

Macrocosm

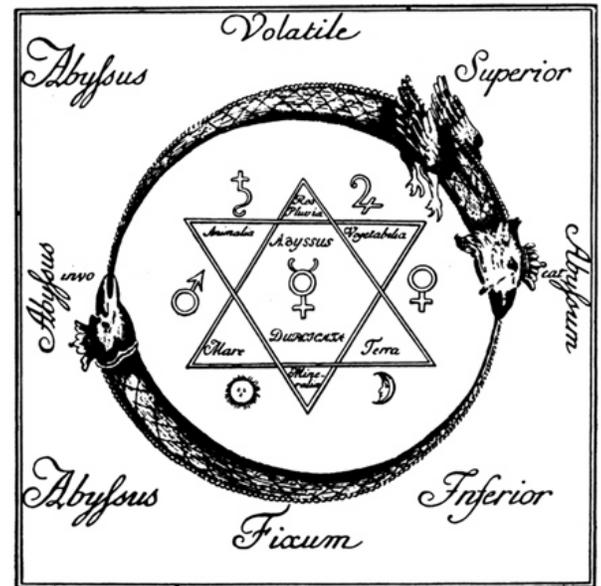
The **macrocosm** (from Greek: μακρός *makrós* "wide, large") is the name given to the great cosmic world, of which man is the image as a microcosm. The macrocosm includes the zodiac, the planetary spheres, but ultimately also the elementary world in which the elementary beings weave and work.

„The macrocosm is found by the looking consciousness in ever greater vividness the further the gaze penetrates back into the past. It lives in the distant past in such a way that every calculation of its revelations of life ceases there. Out of this aliveness man is separated. The macrocosm enters more and more into the sphere of the calculable. With this, however, it gradually dies out. To the extent that the human being - the microcosm - emerges from the macrocosm as an independent entity, the macrocosm dies. In the cosmic present there is a macrocosm that has died. But in the becoming of the macrocosm, not only the human being has come into being. The earth also arose from the macrocosm.“ (Lit.:GA 26, p. 197)

Goethe's *Faust* mentions the sign of the macrocosm in his famous opening monologue. In the centre is Mercury, surrounded by a hexagram formed by two equilateral triangles, next to whose points are the other classical planets Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, the Sun and the Moon.

„Every evening, when he falls asleep, man steps out of his small world, out of his microcosm into the great world, into the macrocosm and, pouring out his astral body and his I into the macrocosm, unites himself with this macrocosm, with the great world. But because in the present course of his life he is only capable of working in the world of daily life, his consciousness ceases at the moment when he enters the macrocosm. Secret science has always expressed this by saying: Between life in the microcosm and life in the macrocosm lies the stream of forgetfulness. Man enters the macrocosm, the great world, on the stream of forgetfulness by passing from the microcosm into the macrocosm when he falls asleep.“ (Lit.:GA 119, p. 53)

„We have made various observations which could draw our attention to the fact that through the spiritual-scientific world-view we are regaining for human knowledge in a different way old treasures of knowledge which in past days were known by men as that which belonged to the spiritual worlds. Again and again we shall come across this pre-worldly knowledge of the spiritual worlds, and again and again we shall be reminded that this knowledge of the past was based on the fact that man, by virtue of his earlier organisation, could stand in such a connection with the whole universe and its happenings that, as we express ourselves in our language, the human microcosm was immersed in the lawfulness, in the events of the macrocosm, and that in this immersion in the



The sign of the macrocosm according to Rudolf Steiner's explanations of Goethe's *Faust*

macrocosm he could have experiences of things which intimately concern his soul-life, but which must remain hidden from him as long as he walks on the physical plane as a microcosm and is only endowed with that knowledge which is given to the senses and the intellect bound to the senses.“ (Lit.:GA 158, p. 171)

Literature

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References to the work of Rudolf Steiner follow Rudolf Steiner's Collected Works (CW or GA), Rudolf Steiner Verlag, Dornach/Switzerland, unless otherwise stated.

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