

Peter Gobets Tribute

Editor-in-Chief

The Origin and Significance of Zero

The Origin and Significance of Zero, the comprehensive, interdisciplinary volume published by Brill, is a tribute to the life and legacy of Peter Gobets, whose vision, commitment, creativity, ingenuity, insight, persistence and passion transformed a phantasmal dream into reified reality – apropos, perhaps, of zero itself, transforming from empty placeholder to axial number. Peter was the Zero project Commander Zeronaut (as Peter called explorers of the truth behind the discovery or invention of zero) – he energized all with the deep nature of zero; he encouraged and championed zero-scholars – and, as fate would have it, Peter Gobets departed Mothership Earth on 5 March 2024, just days before the volume’s publication.

Peter was a true intellectual, having visited us from a bygone era – itinerant poet, iconoclastic critic, inveterate neologist, iterative wit. A global wanderer and wonderer, Peter was born in the Suriname rainforest to descendants of the disposed, emigrated to California at age 12, earned his Master’s in organic chemistry at Berkeley (where he was an original hippie), wrote prose and poetry, ultimately returning to his father’s homeland, The Netherlands.

Self-effacing – he would have hated this tribute – Peter engaged broadly. One could never know what a Peter-Gobets-email might contain. Any subject he could skewer. His scholarly scalpel was so sharp its operations were painless. His laser-sharp focus and dedication towards the study of zero, his charm in engaging scholars, scientists, artists, entrepreneurs and captains of influence, all combined to actualize the project, realizing the holding of various zero events and the publishing of the Brill zero monograph – the culmination of Peter’s 50-year vision and accomplishment. Bereft of Peter Gobets, zero feels more empty than ever.



BRILL

The Origin and Significance of Zero

An Interdisciplinary Perspective

Series: Brill [Value Inquiry Book Series](#), Volume: 395

Volume Editors: [Peter Gobets](#) and [Robert Lawrence Kuhn](#)

Zero has been axial in human development, but the origin and discovery of zero has never been satisfactorily addressed by a comprehensive, systematic and above all interdisciplinary research program. In this volume, over 40 international scholars explore zero under four broad themes: history; religion, philosophy & linguistics; arts; and mathematics & the sciences. Some propose that the invention/discovery of zero may have been facilitated by the prior evolution of a sophisticated concept of Nothingness or Emptiness (as it is understood in non-European traditions); and conversely, inhibited by the absence of, or aversion to, such a concept of Nothingness in the West. But not all scholars agree. Join the debate.

Copyright Year: 2024

<https://brill.com/display/title/68384?language=en>