by everyone, they rowed out to the Troll Stone in the small customs boat. Now the big event was about to take place. Darkness had gradually descended, and the boys were ready to put into action the great conspiracy they had planned throughout the summer holidays - they were going to blow up the troll stone with their homemade cannonball. The boys approached the troll stone completely unnoticed by everyone else, and then they were ready to set fire to the paper tube that would ignite the deadly cannonball, and the fuse was lit.

But what happened? Nothing like the conspiracy had imagined. It's true that the explosion caused parts of the stone to splash in all directions, but the disastrous thing was that the boys had only got a few metres away from the stone when the violent explosion took place. Several of them were quite seriously injured because they were so close to the explosion. Rocks and splinters flew in all directions and the one who was most seriously injured was Frans, who had his face pulverised in the explosion. You might say it was an irony of fate, given that the whole blast was Frans' idea. Uncle Hannibal was also bedridden for several days, but he was mostly injured by the pressure of the explosion. Hannibal commented rather laconically to the children that perhaps the injuries were honestly deserved.

And so we hear no more about the dramatic events.

But in the book, as in so many of Agerskov's literary works, there is also a tragic little love story woven in. We hear the tragic story of the little girl, Julie, with whom Uncle Hannibal as a boy was very infatuated and in love. We learn early on that Hannibal and Julie are lovers, and she gives him an engagement ring as proof of her love for him. At the very end of the book, we read the following:

‘The captain was silent, and all the children sat silent around him, looking very uneasy.

Then Ellen said all at once:

‘Well, uncle, what has become of little Julie, you have not told me.’

The captain sat silent for a long time, as if lost in dark thoughts. Then he said:

‘I am really sorry that you reminded me of Julie, little Ellen; it is only sad what I have to tell you. But listen to me:

The same day I came up, that is, three days after the explosion, I went over to William. But think what had happened, scarcely an hour before: little Julie had been drowned, God had taken his angel to himself; the wise wife of the parish had been right; she had been too bright and beautiful to live on earth.

No one knew how it had happened; she had been swimming with some other little girls in very shallow water, and suddenly she had been lying lifeless in their midst. They had carried her ashore, but she was and remained dead.

I well remember that all my childhood I thought it was the troll stone that had taken the terrible revenge upon me and William; for she drowned close to it, where it stood, mutilated, robbed of her upper part by the explosion.

Poor little Julie! I went in to see her lying in her white bed. Her face was so pale, and her bright, mild eyes were closed; only her yellow curls were the same. There she lay, stiff and dead, and could not smile at me, could not speak to me.

I cried and could not stop again; it was so terribly sad. You know, children, how much I loved her, and that she was to be my wife when we grew up.

I picked a lovely bunch of flowers and put them in her white hands; she was to have them as a last greeting from me, poor little Julie!’

And with this sad event, Michael Agerskov concludes ‘The Great Gunpowder Plot’.

If anyone is wondering why I have written such a detailed review of both this and several of Michael Agerskov's literary publications, I can tell you that it is because I am quite sure that his books are partly autobiographical and contain much from Agerskov's own childhood. Therefore, I think that many of those who later read these reviews

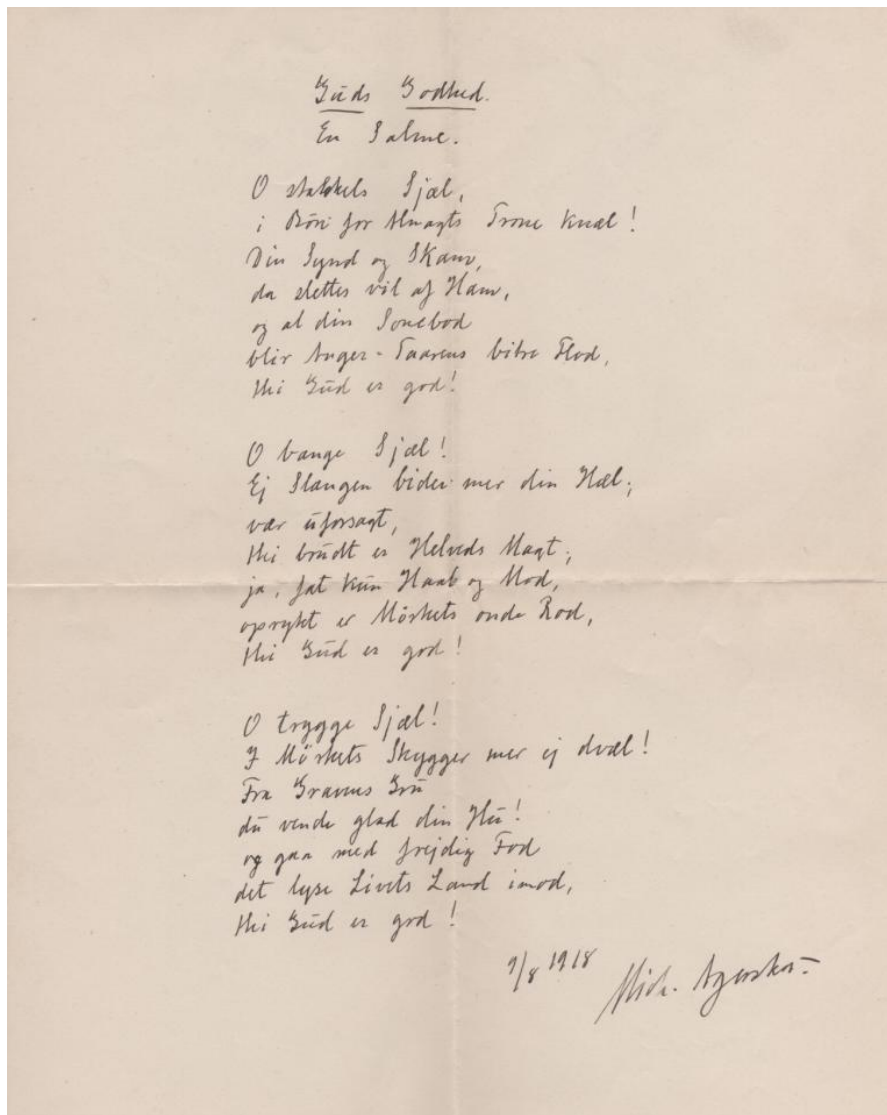
<p>En Bekendelse.</p> <p>Af en ukendt ånd. Min hilsen til eder alle! Jeg har modtaget tilladelse til at tale til eder, - tale i vor Faders navn; men mit navn skal være ukendt for eder. Jeg ønsker at forme mine ord således, som tankerne i dette øjeblik indgiver mig dem; og jeg beder eder være milde i eders dom over mig, da jeg endnu har meget svært ved at forme de tanker, der forekommer.</p> <p>I tidernes morgen faldt synden over Jorden. I utalte årtusinder kæmpede Lysets og Mørkets magter om herredømmet over menneskenes sjæle.</p> <p>Af Mørkets magter lærte menneskene ugeringer, laster og manddrab. Og når sjælene ved døden forlod de jordiske legemer, blandt deres syndefulde tanker og begæringer dem fast til Jorden i årtusindrede eller længere, indtil den guddommelige Gnist, der er nedlagt i hvert menneskehjerte, havde vokset sig så stærk, at sjælen ved hjælp af Lysets ånder formåede at hæve sig op til det hjem, hvorfra den var udgået.</p> <p>Med sorg og angst overså sjælen der sit forføjede jordeliv, og ofte sendte Herren den, påny inkarneret, tilbage til Jorden for at sone, for at lære at afkaste syndens åg, for at lutres og gå fremad.</p> <p>Lysets og Mørkets magter kæmpede ustandselig! Der kom sekler, hvor Lyset bredte sig over Jorden, og mange bundne sjæle droges opad. Der kom sekler, hvor Mørket bredte sig over Jorden, og utallige menneskesjæle faldt dybt for syndens magt. Da kom den seneste tid, den tid, hvortil I hører.</p> <p>Lyset bredte sig atter over Jorden, og mange synde bundne sjæle droges af Lysets ånder, ved hjælp af menneskenes forbønner, opad til hjemmet og modtog vor Faders tilgivelse.</p> <p>Jeg, der taler til eder, var blandt de dybeste faldne.</p> <p>Med rædsel så jeg Lyset vælde klarere og renere hen over Jorden. Med rædsel så jeg skarer af synde bundne sjæle hæve sig opad mod Lyset.</p> <p>Vi, der endnu var tilbage, kæmpede med fordoblet styrke, og vi udsendte onde og hadefulde tanker, der ramte menneskene og fødte i deres hjerner og hjerter Mørkets styggeste gerninger.</p> <p>Da hørte vi i vor kamp menneskestemmer, der bad: "Herre, forbarm dig over alle synde bundne sjæle, tilgiv dem, drag dem opad til dit Rige, bort fra Jorden, så at menneskene kan leve deres jordeliv uden Mørkets indgriben!"</p> <p>Og vi så en hærskarer af Lysets ånder stige ned til Jorden. De talede til alle de bundne sjæle, bød dem følge med til hjemmet og lovede dem Faderens tilgivelse. Og alle fulgte!</p>	<p>Kun jeg alene stod tilbage, ene med min rædsel og angst. Hvor jeg end vandrede hen over Jorden, var jeg ene, ene blandt menneskene; og i mit hjerte vågnede længselen efter vor Faders hjem.</p> <p>Da stod en Lysets engel ved min side. Han rakte mig sine hænder og sagde kærlig: "Broder, følg mig; thi vor Fader kalder!" Men jeg skjulte mit åsyn og svarede: "Jeg kan ikke følge; thi intet menneske vil bede for min frelse." Men han sagde: "Jeg skal føre dig til mennesker, der vil bede for dig." Og han førte mig til et rum, hvor mange af Lysets ånder var forsamlede. Tavse gjorde de plads for mig, og jeg så, at også mennesker var til stede.</p> <p>Da jeg i angst tilbage og råbte: "Broder, disse svage mennesker vover ikke at bede for mig," men min broder og min Frelser svarede: "Sig disse mennesker, hvem du er, og hvad du har syndet, og de vil bede for dig; thi de har lært, at vor Faders barmhjertighed er uendelig, og vor Faders kærlighed er over al forstand."</p> <p>Da bad jeg skælvende disse mennesker anråbe vor Fader om fred og tilgivelse for mig; og de bad: "Herre, forbarm dig over denne synder, bortslet alt og drag ham op til dit Rige." Da hørte jeg en mægtig stemme, der talte til mig: "Dine synder er dig forladte, vend tilbage til det hjem, hvorfra du er udgået!" og alle de lyse ånder omringede mig, og bød mig kærlig at følge dem, og de førte mig til vor Fader.</p> <p>I sandhed, vor Faders barmhjertighed er uendelig, og vor Faders kærlighed er over al forstand!</p> <p>Mere end dette er det mig ikke tilladt at sige eder. Jeg byder eder alle et inderligt level.</p> <p>Efter en kort pause.</p> <p>Den tabte Frugtkerne.</p> <p>En lignelse af "Kristus".</p> <p>Kristus bringer eder alle vor Faders kærlige hilsen, fred og velsignelse! Kristus ønsker at tale nogle ord til eder:</p> <p>En mand ejede nogle kostbare frugtkerner; med megen omhu lagde han dem i den bedste muldjord i sin have. Men det skete, at han tabte en af kernerne, medens han arbejdede. Tålmodig søgte han overalt for at genfinde den tabte kerne; men han fandt den ikke, og han blev såre bedrøvet.</p>
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Michael and Johanne began publishing their mediumistic messages early on under the names Kaj and Bettina in #The truth seeker" and "Jacob's ladder", published by Chr. Lyngs. And as early as April 1912, they told of the message from Ardor, in which he tells of how Christ and the youngest, as well as the prayer of Michael and Johanne, made him turn round and ask for forgiveness for all his evil sins. God forgave him and received him with love in the kingdom of light. At the same time, Chr. Lyngs published a strong warning in which he questioned the veracity of this message, but at the same time emphasised that he in no way doubted the couple's credibility, but firmly believed in their honesty. Above is an extract from the message, which Claus Hafstrøm has published in his book 'Kaj og Bettina', together with their other published messages in Lyng's journal.

of his books, will greatly appreciate getting to know Agerskov's upbringing and background.

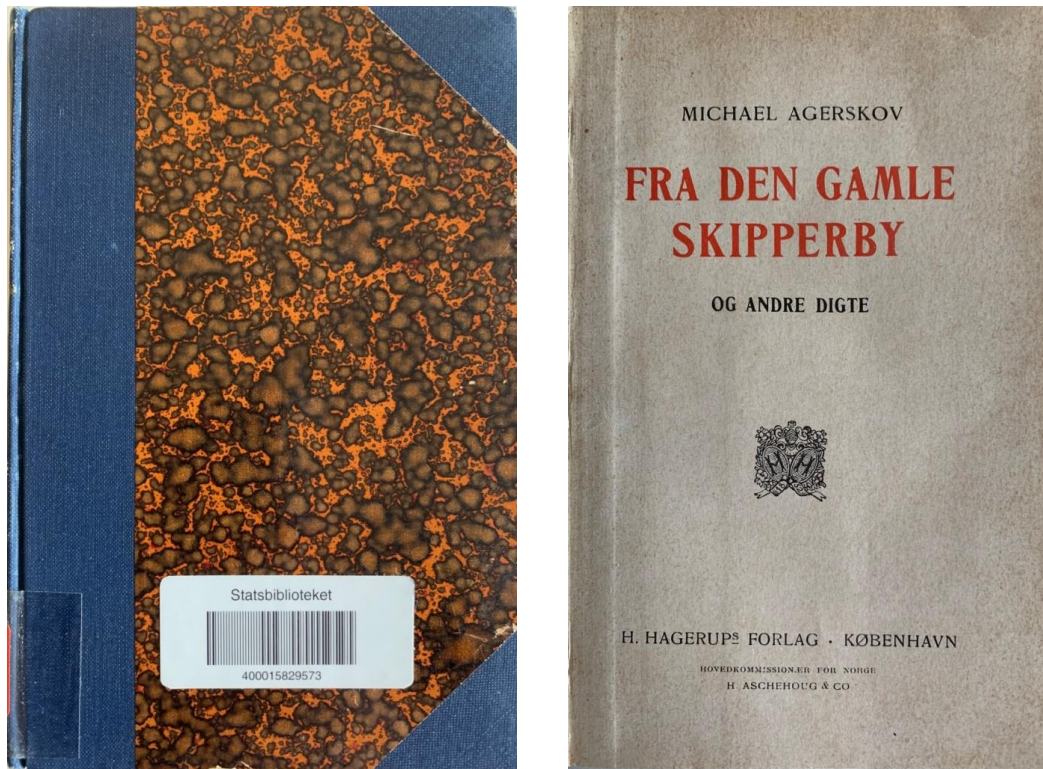


Editor and municipal teacher Chr. Lyngs, d. 1921, published many of Michael and Johanne Agerskov's mediumistic texts in "The truth seeker" and "Jacob's ladder" under the names Kaj and Bettina. Photo: The Royal Library in Copenhagen.



A handwritten poem by Michael Agerskov entitled 'God's Goodness' - dated 9 August 1918. Copyright: Private.

‘From the old Skipper Village and other Poems’ - poetry collection from 1909.

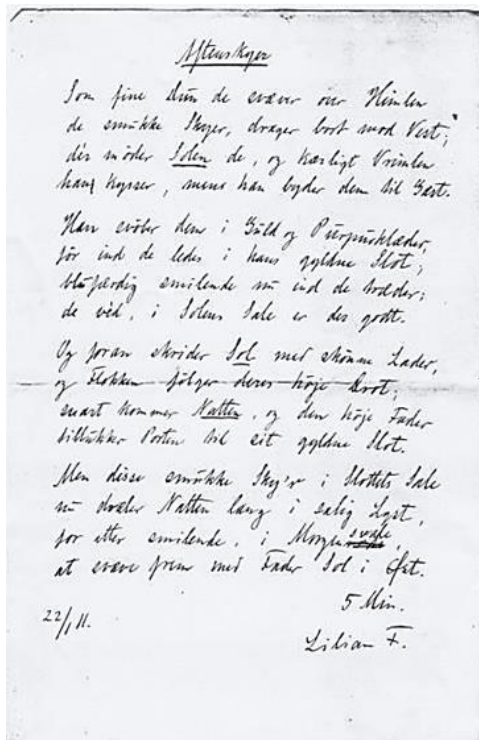


Cover and title page of ‘From the old Skipper Village and other Poems.’



In 1909, Michael published a new collection of poems. By this time, both he and his wife had begun to receive messages from the supernatural world. They both had so-called ‘clear hearing’, i.e. the ability to ‘hear’ what the spiritual personalities communicated, and we know of poems that Michael Agerskov received. To be specific, they did not hear voices and sentences in concrete terms, but they had thoughts transmitted to them, which were then translated into earthly language in their spiritual brain. As it became increasingly clear to the couple what the supernatural world wanted from them, it was Johanne Agerskov who most often acted as a medium, while Michael contributed his wisdom, insight and understanding and participated in the prayer for the fallen. He was also the publisher of all the works.

The Agerskovs' first mediumistic texts were published in Sandhedssøkeren and Jakobsstigen under the names Kaj and Bettina. Claus Hafstrøm has republished the texts, and the collection is described as follows: ‘The book is mainly a collection of poems and short texts partly by Michael Agerskov as a medium and partly by his wife Johanne Agerskov. The poems are of high quality with authors such as Holger Drachmann, Christian Winther, Grundtvig and others. The prose texts include a fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen, The Snowbell and The Butterfly, and perhaps the most important work in the collection: A Confession of an Unknown Spirit (Satan). There are also two parables of Christ. They can also be found in Toward the Light, but otherwise this will be new!’



One of the poems Michael Agerskov received as a medium in 1911. The spiritual personality who wrote the poem is called Lilian F. Agerskov's name as a medium was Kaj. This poem can be found in the archives of the Royal Library in Copenhagen.

However, Agerskov also had his own literary production and also wrote textbooks for schools. 'From the old Skipper Village and other Poems' was, as the title suggests, divided into several parts, and in the first part we can read very colorful portraits of people from the Skipper Village. It is tempting to believe that the portraits are inspired by real people who lived in Rørvig or Nykøbing and whom the young Michael met during his childhood. His family lived in Rørvig until 1881, when Michael was about 11 years old, and then moved to Nykøbing, Zealand. This upbringing characterises many of Agerskov's books and has obviously been one of his most important sources of inspiration.

The poems are written in rhyme, but I don't have enough literary insight to know whether they follow specific rules for verse form. But in the first poem, 'Skipper Lars Vinter', which consists of seven verses, all the verses have the same structure and rhythm, and the first two lines rhyme, as do lines four and five, while line two rhymes with line six. One can only imagine how demanding it must be to write poetry in this way. Agerskov was a lecturer in Danish, and he obviously mastered many different verse forms, and his poems make a big impression on me, who loves rhyming poetry. He was obviously a gifted rhymers, and his poems impress with their rhyme.

Obviously, it was rough conditions that a young boy learnt about when he had contact with the seamen. We learn this in the poem about skipper Lars Winter. The narrator tells us that he often visited Lars on board his boat. And in the third verse it says:

'As a boy I spent some time with Lars on board;
it dare not be said, the cabin was large,
but it was too small for me:
I was given shots, and schnapps and chewing tobacco,
The latter I could hardly keep down,
but God how the shots tasted!'

Author's comment: The poems have not been rewritten by a translator but have been translated using modern digital translation programs.

Giving chewing tobacco and schnapps to children is not so common nowadays, but seafarers were of a slightly rougher type. Many first-time travellers were barely teenagers when they signed on as deckhands. "Beskøjter" was a type of hard bread with a very long shelf life, which was widely used by sailors in the old days. The word is probably related to the English word for biscuits - 'biskuit'. With biscuits and stockfish, seafarers avoided most deficiency diseases.

Death is a recurring theme in Michael Agerskov's writing, and his collection of poems from 1909 is no exception. Already in the second poem, we hear the story of the unfinished house by the beach that no one has ever moved into. The second verse reads:

'It stares with weary eyes
Over the desolate lake,
Like a lifeless, lonely man,
Who will but cannot die.'

Agerskov goes on to say that there is a very tragic story behind this 'sad house'. It was originally begun by the local 'pilotage man', who is referred to as 'the old, strange Stubborn'. He had only one son, who was the captain of a barque. A house was built for his son and his girlfriend, Marie. But on the day of the 'topping-out ceremony', a violent storm hit the village (I assume that 'topping-out ceremony' is a celebration because the walls and roof have been erected).

In the middle of the celebrations, they received word that a ship had run aground and was smashed against the shore. Tragically, none of the crew or passengers survived. And it was even more tragic for the pilotage man when they learnt that it was their son's bark that had sunk, and his body had drifted ashore. The father decided that the house would never be finished, and as if his son's death wasn't enough, his girlfriend also died within a year.

In the coastal towns where Michael Agerskov grew up, many families probably experienced the disappearance of one or more of their loved ones at sea. So perhaps we shouldn't be surprised that death plays such an important role in Agerskov's poetry. After all, this was before the discovery of antibiotics, and even pneumonia could often lead to death. Deadly disease epidemics such as influenza, turbekulosis, typhus and poliomyelitis also took many lives. Agerskov himself died of the so-called Spanish flu, which was an influenza virus.

In the next poem, Agerskov reveals that he knows a great deal about the living conditions of seafarers as they travelled around the world. This was particularly challenging for a young man from the Nordic countries who knew little about what went on in the harbours where they went ashore on leave. A naïve young man could easily mistake the prostitutes' interest for true love. And that's exactly what happened to the young man in the next poem, called 'The Prodigal Son'.

Perhaps the title is inspired by the biblical tale of the son who returns home after a long time?

The young boy has just returned home after many years at sea, and his parents blame him for not having written a single letter in all the years he has been away. The young man is obviously ill, and his mother in particular blames him for the fact that he has certainly been



Agerskov's poetry is often about the many tragic fates of the seamen who disappeared at sea, and not least those left behind. Photo from the internet.

'sweating'. I guess that means he's been spending his time in harbour in bars with drink and voluptuous women.

And the young man has to admit that it's true. But there is also more. In his naivety, he imagined that a young girl, Laila, whom he met in a bar in Buenos Aires, loved him and only him. But his best friend wanted to teach him a lesson about the life of seafarers and prove that she was just a frivolous and unfaithful woman who was every man's girlfriend. He 'bought' her favours with a pearl necklace. For the young man, who was deeply in love and convinced that her love was faithful, it was all too much. As the two sailors made their way to the boat together, he stabbed his friend and killed him.

But the murder haunted him, and he never found peace of mind. Back home, he was pale and yellow and lay in his mother's lap, begging his parents to save him, but that was to be his last day. He died while his mother stroked his hair and his father tremblingly wept with age. The son's yellow colour would indicate that he had a serious liver disease, such as jaundice. Many seafarers probably contracted serious diseases in their dealings with prostitutes when they were ashore - both gonorrhoea and syphilis were widespread where sexual favours were exchanged.

The poem reads:

'It was a long time ago, on my first trip, in Buenos Ayres we lay;
There it was at a dancing club that I first saw Laila.
She was like fire, she danced wildly - soon she became mine,
Mine, mine alone, no one else's - her kisses were like wine.

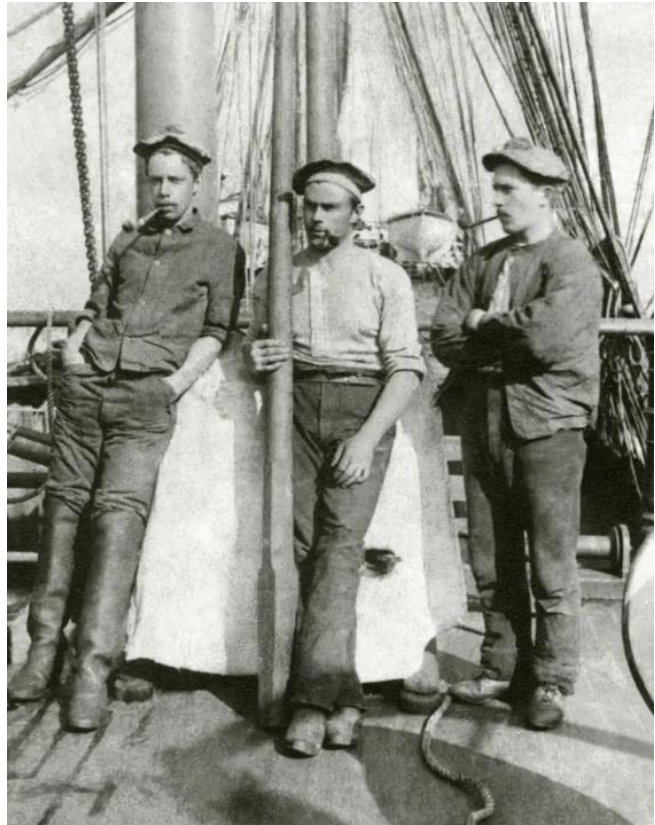
I could beat them, the others, when they said she was flannelled and loose;
I, who knew nothing, how could I believe she was an everyman's girl?
I will cure you! Said a sailor, my best mate;
I'll make her mine, such a girl is always ready!

A string of pearls, I think, was the bait - then the heart was turned;
I was air to her, dead as she had never known me.
The night she became his, I was senseless, of nothing I know;
But the next night, as we walked to the ship, I stabbed him.

I killed him for the sake of a harlot, my best friend.
And - Father and mother save me! - there he is in the pub again!'

What Agerskov describes in this poem can hardly have been his own experience, because he never went to sea. But his father had been a sailor, and Agerskov probably socialised with many sailors in his childhood and youth. What he says in this poem rhymes well with what my father and mother said about their youth. They became lovers at a very young age, and my father went to sea a few years after they became engaged.

He told me as an older man that it became a terribly difficult moral dilemma for him when the boat was ashore, and the older sailors went to bars and drank large quantities of beer and hung out with the barmaids in the harbor - girls who were actually prostitutes. According to my father, they were perceived as 'semi-prostitutes', as he called it. When they fell in love with a young sailor, they were happy to stay with him while he was ashore and get money and drinks from him, but when he travelled out again, they found other sailors. The young first-time travelers were mocked and accused of being gay if they didn't find a girl to have fun with while the boat was ashore and being unloaded and loaded. Back then, people didn't have the same tolerant view of being gay as we do today. Being considered gay by other seafarers meant constant bullying and harassment.



Tough conditions awaited the young boys who travelled to sea. The picture shows three Norwegian sailors. Photo from the internet.

It was not easy for a young, sensitive man to know how to deal with this. Should he be faithful to his fiancée back home in Norway and be mocked by the older sailors, or should he do as they did and find himself an easy-going woman in the harbor and betray his fiancée? I won't go into the details of how my father resolved this, but at least the two of them got married and had four children.

This is followed by several poems about colorful and original personalities, such as 'Karen Goose Girl', 'Kresten Fiddler man' and 'Gallop-Marie', all described in verse form in a rich language, which once again testifies to Agerskov's extraordinary abilities as a rhyme maker.

Next comes another poem that deals with the seafarers' relationship with women when they were at sea, often for a long time, while they had a girlfriend at home. And also whether the girl found another boyfriend when the young sailor was away for so long - often for several years. Perhaps it's not so hard to understand that young people with their strong desires and urges could find it difficult to be without love for such a long time?

The poem is called 'Intricacies' with the subtitle 'A Ballade'. The two young lovers, Jens and Sine, had both heard rumors that the other had been unfaithful during their long absence. Hers was quite innocent, though. It was said that she had been to the market with Hans, danced with him and received a pearl wreath as proof of his infatuation.



Three Japanese Geisha girls photographed in the early 1900s. Photo from the internet.

What Sine had heard was far more upsetting, I think. She had been told that Hans had been with a ‘Chinese girl’ and that the crew had taken three ‘Negro girls’ on board and kept them as wives. Jens takes it all with a certain amount of humor, denying that there were three colored girls, but that there were eight. The fact that he was so accommodating and humorous was obviously redemptive between the two of them, because then she admitted that she had indeed been dancing with Hans, but that it wasn't her who got a rosary, but another girl. And Sine had only had thoughts of her Jens during the dance.

And then Jens had to admit that there was some truth in the rumors about his relationship with a ‘Geisha’, and then the mood was good again between them, when he told her that he would now take his loose exam like his father, and then he could live at

home with her. And then love prevailed between them.

I mentioned the next poem earlier in my biography of Michael Agerskov. It is called ‘Min Barnekjæresten’ (My Childhood Sweetheart), and it is very easy to link it to the story Agerskov tells in his book, ‘Nogle psykiske Oplevelser’ (Some Psychic Experiences). Here he tells of a memory from his childhood, where he met a young girl for whom he felt very strong sympathy, and they spent a whole day together in his childhood neighborhood. But suddenly she was gone again, and even though he asked around to see if anyone knew who the girl was, he never found out.

The incident was only cleared up when the couple made contact with the supernatural spirits. They told them that once, when the young Johanne was feverish, they had allowed her spiritual self to meet the young Michael, to possibly forge a bond between them, so that the chances would be greater for them to come together as adults to fulfil the mission they had undertaken before their earthly birth. Namely, to pray for the fallen spirits, including the prince of darkness, so that they would all be won back to the light. And then to receive the message of the true relationship between God and man.

And as we know, they fully succeeded in fulfilling their mission. Since this event had such great significance for both the Agerskovs' personal history and for humanity, I reproduce it in its entirety.

‘My Childhood Sweetheart’.

All I remember now is this sun-golden hair.
And her eyes, blue, gentle,

but what she knows and who she was,
I know not, was never told,
but I still know her hand in mine,
I see us slipping between cornfields.

What were we talking about? I don't remember,
But I vaguely remember a flowery carpet,
Everywhere singing, lark music
From the blue, high sky.
And I remember a green hillside where we sat,
Hand in hand, side by side,
And a sun that lay round a golden hair
And in those eyes, blue, gentle.

Like a dream, the hours slipped by.
Evening, grey night, before we knew it,
and when we said goodbye,
it was as if our hearts were breaking.
Who she was, where she came from,
I do not know, I never knew,
Only memory plays with a sun-golden hair
And two children's eyes, blue and gentle.

Then there are more poems from 'the old Skipper town'. Agerskov utilises several different styles and verse forms. Some of them have the character of being intended as songs, and sometimes he uses repetitions almost as choruses. What all the poems have in common is that they depict the original inhabitants of the village, the fairly harsh living conditions and often tragic events of the time. However, many of the poems are not without humor either, and Agerskov emerges as a true language artist.

We hear about 'Virgin Larsen', a beautiful young teacher who always wore the same black dress and was always sad and wistful. A picture of a man and a ship hung on the wall in the schoolroom. When the children curiously asked who it was, they learnt that it was her boyfriend, Ole, and his ship, which sank at sea. And it's as if she said goodbye to life itself when he disappeared at sea.

Then comes the great poem 'Bal paa Kroen' (Ball at the Inn), which consists of five parts, all with different verse forms. The poem depicts the colorful life in the skipper's village, when many ships were anchored in the bay for many days due to a lack of wind. The skipper suggested that they organise a party at the inn. And the suggestion went down very well with the mate:

'That was a bloody word!
We're going to have a ball at the inn,
It'll be a treat for Mum.'



Children's pictures of Johanne and Michael. Both pictures are sections of group pictures. The top picture belongs to descendants in the family, while the bottom picture belongs to the Royal Library in Copenhagen.

said the steersman.

And the young people came from far and wide, young girls in summer dresses and handsome sailors in sailor suits. Even the customs inspector came in full uniform, accompanied by his customs assistant and helmsman. The customs inspector's two daughters are also present:

He has two daughters
to look after.
Astrid, wrapped in pink,
And Minka, sky blue.

Astrid is like a
tropical giraffe tall,
Minka is as slim as a
telegraph pole.

Kresten fiddler played up to dance, and soon the dance floor was full. People drank and partied the night away and the atmosphere was high. That is, until the violin suddenly stopped, and two angry young men stood in the middle of the dance floor, red-faced with rage and glaring at each other. They were Frans Seaman and the farmer's son Lange Peter. The crowd incited them with obscenities and shouts, and they attacked each other with hard punches and wrestling holds. It became a very bloody affair, until the innkeeper intervened and managed to tear them apart. Everyone agreed that it was the Seaman who won the fight, and the farmer's son had to walk home bloodied and humiliated.

In the last verse, Agerskov writes:
Couple after couple found their way
to the dewy scrub.
New lives were kindled
in the trembling moonlight.

A truly enjoyable poem in which Agerskov gets to unfold his wealth of language, humour and great ability to take people to task.

The poet has called part two of the collection 'Mixed Poems'.

The first poem in this section is called 'The Great Mill' and is about the miller at the great mill, who one stormy day got caught in one of the mill's blades and was dragged around and thrown into the air. His son heard his father's desperate cries of pain and ran to see what had happened. And at the mill, he tripped on a rope and suffered the same fate as his father. Agerskov obviously has an eye for how difficult life could be for many people, with hard labor and many sad fates. It reminds me of the young Jesus, who also had great compassion for all the people he saw around him, who suffered from poverty and disease.

The hardships of human life on earth and death play a not insignificant role throughout Agerskov's writing.

The next poem, 'A Couple, is just as tragic. The man is a dreamy, introverted poet, while she is lush and joyful. She created life and color for her lover, but he didn't realise it - he was only

concerned with his own. And the poem ends with her losing her zest for life and dying of heartbreak.

Agerskov continues to write about the same subject - death and tragedy. In the third poem in this section, 'Twilight', we meet a woman carrying a small bundle, her newborn child, which she does not want. The author conjures up a bleak image of cold, darkness, silence and black forest. The woman is on her way to a pond, where she will drown her child and give it to death. But then death calls again, and the woman realises that she too must die. It is not entirely clear whether she drowns herself in the same pond where she drowned her child, or whether she dies of grief and illness.

This is the last verse:

And she gives her child to death; yet he is not appeased.
It calls, it calls out there, it threatens so wildly.
Then she knew that she herself must die.
She shuddered with terror,
She was in a fever.
But the reeds hiss and the darkness sobs from the bottomless lake.

Perhaps we can interpret this as a poem about karma, and what is later, in *Toward the Light*, called the law of retribution? The poem tells us that every thought and deed sooner or later come back to haunt its originator. In the poem, the woman is affected by her deed so concretely that she suffers the same fate herself. But according to TtL, repentance and prayer for forgiveness can mitigate the 'punishment', and the 'sinner' can instead be given the task of performing an act of love to restore her own evil act.



Michael Agerskov often uses depictions of nature to create certain moods in his poems. Photo from the internet.

Alas, what sad fates Agerskov recounts in this part of the collection. It is somewhat reminiscent of so-called Skillings songs, which also usually had a tragic ending. In the poem 'Young Widow', on the other hand, we hear about hope and expectations in the midst of sadness. The widow has lost her husband but finds comfort in sewing children's shirts and knitting children's socks. And we realise that she is pregnant and expecting her child in the spring.

The next poem is about the really big topics in life, and this is also reflected in the title, which is 'Life'. Among other things, the theme can be said to be how difficult life can be for humanity, on our dark earth of death and transience. But Agerskov also sees light and hope, which he describes in the second verse:

Yes, Life that Grows
 Of forgotten graves' forgotten traces.
 But alas, to what, to what
 this strange interplay?
 A present in the strong flame of the day
 Like sunlit crests of waves -
 then down into the common home of all things,
 that another self may rise to life.

It's easy to realise that this must be about how life on earth has evolved and continues to evolve closer and closer to the light and out of the darkness. Even the tiniest flower sprout seeks to move towards the light, and humanity has evolved from being quite unconscious and primitive, ape-like beings, to becoming civilised beings who have formed highly developed, humane societies that are based on human rights and have a humane legal system, at least in the Western world. But the road there has been hard and difficult, in a constant battle against the forces of darkness that has given us many setbacks.

But it's not just our societies that have undergone a development towards ever greater civilisation; every single human race and every single individual has also experienced this, through the many lives in which we have had to harvest our experiences and learn from them. But we must be able to say that the road to this point has been both difficult and long, and we have all had to experience the transience of life through illness, suffering and death. But all of our victories, by virtue of the light's guidance, have inspired us to constantly seek new understanding and new insights.

I think Agerskov describes it very poetically and beautifully in this verse:

And centuries suffered,
 Before out of unconsciousness came
 The first sign of Life -
 The becoming of personality,
 Then God appeared in the high,
 above the distress and labor of the earth,
 Every hope, every desire, every longing, every loss
 advanced towards the heaven-built harbor of bliss.

You might think that when Agerskov uses the name God in his poems, he means the personal God. But I think it could just as well be a metaphor. Not the personal God, but a symbol of the power of light and love. You can't know for sure. But for me it makes more sense to interpret the poem in this way, because I don't think Agerskov ever believed that God could abandon us, as he writes in the next verse:

Yet the heavens burst,
 for the wild haste of the world's savage will,
 And the earth became a spruce
 in the ocean of the altar.
 Then God went to other places,
 And deep emptiness was everywhere.
 The comforting 'upward' now

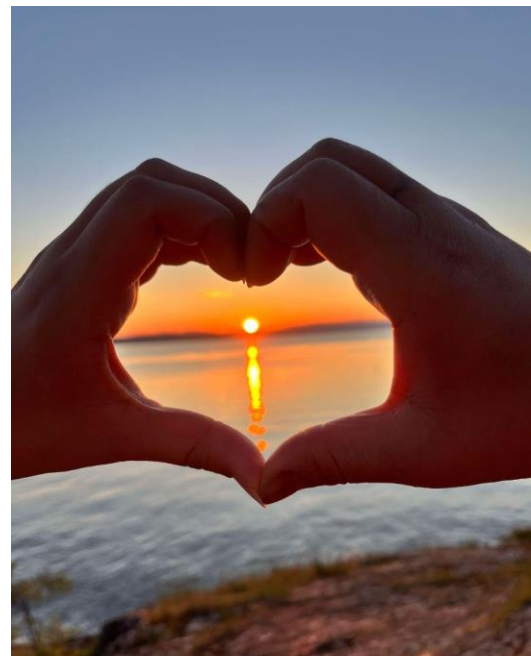
and the 'outward' of horror was, filled with the horror of the grave.



An artist's representation of light and darkness. Photo from the internet.

Personally, I think this is Agerskov's poetic description of the attack of darkness on mankind. In particular, there was a major setback for the smooth and steady development of the light when the eldest, the servants and slaves of evil, decided to incarnate on earth as humans about 12,000 years ago, to be able to enjoy all that humans had built up over the millennia. But the oldest became evil and cunning people, who dominated with their ruthlessness and tore down everything the youngest had helped to build. But in the last verse, Agerskov shows us hope for the future, and we can all rest assured that the light will triumph in the end. God's mill grinds slowly, but what God has once decided will always prevail in the end.

But the horror of the grave
 Shall weigh upon us for a long time to come,
 Till the heart turns to ice
 And Paradise is forgotten,
 Or to the thoughts of late generations



All life has its origin in light and God's love. This picture was taken by my daughter, Amina, and it's her and her mum's hand that forms the heart. Photo: Amina Avnskog.

will have the power to break the barriers of death,
to bridge the gorge,
And strong souls *know* where we can only *believe*.

I would very much like to know how much Johanne and Michael Agerskov had learnt about mankind's true relationship with God, about the nature of God, about reincarnation and the struggle between good and evil when he wrote this poem. We don't know this for sure, but around these years, the couple, under the names Bettina and Kaj, had many mediumistic messages published in the Danish spiritualist journal, *The Truth Seeker* and *Jacob's Ladder*

After this poem, which deals with the really big topics in life, there follows a poem with a slightly lighter and easily recognisable theme, namely love - the poem is called 'Young Love'. And for Agerskov, love is a sacred force, exalted and heavenly. And in the last verse it says:

O young love, all the richest happiness the world knows,
here in the trembling splendor of the forest night.
No sin, no offence! You know not guilt, nor all is but a dream.
Therefore, kiss ye not; a whisper is enough, and a tender handshake.
Holy is the love that knows no offence.
Therefore, let them dream in the trembling splendor of the forest night.

It seems obvious to me that with this poem Agerskov is describing romantic love and not physical attraction. Unfortunately, currently, love for many people has become synonymous with sex, and many young people enjoy sex in large quantities with various partners for whom they have no loving feelings whatsoever. I have to say that this has been a very undesirable development in our society, where sexual desire has become a kind of obsession for many young people and adults. Self-fulfilment, exploitation of others, selfishness and a lack of consideration and care unfortunately seem to dominate society today. Michael Agerskov contrasts this with heavenly love, which is selfless, considerate and devoid of selfishness. Unfortunately, not many people seem to recognise this in our time. Women and men who can feel deeper feelings and romantic affection will never be pushy or try to extract sexual fulfilment. This is the case with the youngest and most advanced human spirits - for them, the most important thing is to get to know their young lover, be considerate and get to know their lover's wants and needs, before the relationship leads to physical lovemaking - which both want and indulge in.

I think I can safely say that for a man or young person who knows true romantic feelings, it is simply impossible to manage to rape a woman. When he senses the woman's unwillingness or resistance, the sexual arousal will simply fade away and be replaced by a compassionate care and deeper interest in the woman. Men who rape are very primitive beings who lack the capacity for real, emotional involvement with a woman (or a man, if you're gay).

The remaining poems in this section are a mixture of rhyming verses that do not go into the depths of life, but are more like children's songs, as well as poems that are close to the themes of the rather sad poems from the first section. The lighter poems include 'Spindevisen' and 'Pasops Vise', the latter with the subtitle 'Children's Song'. In the poem 'Den unge Nonne' (The Young Nun), we hear about a young girl who was basically 'a fiery young Fole' who became a nun because she was broken by the first man, she gave herself to. And at the end of the poem, we learn that she died. Life wasn't so easy for young women over 100 years ago.

And if they gave themselves to a man without being engaged or married, it could spell disaster for her. Many a young girl's heart has been fragile and easily broken over the years.



To the left, a statue of the mythical Greek goddess of love Aphrodite from around 100 BC. The statue now belongs to the British Museum. On the right is a reconstruction of the temple dedicated to her on the island of Kythira. The reconstruction was made by the company 'Ubisoft' for the computer game 'Assassin's Creed'.

In the poem 'The Lighthouse', Agerskov uses the lighthouse as a metaphor for what humans have to navigate in order to reach the heights and avoid being crushed against the rocks. But the lighthouse also attracts flocks of birds, who believe that the lighthouse is the destination of the journey. But these flocks of souls, as Agerskov calls them, find their wings 'broken and clipped'. But occasionally a 'flame soul' is born that shines far and wide and realises that the lighthouse is just a light to navigate by on the journey ahead. Could this be a description of the youngest (flame souls) and the simpler human spirits (soul vessels)? Perhaps.

The next poem, 'Kytherea', is a very captivating and beautiful description of the goddess of love, Aphrodite, and one of the temples dedicated to her. In Wikipedia you can read the following: 'The Temple of Aphrodite Kytherea was a sanctuary in ancient Kythira dedicated to the goddess Aphrodite. It was known for allegedly being the oldest temple of Aphrodite in Greece. It was dedicated to the goddess under her name and aspect as Aphrodite Ourania and contained a statue of an armed Aphrodite. The temple is dated to the 6th century BCE. Although it was considered a significant sanctuary, it was described as a small building.' It is easy to understand the poem as a tribute to love

This is followed by another love poem, written in an almost mythical and highly poetic language. The poem is called 'Mirla and Mirliti' and has the subtitle '(Scherzo)'. The two young people are a princess and a prince respectively, and their relationship is described in Agerskov's typical way in beautiful, symbol-heavy language. You can find the definition of a scherzo on the internet, which states that a scherzo is 'a lively, optimistic piece of classical music with a fast tempo'. Agerskov is really good at using names that appear mythical and perhaps a little mysterious in his literature. According to the internet, both Mirla and Marliti are names used for a 'blackbird'. It's probably no coincidence that Agerskov has chosen these particular names, because we can read on the internet that the blackbird has a symbolic significance that gives a very special meaning to the poem: 'The blackbird is a symbol of higher ideals, a higher knowledge. The color black symbolises pure potential.'

The young lovers walked together looking at lotus flowers and came to the lily pad and rose forest. And they fall asleep together in the lily pad, breast to breast after many tender caresses, and they dream of all that is beautiful and lovely. But in the last verse, everything is suddenly turned upside down.

With Sun they both turned pale.
Princess Mirla and Prince Mirliti;
The long, melancholy lily stems
Now looked out in the world in
splendor,
And hoarsely the bulbwort hissed
Of fox-red and dirt-blue,
Of moldy white and bile-green
and all the ugly and horrible things that
exist.



Bulbwort is a highly poisonous and foul-smelling but actually quite beautiful plant, which Agerskov has also used as a symbol in other poems, and the colors Agerskov mentions in the last lines mean fox red, dirty blue, white mold and bile green in English. Nasty and ugly colors. One wonders how to interpret this sudden change in the poem, from the beautiful and hopeful, the pure and the high ideals to the hideous, nasty and ugly. Personally, I think Agerskov describes the great contrast between light and darkness, the beauty of light and love, and the evil and threatening power of darkness.

After many years of holidaying in my wife's home country, Thailand, I became fascinated with growing water lilies, or lotus plants, as Agerskov calls them. In Thailand, they have ponds almost everywhere with water lilies in all the colours of the rainbow. Photo: Amina Avnskog.

We are approaching the end of part two of Agerskov's poetry collection. Once again there is a poem with the subtitle 'Skherzo', and it is an enjoyable and humorous little poem entitled 'The Monk and the Maiden'. The term 'fair maiden' is often used to describe a young woman, and in the poem, she comes to a stream where a monk is washing his robes. The monk offers to carry her across the stream, and she accepts. But when they are halfway across, he steals away to give her a kiss. The girl gets angry and slaps him. And that's how the last two verses read:

'Be silent, you filthy Monk!
I would have dirtied my foot sooner.'
The fair maiden gave him a wing,
You heard it was a good one.

Ah, hello, the cunning Monk!
he stood and laughed heartily:
'I'll not be harmed by a slap,
And you much less with a kiss.'
Now the streams are flowing.

And with the last poem, 'Pasop's Song', as a conclusion, we arrive at the third part of the collection, which is called:

'Nature moods'.

This section consists of a total of nine poems depicting nature, and in these poems, I think Agerskov unfolds his poetic talent to the full. In my opinion, he is a master at depicting nature, and in some cases the poems in this section do not really contain any deeper meaning, other than giving the reader a rich experience of the moods of nature. But Agerskov is, in my opinion, a master at using the mood he creates to link the poem to life events. In this way, he gives us greater opportunities to empathise with life's various events - not infrequently, he describes the tragic aspects of life. As I have written before, Agerskov grew up in a time and place where people's living conditions were tough and challenging, and in the coastal village many sailors disappeared at sea, and the bereaved were left with grief and longing for the shipwrecked.

I choose the very last poem in the collection as an example of Agerskov's rich ability to create moods and convey sad events, but perhaps also to bring us comfort:

'Wet Winter'.

An outline of naked, poor trees
against a sky, lead-colored, dusky and vast.
A ragged, winged army of birds,
Scrambling towards the earth.

A glistening layer of leaves,
Faded and barren over road and path.
Fog in front and Fog behind,
Mute every waxing melody.

The harvest is ended, the harvest of the storm.
O Mother Nature! Was it here that I lay
this summer by your trembling breast
and heard your heart beating!

Hush - humming a song,
a strange song of the deepest horror:
Your mother's blood has stopped its course,
Her heart has broken now.

One might ask, is it only nature's mother's blood (perhaps understood as nature's life-giving force) that has stopped, or is this about human life? Nature in our part of the world 'dies' in a way every autumn and winter, and only wakes up again in spring and summer. I don't know the answer to what Agerskov wants to get across in this poem, but for my own part the poem gives me associations with how both nature and human life go in cycles. We are born and die and are born again. At least this is the case for

Michael Agerskov: Fra den gamle
Skipperby og andre Digte. 78
Sider. Hagerup.

Der findes i denne Digtamling baade
adskillige smukke alvorlige Digte, f. Eks. en
Del Naturstemninger, og flere morsomme
og kvikke smaa Digtninger som „Munken
og Stønjomfruen“, „Pasops Bije“ —
Agerskov har et særligt Talent for Børne-
vers — og „Karen Gaasepige“. Aller-
heldigst synes Forfatteren os at være, naar
begge disse Elementer er blandede i hans
Digte. Af den Sort er en Del af de
Stilbringer fra en lille nordjællandsk
Stipperby, hvormed Bogen indledes. Der
er f. Eks. „Min Børnekæreste“, „Jomfru
Larsen“, „Bal paa Kroen“ og den ud-
mærkede „Galop-Marie“ med Slutnings-
verset:

Hun naaede ej at blive viet i Guds Rum,
men hver Gang der en lille kom, hun tænkte:
hvor der er Hjærtetum, er ogsaa Hustrum. Z.

The publication of 'From the old Skipper Village' was mentioned in several of the Danish daily newspapers, but I have only found this more detailed mention in Ribe Stifts-Tidende from 2 April 1909.

those of us who believe that humans live many lives in succession - just as many of nature's plants 'die', but then come back to life.



Michael Agerskov was a master at depicting nature with poetic language, and at the same time saying something deeper about human life. Photo: lindeabrun. Found on the internet.

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MIDSOMMER.

Alt lullet ind i Middagsstundens Døs.
Utrolig varmt. Paa Kærets blanke Flade
vugger sig Solen, doven, leddeløs,
og slapt og søvnigt hænger Pilens Blade.

Halvt drømmevage til mit Øre naar
usikre Toner af en Guldsmeds Svirren;
fra Marken fjerne Lyd af Kø'r og Faar,
en søvnig Brægen eller et Jerntøjrs Klirren.

Og mer og mer min Sjæl sig taber i
den tunge Stilhed, som dog aldrig tier
— i denne endeløse Melodi
fra tusind summende Fluer, Myg og Bier.

78

VAAD VINTER.

Et Rids af nøgne, fattige Træ'r
mod en Himmel, blyfarvet, skummel og stor;
en pjusket, vingetræt Fuglehær,
som skræppende søger mod Jord.

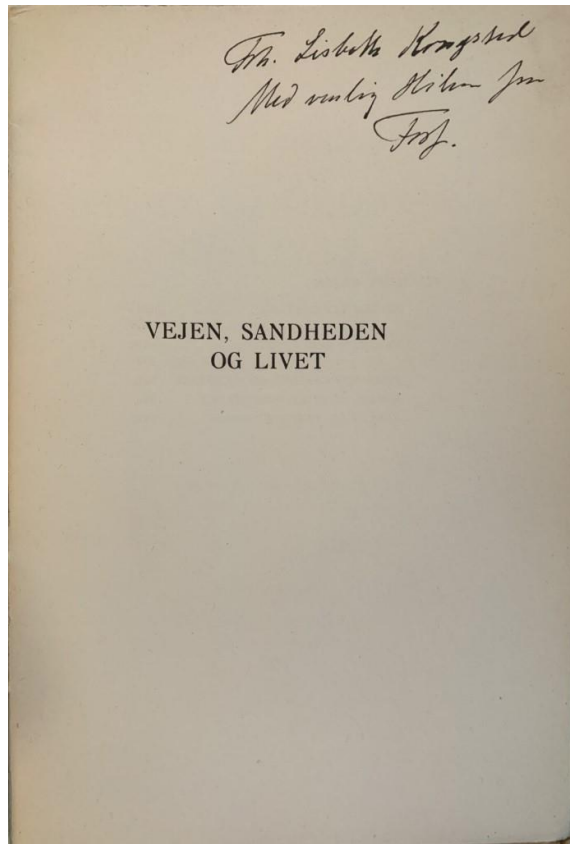
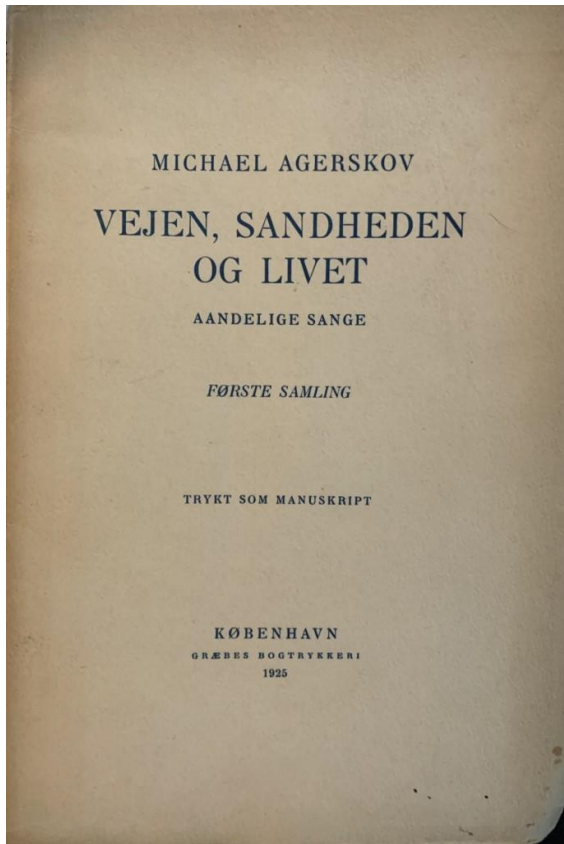
Et vædeglinsende Bladelag,
fålmlet og goldt over Vej og Sti;
Taage foran og Taage bag,
stum hver Vaarmelodi.

Endt er Høsten, Stormenes Høst.
O Moder Natur! var det her jeg laa
i Sommer ved dit skælvende Bryst
og hørte dit Hjerte slaa!

Tys — der nynner sig frem en Sang,
en sælsom Sang af den dybeste Gru:
din Moders Blod har standset sin Gang,
hendes Hjerte er bristet itu.

Two poems in Danish from Michael Agerskov's "From the old Skipper Village and other poems" from 1909.

The Way, the Truth and the Life. Spiritual Songs - first collection, 1925.



My copies of Michael Agerskov's 'The Way, the Truth and the Life' were given to me as a gift by Michael Agerskov's niece, Jette Kongsted, married Scherl. She has obviously inherited this book from her sister, Lisbeth, who in turn received it from the author, Michael Agerskov.

Michael Agerskov's 'Aandelige Sange' (Spiritual Songs) was first published in two separate parts, the first collection in 1925 and the second in 1926. In later editions the two parts have been combined into one book. In 1925 it had been a few years since the Agerskov couple had published the 'Toward the Light' trilogy, and Agerskov had published his account in which he described their experiences as mediators of the message from the extrasensory side, 'Some Psychic Experiences'.

Agerskov had a literary production behind him, from the years before the couple was visited by the extrasensory world, and in my reviews of those poems I have endeavoured to find traces of Agerskov's distant recollection of his life in the spheres. The Agerskovs belonged to a group of the youngest who, for many incarnations, had been tasked with remembering the prayer for the most deeply fallen of the elders. I think I have found quite clear references to the forces of darkness and light and to other things described in TtL in his early poetry collections. See my earlier reviews in this book. But whereas it could be difficult to fully penetrate the meaning behind many of the early poems, it is of course easier for those of us who know the content of TtL to understand the meaning of the spiritual songs from 1925 and 1926.

In Agerskov's literary production after 1920, it is quite natural that his poetry collections differ from the poems he wrote in his younger days, in that they are now strongly inspired by the message of TtL. But Agerskov's use of imagery from nature is just as evident in the new

poems as in his earlier publications. As usual, the poems are structured according to classical verse forms and traditional rhymes and rhythms. Unfortunately, I'm not schooled in this, but I can see that the structure of the songs fulfils strict requirements for both word and letter rhyme..

As one of the author Agerskov's greatest admirers, I am deeply moved by how he manages to present TtL's message in poetic and very beautiful formulations with rich images and metaphors from nature and TtL's worldview. I would like to reproduce every single song (or poem) from the 1925 collection, but I have to limit myself to a few of those that have made the strongest impression on me personally.

Let me also add that some of the songs are written to pre-existing melodies, while others are labelled 'own melody'. Unfortunately, we do not know these melodies, as Agerskov did not have them published, as far as I know. But otherwise, many of the songs are not labelled with a melody, and they invite talented musicians to set melodies to them, so that they can be sung in our churches sometime in the future, when TtL has become commonplace. The texts have all the qualities needed to become universal.

Before I start commenting on the individual poems, I must also say a few words about the title Michael Agerskov has chosen for his collection of spiritual songs, 'The Way, the Truth and the Life'. These are words that we all know from the Bible, where it is attributed to Jesus in John, 14. 6. that Jesus stated that 'I am the Truth, the Way and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me'.

What could Agerskov's purpose be in using the exact words from this quote, since it is perhaps not very likely that Jesus could have said this about himself? I have always thought that if Jesus said something close to these words, it can hardly have been his intention to claim that he as a person or the Christian understanding of the words - namely that faith in the Christian interpretation of the crucifixion of Jesus is the way to salvation. In all his behaviour, Jesus was anti-dogmatic and did not demand any particular belief from his followers, like the Jewish scribes.

On the contrary, his message was that God loves all his creatures equally, rich and poor, powerful or outcast, and God required no special faith to answer a prayer from the heart. And this was the way, the truth and the life: The fervent faith in God's help that came in response to a sincere and heartfelt prayer from the heart. So it was this message that was the way, not a dogmatic belief in a particular doctrine.

Those of us who know TtL know that Christ is the leader and support of all mankind, and if we pray to him, he can also help us, even if he does not have God's immense strength. He was given and has undertaken the task before God to lead every human being to the Kingdom of God. Therefore, he could rightly have said that the way to the Father is through him, for he is in a real sense our saviour and protector.

I think it is a very good choice by Agerskov to choose the title 'The Way, the Truth and the Life' for his collection of spiritual songs, because with it he gives the words precisely the meaning they should have. Namely, that it is Jesus' message of love that is the basis for the words, and not the dogmatic Christian message of salvation through faith in Jesus' 'atoning death'. We humans do not need salvation through death on the cross - we are all created by God and thus we are included in eternal life. God does not allow anyone to be destroyed or perish no matter how they have lived their lives.

Agerskov's collection opens with a song that moves me deeply, and I imagine it will be frequently sung in our churches and religious gatherings in the future, if a talented musician sets a beautiful melody to it. Here Agerskov tells us that all beautiful music and art originates from God.

THE SOURCE OF THE SONG.

God is present in song and joy;
Then we will sing from a joyful breast!
Let the song rise
towards the kingdom of light,
Yes, let it rise to the shore of light!

As a bird in the grove in the morning
with cheer greets the young day,
so let us young people
sing from the heart,
let the song resound for the cause of light!

Like a bird in grove in the evening
the sun chirps a gentle farewell,
so let us old people
quietly gather together
and hum quietly in the evening of life!

Among our loved ones is good to be;
Let song carry us with the flight of birds!
In song and joy
God is present,
For God is the fountainhead of song!



For God is the fountainhead of songs!
Copyright: Ben White

Author's comment: The poems are not retold in English by a poet, but translated using modern computer technology.

There are several examples in the collection where Agerskov chooses to use symbolism that evokes Christian doctrine. I wonder if he has a specific purpose for this? In this way, Christian people will recognise themselves in the same way as with the title. But at the same time, it should be clear to most people that the poet uses these symbols in a completely different sense than in the Bible.

An example of this is the poem 'Rosa mystica', to which Agerskov has added that it is 'a poem about Christ'. 'Rosa mystica' is used by many as a poetic name for Jesus' mother, the 'Virgin' Mary, and in the Catholic faith she is credited with many supernatural abilities and is responsible for many miracles.

But there is also a tradition of regarding 'Rosa mystica' as a name for the coming Messiah, whom the prophet Isaiah refers to in poetic terms in Isaiah 11:1 as a shoot that will grow from the tribe of the Jews. Reference is also often made to the German hymn 'A rose has blossomed', which begins like this:

A rose has sprung
 all from so fine a root,
 sung by the fathers,
 of David's kind and blood.
 And that one flower has set
 in the midst of the cold winter
 And that at midnight.
 And the one flower has set
 in the midst of the cold winter
 and that at midnight.

Agerskov's poem describes it not entirely differently, but instead of cold and ice, Agerskov chooses to let the rose grow among thistles and poisonous plants:

ROSA MYSTICA.

A poem about Christ.

'I am Rosa mystica,
 whose fragrance pervades the world,
 whose splendour illuminates the world,
 whose flowers drip blood.'

Where can your fragrance permeate the world?
 'I am Rosa mystica!'
 Where can your splendour illuminate the world?
 'I am Rosa mystica!'
 And why do your flowers drip blood?

'I am set among thistles,
 Thistles sting my flowers.'



To the right: As far as I have found out, the Norwegian name for 'Galnebær' is 'Belladonnaurt'. The berries are highly toxic to humans. Left: Thistles are not very beautiful plants.

Here, Agerskov uses the poetic name 'Rosa mystica', which in the Catholic faith is

associated with 'Virgin' Mary and with miracles and inexplicable healings, while the poet associates the name with the Messiah. The poem also tells us that 'Rosa mystica's' flowers drip blood because the thistles that surround it prick the flowers with their thorns.

As we all know, the blood of Jesus plays a central role in the Christian faith, both in the doctrine of salvation and in the Eucharist. But in Agerskov's poem it obviously has a completely different meaning than Jesus sacrificing his blood and body to give people salvation. Personally, I see blood as a symbol of life force, an image of the body's life-giving fluid. Later in the poem we learn that 'Rosa mystica's' blood drips onto all the other flowers, and Jesus' teaching of love thus gives power to all and will transform darkness into light by making the thorns of the thistles disappear and the poisonous berries become nourishing.

'Rosa mystica' goes on to say in the poem that it has not always grown among thistles, but that it once bloomed in the great garden among thousands upon thousands of other flowers. But because of its sweet fragrance and the splendour of its flowers, the gardener (God) decided that for a while it should grow among thistles, poisonous berries and poor field flowers to spread its beauty and delicious fragrance among the inferior plants.



Michael Agerskov's study with his work desk at Grundtvigsvej 3 in Copenhagen, where he lived with his wife Johanne and daughter Inger. The photo was taken in 1919 by Inger Agerskov.

Then the voice in the poem asks if 'Rosa mystica' will stand among the thistles forever, and gets an answer:

'No!

For I am Rosa mystica.

When the evil thistles lose their thorns, when the poisonous berries become nourishing, and the poor field flowers become rich, then the gardener will bring me back.'

But this is not possible!

‘Remember I am Rosa mystica.
My fragrance pervades the world,
my splendour illuminates the world,
my blood drips over all flowers.

I am Rosa mystica.’

In other words: Jesus' doctrine of love will win in the end! He nourishes each and every one of us, symbolised by the blood of Rosa mystica dripping on every flower.

Finally, a small comment on Agerskov's use of wildflowers as a symbol on a par with prickly thistles and poisonous berries. Now, a meadow of wildflowers can be a very beautiful sight, and there are many wildflowers with both beautiful flowers and a good scent. But as a metaphor, I think Agerskov is referring to wildflowers as somewhat unremarkable, uncultivated flowers compared to large, beautiful roses that have been refined and cultivated over many years by skilled gardeners (the youngest).

Compared to the somewhat simpler human spirits symbolised by wildflowers, ‘Rosa mystica’ (Christ) stands out as the most beautiful, the most fragrant and with the greatest talent and power to spread its beauty and fragrance to all mankind. In the earthly world, we know that those who feel a little inferior and do not have the same talent as those who stand out as innovative geniuses can easily be characterised by envy and meet the more gifted with mockery and derision. Not infrequently, the youngest who have brought new knowledge and insight to the world have been both crushed and killed, just like Jesus.



A flower meadow with wildflowers is also a beautiful sight. But as a symbol, roses that have been refined and cultivated over many generations mean something else. Photo: Sverre Avnskog.

There are a few other places where Agerskov uses formulations that are familiar from traditional Christian doctrine. In the poem ‘Good Friday’ he writes, for example:

Singing, singing, in happy clusters!
 All now sing the Word of Joy:
 Before the Good Friday evensong
 Christ was freed from fear and hardship,
 Resurrected glorious from the dead
 Where eternal happiness dwells.

According to church teaching, Jesus rose from the dead in his physical body, but we know from TtL that this was not the case. Christ was never really dead, only his physical body, in which he incarnated as the man Jesus. But once again, Agerskov uses a formulation from the Christian faith, that Christ rose from the dead, but gives it a new content.

In his poem ‘Pentecost’, Agerskov uses another metaphor from Christianity when he writes:

’Like a bride awaiting her bridegroom,
 Nature has decked herself in splendour,
 She has tuned her little instruments
 To a bird's song cheerful and lovely,
 And the thousand flowers she gathers
 And makes the forest and meadow so
 green.’

And in the poem Maundy Thursday we recognise the words from the Last Supper about Jesus breaking the bread and handing the disciples wine, but of course Agerskov makes no mention of Jesus saying that this is his body and his blood to be shed in the new covenant with the Lord. Of course, Jesus would never say something so blasphemous. This is entirely the idea of the elders, and Paul adopted it, perhaps inspired by his background as a scribal Pharisee, where the idea of sacrifice was central to the religious practice of the Jewish

clergy. Reading the poem Maundy Thursday makes me both wistful and sad. I think Agerskov captures the fateful atmosphere of Jesus' last meal with his disciples and his heartfelt prayer in solitude for suffering humanity in a very moving way.



One of his daughter Inger Agerskov's many photographs of Michael Agerskov from their trips together. Unfortunately, the photograph is not dated, but it looks as if it could be from the early 1920s. Photo: Inger Agerskov.

What is said in the Bible about Jesus praying to God to escape his fate was completely remote to Jesus, who only had thoughts of all the suffering that awaited people after he had not been able to remember the prayer for the elder and had not managed to break the evil power of darkness.

CUTTING THURSDAY.

Own melody.

It is in the holy hours.
 So solemnly the bells chime;
 yea, the mighty ore-bells of memory go,
 And far away through seconds our thoughts go
 To Samuel's house, to that sorrowful night,
 When the Master bade the dear ones farewell.
 It is in the holy hours.

It's in the quiet hours of the night,
 and the sun has already set.
 Our Saviour asks each one of them
 to remember him when he is no longer near;
 He promises to be an invisible guest,
 every time they gather for the Easter feast.
 It is in the quiet hours of the night.

It is in those anxious moments,
 And the sun has long since set.
 Our Saviour asks them to remember
 Every loving word he speaks to them now;
 He gives them wine, he breaks them bread,
 he speaks to them of his near death.
 It is in those anxious moments.

We see a trembling star
 through the centuries so far away;
 We see our Father's dearest Son
 sunk in burning, fervent prayer:
 He prays for every soul on earth,
 for all the families that dwell in darkness.
 We see a trembling star.

It is in the agonising hours,
 No longer the bells toll.
 We see the flaming light of torches
 And men who draw near to our Saviour;
 He bows his head, he goes with them
 To the reproach of judgement, to the prison chamber,
 to the agonising hours of the cross.

It's in the black of night,
 Now the gaping wounds are bleeding.
 Still the wounds bleed in the minds of thousands,
 Tears are flowing on the cheeks of thousands.
 But who shall wash away the flowing blood,
 And who shall dry up the river of tears,
 And heal the bleeding wounds?

So behold the trembling star, though it shines dimly in the distance!
 Though it shines nightly in the distance!
 But not in vain that night was fought,
 And not in vain was his death suffered;
 For the star shall be so bright and great,
 Its splendour shall fill the whole earth.
 Behold the shining star of *love*!

I think this poem is one of Agerskov's most beautiful. The description of Jesus' last evening with his disciples is very wistful and sad, but fortunately the poem/song ends on a note of optimism and hope for the future, telling us that Jesus' death was not in vain, but that his message of love will prevail on earth.

The poems in 'The Way, the Truth and the Life' deal with many of Towards the Light's most important themes, while the collection gradually follows the events of the year. Agerskov's poems discuss and describe God, the power of darkness, Paradise, the importance of home in human life, the power of light, death, goodness, God's many ways, Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Pentecost, the human body and forgiveness.

I would have liked to convey every single one of Agerskov's poems in 'The Way, the Truth and the Life', but I will end with another of the songs that has made the strongest impression on me personally.

PRAYER TO GOD.

I pray for all the old, sick and weary,
 that you, O Father, will make their burdens light!
 I pray for all who are weighed down by the chains of darkness,
 That you, O Father, will give them your blessing!

I pray for all you unholy generations,
 who in your blindness deny our God and Father;
 I pray for all you who curse and hate
 The God who gave you life, your loving Father.

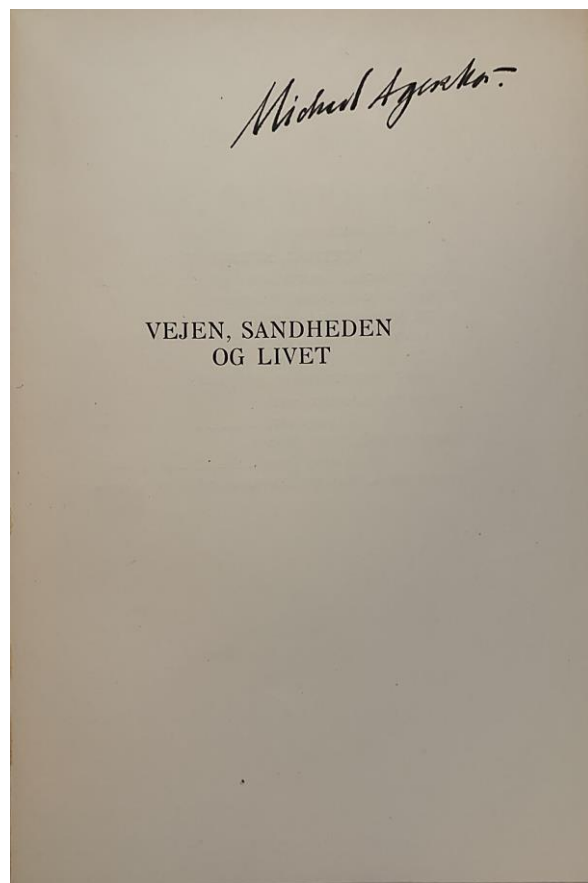
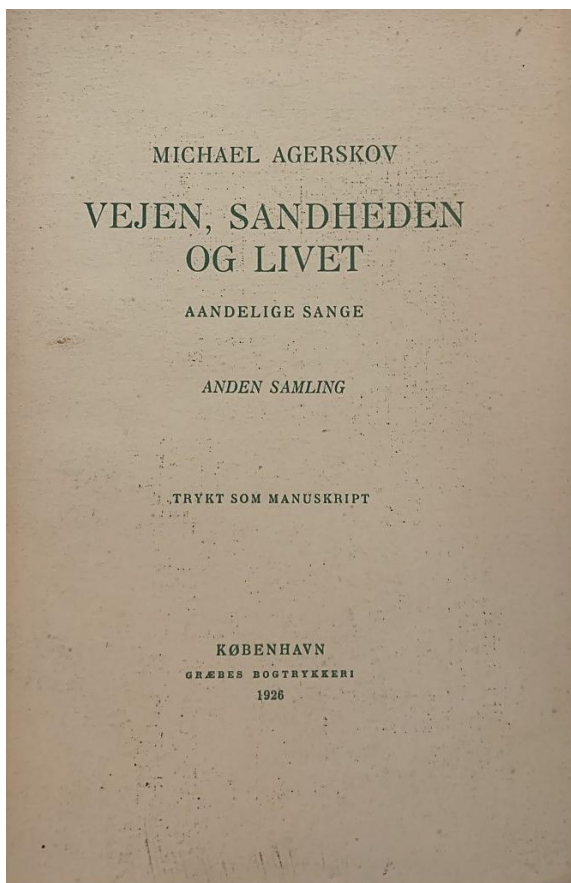
And you, you innumerable multitudes of the departed dead,
 Who tremblingly await the punishment of many an offence,
 I dare to pray for your forgiveness
 For what you have sinned against God and the eternal laws.

I pray for him who fell as far as one can fall,
 that you, O Father, will call upon the pity of men,
 and speak to the hearts of men that they may know

that no one has suffered like him and no one will suffer.

Finally, I pray for home, for family and for friends,
for people near and far, whom I do not know;
I pray for *all*, whatever wild paths they may tread,
that one day in our home we may meet with each other.

The Way, the Truth and the Life. Spiritual Songs - second collection, 1926.



Inger Agerskov had the first editions of Vejen, Sandheden og Livet, part one and part two in her book collection. Her edition of the second collection from 1926 probably belonged to Michael Agerskov himself.

The second part of the collection of 'spiritual songs' was published the year after the first. But in later editions the two collections have been combined into one book. In part two, some of the songs also have a familiar melody, but most do not. But as I also wrote in my review of the first collection; Perhaps sometime in the future, when 'Toward the Light' has become common knowledge, one or more talented musicians will hopefully put a melody to all these beautiful poems.

The songs in part two are of the same high quality as in part one, and we recognise Agerskov's rich use of symbols and metaphors from nature. For my own part, I was perhaps even more emotionally affected by the poems in the first part, and I think it has to do with the subjects of

the poems. In a way, the poems in the second collection appeal more to my intellectual senses. But others might experience it differently.

The topics in this collection are again taken from TtL, and they are interpreted and communicated in Agerskov's poetic language. To the melody of 'Lovely is the earth', Agerskov has written a beautiful tribute to Kistus:

The love torch.

Christ in the darkness
Lifts high his torch;
Come, let us follow with comforting courage!
Clearly it illuminates
The chasms of the abyss
And shows the way for our feet.

Kindreds shall come,
Families shall pass away;
Never yet will that torch be extinguished!
Clear through the darkness
The light will shine
And show us the way to God.

Forwards towards the Light,
Forward without wavering!
Ahead is the Divine Sun of Love,
Come, let us follow
The torch of love!
Let it be the Light-Symbol of Life!

In a song, Agerskov also comments on what it means for Christ that he has been deified by Christendom. The poem should be well suited to open the eyes of the world's Christians to what a heavy burden it is for one of God's children to be put in the place of God.

The Christ image.

Did you not see, did you not see
Those wistful glances,
The sorrow deep from the bottom of the soul?
Did you not see a pain lying
Around that gentle, delicate mouth?

Did you see the brow, sadly arched,
And how strangely the halo trembled,
The halo round his hair?
The burden of God is his hell.
Alas, how little you understand it!

Didst thou see these gentle hands,
 That know not violence?
 Yet with joy they tore away
 The glory which our Father dishonours,
 The bitter torture of the burden of Godhead.
 As a fluff against the globes of the earth,
 As a dew against all the rivers,
 as a drop against the sea
 is our Saviour, is our brother
 To the God who gave life.

Did you not see, did you not see
 The sadness of the burden of divinity
 In the depths of his eyes?
 Did you not see, did you not see
 The dragon of pain about his mouth?

After this poem/song about the pain that weighs Christ down, the collection continues with a series of poems based on TtL's version of 'Our Father', one poem for each of the lines in the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples. The prayer Jesus prayed is slightly different from the one prayed in our churches. The church's prayer is constantly changing and is now called 'Our Father' in Norwegian, and fortunately the incomprehensible phrase, 'Lead us not into temptation' has now been changed to 'And let us not fall into temptation'.

Jesus' prayer says "Lead us when we are tempted". In my eyes, this is the absolute best wording. Of course, God would never lead us into temptation, nor can he prevent us from being tempted. Therefore, the only meaningful thing to do is to ask him to lead us when we experience temptations to commit deeds that we know go against our conscience.

That's what '**Our Father**' sounds like in 'Toward the Light':

Lead us until we enter your kingdom!
 Thy will be done.
 Give us this day our daily bread!
 Forgive us our debts!
 Help us to forgive our debtors!
 Lead us when we are tempted and deliver us from evil.
 Take the dead into your custody!
 Protect and preserve us all!

In my eyes, the poem that comes after 'Our Father' is perhaps the most fascinating in this collection. It seems to be based on a dream, and it would be interesting to know for sure whether this is a dream that Agerskov himself has had, or whether he uses the dream as a metaphor. This is how it reads:

Dream weave.

To me, who brooded heavily
 over the lot of man
 under the sun,
 And heavier still
 over the conditions of life
 behind death.
 The dream came to me one night,
 a night without a moon.

‘Look!’ said a Voice in the Dream,
 ‘behold the Church's heaven,
 behold the hell of the Church
 with the sheep and the goats,
 the white robes,
 the palm branches,
 the eternal song of praise!
 What shall we think of it?’

And another voice answered in the
 dream:
 ‘Only the little thoughts of children,
 Only children's little thoughts
 from dark times,
 that are not ours!’

‘But look!’ it sounded again in the
 dream,
 ‘this black tomb,
 this deep emptiness,
 of the deniers of life!
 What shall we think of it?’

And there was a quiet laugh:
 ‘The great wise men
 are greater fools.’

Then an authoritative voice spoke:
 ‘You who look,
 learn the Truth!
 Out of his flaming Being
 the Almighty sent



A photograph from one of her daughter Inger Agerskov's photo albums of Michael Agerskov. Inger Agerskov has dated the photograph to 1921.

two beams together,
 two by two,
 into the World of Darkness,
 to follow, to unite,
 under the ever
 ever-changing earthly life,
 two and yet one -
 Man and Woman!’

And in the dream it answered
 mockingly:
 ‘Many followed
 many parted;
 few agreed,
 many fought.’
 But the authoritative voice persisted:
 ‘One day they will be released
 from the darkness of the earth,
 then they will go together
 to other lands.
 You who look,
 behold you stand
 on the mountain of infinity.
 Learn the truth!’

And behold, I stood
 On the mountain of infinity.
 Unknown worlds
 rolled themselves up.
 Eternities gathered together
 in seconds.

Two by two
 walked the crowds,
 Hand in hand,
 Soul to soul;
 rose through ever
 more beautiful worlds,
 onward, onward,
 towards bliss.

‘Look!’ said a voice in the dream:
 ‘With ever young hearts,
 with ever-fresh senses,
 these shall wander
 through eternity,



The dining room in Grundtvigsvej 3 III where Michael Agerskov and his wife Johanne lived together with their daughter, Inger Agerskov, who was also a wholehearted supporter of ‘Toward the Light’. The photo was taken by his daughter Inger in August 1919, and I have found it in one of her photo albums.

under the eyes of the Father,
 shielded by His hands.’
 And even more beautiful it sounded:
 ‘In God, our Father, rests
 infinite possibilities
 for all life.
 Goodness, Beauty, Wisdom
 overflow
 these happy ones.
 Then I said in the Dream,
 where I stood
 On the mountain of infinity:
 ‘Will these happy ones
 reach the Kingdom of God?
 Will they see God?’
 And it answered me in the dream,
 where I stood
 on the mountain of infinity:
 ‘Will these happy ones
 reach the kingdom of God?
 Will they see God?’

And it answered me in the dream:
 ‘After ages...
 they will reach the Kingdom of God.
 The Father loves
 all his children:
 His thought encompasses them,
 His will guides them.
 They will all behold
 God their Father.’

Then I asked in the Dream,
 Where I stood
 On the mountains of infinity:
 ‘Will they never be
 one with God?’

But behold, there flowed
 Like a vast sea
 The darkness of the abyss came towards me.
 And there was an unspeakable silence.

But through the dream's
 unspeakable Silence

the Voice of God sounded
clear and pure:
'My son, you asked,
I will answer:
Did my children become
became one with me,
then they would be sucked
Into my flaming
Infinity of being,
as the light fervours
are sucked from the
furnace.'

And through the dream's
unspeakable silence
God spoke again:
'My Son, you asked,
I will answer:

Require my children
to be one with me,
then it is death,
then it is death.
Then the Way of Life has ended,
then the Ring of Life is closed

then I too must die.'

Then I said in the dream,
in unspeakable sadness.
'Father, will it happen?'

But behold, then spread
Streams of light
The darkness of the abyss.
Jubilant voices broke
the crushing silence.
From the throats of millions it sounded:

Never!

For someone who has been deeply fascinated by 'Toward the Light' for more than 35 years, reading Michael Agerkov's literary work is a powerful experience. I have always been deeply convinced of the truth of the message of TtL, and both Mr and Mrs Agerkov were obviously 100% dedicated to being advocates for TtL in every context. Michael Agerkov was obviously a literary genius, both before and after he and Johanne were contacted by the transcendental spirits, and his thoughts can be found in all his works, right from the first publication, back in



A photograph of the living room in Grundtvigsvej 3 III, where Michael lived until his death in 1933, and where his daughter and wife continued to live. The photograph was taken by Inger Agerkov in August 1919, and I found it in one of the many photo albums she left

1893, when he was still a young man. In 1925 and 1926, the poems/songs are obviously based on the message of TtL, and are in no way characterised by the fact that Agerskov was disillusioned because everything indicated that TtL was not breaking through as they had hoped, but was largely neglected both by the men of the church and the press - apart from a very few supporters.

Of course, it's easy to feel very disappointed and depressed when the work you've dedicated yourself to over several decades doesn't meet with the understanding you had hoped for and perhaps expected. I've experienced that feeling myself, when I've faced strong opposition both from Christians and from other TtL supporters who have a different view of important issues than myself. But I have also retained my strong commitment throughout the years, and what has pleased me the most is the enormous support I have experienced from descendants in both the Agerskov and Malling-Hansen families. They have been exceptionally generous and accommodating, and have donated large parts of their photographs, books and letter collections to me because they knew the material would be well looked after.

The last song I have reproduced from The Way, the Truth and the Life has made a particularly deep impression on me. Is it really a dream that Agerskov himself dreamt one night? If so, it is very special to dream that he could hear God's voice to himself. I myself have had some very strong voices in connection with my work with TtL, but nothing that comes close to what Agerskov talks about.

When I was young, I once dreamed that I was handed an envelope in a dream, and when I opened it, it said on a note that I had been commissioned to testify about God. And the dream ended with a kind of religious performance or dance, which was so unearthly and beautiful that it cannot be rendered in words. They are simply too poor. Another time I dreamt that I was invited by Johanne Agerskov to her birthday celebration, and when I met her, she was wearing a white dress and white veils, and she thanked me for all I had done for TtL. After I had written an article about Jesus, I dreamt the next night that I received one of Mrs Agerskov's father's writing balls as a gift. Such writing balls are highly sought after by collectors all over the world, and are valued at around one million kroner.

But I've never dreamt anything like what Agerskov says in his dream. Through conversations with several dream voices a message is conveyed to Agerskov, with which we are mainly familiar from TtL. He hears about the emptiness experienced by women and men who deny love and the Father, and who are unable to stay together. And one of the voices tells Agerskov that God sent woman and man to earth as duals, who will always belong together for all eternity. But only a few succeed in finding each other and many fight against each other and are unable to stay together.

But Agerskov is told that he is standing on the Mountain of Infinity, and he can behold the truth about God's infinite goodness, and he will see the truth. When Agerskov is told that he is standing on the Mountain of Infinity, we can perhaps understand this to mean that he is standing above earthly reality and can look out over the infinite truths about God and human existence. And he is told that all dual pairs will one day come to the heavenly world, where they will learn that they have a dual with whom they belong for all eternity.

In his curiosity, Agerskov asks in the dream whether the happy couples who manage to stay together will ever see God, and whether they will become one with God. After this, there is an unspeakable silence and an abyss of darkness flows towards the dream voice. And when a voice finally sounds, it is God himself who speaks. And the answer is terrifying. God says that if any of his creatures become one with him, they will be sucked into his fiery being and be gone forever. But his next answer is even more sinister. If any of his creatures demanded to become one with him, it would mean death and the end of life - the ring would be closed. And then God would die too!

Naturally, this horrified the dreamer, and he asked in unspeakable sadness: -Will this ever happen? And then a powerful light streams forth and scatters the darkness of the abyss, and millions of cheering voices sound: NEVER! Regardless of whether this was a dream, a vision or a fictitious song, it makes a powerful impression on us who read it.

The song reminds me of something I wrote a few years ago in connection with the Episcopal Letter, which many of us believe to be an eclipsed document, given to Mrs Agerskov by the spirits of darkness. I philosophised about what would happen to the universe if God chose to follow the thoughts of darkness and went towards the light. I can't help but realise that the result would be a gigantic short circuit of the flow of light that emanates from God's unquenchable ocean of light and permeates the universe and all his creatures. And in my mind, the result would have to be a gigantic explosion that would destroy all life. But I say as in Agerskov's poem: Of course it will never happen.

Well, well, so far about my own thoughts. As long as Agerskov himself does not reveal whether his song/poem is really a dream, we cannot know with certainty whether to take the information about God's death literally or symbolically. Toward the Light writes a lot about dreams, and some of our dreams can stem directly from our spiritual self, and there is every reason to take them seriously.

But all dreams consist of symbols, which must be interpreted and not taken literally. This means that even in a dream where God is speaking, God is most likely a symbol and not God himself. It's the same as when you dream that you meet a high-ranking head of state, a politician you admire, or your boss at work. They should always be understood symbolically, and usually mean that there is a higher authority in your consciousness that wants to tell you something. My father dreamt, for example, during the time of perestroika and glasnost in the old Soviet Union that the president, Michael Gorbachev was saluting him. It's not hard to understand that this was the dream's way of confirming to my father that he had done something good and was on the right path.

Trying to interpret other people's dreams is always dangerous, because only the individual knows their own thoughts and feelings. But the warning in the song/poem about God's death if any of his creatures wish to be etherised with him may be about the fact that there is no reason for a human being to wish to become like God. 'God' seen as a symbol in a dream *may* very well symbolise the dreamer's spiritual self, and as humans we should settle for being just that - a human being with all our limitations, and not strive to become God-like, perfect persons without flaws and weaknesses. A human being simply cannot become like God on earth - not even Jesus did that, even though he is the human being who has come closest to reflecting God's love.

Perhaps the dream is a warning to Agerskov not to aim too high and set unreasonable expectations for himself? I do not know.

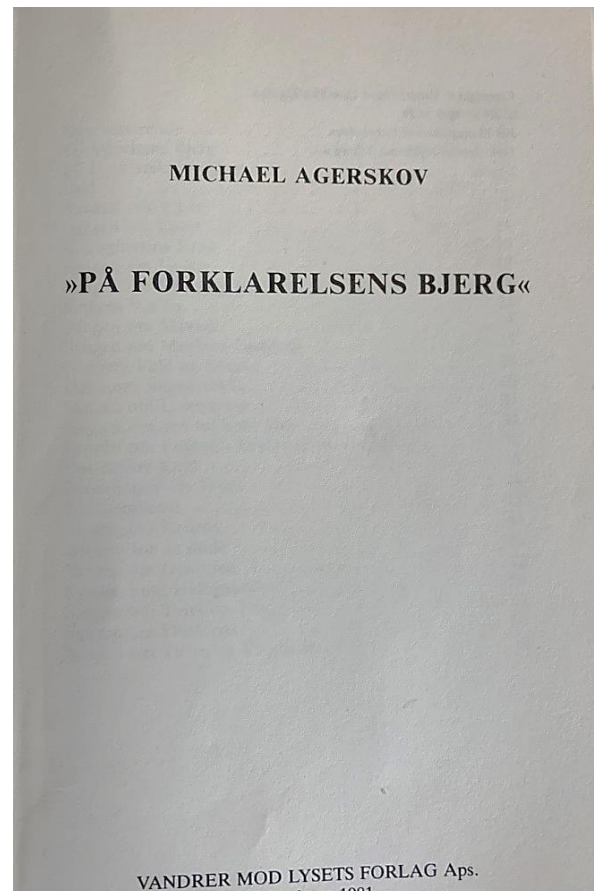
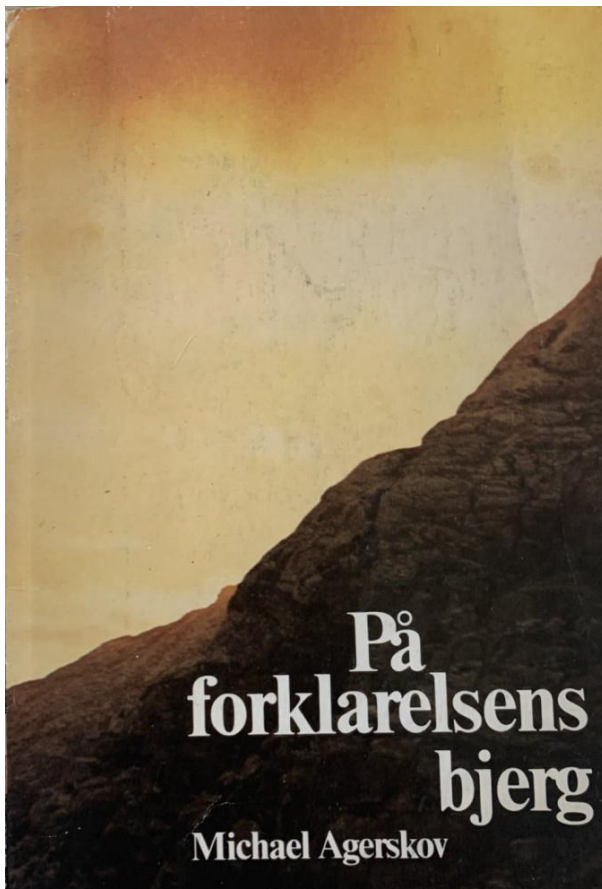
Nor do I want to ignore the possibility that Agerskov's dream may have been influenced by Agerskov's own fear of the future. After all, the outlook for the world was not particularly bright when this poem was written, and very malicious etheric records threatened the world. Agerskov was, after all, one of the youngest clairvoyants, and there was a high probability that he could sense the evil that threatened. And we must probably assume that Agerskov himself and his entire family were threatened by evil forces. Not long after these songs were published, Agerskov was struck by a severe attack of Spanish flu, and as a consequence he suffered from increasing muscular paralysis that eventually affected his heart, and he passed away at the age of 63, by which time he was completely disabled and in need of care. Then Mrs Agerskov lost her most important supporter and the world lost a great talent who could still have done a lot for 'Toward the Light'.

The information in the song that a human spirit can be absorbed into God's flaming being is also recognised from TtL. According to the work, all spiritual personalities are asked if they wish to voluntarily continue their incarnations after a completed incarnation. And if they don't, God will let them sink back into the stream of light and cease to exist. But TtL in no way warns that if someone were to choose to do so, it would mean the end of life itself and death for both God and all his creatures. TtL also states that no spiritual personality has so far chosen to be destroyed, not even the elders who suffer the most because of their terrible, evil deeds that have turned against themselves.

But a spirit in the kingdom of heaven who suffers does not stand alone, as many lonely people can experience on earth. The youngest can pull the curtain away from their suffering and show them the life that awaits them in the future, if they choose to endure their suffering. And Johanne Agerskov tells us that the oldest of the oldest, who was once a slave to darkness, has been put into a kind of artificial sleep to release his worst suffering until humans have learnt to forgive him.

I sincerely hope that Michael Agerskov's poetry will once again come into its own in the future. Hidden here are many grains of gold and an infinity of heavenly truths to marvel at. His poetry deserves so much more than to be forgotten by us humans. I hope that my reviews of his literary works can arouse the curiosity of a few more people over the years. But as TtL says: God's mill grinds slowly but will always prevail in the end.

On the The Mountain of Explanation - a poetry collection by Michael Agerskov, published in 1975.



Agerskov called this collection of poems a poetry circle, and it was not published until long after his death. According to the Royal Library, their copy of the book is from 1975, while the copy I have is from then second edition that was published in 1981.

When Michael Agerskov passed away in 1933, he left behind several manuscripts that were unpublished. The poetry collection “On the Mountain of Explaneation” was one of these. The poems are clearly inspired by the content of *Toward the Light*, and for those of us who are familiar with this work, we recognize the message from TtL. Michael Agerskov adds a beautiful, poetic dimension, which gives us a completely new experience of the content. Agerskov was a true aesthetician and a wordsmith completely out of the ordinary and translates VmL’s message into beautiful, profound poetry, which makes us reflect and want to penetrate deeper into his poetry. I personally experience a depth in the poems that inspires me to read them again several times in order to be able to go deeper into Agerskov’s message.

Agerskov has chosen a title that is well-known to all Christians and that comes from a story from the Bible, which is reproduced in all three synoptic gospels. Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8 and Luke 9:28-36). In the Bible we learn that Jesus had taken his disciples Peter, Jacob and John on a hike up a mountain, and while they were there, two familiar figures from the scriptures appeared to Jesus and the disciples present – namely Moses and Elijah. According to the Bible, Jesus was also transformed into a luminous figure. It is not stated in more detail

which mountain they were on, but most Bible scholars assume that it was Tabor in northern Israel.

According to *Toward the Light*, this story is based on an actual event. Jesus often sought out lonely places to listen to his thoughts and examine his heart. At such a time, when Jesus was sorrowful over the suffering of people and their mutual hatred and evil, and prayed for strength for his work among people, God sent two of the discarnate youngest to him to give

16.

Hvorledes skal vi forstaa Forklarelser paa Bjerget?

Oftede vandrede Jesus til de øde Steder for i Stilheden at ransage sit Hjerte og lytte til sine Tanker.

Men naar han var i Ensomheden, sørgede han meget over Menneskenes Elendighed, sørgede over deres Lidelser, sørgede over deres indbyrdes Had og Ondskab.

Og han bad sin himmelske Fader give ham Styrke og Kraft til at vejlede den syndige og forvildede Menneskeslægt.

Da Jesus en Dag, tynget af Sorger, var i Ensomheden, medens de Ledsagere, der vare med ham, slumrede, træt af Vandringen, sendte Gud to af de Yngste til ham, at de kunde træde frem for hans jordiske Øjne og saaledes bringe ham Trøst og Styrke.

Men da Jesus skimtede de svage Omrids af de lysende og straalende Skikkelser, raabte han højt: „Fader, jeg takker dig!“

Ved hans Udraab vaagnede hans Ledsagere af deres Slummer; men ved den bratte Opvaagnen beholdt de et svagt Minde om det skønne, de havde set. Thi medens deres Legemer hvilede, havde deres Aand set og genkendt de lysende, straalende Skikkelser.

This is about the Explanation on the mountain in Toward the Light. The story from the Bible is based, as we can see, on a real event.

strength and comfort, and they appeared to Jesus in their spiritual forms. Jesus thanked God for the revelation, and the disciples who had been sleeping were awakened by the event, and they had retained a memory of the two luminous figures. It is possible that while they were sleeping, the disciples could also see Jesus in his full radiance with their spiritual vision, since the Bible tells us that Jesus also appeared as a luminous being, in the same way as the two discarnate youngest ones.

The first poem in the collection "On the Mountain of Explanation" is called "The Wanderer," and it strikes a chord that characterizes the entire collection of poems. There is real depth and beautiful poetry here, and the poem gives me associations with Jesus' message, as it is reproduced in the so-called Sermon on the Mount. The relatively few lines in these verses in Matthew chapter 5 actually summarize Jesus' entire message, and to truly understand what Jesus wanted to teach the people, it is actually enough to immerse yourself in these breathtaking words. The Sermon on the Mountain in the Bible reads as follows:

1 When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside. There he sat down, and his disciples gathered around him.

2 He began to speak and teach them:

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed are those who mourn,

for they will be comforted.

5 Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

7 Blessed are the merciful,
for they will receive mercy.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.

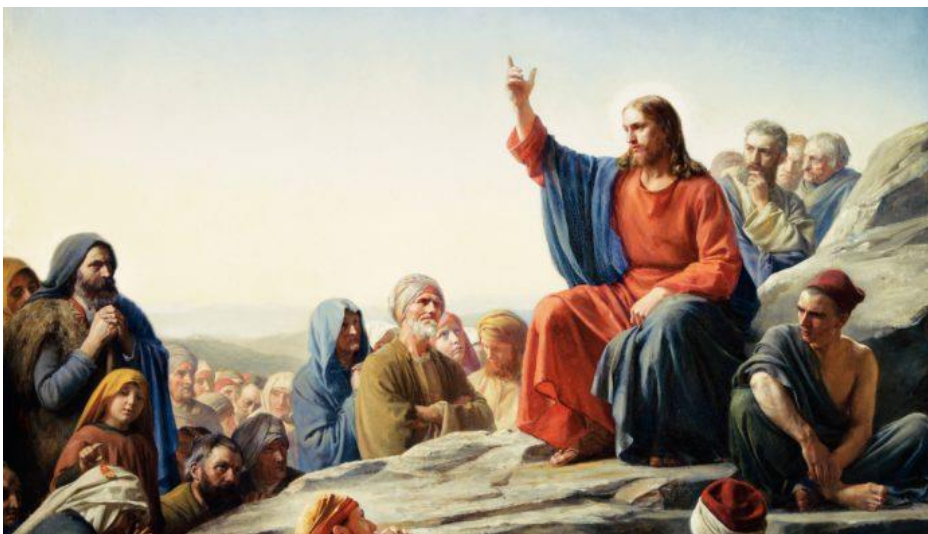
10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven. For in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be children of your Father in heaven.

Here Jesus conveys the nature of God in a very condensed and clear way and clarifies his own message. When one considers how the Testaments were changed over the years, some removed and some added, it is almost a miracle that these beautiful words were allowed to remain in scripture throughout all the centuries, for they in reality contradict the entire dogmatic faith that was constructed by Paul and his descendants after the death of Jesus.

Can it be said more clearly than in the Sermon on the Mountain that there is no requirement for eternal life in the kingdom of heaven that you join the so-called atoning death? Here it is very clear that the kingdom of heaven belongs to those who are poor in spirit and those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. The pure in heart shall see God, those who make peace shall be called children of God, and those who are persecuted for Jesus' sake shall receive



Many artists and composers have been inspired by the life and preaching of Jesus throughout history. This is an artistic representation of the Sermon on the Mountain, found on the internet.

their reward in heaven. It is very difficult to understand these statements in any other way than that all these groups will be accepted into the kingdom of heaven, and there is not a single word here about anyone being lost.

Jesus' statement from verse 44 onwards can hardly be understood in any other way than as an invitation, albeit indirect, to also pray for and forgive the devil. It is said very explicitly that in order to be like God, we humans must pray for and love ALL those who hate us, who curse us and persecute us. He says nothing about there being any exceptions to this commandment. This puts it in a slightly bad light when Christians say in church that they forsake the devil and all his works. They should rather say that they forgive and love the devil and pray for his salvation. That would be much more in line with Jesus' message.

In continuation of this, I think it is very appropriate to reproduce the entire opening poem in Michael Agerskov's "The Explanation on the Mountain":

«**The Wanderer**».

I am the wanderer.
I wander towards the Mountain of Explanation.

And with me wander countless souls: The questioners,
the wondering, the dreaming, the searching; the
suffering, the troubled, those who ponder life's
whence, why, where to; who ponder the
mystery of death.
And they see with my eyes, hear with my ears,
ask with my lips.

I am the wanderer.
I wander towards the Mountain of Explanation.

And with me walk countless dead: The lonely, the pondering; the restless, the yearning; the
sad, the sorrowful; those who once gazed at the enigmatic starry sky; those who probed the
enigmatic depths of their souls.
And they see with my eyes, hear with my ears,
Ask with my lips.

I am the wanderer.
I walk towards the Mountain of Explanation.
And with me will walk unborn crowds: The silent, the thoughtful; the pure in heart; the
strong-willed; the light-seeking, the darkness-shy; those who carry God in their hearts; those
who have a share in the eternal.
And they shall see with my eyes, hear with my ears, ask with my lips.

I am the wanderer.

<p>Author's comment: The poems are not rewritten by a poet but translated using modern translation software.</p>
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I think this poem is one of the most beautiful things Michael has written. Of course, one wonders who this I-person really is. Is it Michael Agerskov himself? The main character in his novel "The Source of Life", Kai Fürst, who I believe has many similarities to the author himself, was precisely such a searching soul that Agerskov describes in the poem. Or is it Christ the poet describes? The content of the poem, as previously pointed out, has much in common with Jesus' statements in the Sermon on the Mount. And when Agerskov says that the I-person is on his way to the mountain of explanation, it becomes even more obvious to perceive this as Christ's journey. "The Mountain of Explanation" obviously refers to the revelation that Jesus and his three disciples experienced in the Bible story. "Explanation" means, purely linguistically, that something is explained or that one is enlightened and gains new insight, and this will happen to everyone who follows Jesus' teaching of love.



Left: An artist's depiction of the "Explanation on the Mountain." Photo from the Internet. Right: Many Bible scholars believe that the "Explanation on the Mounttain" took place on Mount Tabor in northern Israel. Photo from the Internet.

The next two poems also draw inspiration from the Bible's story of when two of the youngest appeared in their light bodies to Jesus and some of the disciples. The second poem is even called "**The Mountain of Explanation.**" And it begins with the author telling us that as a child he dreamed of this very event, which is described both in the Bible and in *Toward the Light*:

As a child I dreamed of the three Figures,
 which the Lord's Apostle was allowed to see
 on the Mountain of Explanation.
 The Dream I could not forget,
 It was like I belonged there.

It should not surprise us if Agerskov really had this dream as a young boy, because he was born to earth with a truly great task ahead of him: Together with his wife to pray for the fallen spirits, help win the evil one back to the light and stand as publisher of TtL, which must truly be said to be a true revelation, not to say an explanation. It is by no means unlikely that Agerskov himself was one of the apostles who experienced seeing some of the discarnate youngest, because both he and Johanne Agerskov belong to a group of the youngest, who over the centuries have taken on the task of trying to remember the prayer for the devil. I have

previously argued that I believe that Rasmus Malling-Hansen was incarnated as the apostle Peter, and I find it equally likely that Michael Agerskov was incarnated as one of the others, e.g. Johannes. But we will probably never know for sure – until we find ourselves in the kingdom of heaven.

In the next verses, the poet tells that throughout his young life, he wandered towards the Mountain of Explanation before finally reaching it:

Now I stand under the vault of heaven, here
in the fantastic glow of sunset
on the Mountain of Explanation,
high above the dark valleys
and the everyday talk of men.

I hear the choir of the high spirits,
I listen to deep and wise words
on the Mountain of Explanation.
to the speech of life and light
high above the dark valleys.

Michael and Johanne Agerskov received information far beyond what is reproduced in VmL – they tell this in an interview in Berlingske Tidende from October 3, 1922, by journalist Christian Houmark. So when Agerskov says in this poem that he “listens to deep and wise words”, it is probably very close to his own experiences. We know, for example, that the Agerskov couple were told Jesus’ actual birthday – which was not on Christmas Eve – but it was information they promised not to tell anyone else. And they fulfilled their promise to the fullest – and only told further in their books what was desired from the supernatural spirits.

The third poem in the cycle also refers to the revelation that Jesus and the disciples experienced. It is called "On the Mountain of Explanation" and begins thus:

Whence these strange images that flow
past me, like great birds, with rhythmic flapping of wings?
Were they born in the immeasurable depths of the Universe or in my
own soul?
Are they the thoughts of the All-Father?
Are they the speech of the Universe?

And he concludes thus:

And the images that flow and flow, like great
birds, with rhythmic wingbeats, I shape them in
Words.
And the symbols that stand like mighty figures in the
evening twilight, I shape them in speech.
But you who read this, should know that words are
poor compared to the mighty images and symbols that

stand behind.

I think Agerskov describes very well how our earthly words can only convey a poor representation of the reality of the heavenly world. It surpasses everything we can imagine, and even the most beautiful earthly nature becomes only a pale imitation of the beauty of the kingdom of heaven. I myself experienced having a dream about a heavenly scenario of such beauty that it was completely impossible to reproduce it in words. I remember it as a kind of dance in beautiful costumes and surrounded by a divine play of colors. It was such a breathtaking beauty and beautiful colors that I was almost stunned. Before this, I dreamed that I was given a letter, which contained a message to me that I should testify about God.

But my experience was hardly the same soul-stirring experience that Johanne and Michael had – but it meant a lot to me.



Many artists have throughout the ages tried to portray the youngest and the heavenly beauty. This picture comes from the internet, but unfortunately the artist's name was not given. Angels are often painted with wings, and I personally believe that this is because those who have received revelations from the youngest see their light radiation and believe that they see wings. Photo from the internet.

The poem series “On the Mountain of Explanation” contains a total of 27 poems. It is certainly not easy to choose which poems deserve mention, because they all do. The poems contain so much wisdom, so many heavenly truths, and the poems are formulated with such beautiful and poetic words. The poems are largely based on the content of TtL, but Agerskov adds new depth and wisdom to many of the topics. It is almost overwhelming for a single person to try to absorb so much deep content at once.

The next poems depict God, Thought and Will, Light, Love, Hatred, Light and Darkness and War. In poem number XII, Agerskov tells what would have been the outcome if thought and will had been united in darkness. We learn that it would have had a cruel course. The dark

deity that then arose would have become evil itself, and his creatures would also have become thoroughly warlike and evil and would have been in constant war against each other. Finally, they would also have attacked the dark deity himself. He would have had no other choice but to annihilate all his creatures, and would ultimately be blown to pieces by the power of the cruel darkness himself. Thus, thought and will would have been separated from each other, never to be united again, and the universe would forever remain desolate and dead.

It is almost a little frightening to read about the fatal consequence of the union of thought and will in the darkness, but we can only thank God in deep gratitude that he emerged from the light.

In poem number XIII, called "**Through Fall and Atonement**," Agerskov tells the background to reincarnation.

He writes, among other things:

Then the truth was born in the depths of my soul: The will is free;
 We ourselves determine our destiny for good or evil. For God is just.
 And I understood: One life determines the next,
 for good or evil, through the endless
 series of incarnations. Through the fall and atonement, the chain of human life goes. Born and
 dying, to be born again. For God is just.
 And I understood: From the endless
 series of incarnations, humans shall not be released until everything is atoned for,
 everything is experienced, before the freedom of the will for good is
 realized. For God is just.
 And I understood: The secret door between life and death and
 death and birth must be closed. From the previous existence
 Man must remember nothing. Every life must
 Begin – as new. For God is good.



An artist's depiction of reincarnation. The belief in reincarnation is found in both Hinduism and Buddhism. In TiL we learn that animals do not have eternal life, but for people who have been very closely attached to a pet, a temporary copy of the animal can be created from the supernatural, so that the loss will not be too heavy. Unfortunately, the artist's name was not given. Photo from the internet.

Poem number XIV is also very fascinating. It is called "**The Great Arithmetic**", and begins thus:

Your life can be likened to a mighty large
incredibly complicated arithmetic,
whose outline was made in the The Morning of Time,
but of which you only know a few numbers,
only a few out of many thousands of digits.

And the poem ends like this:

For know: There *is* a solution, know: with God
there *is* a solution, even if your search
never succeeds in figuring it out.

For the Lord one day is as a thousand years;
the short earthly life must be followed by new ones,
which go forward in the bound rhythm of time.

For *human life* is a mighty,
vast, and immensely complicated calculation,
the outline of which was drawn at the dawn of time.

And the following poem, number XV, called "**The Song of the Rhythm of Life,**" is on the same subject:

From the flaming Spirit of God
a spark glided through space its sparkling path.
and a human self was created,
to fight in the garment of dust
against the power of darkness.
But its thought was poor, its will weak:
That was *the first day of man. (Incarnation).*

The next verses tell of how the human spirit must struggle forward, in incarnation after incarnation, to strengthen its will and its thought through earthly lives and choose away the darkness and reach the mountain of transfigurations, to use Agerskov's own words from the first poems in the circle. And the poem ends thus:

For yet shall shekels perish
in the grave of All,
ere man dares to lay down
his walking stick.

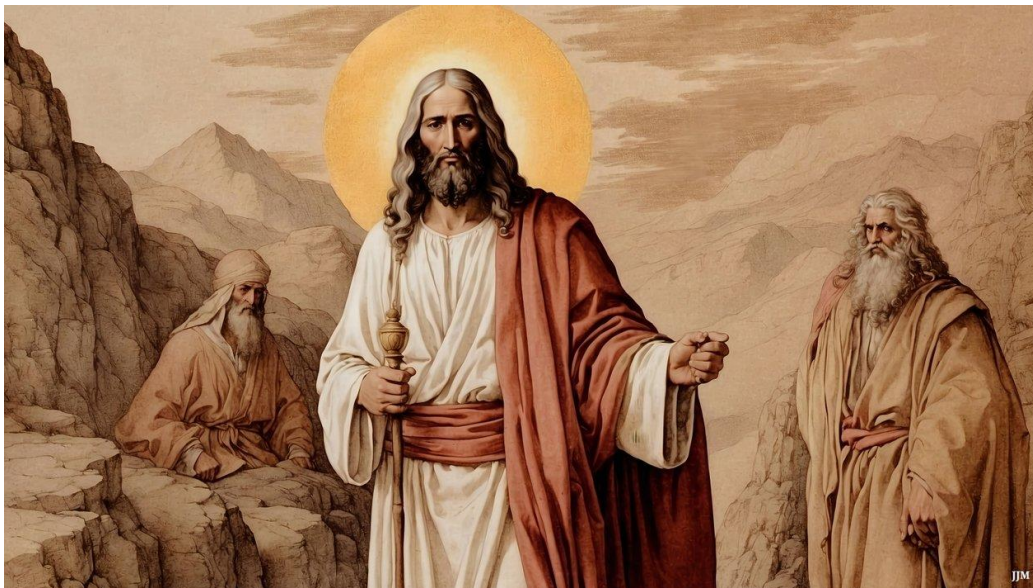
And his mind shall know
all that the earth knows,
and his heart shall suffer

all that the earth suffered.

His thoughts and will must grow
immensely strong,
he must learn to defeat
all the works of Darkness.

But then shall the guest from the land of light
be forever released from the bonds of darkness;
then shall *Christ meet* the blessed spirit
and lead it by his loving hand
and say: Now is the distress of the journey
with a thousand births and a thousand deaths;
now a life in glory awaits,
to the *world of light* I will lead you.

It will certainly not be easy for people who join other religions to accept that Christ is not only the leader of Christians, but is the leader of all humanity. Because he was the youngest who had reached the greatest compassion for suffering people and the greatest capacity for love, God entrusted him with the main responsibility of leading humanity towards the light. But Jesus is not the only one of the youngest who was commissioned to incarnate to pray for the devil and reveal the supersensible truths, and several of the youngest have been founders of religions and religious reformers - such as Buddha, Muhammad, Mani, Zwingli and Luther. (For those who do not know, I can tell you that according to the VmL, Luther was the reincarnated Paul, and Muhammad was the reincarnated Buddha). Only Jesus succeeded in conveying the gospel of love pure and unadulterated - but his simple teaching of love was unfortunately distorted and falsified by Paul and the church leaders in the centuries that followed. In *Toward the Light* we learn about Jesus' original teaching - pure and unadulterated, and Michael Agerskov conveys this teaching in poetic form in "**On the Mountain of Explanation**".



Previous page: Many artists have depicted the story of the Explanaton on the Mountain. This painting was created by the artist Josef Johann Michel. Photo from the internet.

Agerskov tells about the incarnations of the youngest in poem no. XVII, which is called **"The Song of the Incarnation of the Angels"**:

*We are the Powers,
we are our Father's Anointed.*

Through the rolling,
changing centuries
our Father sent us
again, and again
to the World of Men,
to learn and to suffer.

*We are the Helpers,
We are the heavenly leaders.*

We are the ones who spread
the heavenly Light
in the darkness of the earth;
we go before,
in our luminous trail
men must walk.

*We are the Geniuses,
we are the Creators of the Future.*

We are the ones who draw
veil upon veil
from the essence of things,
we are the ones who resolve,
one by one
the threads of nature.

And in the last verse the author says:

*We are the Masters,
We are the innovators of art.*

Our souls remember
the radiant figures
Who walk in the light
in the realm of His glory;
we mould them after
In the world of dust.

We are the heavenly helpers.

*We are the heavenly Leaders.
We are the anointed of our Father.*

Poem number XIX is about the disciple who betrayed Jesus and is called '**The story of Judas**'. The poem tells of Judas' terrible time after his death. He did not escape the consequences of his darkened life, but found himself alone for centuries, chained to grey rocks under a black sky, and constantly forced by his own thoughts to relive again and again his life and his betrayal of his master.

But then despair and regret awoke in Judas' mind, and the poem tells us that

A golden glow filled the dark room,
and a radiant figure approached.
The Master stood before him.
'Judas, Judas, behold I have found you!'
Then a tear fell from Judas' cheek. And the tear
Fell down on the chain.
And behold, the chain broke.
'Who forged my chain?'
'Thine own wrath.'
'And behold, the grey rocks fade away like roofs and
And vanish.'
'Thy own defiance hath raised them up.'
'And the sky turns blue again.'
'Thy hate hath coloured it black.'
Then heavy tears streamed down Judas' face.
face.
'The wrath of our Father will crush me.'
'Our Father longs for you. He sent me to
To bring you to him.'
'But Master, have you forgiven me?'
'My beloved brother, nineteen centuries ago
I forgave you.'
'Master, master, bring me before our father.'
And the brothers went away hand in hand.

We know from TtL that the fact that Judas singled him out to those who were sent to take Jesus prisoner did not really have any decisive significance for the arrest of Jesus. But even so, it was a terrible betrayal of the man who had supported him and chosen him as one of his followers. According to TtL, the other disciples were not entirely innocent in Judas' downfall, for they had never fully accepted him as part of their community. This eventually created anger and hatred towards Jesus in Judas' mind as well. And after centuries of suffering and reliving his life, Jesus won Judas back to the Light by his forgiveness and love, just like with the devil. But in order for repentance to be possible, Judas first had to begin to repent of his deeds, and that made him receptive to Jesus' forgiveness.



Judas suffered for centuries after his fall into darkness and betrayal of Jesus. His thoughts forced him to relive his evil actions again and again. When despair and regret finally awoke in his mind, God showed Jesus where to find Judas, and Jesus sought out Judas and told him that he had forgiven him and that God longed for him to return to the Light. The story is very similar to what happened to Ardor - he was also (wrongly) convinced that God would destroy him. Photo: Pixabay. The artist is unknown.

I already know the next poem, number XX, **‘The Image of Christ’**. It was also included in the last collection of poems published while Agerskov was still alive - ‘Vejen, Sandheden og Livet’ part 2 from 1926. The poem is about the enormous burden humans have placed on Christ’s shoulders by giving him divine status. This has made Christ infinitely sad, but he can endure it because God supports him. In verse number 4 it says:

As a fluff against the Globes of the universe,
 As a dew against all rivers
 As a droplet against the sea
 is our salvation, is our brother
 To the God who gave life.

The following poem, number XXI, **‘The Song of Christ’**, is also about our Master and leader. And Agerskov’s poem is a truly warm tribute to Christ, and full of love for him. It is obvious that when Agerskov tells us how infinitely more loving, and how infinitely greater power God has, it is by no means his intention to belittle Jesus. It’s just that God stands so infinitely above us in his power over the universe, his ability to forgive and love, and his power over light - also over Jesus. God is like an ocean of light that is never empty but floods us all with an endless stream of love and light energy.

In the second verse about Christ, the poet writes:

Like a marvelous dream he was fair,
 unspeakable love was in his eye,
 His heart was pure, his thoughts were high,
 He was the dearest son of his father,
 between brothers and sisters his dearest son.

In verse number four onwards it says:

And the ages, the ages rolled.
 The rolling globe became the kingdom of darkness,
 with murders and killings and quarrels and wars,
 no peace, no happiness was found,
 no love to bind the hearts of men.

Then said our Father and God:
 Behold, the children of the earth are in distress and darkness,
 my son, will you bring them light and strength
 Will you bring them my message of love?
 Will you teach them that I am the living God?

And he learnt and lived and lived and suffered.
 But the children of the earth esteemed him little
 And mocked the message that he would bring them.
 Then great sorrow weighed him down;
 But faithful he learnt, lived, and suffered.

They gave him the death of the cross.
 Yet the light that was lit can never be extinguished,
 and the door of the heart can never be shut.
 A glow of love was kindled,
 that radiates beyond grave and death.



Jesus has made an indelible impression on humanity and his memory is kept alive by the youngest. Perhaps the most impressive Jesus statue stands on a mountain top in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Wikipedia states the following: The statue stands on top of the 711 metre high Corcovado mountain in the Tijuca National Park, and can be seen from far and wide. A separate railway takes visitors up there. Photo from the internet.

Agerskov's poetry continues with a further five poems. They are called **'The Prayer for the Dead'**, **'The Song of the Shortcut'**, **'The Song of Doubt and Faith'**, **'The Song of the Duals'** and **'The Song of Time and Eternity'**.

I choose to conclude my review of 'On the mountain of Explanation' with a few verses from **'Prayer for the Dead.'** We should all take these words to heart:

Pray for the dead
 To God, our Father,
 that he will send them
 Light and relief;
 while they scrutinise
 with fear their earthly life
 dark spots
 And dark meaning.

Pray for the dead
 to God, our Father,
 most of all for the many,
 who killed themselves:
 then will their dark
 loneliness
 be filled with faint
 Glimpses of hope.

Think of the dead
 with loving thoughts;
 Send to the dead
 loving greetings:
 Nothing pleases them
 more than to feel
 that the bond of love
 is not broken.

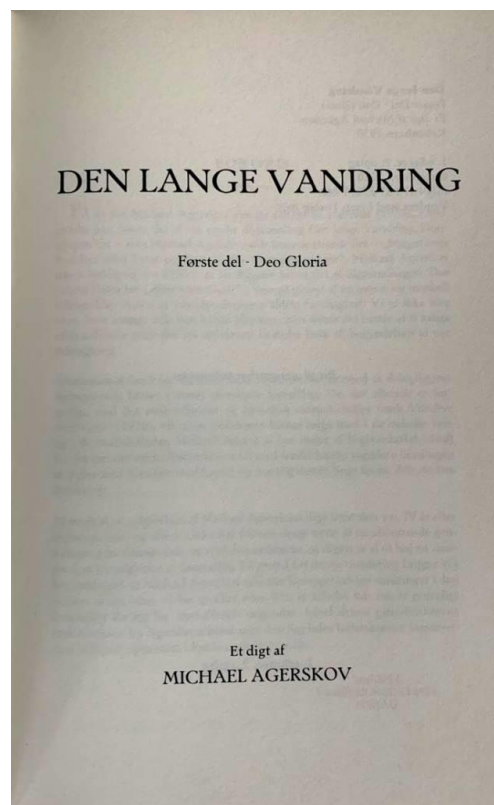
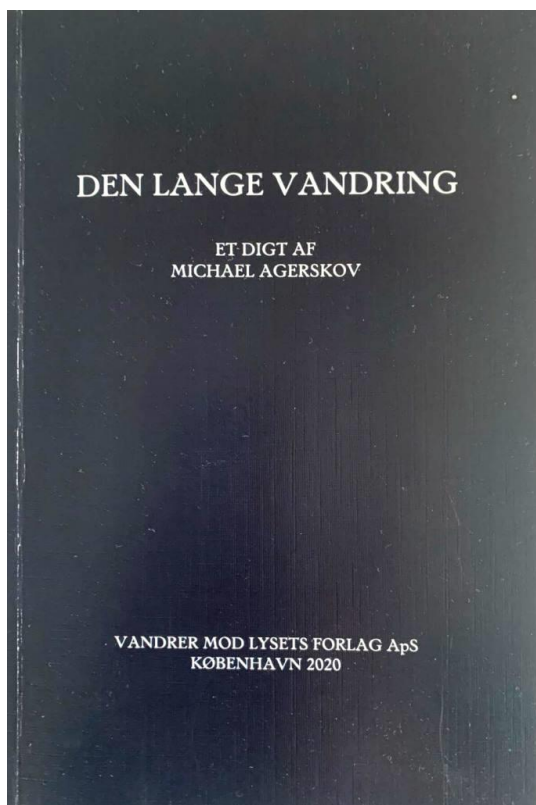
Think of the dead
 with loving thoughts,
 but do not weep for them
 selfish tears:
 Those tears drip
 like molten lead
 over their poor
 bleeding hearts.

With these very beautiful words I would like to conclude my review of Michael Agerskov's collection of poems, 'On the mountain of Explanation'. This collection has made a very deep impression on me. As a dedicated follower of the message of Toward the Light, many might say that I am incapable of giving an objective review of Agerskov's poems, and those who

read my reviews should take that into consideration. Someone who in no way agrees with the message of TtL will surely assess Agerskov's literary work in a different way.

The preface does not state when the poems in this group of poems were actually written, but as I have previously stated, one of them was also included in a collection of poems from 1926. It is likely that the poems were written sometime between 1926 and 1930, when 'The Long Walk', part one was completed. Agerskov died in 1933 from an increasing muscle and nerve disorder, which was a side effect of a severe attack of the so-called Spanish flu (an influenza epidemic) in 1928. All that remains is a single mention of a collection of poems published in 2020 by Toward the Light Foundation and Publisher, namely 'The Long Walk'.

The long walk, a poem by Michael Agerskov, written in 1930 - published in 2020.



Michael left behind another unpublished manuscript when he passed away in 1933. It was the first part of a poem he called 'The Long Walk' - 'Deo Gloria', which means 'Glory to God' in Latin. The poem is based on TtL, and the first part ends with Christ being asked by God if he will follow the Father's call and allow himself to be incarnated among people on earth in order to reveal God's true nature and his gospel of love. Unfortunately, Agerskov was never able to complete more parts of this large-scale work, as he became increasingly weakened by a nerve and muscle disorder.

The publisher gives a very detailed account of why they chose to publish the poem so long after Agerskov's death. They have a total of four versions of the poem in their archive: Agerskov's first version in his own handwriting, then a version that was obviously adapted by

the poet himself. Furthermore, there are two more versions, one written in Inger Agerskov's beautiful handwriting and one typed, also probably by Inger Agerskov. The publisher therefore assumes that Agerskov had time to edit the poem and quality assure it for publication. And I can vouch for the fact that the poem is absolutely up to Agerskov's usual high standard. He was a true wordsmith and had language in his power, and those who read the poem with anticipation will certainly not be disappointed.

The poem reproduces the entire first part of the message in *Toward the Light*, right up to the beginning of Christ's incarnation in the land of the Jews as Jesus. The difference between this poem and Agerskov's other poetry publications is that the poet does not use images and metaphors, and the poems do not rhyme, but rather all the verses have a fixed rhythm, which makes them very readable. And the language is very beautiful and poetic, and I would say that Agerskov really does justice to TtL's portrayal of God's emergence in the Light, the creation of the universe, the fall of the eldest and the youngest who took on the task of being humanity's helpers and pioneers.

The poem is divided into ten parts, and the poet calls each part a song, and the song in turn is divided into several poems.

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As you can see from the table of contents, the poems in 'The Long Walk' deal with all the important events that TtL describes.

Once again, Agerskov shows that he is a very stylistically confident and skilful poet. One could perhaps call the poem a reproduction of TtL in short form, a kind of concentrate with few but well-chosen words. As a 'taster' of the songs, I reproduce the first of them:

I

Light and Darkness

FORMERLY once
 was formless the universe.
 Soot-black, mighty,
Darkness brooded.
 Like a spark,
 The primal power of **light**
 was concealed by the darkness
 dark masses.

Everything was at rest.
 Worlds were slumbering.
 Untriggered
 were all powers,
 Untriggered
 from eternity.
 Even in the past
 was the World-Race.

The darkness was pregnant
 with possibilities
 for all that is ugly,
 for all evil,
 to murder and horror,
 raging hatred,
 to war and blood
 and bitter death.

The light was pregnant
 with the sprouts of life
 to all that is good,
 to all that is beautiful,
 to the cosmic
 Work of Love,
 to the Universe'
 Essence and Being.

But all was at rest.
 Worlds slumbered.
 Untriggered
 were all powers,
 unleashed
 from eternity.

Still in the future developments



Gustav Doré, 1832-1883, 'Cration of Light'. We know from TtL that both Light and Darkness were two of the primordial forces of the universe, along with Thought and Will. Neither Light nor Darkness was created by God, as many Christians believe. Photo from wikipedia.

Was the course of the world.

In just a few words, Agerskov describes very precisely the primordial state of the universe as we know it from TtL. It is not until the next song that he introduces the concepts of thought and will, which initially rested on the boundary between darkness and light, and the very first change in the primordial universe occurred when thought and will reacted weakly and drifted towards the light. Then the darkness also came to life and threw out the evil arms of darkness to win over thought and will. But the light responded with powerful rays that fought down the darkness.

For ages the struggle went back and forth, but in the end thought and will merged in the light and as Agerskov writes: 'The light flamed in sparkling splendour'. Then the power of darkness was defeated, and a flaming being emerged - God, who thus created himself by the fusion of thought and will. And God also created his twelve helpers, who had participated in the struggle out of darkness, and therefore have an insight and power that far exceeds that of angels and humans - but only God knows the riddle of life and can create from light.

The songs then follow the further development of the universe, depicting God's creation of dwellings for himself and the twelve helpers, and then the creation of the universe: Four mighty suns rotating in an eternal orbit around God's kingdom, a gigantic central sun. And in the four mother suns, God laid down the seeds of all possible life forms, which could come to life and form plants and animals.

Then God created thousands upon thousands of beautiful beings, whom we know as the angels - or in TtL terminology, the oldest and the youngest. They were created as male or female, bonded together, as duals, equal yet separate. In the male dual, the will was stronger, and in the female dual, the thought was strongest. The angels were beautiful, radiant figures with endless possibilities to create and grow in spiritual maturity. The oldest mature in God's thoughts first and then the youngest, but they all emerged at the same time. In TtL, they are referred to as the Elders and the Youngest to distinguish them from each other. The youngest cultivated 'the expression of feelings in colour, form or poetry'. While 'The oldest became those who practised the abstractions of thought and inner logic.'

Although everyone was initially created equal, with the same possibilities, free will and free thought meant that they became individualities that developed in different directions. They lived for unknown eternities in the kingdom of God and were taught both the powers of light and darkness by God and his twelve helpers. They did not know sin or evil but were taught about the dangerous powers of darkness and how to resist it.

Agerskov goes on to describe the great divide in the development of the universe, and the events that made the human world the scene of the struggle between good and evil. God wanted to create new beings with the same opportunities for spiritual maturity as his first created children, but initially they would be far less spiritually mature than the angels. God's plan was that they would be created by the light and by his own, and they would be beings of light that would be guided forward by the oldest and the youngest, through spiritual, intuitive thought inspiration.

When God had created the globes in our solar system, and they had gradually matured to become habitable by the planned human spirits, he chose Earth as the most suitable. The earth was a beautiful globe of light, where humans would live and develop. And God called all the angels and told them that he would choose someone from among them to whom he would give the responsibility of leading the new human spirits forward toward the light. In reality, the youngest and oldest were put to the test when God did it this way, because the ignorance they faced could develop into self-righteousness in some and a feeling that they were best suited to the task. In other words, they were faced with the possibility of being tempted by the influence of darkness.

This is what is called the Fall in the Bible. According to TtL, the biblical story of how Adam and Eve were tempted by the serpent to eat of the forbidden fruit is a symbolic representation of what happened when some of the angels were tempted by darkness and became arrogant and confident that they were best suited to lead the planned new creations. When they ate the forbidden fruit, it symbolically means that they allowed themselves to be led by the power of darkness, thus breaking with what God had taught them about the cruel power of darkness. Symbolically, the flesh of the fruit represents darkness, which is perishable, while the seeds represent light, which germinates and lives on.

Once the elders had allowed darkness to creep into their thoughts, it is in the nature of darkness to spread more and more, and the fallen angels distanced themselves more and more from God. Of course, it was not God who excluded them from his kingdom, but the darkness inspired them to defy God's will. The haughty thought first arose in one of the female elders, but her male dual took note of her thinking and put it into practice. He was the elder who had reached the furthest in terms of insight and intellectual maturity, and all the other elders agreed that they should be the ones chosen to lead the planned human spirits. In TtL, this elder is known as the oldest of the elders, and he became the leader of the elders. We know him as the devil.

The elders travelled more and more often to the planet God had chosen, seeing how beautiful and glorious it was, and they were more and more overcome by the conviction that they were best suited to the task. God tried to call them and ask them to return to their homes, but they ignored him, and God does not force anyone to follow his will. And each time they defied God, the darkness gained more and more power over them.

The actions of the elders and their fall to the power of darkness released clusters of darkness from the cycle of light and activated the latent poles of darkness. This had fatal consequences for the elders and for the globe. Agerskov describes it this way in the third song:

I

Darkness is separated.

CENTURIES faded
with centuries to follow,
like great birds
on strong wings,

while the elders,
with tense eeriness,
sought to solder
life in the darkness.

Mighty Masses
of Darkness-Hobe
now detached themselves
from the orbit of Light,
the poles of darkness
met, evil
slumbered long,
until Life arose.

In heavy waves
it poured forth,
bound them to it
With bands of strength;
woving in their
being's evil
and polluted the pure
thoughts

In heavy waves
it poured forth,
destroying
The light landscape;
Broke down their fair
dwellings down,
obliterating all
the radiant colours.

The sky darkened.
The sea turned black.
The shining lakes
became stinking swamps.
In the guessing forests
Every tree fell.
The flowers of the meadows
faded and withered.

The sky darkened.
The sea turned black.
Evil vapours
rose from the deep.
The day grew dim.
A world of shadows



Throughout history, countless artists have depicted the devil and hell. Gustav Doré, 1832-1883, was one of them. This image is said to be inspired by Dante's Inferno. Many people nowadays regard the devil and hell as nothing more than mythical concepts, but they were very real. The sphere of hell arose when the elders fell to darkness, and their beautiful dwellings were destroyed by darkness, but are now erased by God. And the devil is one of God's fallen angels, who has since returned to the Kingdom of God. Photo from the internet.

shadowy in heavy
The roofs lay.

The sky darkened.
The sea turned black.
The shining lakes
became stinking swamps
The beauty of the
radiant kingdom
turned into an ugly
Kingdom of Hell

Then they all shouted,
terrified:
'What is this?
We would not.
We would not,
The Great One knows it;
He knows our thoughts,
this we did not think.'

But the waves of darkness
kept flowing,
ceaselessly,
as centuries faded,
and new masses
of Darkness-Hobe
dissolved out
from the orbit of Light.



'The sky darkened. The sea turned black. The shining lakes became stinking swamps. In the guessing forests every tree fell. The flowers of the meadows faded and withered.' Photo from the internet.

God called the elders at regular intervals, and the youngest also sought out the elders to call them. But all attempts to get them to return home were in vain. The elders only heard their calls as faint voices but ignored them. And each time they drew the darkness closer around them.

Agerskov follows TtL's content in chronological order in the remaining poems. As I have said before about his poetry collections, I would have liked to reproduce all the poems. But in a review of the collection, I have to be content with a small selection, so that the reader can get a flavour of the content. The next major event in human history was the creation of human bodies by the elders. Darkness had fertilised many of the seeds of various life forms that God had placed in the earth. In the darkness, the seeds that in the light would have developed into many different beautiful life forms were distorted and emerged as macabre, lurid and ugly animal forms. This is how the dinosaurs arose, and when the elders discovered the chaos that had arisen on earth, they came up with the idea of creating their own creatures who could bring order to the chaos.

The elders planned to lead their creatures and make them follow their will. But the elders did not have the power to create from light, because only God knows the riddle of life in light. But the elders did have the power to create life forms out of darkness, and for two million years they experimented with constructing living beings out of darkness. But the elders were largely confused by the darkness, and their creations were characterised by the elders' failing abilities, and several different types emerged. We recognise them as the very first versions of the human race and most of them were ape-like, primitive beings that had no language, but looked more like animals.

And when the elders brought their creatures to life, they could feel the evil radiance of the elders and they feared them. Instead, they turned to the sun and worshipped the light.

This is how Agerskov describes the creation of the elders in the third song:

X

The Elders create the Humans

A lot of time
in the cloud faded,
like black birds
on black wings,
while the elders,
with tense eeriness,
tested the darkness
possibilities.

Of the Earth's radiations
they sought to create
in their own likeness
living beings;
But dark and confused
were their thoughts:
Nothing did they
accomplished.

A lot of time
in the cloud faded,
while undaunted,
with tense eeriness,
by the rays of darkness
they sought to create,
by the light of thought,
living creatures.

And after much labour



Reconstructions of the first human types based on archaeological finds. It is fair to say that they correspond well with TtL's description of the first humans and with Agerskov's poem: 'Hideously distorted, deformed images'. In other words, the first humans were not created by God, nor did they evolve from a common ancestor for humans and apes. They were created by highly intelligent beings: God's fallen angels. The youngest eventually incarnated in the most advanced of these beings, refining both their appearance and their thoughts. And through millions of years of evolution, they became modern man. Photo from the internet.

and much trouble
they succeeded
to create life,
that could live,
that could breathe
in the heavy
fog and vapours.

Of Mankind's
teeming masses
these beings were
the **first** of our world;
Yet they were not beautiful
And not good;
They were not given power,
but only the **lust of power**.

Humanity,
the dark-born,
the fallen spirit's
true Children,
were hideously distorted,
deformed images
of their Creator's
beautiful figures.



*The life spirits God had placed in the earth's
aura were fertilised by the darkness, and
grotesque, hideous and cruel animal forms
arose. The elders decided to create their own
human beings, whom they wanted to lead so
that they could clean up the earthly chaos.
However, the primitive humans could sense the
evil radiance of the elders and feared them.
Instead, they turned to the sun for solace.*

The Elders' creations were tragic in every way, and many types were created, each more primitive than the last. But because the Elders had a good and selfless intention with their creation, they wanted to create human beings who could sort out the chaos on earth, humans received a spark of the light from which the Elders were created. This had disastrous consequences for humans, because when they died, it was only the physical body that decayed and disappeared, but the rest of the humans lived on as zombies, who were neither dead nor alive, but unconscious shadows that roamed the earth in herds. And eventually they also penetrated the ruined kingdom, where the elders had their dwellings, and they wandered around in their thousands as dead yet living beings. And the elders were horrified by this result of their creation. This was something they had not foreseen.

But when God next called the elders, some of them, in despair, asked God for help for their miserable creations, and God answered their prayer and promised to attach a spirit to each of the shadows. And the elders who prayed this selfless prayer were carried by the youngest home to the kingdom of God, and God forgave them and gave them dwellings in his kingdom, where they could rebuild their darkened personalities.

And God kept His promise to the elders; He attached a spirit to each human shadow and included them in eternal life. But these human spirits were immature creatures, and God decreed that they had to incarnate in many lives on earth, gradually maturing through each earth life.

And to lead the human spirits forwards towards the light, he asked the youngest for their help by incarnating as humans on earth and by leading the humans as their guardian spirits. And although the others were reluctant to take on such a demanding task, Christ went ahead and agreed to lead mankind. And so he became the leader and pioneer of humanity, and had a total of five incarnations, during which he revealed God's message of love.

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Mennesker lig,
 leve vi ville;
 Mennesker lig,
 leve vi ville;
 Mit vil vi bringe
 de menneskelige
 det menneskelige "lys"
 som en "ledelse".

Da skabte alle,
 alle de Yngste:
 "Fæder" fæder,
 vi følger dit kald:
 den lange Vandrings
 med lettere ord
 og til dit høje
 Herlighed = Rige" —

Se, en kvindelig
 sandelig Sankt,
 stillet af Mandens
 første Vilje,
 blev Førstegælden
 af Freløserstedet,
 og Freløserens
 lys = første Grundlag.

On the left: The table of contents of songs eight to ten. Right: A copy of one of the original poems written by Michael Agerskov. Copies from the book 'The Long Walk'.

And the last of them was like Jesus of Nazareth. In a poem, Agerskov describes how God approached Christ to ask him to incarnate as Jesus in the tenth song.

V

'My son, are you ready?'

And before a century
 had passed in the universe,
 God called

to his dearest son.
 And the Father said:
 ‘The hour has come,
 my son, are you ready
 for the labour of the journey?’

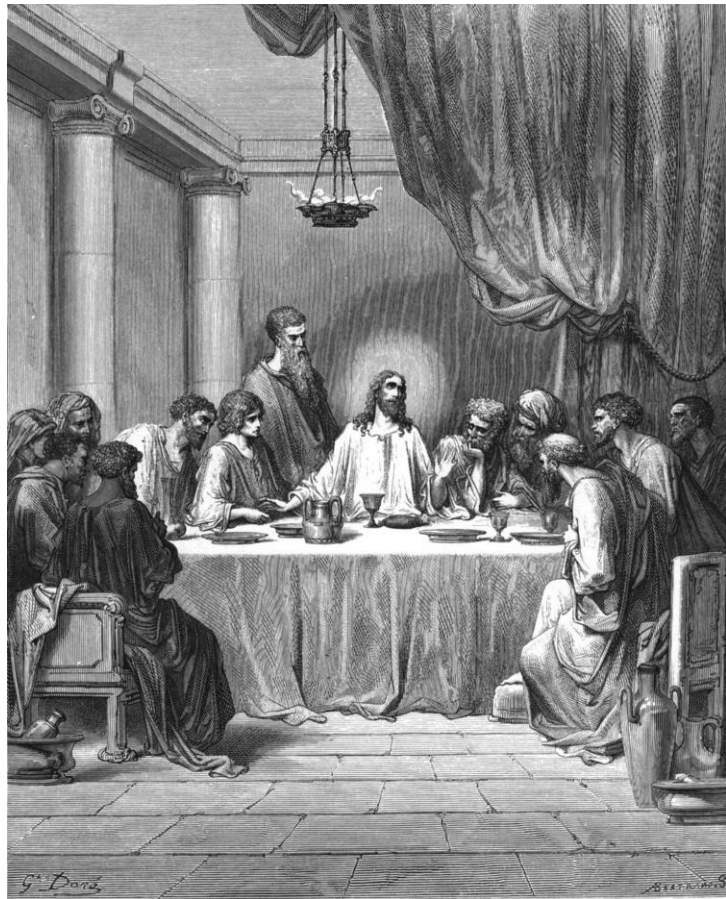
But the son answered:
 ‘Behold, I am ready!’
 And the father concluded
 in the bosom of his son:
 ‘Love,
 ...the precious...,
 to the children of the earth
 you shall bring from me.

Teach them to **get along,**
to love one another,
 as brothers and sisters
 from the same home;
 For love,
 which is precious,
 is the Source of Life
 and the Essence of Light.

Teach them to **remember**
me, the Almighty,
 the Father of their spirits,
 who loves them all.
 Teach them to pray
 in remembrance of me:
 a selfless prayer
 is not prayed in vain.

But the path of your
 wandering
 will be hard to find,
 the right way
 in the brooding darkness,
 through the dense
 Thorns and thistles.
 Beloved son:
 Are you still ready?’

Then the son answered:
 ‘Tell me, Father,
 Will I choose the right way?’
 ‘I cannot choose



God called upon Christ and asked him to incarnate as Jesus in the land of the Jews, for from there came the strongest prayer for the Messiah, God's messenger, to come to their land. And Christ was willing to incarnate as a man, despite God's warnings that if he did not remember the prayer of the most wicked, men would persecute him and give him death on the cross. Gustav Doré has created many pictures with biblical motifs, and this picture is called 'The last supper'. As you can see, there are only 11 disciples in the picture, because Judas quietly left the others to betray Jesus. Image from the internet.

the way for you,
I can only tell you
the Path you should follow.

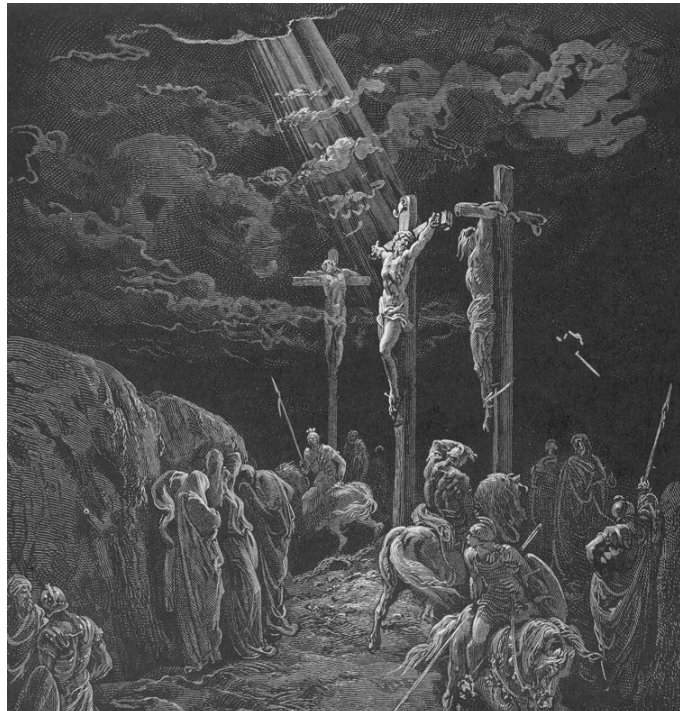
Can you as a Human being
remember your brother
and pray for him
a prayer from the heart,
then his quarrelsome
mind will be softened,
the tears of remorse
his defiance will melt away.

The streams of light
will loosen his chains;
then the darkness
has lost its servant;
then shall the path of thy walk
be brighter:
Many will love you,
many will follow you.

Yet, do you **not** remember
The servant of darkness,
And pray not for him
a prayer from the heart:
Then his defiant mind
will become more evil;
he will fight with the
hatred of hell
against thee.

Then the path of your wandering
Path will be stoned,
The thistles will sting thee,
the thorns will tear you;
Many will hate you!
Hate you, mock you;
few will love you,
fewer will follow you.

The humans...
will torture you, torment you,
and for your gifts
give you death,
give you death,
Death on the cross:



It's truly heartbreaking to read about how Satan managed to hide from Jesus by pulling the darkness so tightly around him, with the result that Jesus prayed for himself instead of praying for Satan. And in that moment, God reminded him that humans would give him death on the cross. How did Jesus manage to live with this defeat? When I read this chapter in TiL, I was sad and depressed for several days afterwards. The picture is Gustav Doré's depiction of Jesus on the cross.

Beloved son,
art thou yet ready?'

Painfully
The son bowed his head;
Then he looked firmly
at his father and said:
'Yes, I am ready
for the agony of the journey,
When **thou** wilt follow
my journey on earth,
and forgive me,
If in the darkness I stumble,
for thou knowest the darkness
and the power of darkness.'
'Listen to my voice,
it shall sound to thee,
when in the wilderness of darkness
your way is lost.

And behold, I will ask
a brother to follow you,
to carry some
of the burdens for you,
to remove the sharpest
Stones from the Road,
and uproot the thorny
Thistles.'

Then God took away
the memory of their thoughts,
He bound them
to children unborn,
bound them by the light of the
enlivening
to the yet
unborn foetuses.

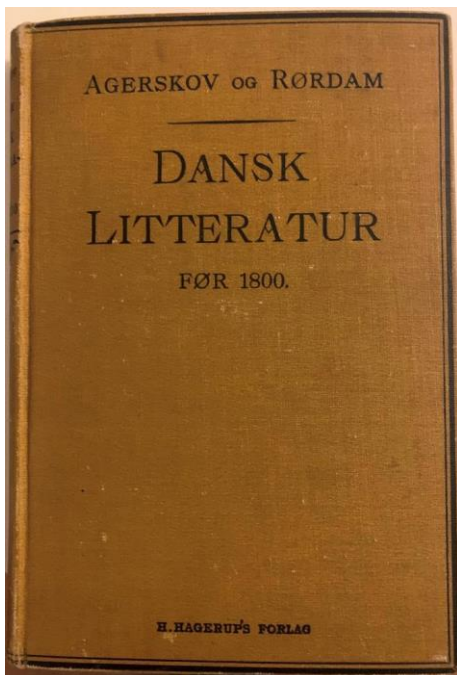
Yet God gave them
a faint remembrance,
that they might
know one another,
that they might know
who they were
in those distant times
in the kingdom of the Father.



And both were sent
together to the earth,
to the Jewish people
on the banks of the Jordan:
And the one was **Jesus,**
the child of the heart of God,
and the other was **Joseph**
of Arimathea.

With this song, Michael Agerskov concludes his great epic poem about the history of the universe from the time when light triumphed over darkness and God emerged from the light. Unfortunately, Agerskov was no longer able to write due to a progressive nerve and muscle disorder that eventually also affected his heart muscle, with the result that he died in 1933, aged just over 60.

I have mentioned all of Michael Agerskov's literary works from the first one published in 1893 up to 'The Long Walk' from 1930. Agerskov also wrote several literature textbooks together with Erling Rørdam, and they were also translated into Swedish and used in schools for many years.



Michael Agerskov was an examiner at the teacher training college exam and wrote several textbooks for Danish and Swedish schools in collaboration with Erling Rørdam. To the right is his dedication to his sister, Henriette, who was also a teacher.



Michael Agerskov photographed with friends and colleagues, by his daughter Inger Agerskov. From the left: Mr Buur, Mr Agerskov, Mr Rørdam, Prof Juul and Mr. Hansen. Photo taken in Silkeborg, 08.07.23. Because Inger Agerskov has not noted the first names of the gentlemen, I do not know for sure

Reading all of Michael Agerskov's publications from when he was a young man until his old age is like following an adventurous journey in Agerskov's mind. He was, in my opinion, a very talented writer from his early years, and his sensitivity and insight into the human mind characterises his first publications. He also provides some very insightful portrayals of people's living conditions in the Danish coastal towns in the last decades of the 19th century. It goes without saying that Agerskov's poetry took a completely new direction after he and his Johanne began receiving spiritual messages in 1908 and beyond. After these years, Agerskov's literary production was characterised by all the new things he and Johanne received from the extrasensory world, and his literary works changed direction. But personally, I am still very fond of what he wrote before he and Johanne became spokespersons for the extrasensory world. And personally, I think I can see traces in several of Agerskov's literary works before 1908 that he had faint memories of what was to come. I can only say that I am deeply impressed by Michael Agerskov as an author, and I am very, very fond of all his works, both before and after he and Johanne became spokespersons for the messages of the extrasensory world.

Sources:

Michael Agerskov's literary production:

- * Two People and Twilight, poems 1893
- * Adathysta, novel 1897
- * The Source of Life, stories 1897
- * Voices of Twilight, poems 1899
- * The great Gunpowder Conspiracy, novel 1902
- * From the old skipper village and other poems, 1909
- * The Way Truth and Life, Spiritual Songs, 1928
- * On the Mountain of Explanation - A circle of poems, 1975
- * The Long Walk - a poem, first part Deo Gloria. Written in 1930, published in 2020.

Hvis min egen Forholdene skulde muntiggjøre, at et Forlag
 skulde ønske at udgive mine samlede Skrifter, vilde følgende
 Fordelelse synes mig naturlig;

1. Bind: Mine Digtsamlinger (eller måske et stort Udvalgt). To
 "Mennesker" (1893), "Tidsmødets Stemme" (1895), "den gamle Skipper-
 by" samt nogle Digte fra forskellige Perioder. Endvidere Eventyrdigte
 nogen "Adskiltside".
2. Bind: "Vejen, Sandheden og Livet", "Paa Forældrenes
 Bænk" samt nogle senere værdifulde Sange og Salmeoversættelser.
 Endvidere: "En Seers Drøm", og "den lange Vandring".
3. Bind: Romanen "Livets Kilde". — Børnefortællinger, her
 store Kendsktsammensværgelser samt talrige Digte og Småfor-
 tællinger for Børn, oprett: Lesebog I-IV og "gulehefter".
4. Bind: "Nogle psykiske Oplevelser" (1922), "Kerken og Kri-
 stendommen" (1923), "Statistikens Præst", "Kordepunkter", "Vandret
 med Lyset", "Sartor Resartus" samt nogle Stykker om
 kirkelege Forhold.
5. Bind: Fenimore's "De Memoriam", geng. som dansk.

Nov. 1931

M. Agerskov

In 1931, Michael wrote this letter about what he thought should be included if his complete works were to be published at some point in the future. As you can see, he envisioned a total of five volumes, including all his known works and some unknown ones. Thank you very much to TiL Fund and Publishers who have been kind enough to share this letter with me. According to them, there are several unpublished manuscripts by Michael Agerskov in their archive.

Kolbotn, 09.11.24.
Sverre Avnskog

English translation 25.01.2025 by Sverre Avnskog with the help of modern digital translation tools.