



What got to be known to us as 'Schur's algorithm' - what cannot be brought on that common denominator? - was reinvented many times over. If you read recent literature, the inventiveness of authors to rediscover this one and the same algorithm is still on the rise. One would think that reading literature is not a modern thing to do - everything worth knowing is produced nowadays by a news groups on internet, making original authorship or whatever scholarship perfectly superfluous. We are getting close to a vortex of knowledge, a black hole in which everything knowable is going to disappear in chaos. Tom, on the contrary, is a great scholar, with a large private library at his disposal and that of his friends and students, and an even larger one in the back of his brains.

Chaos is not what Tom's exquisite mind tends to. Tom is a child of two very deep and very strong cultural traditions. There is the Dravidian of South India who integrated the philosophy of the northerners and impregnated it with deeply felt esthetics - a unique combination of breadth and subtlety, and also the tradition of early christianity - that of Saint Thomas, the doubter but also the believer, when his own eyes had seen the truth. Thomas was not a guy who would go for something unless it all added up (in those times people would not use multiplication yet). The combination makes for a distinctively rich personality, the Dravidian sense of art with the Christian sense for business, beauty combined with strength, feeling with reason.

But, of course, there is more to Tom than meets the eye at first, and that is called Sarah. Her steady and charming presence, her ability to sense anybody's needs, her personal warmth and readiness to help whenever and wherever needed more than doubles Tom's effectiveness. In the garden of life, Tom and Sarah have produced a delightful environment in which they have invited so many people, scientists, friends, relatives to share with them the beauty they created. I have often been the happy recipient of their hospitality, their friendship and their care. I am and will always remain thankful for this great gift.

Patrick Dewilde

Bleiswijk, May 1995.