

Articles by Joseph Caezza.

- [Hermeticism and the Golden Fleece](#)
- [Who Were the Alchemists?](#)
- [An Interview with a Bohemian Hermeticist](#)
- [An Interview with Vladislav Zadrobilek](#)
- [An Interview with Hans Nintzel](#)
- [An Interview with Stanislas Klossowski de Rola](#)
- [An Interview with Mike Dickman - Parisian hermetic translator](#)

Articles by Susanna Åkerman.

- [Christina of Sweden \(1626-1689\), the Porta Magica and the Italian poets of the Golden and Rosy Cross](#)
- [A medieval forerunner to the crest of J. V. Andreae](#)

Articles by Mark House.

- [Newton And Flamel On Star Regulus Of Antimony And Iron](#)
- [Proportions for Martial Regulus mixes](#)
- [Extracting The Seed Of Gold](#)
- [An Artificial Synthesis Of Gold? You Be The Judge](#)
- [Most Excellent Excerpts](#)
- [Identifying some first steps of Alchemical Initiation](#)

Articles by Layne Little.

- [Shaking the Tree: Kundalini Yoga, Spiritual Alchemy, & the Mysteries of the Breath in Bhogar's 7000](#)
- [An Introduction to the Tamil Siddhas: Their Tantric Roots, Alchemy, Poetry, and the True Nature of their Heresy](#)
- [Reflections on the Poetry of Ramalingar](#)
- [Avaiyar's Vinayagar Agaval](#)

Articles by other authors.

- [Isabella and Richard Ingalese - Tim Scot](#)
- [Notes On Tantric Alchemy and the Purification of Mercury - Steven A. Feite](#)
- [Roger Bacon's Place in the History of Alchemy - Edmund Brehm](#)
- [Doctor Robert Fludd - Sharon M.W.](#)
- [Burt Humburg - On the Color Changes in the "Great Work"](#)
- [Golden Moments- Nick Kollerstrom](#)
- [Biography of Dr. J.B. van Helmont - Léonard de Vinci \[In French\].](#)
- [Commentary on the Emerald Tablet of Hermes - Rawn Clark](#)
- [Rosicrucian Thoughts on the Ever-Burning Lamps of the Ancients. By W. Wynn Westcott](#)
- [Games with alchemical content - Charles Cameron](#)
- [Science and magic in Ge Hong's *Baopu-zi nei pian* - Evgueni A. Tortchinov](#)
- [External and Internal in Ge Hong's Alchemy - Evgueni A. Tortchinov](#)
- [Alchemy in Finland - Heikki Lehtosaari](#)
- ["Ethereal Chemicals": Alchemy and the Romantic Imagination - Maureen B. Roberts](#)
- [The Rotation of the Elements - John Opsopaus](#)
- [Christ as the philosopher's stone in George Herbert's 'The Elixir' -Clarence H. Miller](#)
- [Lecture series on alchemy by Terence McKenna](#)

Hermeticism and the Golden Fleece - Joseph Caezza

Hermeticism and the Golden Fleece

Joseph Caezza

Every century and upon every continent a handful of exceptional men are born who possess the innate ability to read the signatures of nature directly, to see immediately into the mystery of continuous creation and to know pristine reality revealed by the power of imaginal identification. Such vision differs radically from twentieth century pedestrian academic mentality. These sages have bequeathed us a legacy of artifacts fine as the thread of Ariadne in the form of the good texts of Hermetic Alchemy. These tomes speak from the vein of the forge and the crucible, a mother load in the vast mine of collective imagination about mankind's origin and ultimate destiny. They articulate with artful genius the same message of the hero's journey embodied in the great world myths. A generation ahead of mythic Cadmus, a generation behind Homer's Ulysses, Jason's quest for the Golden Fleece constitutes a fabulous example of the archetypal process of Nature referred to in the Emerald Tablet of Hermes Trismegistus as "the operation of the Sun".

The greatest alchemical adepts, Artephius, Nicholas Flamel, Salomon Trismosen, Michael Maier, Philalethes, Dom Pernety and Fulcanelli among many others have spoken at once with pornographic explicitness and again with exasperating obliqueness about the bench-top laboratory manipulations revealed in the circumstances of Jason's voyage. Joscelyn Godwin in his brilliant forward to Antoine Faivre's contemporary survey, *The Golden Fleece and Alchemy* remarks that C. G. Jung anchors Jason's argo along with the Hermetic great work solely to the psychic level of personality integration while ignoring how, why, what and with what, adepts actually do in their laboratories. Faivre too, pays gross negligence to this central aspect of the royal art which concerns itself with a combination of prayer, study and working hands-on directly with matter. "ORA, LEGE, LEGE, LEGE, RELEGE, LABORA ET INVENIES", declares the motto of the *Mutus Liber* of 1677, "Pray, Read, Read, Read, Read Again and You Shall Find".

Western alchemy represents a highly specialized version of the age old quest for mystical communion with the essential archetypal process of Nature. Adepts seek to recapitulate this process with symbolically affective laboratory gestures, chemical manipulations and of course, with the indispensable cooperation of providence. But what do they actually do in their laboratories?

Betty Dobbs in her monumental study, *The Foundations of Newton's Alchemy or The Hunting of the Green Lyon*, addresses this central issue of laboratory procedures in their 17th century European context better than any modern professional scholar. She explains that adepts worked their methodologies with simple manipulations and a few key materials. She provides an excellent translation of Sir Isaac Newton's Clavis, a recipe that entails the chief substances symbolized in the Jason myth.

According to the myth, Chrysomellos, the winged ram sent by beneficent Olympian deities rescues a child from the homicidal plot of his stepmother, carrying him safely to the eastern shores of the Black sea. Here the miraculous ram becomes a sacrifice, its fleece hung upon an oak tree in a grove sacred to Ares and guarded by a dragon. The scenario refers metaphorically to the descent of the Divine from above the highest sepheroth, Kether, down the Kabbalistic tree of life to the lowest sepheroth, Malkuth, Earth in the presence of the element Antimony, who's vital spirit, philosophic mercury, remains still in tact. Matter has become the prison of spirit. Insightful wisdom and artful alchemical manipulation may release it.

Renaissance alchemists represented antimony by the symbolic rams horns that also identify the zodiac constellation Ares. Antimony, a metalloid or semi-metal was perceived as below lead in an infant or childhood state in the natural process of metallic evolution fully mature in the element gold. It was also symbolized as a cross above a circle which additionally identified Earth, the divinely perfect circle of gold buried under the cross of nature upon which man is crucified.

Gold, more than a metaphor, blatantly and beautifully bears the solar signature. Its perfect state defies oxidation or attack by any single acid giving way only to aqua regia, a combination of nitric and hydrochloric acid. Luster and permanence testify to its Divinity within the confines of the metallic realm.

Ares, known to the Romans as Mars, also indicates the element Iron, rich in philosophical sulfur, the source principle of the luminous animating functional fire of Nature. It comprises the compliment of philosophic mercury. Iron finds use in purifying stibnite, the chief ore of antimony in the classic reduction process: $Sb_2S_3 + 2 Fe = 2Sb + Fe_2S_3$.

Newton spent years of study and labor working out the details of this reaction and its product at the root of animated philosophic mercury. Small iron nails are heated red hot in a crucible. Powdered antimony ore is added along with saltpeter and tartar to serve as fluxing agents. After several fulminating episodes sponsored by repeated additions of saltpeter the molten material is poured into a conical mold. Pure antimony sinks to the bottom topped off by a layer of scoria which easily separates after cooling. Signs of correct crystal purity include a star pattern on the surface of the antimony, hence the name star martial regulus.

In a major episode exactly reminiscent of Cadmus, Jason must sow serpents teeth into a field. From these seeds spring an army of ghost warriors who fight each other to death. The seed of gold, the serpent teeth are extracted from the layer of scoria above the purified antimony, the mercurial serpent, using sal ammoniac, ammonium chloride in the procedure of sublimation. This seed after purification is then sewn into meticulously prepared philosophical mercury. This metallic mixture then sealed hermetically in a flask undergoes a long gradually heated fermentation. Color changes clearly mark the major stages of this incubation along with the emergence and dissolution from the molten mass of many strange forms described metaphorically in the Jason myth as a battle of ghost warriors. Newton and other adept authors describe these forms as fast growing metallic trees. An anonymous contemporary operator recently perceived these forms as rapidly sprouting heads of cauliflower that soon dissolved back into the putrefying chaos contained in his hermetic flask.

The ultimate product of this labor mythically known as the golden fleece refers to the philosopher's stone. This red powder projected into molten base metal effects an apparently miraculous transmutation into gold. Recent discoveries by Stan Tenen and others, (*Gnosis* No. 3 and 28) of the geometric revelation hidden in the Torah's Hebrew letter code that model mathematically the fractal process of a seeds germination into fruit containing self propagating seed within itself, illuminates this alchemical gesture of projection. During this gesture rearrangement of base metal subatomic particles catalyzed by the propagated potency of Divine Presence unfolding flower-like from the philosopher's stone, creates a well known wonder of alchemy.

This wonder of alchemy testifies with unquestionable proof to the level of personality integration achieved by the operator. Unlike the vague proofs of successful psychotherapy the adept has a tangible token artifact. Alchemy of the forge and crucible variety thus embodies the profound idea of sacred science. Our late twentieth century civilization moves ever closer to the rediscovery of this tradition. Yet the only way to exhaustively understand the symbolic implications of the Jason myth in its alchemical context is to become an alchemist and to execute the great work.

But does salvation require a laboratory? The archetypes projected into external substance may be manipulated at a strictly internal level. The symbols of western alchemy occur in familiar forms in Tantric Yoga. The European "Royal Art" of alchemy pursues the same goal as the Royal Raja Yoga of India. In the most remote past European and Hindu cultures sprang from a single root whose core experience of Gnosis presented itself in myths and related esoteric disciplines of spiritual reintegration.

J. Nigro Sansonese, a contemporary yogin as well as professor of math and physics delivers a brilliantly argued thesis in his recent *The Body of Myth*. Expanding the tradition of C.G. Jung and Joseph Campbell he explicates the anatomic, physiologic and neurologic basis of the great world myths. Such myths trek out the physical geography of man's body as the spiritual current moves up the spinal ladder of ascending attention to culminate in the ecstatic rapture of gnosis.

According to Sansonese myths reveal in esoteric language the stages of bodily transformation leading to contemplative trance. He includes an entire chapter on Jason and the Argonauts. Jason's ship, the argo refers to the cranium. The fifty argonauts represent the five senses withdrawn from fragmented external experience yet focused on the inward journey into trance. Two of these argonauts, the Dioscuri, Castor and Pollux are esoteric descriptions of alternate nostril breathing.

The rowing contest between Jason and Hercules constitutes a further example of alternate nostril breathing just previous to the experience of trance symbolized as the heros collapse from exhaustion into unconsciousness. The author speaks from his own experience of meditative absorption when he describes minutely perceptible changes in the sutures and sinuses of the skull during breathing which correlate to elements of the stages in the argonauts' journey.

Finally Sansonese dissects the name "Jason" to reveal its two syllable nature as an onomatopoeic rendering for the physical gesture of respiration. Convincing evidence appears in the ancestral lineage of Jason. His great-grandfather was Aeolus, god of the wind. Also relevant are yogic breathing exercises that assign onomatopoeic syllables to

inspiration and expiration such as HAM-SA, SO-HAM or SI-VA. These arguments might seem eccentric and vague. Perhaps only another yogin could appreciate their depth and profoundness.

Contemporary scholars have barely touched the phenomenological relationship between yoga and alchemy.

Certainly they pursue identical goals. Mircea Eliade in his now classic encyclopedic survey, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, includes a brief chapter on yoga and alchemy. He notes that there are certain moments when the "osmosis" between these two disciplines is perfect.

The Hermetic scholar, Manly Palmer Hall speculates on the etymology of the symbolic rose of the Rosicrucians derived from Ras, wisdom or Ros, dew which recall Rasayana, the Ayurvedic science of longevity involving alchemically produced herbal and metallic medicines but more specifically "rasum", the nectar of immortality produced in the brain. Normally this secretion is destroyed by normal body function but yogic manipulations such as the headstand and kerchari mudra preserve and cultivate this substance.

During kerchari mudra, the tongue, artificially lengthened over years of ardent discipline inserts back and up into the nasal passage to block the normal flow of rasum. Such a practice is thought to function like the golden fleece to preserve health and even restore lost youth.

The greatest Hindu sages write about the spiritual accomplishment of Gnosis using the metaphor of the philosopher's stone. Jnaneshwar (1275-1296) certainly one of the foremost saints of the past millennium wrote an exquisite commentary on the Bhagavad Gita, Hinduism's central scripture. He composed this work at the age of fourteen, without formal education by direct knowledge resulting from Divine grace. He describes with unparalleled depth the symptoms of bodily transformation effected by the yogic process of spiritual awakening. His commentary contains no less than 17 references to the philosopher's stone that explicitly transmutes base metal into gold. Often these references describe the way divine grace transforms its recipient.

The seventh century South Indian sage, Thirumoolar in his classic, *Thirumandiram*, an esoteric masterpiece of 3000 verses, explains man's path to immortal divinity. In verse 2709 he declares that the name of God, Siva, is an alchemical vehicle that turns the body into immortal gold. His poetry resonates with the deathless nature of spiritual attainment.

Another great South Indian saint, Ramalinga Swamikal (1823-1874) dissolved his perfected body into blinding white light just as another earlier sage, Manickavasagar had done in the seventh century. As a child Ramalingar delivered brilliant scriptural discourses and commentaries without any formal education. He too claimed direct knowledge bestowed by divine grace. In his classic testimony, *The Divine Song of Grace*, Ramalinga describes the transmutation of his dense physical body into a body of light:

"Oh God! The Eternal Love, just to bestow upon me the golden body, You,
Universal Love, have merged with my heart, allowing yourself to be infused in me.
Oh Supreme Love, You with the Light of Grace have alchemised my body".
Canto 6, Chapter 1, Verse 480

This verse resounds with the import of the gesture of alchemical projection where a minute quantity of the philosopher's stone transmutes molten base metal into gold. Ramalinga's body cast no shadow and attempts to photograph him revealed only his clothing. The esoteric level of such accomplishment defies any attempt at vain academic analysis.

So too, a deeper understanding of the quest of Jason and the Argonauts defies the limit of ivory tower scholarship. The golden fleece beckons to every man as a road map of the soul's origin and ultimate destiny. Exhaustive study of the map will always be an optional first step. Genuine accomplishment emerges only when we take up the quest and join Jason on his hero's journey.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Dobbs, Betty Jo Teeter, *The Foundations of Newton's Alchemy or The Hunting of the Green Lyon*. Cambridge, 1975

Faivre, Antoine, *The Golden Fleece and Alchemy*, SUNY, Albany, N.Y. 1993

Jnanadeva, Sri, (Jnanashwar), *Bhavartha Dipika*, also known as the Jnanashwari, Samata, Madras, 1954

Natarajan, B., editor-translator, *Thirumoolar's Thirumandiram*, ITES, Madras, 1979

Pernety, Antoine-Joseph, *An Alchemical Treatise on the Great Art*, Weiser, York Beach, ME. 1995

Sansonese, J. Nigro, *The Body of Myth: Mythology, Shamanic Trance and the Sacred Geography of the Body*, Inner Traditions International, Rochester, VT. 1994

Srinivasan, C., *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Ramalinga*, Ilakkia Nilayam, Tiruchi, 1968.

Who Were the Alchemists? - Joseph Caezza

Who Were the Alchemists?

Joseph Caezza

It has been estimated that in the past 2000 years over 100,000 tomes have been written on Western Alchemy (1). Certainly many of these works were the products of cranks and dilettantes but who were they emulating? What ineffable mystery were the sincere authors attempting to communicate?

Although in the West it is thought to concern the transmutation of base metals into gold, many of today's best scholars agree that Alchemy defies any strict definition (2). Research into its enigmas might best begin with a historical inquiry into the identity of the best known "adepts". These individuals stood distinctly separate from the fanatic "puffers" who constitute a major source of ridicule toward this whole field. "Puffers", so called because of their use of the bellows, relate to "adepts" just as "quacks" relate to allopathic physicians. A meticulous study reveals the true adept to be sincerely religious, inclined toward natural science and generally free from the greed and vanity that compelled the puffer.

Morienus, who apparently lived during the seventh century, dwelled as a Christian hermit in the mountains near Jerusalem. He was known to send large annual donations of gold to the Christian Church there thus attracting the attention of the Arab king, Khalid, whom he initiated into the secrets of Alchemy (3). Geber (8th century) and Avicena (10th century) were alchemists and physicians both initiated into austere Sufi fraternities (4). Sufism represents the ascetic system of Islamic mysticism that stresses contemplation as a vehicle to ecstatic union with the Divine. Roger Bacon (1214-1292) was a Franciscan monk (5). Ramond Lully (1235-1315), allied for a time to the Franciscans was initiated by Arnold de Villanova. Lully in his turn initiated John Cremer, a Benedictine monk who allegedly held the position of Abbot of Westminster. Albertus Magnus (1193-1280) and his illustrious student, Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) both were Dominican monks esteemed in the annals of alchemistic philosophers as adepts (6). Certainly the most famous of fourteenth century adepts, Nicholas Flamel, accomplished the alchemical magnum opus after deciphering the now classic, *Book of Abraham the Jew: Priest to the Jewish People*, which was intended to help devout Jews pay their Roman taxes. Flamel supposedly used a mysteriously aquired fortune to build hospitals and restore Parisian churches (7). The best known adept of the fifteenth century was the semi-mythical Basil Valentine, a Benedictine monk, prior to St. Peter's at Erfurt. Another great alchemical author of the fifteenth century was Sir George Ripley, a Carmelite monk who supposedly donated 100,000 pounds sterling worth of alchemically produced gold to the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem (8). Pope John XXII (1316-1334) has also been indicted as an alchemical adept and a significant work on transmutation is ascribed to him. He bequeathed a mysteriously acquired fortune to the church that consisted in part of eighteen million florins of gold bullion rumored to be the product of his labor (9). Dom Anthony-Joseph Pernety (1716-1796), a Benedictine monk, authored a recently republished classic on Alchemy renowned for its encyclopedic clarity (10). Even Martin Luther is quoted for praising Alchemy, "not only for its practicle utility but for its verification of church doctrines" (11). A recent article in the prestigious journal, *Nature*, sympathetically explored Sir Isaac Newton's preoccupation with Alchemy (12). Was it mere nonsense that engaged the minds of so many great men?

Not only Newton but two other of the most distinguished seventeenth century scientists, G. W. Leibniz and Robert Boyle, "the father of modern chemistry", clearly accepted the theory of alchemical transmutation. The contemporary scholar, B.J.T. Dobbs, exhaustively chronicles the mystic climate of this age in her now classic, *The Foundations of Newton's Alchemy or the Hunting of the Green Lyon* (13). Herein she tracks the final thirty years of Newton's life spent in diligent quest, a quest in the vein of the forge and the crucible for the Lapis Philosophorum, the Philosopher's Stone. In her brilliant sequel, *The Janus Face of Genius: The Role of Alchemy in Newton's Thought*, Dobbs concedes that Newton's primary alchemical compulsions emmerged from the purest religious aspirations for mystic Truth (14).

Why are there artifacts of gold in the British Museum supposedly produced by transmutation(15)? Why are these specimens exponentially more pure than the technology of their respective ages usually produced? Why are there so many eye witness accounts of transmutation? Why did an Imperial Edict in 144 B.C. China decree public execution for anyone caught preparing gold by alchemical means? Why did the Roman Emperor Diocletian order the burning of all Egyptian alchemical manuscripts in 290 A.D.? Why also did Henry IV outlaw the alchemical production of gold in sixteenth century England?

If Alchemy was indeed the quest for mystic communion with the essential archetypal process of nature then the adept sought to recapitulate this creative process with symbolically affective laboratory gestures and chemical manipulations and of course, with the indispensable cooperation of Providence. Just as all life evolves toward Divine Perfection, so too do metals evolve toward gold. It is this essential process of evolution that the alchemist

accelerates with the product of his labor, the catalytic Philosopher's Stone, the red powder that transmutes base metal into purest gold. The enigmatic reality behind such a magnum opus can not be explained but only demonstrated. In just such a manner religious gnosis demands direct personal experience rather than pedestrian faith.

REFERENCES

1. Paulès, Louis and Bergier, Jacques. 1983. *The Morning of the Magicians*, Scarborough, p.66 .
2. Grossinger, Richard. 1983. *The Alchemical Tradition through the late 20th Century*, Io. 31, North Atlantic, p.240.
3. Stavenhagen, Lee. 1974, *A Testament of Alchemy*, University Press of New England, p. 5.
4. Holmyard, E.J. 1968. *Alchemy*, Penquin, p. 71.
5. Waite, A.E. 1970. *Alchemists through the Ages*, Steiner, p. 63.
6. Klossowski de Rolla, Stanislas. 1988. *The Golden Game*, Braziller, p.114.
7. Ibid. 5, p.108.
8. Ibid. 5, p 135.
9. Ibid. 5, p 9310.
10. Pernety, Anoiné-Joseph, *An Alchemical Treatise on the Great Art*, Weiser, 1995.
11. Courdert, Allison, 1980. *Alchemy*, Shambala.
12. Gregory, R. 1989. *Nature*, vol.342, Nov 31, p.471.
13. Dobbs, B.Y.T. 1975. *The Foundations of Newton's Alchemy or the Hunting of the Green Lyon*, Cambridge.
14. Dobbs, B.Y.T. 1991. *The Janus Face of Genius: The Role of Alchemy in Newton's Thought*, Cambridge.
16. Powell, N. 1976. *Alchemy*, Doubleday.

AN INTERVIEW WITH A BOHEMIAN HERMETICIST

by Joseph Caezza

Lubos Antonin studied philosophy at Prague's prestigious Charles University and worked as a dissident in the Czech cultural underground during the '70's and 80's. He served for 5 years as vice president of the prominent Czech Hermetic organization, UNIVERSALIA. This organization co-sponsored the Rosicrucian Enlightenment conference in Southern Bohemia's Cesky Krumlov in 1995. (See THE STONE No. 14) He more recently played a major role in the conference on "PRAGUE, ALCHEMY and the HERMETIC TRADITION" during 1997. A stellar cast of scholars including Stanislas Klossowski de Rola, Adam McLean, Joscelyn Godwin, Cherry Gilchrist, Chris McIntosh, Chris Bamford, Rafal Prinke, Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke and a host of Czech Hermeticists indulged in four days of discourse and dialogue. Following this event Lubos co-led an excursion to some of the more obscure regions of Bohemia to trace the footsteps of John Dee and Edward Kelley. Lubos played a key role in organizing the "OPUS MAGNUM" exhibit which accompanied this conference. This exhibit, located in the gothic "House of the Stone Bell" in OLD TOWN SQUARE provided a multimedia alchemical initiation experience wherein participants proceeded from the basement through four floors using a spiral staircase to encounter phases of the GREAT WORK. The exhibit displayed obscure historic books and artifacts. It was monumentalized in a large format quality bilingual volume entitled: *OPUS MAGNUM: The Book of Sacred Geometry, Alchemy, Magic, Astrology, The Kabbala and Secret Societies of Bohemia*. Lubos contributed an outstanding article to this book on the subject of natural magic. Presently he works in Prague's National Museum as custodian of 300 castle libraries.

This past summer Lubos gave me a personal tour of the National Museum's renowned mineral collection. He then escorted me to Vysehrad, Prague's hilltop sanctuary for a moment of profound contemplative silence.

Jan Vanis's contemporary book, *A GUIDE TO MYSTERIOUS PRAGUE*, describes Vysehrad as the ancient fortress of Prague's patroness, Libuse, the pagan prophetess princess. Jan Vanis cites contemporary folklore which tells how Libuse sleeps with her army of knights in catacombs beneath Vysehrad. Fables assert that in times of trouble they will awaken to aid the Czech nation. This belief is only a modern metamorphosis of older Bohemian legends connected to St. Wenceslas, Mt. Blanik and Melnik. One meets here the myth of the hallowed hollow hill inhabited by helpful higher beings. Other examples may be found at Mt. Girnar or Mt. Arunachala in India, the Glastonbury Tor in England or Mt. Shasta in Northern California. These helpful higher beings serve as "watchers" standing guard over a collective consciousness. They fulfill the duty of an "egregore", a term derived from the Greek word for "watcher". This term usually refers to the autonomous psychic residue of a group mind. Such an egregore bespeaks a yet to be heard wisdom. It shines a yet to be seen illumination dormant in stone. Recovery of this wisdom and light remains the labor of the alchemist...and men such as Lubos Antonin.

* * * * *

J.C. Lubos, how do you integrate your professional work with active practice of Hermetic Wisdom?

L.A. I began my academic training in Philosophy late in life at the age of 27. While engaged in the study of philosophy from Heidegger to Post-Modernism I discovered Alchemy and Mysticism. I realized something was

missing from our understanding of Renaissance philosophy. Bruno for example could not be understood as only a philosopher but as a practicing Hermeticist. My interests followed his interests in Marsiglio Ficino. So I began related studies of the Enlightenment. I discovered that scholars of the Enlightenment not just scholars of the Renaissance studied alchemy. I did not expect this! I prepared an exhibit for the National Museum in 1994 documenting this. It was called "The Kingdom of Alchemy". Thus I integrate my job and personal work. My long term professional work involves compiling an alchemical bibliography of Czech Hermetic Literature from 300 castle libraries. I hope to show with concrete examples the history of Czech alchemy. The people here involved with natural science were very interested in alchemy. Industrial science, for example processing coal and steel, is very important in this country. There is an awesome relationship of alchemy to industrial science and anti-dogmatic post-modernist philosophy.

J.C. What kind of activities preoccupy Czech Hermetic Philosophers? What is the role of organizations like UNIVERSALIA?

L.A. For me now it is simply a matter of collecting and studying alchemical texts. Thanks to this I have seen what Czech alchemists actually do. I assist them in locating and interpreting classical texts. In the 20th century there is a long tradition of practical alchemy here. It emerged as a belief system derived from Templar, Masonic and Rosicrucian traditions in which actual practice is unconditionally necessary. Although it has presently ceased to exist, the pre-world war organization, UNIVERSALIA, was revived in 1990. Its former president, Vladislav Zadrobilek, with his publishing company, Trigon, functioned to republish many classic alchemical texts. They made possible the recent OPUS MAGNUM exhibit and the catalogue that so well documents Czech alchemical history.

J.C. Could you please tell us briefly the great alchemical myth of the founding of Prague by the pagan princess prophetess, Libuse and her ploughman husband, Premysl?

L.A. This is very significant. Libuse is the Czech version of the Delphic Sibyl. She was a virgin ruler of the people here perhaps more than twelve hundred years ago. They were not satisfied with a woman ruler and demanded a king. From her fortress presumed now to be at Vysehrad she went into a trance. She ordered her soldiers to follow her white horse through the forest to the future king. The horse led the soldiers to the ploughman, Premysl. They presented him with fine clothes and an invitation to become king. He set free his oxen who disappeared into the earth or according to other versions ascended into the sky. Then he placed his ploughman's staff into the ground and it immediately took root, blossomed and flowered. According to some versions at the time he was approached he was using his iron plough blade as a table for his lunch. All of these items have Hermetic import. He went on to become a great ruler. The country blossomed and flowered.

I personally went to the place where this happened. During a rain storm I used my screw driver to dig up some sacred mud. As I dug, my screw driver became mysteriously deformed. I got some mud and made a cup which for me embodies the sacredness of the Holy Grail.

It is believed that Libuse still sleeps under the hilltop fortress of Vysehrad and will awaken when Bohemia is in greatest danger. During the Velvet Revolution, on the 17th of November, 1989, thousands of students spontaneously assembled at Prague's south end, upon Vysehrad's temenos, the sacred precinct of Libuse. They lit candles and held an all night vigil as if to invoke her help. Then followed the miraculous bloodless revolution. The communists quit. The Russians went home. Democracy was restored.

J.C. Is this myth alive for the Czech youth today?

L.A. Consciously no it is not. But unconsciously this myth is a vital part of contemporary Czech culture. Its origins might only have emerged from the romanticism of the 19th century Czech National Revival. There are older versions of this myth. According to some the knights of St. Wenceslas sleep inside the sacred hollow mountain of Blanik or beneath the castle fortress of Melnik waiting to come to the aid of Bohemia in its hour of greatest need. Other versions have nothing to do with St. Wenceslas. This collective memory although not clear is yet alive and sleeps in the Czech landscape. The recent Czech Olympic Hockey victory is an aspect of this egregore of Wenceslas and his knights coming to the aid of Bohemia. For a moment his sleeping soldiers awoke to become the victorious Hockey players.

J.C. Is Vysehrad a sacred location even in spite of its doubtful historic authenticity as Libuse's fortress?

L.A. Yes it is. I believe the actual site of her central fortress was Sarka, where we visited earlier today, just west of Prague. It is close to White Mountain and the Star Palace. Although barren the land here still resonates with a potent mystic charge.

J.C. Bohemians are often pictured as people who glory in cheap beer, free love and bad poetry. What does it mean to be a Bohemian Hermeticist?

L.A. There is a popular misconception of Bohemians as Gypsies. One frequently meets the image of the gypsy fortune tellers or occult magicians. Their life style is strange and very different from Czech Hermetic vision. The

roots of Czech Bohemian Hermeticism emerge from Jan Hus and Komenski. It finds expression as Rosicrucian philosophy and general esoteric tradition for example the work of Jacob Boehme.

J.C. What is the significance of the Black Virgin of Prague and what is her role in Hermetic practice?

L.A. She may possibly be linked to the mining tradition and its guilds as its patron. She represents an intriguing subculture with specific values expressed in the mythic language of minerals and metals. Just as the cathedrals represent textbooks of alchemy written in stone there has been speculation that the city of Prague is a book of alchemy written in the streets and houses. The royal coronation procession path, the Royal Road, might refer to a process. Some see the Black Virgin as playing a role in this. But she is a relatively recent phenomenon compared to Libuse.

J.C. Do young Czechs still appreciate the religious heritage of the Roman Catholic Church?

L.A. This is possibly the most atheistic nation in the world. It is an issue of social conformity. Atheism is the most popular fashion. The few that still attend mass often do so without full understanding. No, young people here do not see the Catholic tradition for what it is, the most perfect system in the world. The Roman Catholic Mass is a magic ritual *par excellence*. It can not be improved. Outside the esotericism of the Catholic Church there is nothing greater. Yet people feel a need to develop themselves as individuals. Thus they turn to spiritualist, occult and hermetic practices. We have some Protestants here but their path is just faith, service and psychic hygiene. The ritual of the Catholic Mass captures the magical experience like no other tradition. "The Unspoken Word" is expressed in its highest purest essence in the Catholic Church, The alchemical ideal is expressed in the sacrament of transubstantiation. The mystery of the Trinity is expressed most wonderfully in Catholic Theology. I laugh when I see people involved with ceremonial magic because they can never compare to the greatness of the Catholic Mass. What more could you want? What more is there?

J.C. Are you familiar with the growing movement in the Catholic Church to revive the Latin Mass?

L.A. Yes. Latin is a sacred language, as is Hebrew or Sanskrit. The mass has its fullest magic power in Latin. When the Mass is celebrated in a national language it is only a lecture not a magic ritual.

J.C. The National Museum displays a fabulous collection of artifacts from mineral, vegetable and animal evolution. It constitutes a superb place for meditation. Is alchemy correctly understood as accelerated metallic evolution or is it the science of Genesis or is it natural magic?

L.A. The National Museum was established by Masons. It is a synthesis of society and Nature. This was intentional. Alchemy emerges from the study of Nature. We easily see this at the National Museum. Yes, alchemy is mineral evolution. It is also the great science of Genesis. It is also natural science and natural magic. On the second floor front lobby of the National Museum in the floor tiles there is a yantra-like mandala. This diagram is outstanding for meditation. During his wake the coffin of Tomas G Masaryk, the first president of this country after WWI and the first true democrat here, was placed overnight upon this mandala. An upcoming Internet site on the National Museum will feature this mandala as its logo.

J.C. Do you have any favorite alchemical authors? Are the books ends in themselves to the process of expanding consciousness?

L.A. Athanasius Kircher had a powerful imagination derived from Ignatius Loyola's Jesuit contemplative exercises. This was actual visualization practice. He was wrong about many things but his emphasis on the power of the imagination is invaluable. Johann Glauber and Johann Becher are authors which have long fascinated me but their works unfortunately are not illustrated. F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway and Faulkner were alchemists like Glauber and Becher. Hemingway spent his life searching for the Stone. But I believe it is not sufficient to just read the books.

J.C. What are your plans for future work?

L.A. Michal Pober and I are working on an upcoming tour: "Magical Journeys in Bohemia": "THE GOLDEN SALAMANDER" to be led by Stanislas Klossowski de Rola. More information is available on Michal Pober's web site:

<http://www.terminal.cz/~michal/bohemia/index2.html>

J.C. Lubos, I'd like to thank you not only for making time for me here today but also for your life's work of keeping the dream alive. Thank you Lubos Antonin.

This interview was conducted on April 18th, 1998 at ROMAN SKAMEN's PUB, a stone's throw from the National Museum in Prague and later at the TERMINAL BAR, Prague's premiere Internet café. Special Acknowledgment to Michal Pober for arranging this interview and providing editorial assistance and to William Hollister for acting as interpreter-translator. Lubos Antonin can be reached at Narodniho Muzea, Vaclavske Nam 68, 11579 Praha 1, Czech Republic. Telephone 011 420 2 24497308

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Demetz, Peter; *PRAGUE IN BLACK AND GOLD*, Allen Lane (1997)
Dolezal, Ivan; *PRAGUE: THE GOLDEN BOOK*, Pragensia (1997)
Dudak, Vladislav; *PRAGUE PILGRIM*, Baset (1995)
Jirasek, Alois; *OLD CZECH LEGENDS*, Forest Books (oop)
Petiska, Eduard; *A TREASURY OF TALES FROM THE KINGDOM OF BOHEMIA*, Martin (1996)
Ripellino, Angelo, *MAGIC PRAGUE*, Picador
Spurek, Milan; *PRAGA MYSTERIOSA*, Eminent (1996) trilingual (Czech-English-German) -Spurek was a contributor to the book, *OPUS MAGNUM*
Stejskal, Martin; *THE SECRETS OF MAGIC PRAGUE*, Dauphin (1997) -translated by William Hollister, published to coincide with the exhibition "*OPUS MAGNUM*" (William Hollister, who served as interpreter-translator during this interview is an American Hermetic playwright living in Prague) Stejskal also contributed a piece on the Star Palace to the *OPUS MAGNUM* catalogue.
Tothova, E; *PRAGUE: THE ROYAL MILE*, Exprint (1997)
Vanis, Jan; *A GUIDE TO MYSTERIOUS PRAGUE*, Martin (1995)
Zadrobilek, Vladislav (editor); *OPUS MAGNUM: THE BOOK OF SACRED GEOMETRY, ALCHEMY, MAGIC, ASTROLOGY, KABBALA AND SECRET SOCIETIES OF BOHEMIA*, Trigon (1997) bilingual (Czech-English) (*to be reviewed in a future issue of the STONE*).

An Interview with Vladislav Zadrobilek

Joseph Caezza

An Interview with Vladislav Zadrobilek

Joseph Caezza

During the 1997 conference on Prague, Alchemy and the Hermetic Tradition a great expectation among Czech attendees concerned the public appearance of the enigmatic Vladislav Zadrobilek. Bohemian hermeticists revere Zadrobilek as one of the greatest living authorities on Czech alchemy. He served as president of the esoteric organization Universalia, authored a number of acclaimed works and edits the outstanding Hermetic journal, Logos. His Trigon publishing company and bookstore make available fine editions of obscure esoteric literature. Present offerings include Cyliani's Hermes Unveiled, both Fulcanelli books and reprinted collections of classic alchemical tomes.

The conference on alchemy accompanied a number of other events commemorating 1997 as the 500th anniversary of the reign of Rudolf II. The Rudolfian era enjoyed the living presence of John Dee, Edward Kelley, Sendivogius, Michael Mair, Hinrich Kurnrath, Martin Ruland (Sr and Jr), Sebald Schwarzer and dozens of other adepts and deceivers. The Opus Magnum exhibit featured prominently among events celebrated during Prague's "Year of Rudolf II". Located in the gothic "House of the Stone Bell" in Old Town Square this event provided a multimedia alchemical initiation experience wherein participants proceeded through four floors using a spiral staircase to experience phases of the great work. Zadrobilek played a key role in organizing this exhibit which displayed obscure books and artifacts. He edited a large format quality bilingual volume monumentalizing this exhibit entitled, *OPUS MAGNUM: The Book of Sacred Geometry, Alchemy, Magic, Astrology, The Kabbala, and Secret Societies of Bohemia*.

J.C. Can you tell me about your personal background?

V.Z Like you I have enjoyed many diverse vocations. I have worked in metallurgy and also as a gardener. At one time I was also involved with the theater, economics and foreign commerce. I have also been employed in the graphic arts, book restoration and publishing.

J.C. In this country, the original homeland of Budwieser and Pilsner where beer culture achieves an unprecedented reverence you abstain from alcohol and practice vegetarianism. Is this part of your hermetic practice?

V.Z. I stopped eating meat because I did not want to eat dead bodies. Remember that before 1989 we suffered 40 years of communist repression here. I initially avoided alcohol, tobacco and coffee because taxes on these products

were used to support international terrorism by the former communists. I discovered many wonderful benefits from abstinence and maintain the practice. There are obviously other motivations for this kind of conduct.

J.C. Last summer during the conference many foreign authorities came here to Prague, the silicone valley of alchemy to tell Czech people about Hermeticism. Was this an awkward situation for some adept Czechs?

V.Z. It does not matter who speaks or where but rather what matters is what is said. Even more than that what matters is what is done. There was a lot of high minded academic talk at the conference and some fine rhetoric. How much of it was new? How many of those speakers actually practice the wisdom they talked about?

J.C. Did alchemy originally come to Prague with the Knights Templars?

V.Z. Prague lies in the heart of Central Europe at the intersection of many crossroads. One theory about the origin of the name of our city concerns the belief that seven holy men from India settled here. They named this place after their sacred native city, Prayag, which is now known as Allahabad. Later the gypsies came here from South India bringing a very strange culture. Of course alchemy came to Prague with the Templars but also with the Jews and foreigners of every variety. Alchemy also emerged here spontaneously. There were alchemists in the court of Charles IV in the fourteenth century but it achieved even greater popularity during the reign of Rudolf II who sponsored over 200 alchemists. Nobles such as Vilem of Rosenberg competed with Rudolf's preoccupation and sponsored many alchemists.

J.C. Prague seems to be a textbook of alchemy written in the houses and streets of the "Royal Route", the coronation path leading up to the hilltop castle and cathedral. Strategic features near the origin of this route include the house at 34 Celetna Street known as "At the Black Mother of God" where the famous statue of the Black Virgin is displayed just opposite the former headquarters of the Templar order.

Number 8 Celetna Street, known as "At the Black Sun" invokes the notion of golden light hidden in dense dark matter. At the place where Celetna Street opens up into Old Town Square lies two houses jointly known as "At the White Unicorn". This animal often associates itself with the Virgin. What is the significance of the Black Virgin of Prague and what is her role in alchemical practice?

V.Z. I agree with Fulcanelli on this. The black Madonnas are manifestations of the ancient goddesses in her form as Isis, Demeter and Cybele. She represents the black poisonous prima materia. Cybele, the wife of Cronos, mother of the gods of Olympus is also known as Rhea, who's name means fluid. This too is a property of the prima materia. During the Opus Magnum exhibit we placed the Black Virgin of Prague in the basement of the House of the Stone Bell upon a large black cubic stone. This cubic form is the root of the name "Cybele" or "Kubele" as we say it here. Her normal residence on Celetna Street is in a house of cubist architectural design. The moon is associated with these goddesses just as it is with the mother of Jesus. Mary crushes a serpent with her foot. This image indicates the fixation of mercury. People speculate on the alchemical symbolism hidden in the city of Prague. Consider Prague's heraldic coat of arms. An arm comes out of the castle doorway holding a sword. For many Czech hermeticists the sword represents the secret fire of the alchemists. Look at the iron grill work coming down from the top of the door. Does the net-like pattern remind you of anything? Look at the shape of the top of the door where the point of the sword rests. Have you seen this form before?

J.C. The French historian Rene Alleau has proposed that the richly decorated Renaissance house, "At the Minute #3" also known as "At the White Lion" where Frans Kafka once lived on the Royal Route just off Old Town Square contains alchemical symbols relevant to the magnum opus. He compares them to Fulcanelli's explication of encrypted decorations at the Lallement mansion at Bouges in France. Is this an exaggeration?

V.Z. Many coded symbols from the Renaissance were used here by people who did not truly understand them. They were interpreted as hermetic but they are not necessarily alchemical. Self promoting people use alchemical iconography even today without knowing the original intention. There is a lot of misunderstanding. People are always eager to appropriate the wisdom and authority of the great adepts.

J.C. A steady stream of pilgrims come to the Czech Republic from Italy, Spain and Latin America to visit the church of Our Lady of Victory, the home of the "Infant of Prague". This miraculous statue of the Little King holds world class cult status. Are any of the symbols associated with this church relevant to alchemical practice?

V.Z. I do not know. The Infant is a pure Christian symbol that arrived here from Spain in the mid 17th century. These symbols do not necessarily derive from alchemy but they can be interpreted that way. There is abundant Templar iconography in that church. The Infant holds an orb surmounted by a cross. It calls to mind a symbol for the prima materia, the world and the earth. This orb is sometimes perceived as a pomegranate filled with seeds. It implies the hermetic capacity for multiplication. All symbols are ambivalent. Church art may have been modified to correspond with alchemical symbols. In the gothic monastery of St. Agnus for example there are a lot of six pointed stars in the arches similar to the large one on the front of Our Lady of Victory. These are not necessarily alchemical symbols.

J.C. I was intrigued to see enormous stone monuments depicting the fourteen Stations of the Cross in the park on Petrin Hill. The passion of Christ constitutes a viable model for the great ordeal of matter. It provides a perfect system of meditation. Do contemporary Czechs use these symbols for their contemplative work or is the cabalistic Tree of Life a more popular system here?

V.Z. Both ways are possible. Jaros Griemiller of Trebsko's 1578 Czech version of The Rosary of the Philosophers omits all the Christian iconography found in the 1550 Frankfort edition of this text. Yet the Lapis-Christ parallel is generally understood here. A good example occurs when the cock crows while Peter, who's name means stone, betrays Jesus. The cock heralds the rising sun. It plays a significant role in alchemical iconography. During Peter's betrayal the cock crows three times indicating the three stages of the great work. The mass is an interesting parody of laboratory work. But remember that it evolved out of ancient gnostic practices that predate Christianity. One of my favorite gnostic teachings is that the world was created out of God's laughter and that everything inside us and out is divine laughter. The Tree of Life has other significance. Jewish thought is different. It does not accept Christ as the messiah. En Sof, the mystery of the cosmos is irrational and unknowable. It is similar to a black hole in reverse. Victor Hugo describes it nicely as a shining black hole radiating darkness This is a great enigma. We do not know how darkness became light or how dull matter can become gold.

J.C. Do you have any favorite alchemical texts?

V.Z. The Mutus Liber and the Turba Philosophorum are my two favorite books. There are three basic versions of the Turba. I have an ancient Czech version. It contains many profound insights. The ancients understood that the Earth's atmosphere protects us from UV and cosmic radiation. We need the sky and the clouds to protect the great work from being burned. One must proceed slowly. There is some evidence in the Turba that the ancients understood oxygen. They may also have understood that free electrons compose the spiritual bodies of metals.

J.C. Your personal contribution to the Opus Magnum catalogue included a commentary on the extraordinary Czech alchemical text, Symbola Chiroglyphica. Does the actual practice of this process have any similarity to the laboratory process suggested by The Hermetic Triumph also known as The Ancient War of the Knights? In this regard is it possible for any two alchemists to elaborate the stone exactly the same way?

V.Z. Yes, the first few steps are very similar. At this time I would wish to avoid talking about the actual practical process. We hope to translate this text in the future. Some of the materials are still unknown to us. Yes, I believe any two alchemists could make the stone the same way. But we admit that there are different and very strange paths. For example the coction stage can be prolonged to arrive at platinum instead of gold.

J.C. What is the purpose of Alchemy?

V.Z. There are many post modern answers to this question. Much has been written recently that is just mystification. Transmutation is an indication of something higher. It is a sudden opening to cosmic consciousness and natural harmony. It is similar to the mystical rapture of yoga for example. Alchemy derives from an ancient science. It is an artifact of an advanced civilization that perished long ago because of the mismanagement of matter. Perhaps you've seen the movie, Planet of the Apes. At times I've been obsessively preoccupied with alchemical literature. But we have a saying here: "Luck goes to those who are prepared". Any good alchemical book, for example, The Twelve Keys of Basil Valentine, is extremely valuable. It is a spiritual essence radiating a thought field until our intuition leads us to a similar field. Such books include crowds of the dead and even those who have not yet been born. The future is present in such books. Such books are living beings. Their words wait like cradles that invite us to rest in them. I was acquainted once with a practicing alchemist. This man was very enigmatic. He talked about a 15 year cycle. Each year the cycle begins in March. He was never able to finish the work in only one year. He was always highly charged. After 14 attempts a shining Christ appeared to him and told him something. He knew at this point that he would succeed. I got two letters from him after that. Then he disappeared without a trace. He said at some point we would meet again but up till now he hasn't showed up. I believe he succeeded in elaborating the philosopher's stone.

J.C. The Opus Magnum exhibit and book which you edited constitute a major accomplishment in the annals of Czech hermeticism. Do you have any plans for similar projects in the future?

V.Z. We may do an exhibit soon about a German aristocrat who once lived in Bohemia, Count Spork. He was a mystic. It is said that he founded the first Freemason lodge in the Czech Republic. Mr. Rittman of Amsterdam and I are organizing an exhibit on Rosicrucianism for the year 2000.

J.C. I'd like to thank you not only for making time for me here today but also for your life's work of keeping the dream alive. Thank you Vladislav Zadrobilek.

This interview was conducted April 19th, 1998 at the Prague home of Vladislav Zadrobilek located a stone's throw from his Trigon bookstore located at: Umelecka 2, 170 00 Praha 7. Grateful thanks to Michal Pober for arranging

this interview and to Peter Buga'r for serving as interpreter-translator. Grateful thanks also to my soror mystica, my beloved Miss Natalie Collins who served as a constant inspiration during this pilgrimage.

Note: A number of interactive CDs on historic aspects of Bohemia have recently become available. Of particular interest are (1) Bird of Paradise, which features Michael Mair's Atalanta Fugens (2) Prague: The Royal Route and (3) Legends of Prague. Selected items will be reviewed in an upcoming issue of The Stone.

The bookdealer, Todd Pratum presently offers, Rudolf II and Prague, edited by Eliska Fucikova (1997) co-published by Prague Castle Administration, Thames and Hudson and Skira, 392 p. This is a catalogue of the general Prague exhibition of which the Opus Magnum exhibit was a part. Todd Pratum will offer the Opus Magnum catalogue in the Fall of 1998.

OPUS MAGNUM: The Book of Sacred Geometry, Alchemy, Magic, Astrology, Kabbala and Secret Societies of Bohemia, edited by Vladislav Zadrobilek, Trigon (1997) bilingual (Czech-English) 328 p. (This book accompanied an exhibit by the same name held during Prague's 1997 celebration of the "Year of Rudolf II".)

"A wise man says that a long time ago, after the creation of this world, the most beautiful angel longed to be more powerful than God. At that time the archangel Gabriel punched this rebellious angel of light in the head and knocked a shiny gem out of his crown. The stone of light flew and lit up the stars, which created the Milky Way. The one who had lost his right to his name because he was not carrying the light, now followed it. Down, close to the earth he crashed in his anger, and like that he created the Bohemian valley. A fragment of the stone of light was dropped in the hill where Vysehrad stands today. There, at the secret place, unknown brothers pray on a certain day of the year, and accept the hidden light."

D.Z. Bor *On the Threshold of Nobility*

This quote heralds the opening text of Opus Magnum, a bold and brilliant exploration of Bohemian alchemy. The premiere chapter describes a geological cataclysm which occurred more than 100 million years ago when an enormous meteor formed "The Prague Impact Crater" 200 by 300 kilometers in size. Green vitreous meteoric fragments known as moldivite or semiprecious valtavine rich in iron hydroxides still abound in this region. The text goes on to detail how the layout of Old Town Prague follows the design of Jerusalem and how many of its churches were constructed at strategic locations in accordance with the laws of sacred geometry to affect a mystic enchantment. A penetrating analysis of cathedral architecture and the art of master stone masons crowns this opening chapter on the sacred space of Bohemia.

A probing inquiry into alchemy's Gnostic, Hermetic and Presocratic roots examines the philosophy behind the practice. One reads on the subject of Heraclitian Fire from which everything comes and returns to:

"This fire refines and reveals everything; its flaring up is the direction toward the unity of everything in One, while its going out means the differentiation of all the particulars of the world. The flaring up is every individuals struggle for the real present and a transformation opposite to dreamy or leisurely going along or flowing off."

Alchemy emerged from the tension between myth and reality, the senses and meaning, perception and cognition. This same tension separates matter from spirit. Fire serves to reintegrate this tension. For the ancients the problem of oneness intrinsically follows awareness. The profoundness of such discussions soars miles above the plethora of contemporary literature on this subject.

A section on doctrine presents alchemical fundamentals with an intriguing twist. Salt appears as the central mediator between mercury and sulfur in a rotating mandala scheme. This contrasts with the more familiar less dynamic linear hierarchy that situates mercury between sulfur and salt. The bullet point format of the text describing this model calls to mind an abbreviated version of Paracelsus' Alchemical Catechism.

An exhaustive historical survey presents details on the men and events that shaped mystic Bohemia. A growing tradition achieved its highest level during the reign of Rudolf II. He sponsored over 200 court alchemists and inspired competitiveness among nobles to promote the royal art. The contemporary hermeticist, Dr. Benedict Janes contributed a chapter outlining the more recent history of Martinism, Freemasonry and related secret societies. Dr. Janes, one of the founders of the organization, Universalia, presents compelling details on the presence of the perennial philosophy which has survived Nazi persecution, Communist repression and even the crowds of hedonistic tourists that today run rampant through the sacred streets of Prague.

The unique feature of Opus Magnum entails never before published illustrations from several classic Czech alchemical tomes. Foremost among these rank Symbola Chirogyphica which bears vague resemblance to The Hermaphroditic Marriage of the Sun and the Moon, Sabaoth, a highly original German manuscript and two idiosyncratic Czech versions of The Rosarium Philosophorum. Outstanding commentaries to John Dee's Hieroglyphic Monad, The Keys of Solomon grimoires and the VIth and VIIth Books of Moses add yet more value to this volume.

Chapters on Doctor Faust in Prague, Kabbala, the Golem myth, astrological aspects of Prague and the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross attend to the myriad peripheral aspects of alchemy. Valiant scholarship attempts to distill the reality behind these myths. For example inflated stories about the magician, Zito, who performed in the court of Charles IVth transplanted themselves upon Dr. Faust. The legend of the Golem monster created by the Polish Rabbi, Eliahu Baalshem of Chem migrated to the great Kabbalist mystic, Rabbi Low, of Prague. The well known myth about revelations from the illuminated tomb of Father Rosenkreutz, at the heart of Rosicrucian tradition, may be an incarnation of the older myth wherein Apollonius of Tyana discovers the Emerald Tablet in the tomb of Hermes. One recalls the belief that both the Emerald Tablet and the Holy Grail were carved out of the gem fallen from the crown of Lucifer. Yet another echo of this initiatory egregory comes from 17th century England where a peasant discovered a deep illuminated crypt inhabited by a sage. The location of this happening became known as "the grave of the Rosicrucian".

Are these myths related to contemporary folklore that describe how the pagan prophetic princess, Libuse, sleeps with her army of knights in catacombs beneath Vysehrad, Prague's hilltop fortress, quietly waiting for Bohemia's hour of need? This too appears as a modern metamorphosis of older Czech legends connected to St. Wenceslas, Mt. Blanik and the castle fortress Melnik. Like the green glassy meteorites strewn about the Bohemian landscape these myths resonate with the alchemical admonition from the acrostic, VITRIOL. *Visita Interiora Terrae Rectificando Invenies Occultum Lapidem* translates to: "Visit the interior of the earth by rectification you will find the hidden stone".

The editor stresses in the introduction the novel nature of the illustrations and the highly original text. These erudite articles as ingenious as they are only serve as footnotes to numerous never before published pictures that bear the full force of the revelation. One can take any given page of this book, meditate for hours and be driven to rapture by the infectious intensity of its insights.

During the summer of 1997 over 70'000 people visited the Opus Magnum exhibit at the House of the Stone Bell in Prague's Old Town Square. Such popularity testifies to the value of the material monumentalized in this book. Destined to become a collector's item only a few copies remain of the original 2000 printed. It takes its place next to Roob's recent Hermetic Museum, Fabricus's *Alchemy: The Royal Art* and Klossowski de Rola's *Golden Game* but offers the unique Bohemian vision.

An Interview with Hans Nintzel

Joseph Caezza

An Interview with Hans Nintzel

Joseph Caezza

The suburban Dallas residence of Hans Nintzel remains one of the most fascinating households I've ever known. Two stone sphinxes flank the flagstone sidewalk leading to his front door. Every room in the house seems to bear some token icon of the Hermetic Great Work. Abundant custom made extra deep book shelves do double duty. A first time visitor pulls a book from the shelf only to find another hidden row of books behind what a casual observer might see. Is this the quintessential idea of "occultism" or of the Hermetic concept of "hiddenness" made manifest in practical form? Is this the call of the adept to look deeper than usual? Hans's home houses one of the largest private libraries of alchemical literature in this country. He studied alchemy with Frater Albertus and has been personally acquainted with many of the best known authorities on the subject. These include Manfred Junius, Solarzareff and Petri Murien. The recently republished *COMPLETE GOLDEN DAWN SYSTEM OF MAGIC* compiled by Israel Regarde features a chapter on alchemy authored by his long time friend and colleague, Hans Nintzel. The following interview was conducted at Hans's home in August of 1996 and January of 1997.

J.C. Hans, there would be no Philosophers of Nature without you. Your essential role made this present international organization possible. Could you speak about that?

H.N. I only discovered Les Philosophers de la Nature and the material of Jean Dubuis while on a pilgrimage in France with the alchemist Solarzareff. Bill Van Doren deserves total credit for following through to make the French dream into an American reality.

J.C. The Philosophers of Nature have experienced awesome growth as well as growing pains in recent times. Why have you chosen to watch from the sidelines?

H.N. The truest alchemical path is an individual effort. Organizations hold a useful place at a certain stage just as the immense volume of literature deserves careful study but eventually one has to do the work. It's a personal thing.

J.C. What is RAMS?

H.N. Restoration of Alchemical Manuscripts Society is a loose knit group of individuals from around the world devoted to translation and distribution of classic Hermetic literature. We are strictly non-profit and cater to the sincere practicing alchemist. Our offerings include selections from the invaluable Bacstrom manuscripts such as THE GOLDEN CHAIN OF HOMER, LAMBSRING's PROCESS and the COELUM PHILOSOPHORUM. Material by obscure authors such as Cyliani, Monte Snyder and Alexander Von Suchten are available.

J.C. Time-Life Books published a volume entitled SECRETS OF THE ALCHEMISTS in their Mysteries of the Unknown series. The book features a photo of you at a 1981 London conference standing next to a "Hermeticist", Swarmi Purna. The fellow was dressed in the garb of a Hindu Holy Man and claimed he had graduated from Oxford in 1845. His appearance was so youthful. Was this guy for real?

H.N. He seemed to be authentic. I recall he had a retinue of very devoted followers.

J.C. During the past fifty years there has been a major revival of interest in alchemy due to the work of the Swiss Psychiatrist, Carl Gustav Jung. How do you feel about his interpretations?

H.N. Jung was a brilliant man. I go along a certain distance with his ideas. They are not wrong just very incomplete. Remember that he had a professional reputation to protect. Don't be too dismayed by all the psychologists who champion alchemy only as a path to personality integration. Sure it's foolish to reduce a sacred tradition to "psychology" but see the phenomenon as a signpost pointing to something higher.

J.C. Your friends, Richard and Iona Miller recently published a book, THE MODERN ALCHEMIST, that explicates the classic work of LAMBSRING as a guide to personal transformation while ignoring the laboratory process associated with this adept. Why is laboratory work so often ignored?

H.N. Not everyone has the grace or insight to even consider the spiritual usefulness of laboratory work. Not everyone has access to the materials required; mineral ores, toxic chemicals, glassware. The toys of an alchemist are expensive and dangerous. We are generally out of touch with the therapeutic value of the crafts or hands-on labor. Our whole economy has shifted from product oriented to service oriented. In the old days people used to make things and sell them. Now everyone is a psychologist. But it's OK. Everyone has a roll to play in Nature. Everybody's entitled to make a living.

J.C. Another academic author, Antoine Faivre, recently published THE GOLDEN FLEECE AND ALCHEMY. This work again completely ignores the laboratory effort essential to realizing the Opus Magnum. What was your impression of this study?

H.N. I loved it! Many of Faivre's historical references are among my favorite authors... Pico della Mirandola, Michael Maier and Dom Pernety, if I can drop some names. Joscelyn Godwin's foreword deserves careful attention and is easily worth the price of the book, to me at least. There is a place for academic authority. It's an optional stage but not the goal. Notice how easy it is to become zealous and obsessive. Always remember "Patience is the ladder of the Philosophers and Humility is the key to their garden".

J.C. Speaking of Pernety did you see the recent edition of his work, AN ALCHEMICAL TREATISE ON THE GREAT ART ?

H.N. Yes, I know Don Wieser and Todd Pratum personally. They worked together to produce that fine volume. It's a joy to see the intense attention recently paid to so many traditional authors. But an enthusiastic student need not become a bibliophile or "biblio maniac" as Todd describes himself. The Bible itself is filled with hidden references to alchemical processes. The passion of Jesus Christ is a well known model for the destructive distillation of Lead Acetate. Genesis and The Book of Revelation hold explicit keys to our art.

J.C. Stan Tenen and his Meru foundation recently blew the lid off the geometric fractal revelation hidden in the Book of Genesis. What does that have to do with alchemy?

H.N. It's not exactly obvious but it's a model for what happens during projection when you throw a piece of the STONE into molten lead and it transmutes into gold. The auric seed germinates and flowers instantaneously producing so many other seeds which we know as metallic gold. I know Stan personally. Some people "borrowed" his discoveries and published them but Stan deserves the most credit for original insight.

J.C. What other Biblical references to alchemy are worth considering?

H.N. One of my favorites is the wedding of Cana. Who got married? Nobody knows! It wasn't important. What was important was that it was the first opportunity Jesus had to teach. He performed the transmutation of water into choice wine at his mother's request. Recall how he responded to her. "Mine hour has not yet come". Why was the water stored in stone pots instead of clay? Dwell on these mysteries. You might receive some higher inspiration.

Look at all the references to salt in the Bible. "Ye are the salt of the Earth." What does it mean?

Textbooks tell us that antimony, a very useful material in alchemy, was not discovered until 1450. But look at Jeremiah 4:30 and you'll find an explicit reference to stibnite, the major ore of antimony. Check out Isaiah 54:11 for another enigma. The bottom line here, and I'm a bottom line kind of a guy, is that you don't need a lot of books to be an alchemist. You need inspiration, illumination and revelation. It comes from upstairs.

J.C. Hans, I'd like to thank you not only for making time for me today but also for your life's work of keeping the dream alive. Thank you Hans Nintzel.

An Interview with Stanislas Klossowski de Rola

Joseph Caezza

An Interview with a true son of Hermes

Joseph Caezza

"Stanislas Klossowski de Rola", the name invokes awe among all students of alchemical wisdom. A true son of Hermes, he carries himself with the aristocratic grace and charming innocence of Antoine de Saint Exupery's "Little Prince". He is the son of Count Balthasar Klossowski de Rola, acclaimed by some as one of the greatest living painters of this century. Stanislas inspired a reevaluation of the alchemical tradition with his two books, *Alchemy: The Secret Art and The Golden Game*. He was a close personal friend to Eugene Caneliet, the direct disciple of the legendary adept, Fulcanelli. Stanislas lived for many years in Sri Lanka and was personally acquainted with the renowned authority on Eastern wisdom, Lama Anagarika Govinda. More recently he has been involved with the motion picture industry and lives with his son in Malibu, California. During the recent Bohemian Golden Salamander tour of September 1998, the hermeticist, Dan Kenney, acted as my agent and at great personal sacrifice followed Stanislas from Prague to a hunting lodge just outside the ancient mining village of Kutna Hora. There he engaged this revered author with my questions.

D.K./J.C. *As the son of the famous painter, Balthus (Count Balthasar Klossowski de Rola), do you still stand in your father's shadow or have you carved out your own piece of space?*

S.K.R. Well it depends: on the one hand all children of famous people are invariably forced to deal with this problem and with the inevitable, often unfavorable, comparisons made by others between themselves and their forbears. Also, there are people whose interest in one stems only from who one's father is. But, on the other hand, I have benefitted tremendously from being my father's son. He is truly an exceptional human being who has instilled in me standards of the highest order. Then again I very much have gone my own eccentric way to live my own life. Still, he does cast a long shadow...

D.K./J.C. *Medieval painters often elaborated their own pigments out of metallic ores. Examples include Naples Yellow (lead antimoniate $Pb_3(SbO_4)_2$), Vermillion (cinnabar HgS) and Orpiment (yellow arsenic sulfide As_2S_3). Could you explain the role of the artist's amplified effort of perception required for hermetic insight and describe the role of color in alchemical work?*

S.K.R. I don't know what you mean exactly by the "artist's amplified effort of perception required for hermetic insight..." By "Artist" I presume you mean an Alchemist. If so, provided one prosecutes one's research work in the correct fashion, hermetic insights do not require amplified efforts of perception, but diligent study of the best books, including prayer and meditation, which in turn gives birth to these mysterious insights that strike like lightning...However, unless you seize them, and make them fast, they are very fugitive. In other words truths that seem unforgettable are indeed forgotten.

The role of color is well known in the alchemical work. There are three basic colors. Everybody knows that... The Nigredo, or black, being the first sign of success, the second sign comes with Whiteness or Albedo, and the final Perfection, Tyrian Color or Rubedo, is when the final fixity is attained. There are other colors of importance such as green which symbolizes the living state, the life force. Alchemists oppose greenness, a life to death, to suggest that

metals that are taken from the mine and can be bought from a shop are dead metals and have to be reincruded, in other words, brought back to life. That's the green and there are a number of other colors which are the fugitive colors, symbolized by the peacock's tail. They appear and they disappear. The best summary in English, of the succession of colors is in an exposition upon Ripley's Vision by Philalethes which I included in *ALCHEMY: THE SECRET ART*.

D.K./J.C. *Cyliani's classic Hermes Unveiled contains a masterful riddle. At the threshold to the temple, the celestial nymph explains that he can accomplish nothing without solving it: "From One, By One, Which Is Only One Are Made Three, From Three, Two, And From Two, One." This seems to be a reference to the Golden Mean proportion, often designated by the Greek letter phi. This living function defines how all things grow in Nature. What has "growth" got to do with the Great Work of Alchemy? How does it relate to practical procedures?*

S.K.R. The role of growth, as it is phrased, is an obvious one. It's parallel is a wedding of two opposite natures, they have a child, the child must be fed and grows. In that sense, the role of growth is an analogical one. Art is helping Nature to achieve its stated aim. Everything grows.

The process itself is about growth. It's about growing one thing from another thing. In other words, the Stone of the Philosophers must become the Philosopher's Stone. So it's a journey from the One to the One. You have to identify the first One, which is the Alpha, and the Omega is the Philosopher's Stone.

D.K./J.C. *Cyliani's aeronautical voyage seems reminiscent of Peter Pan's journey to NeverNever Land in the recent movie, "Hook". It also calls to mind a recently published account of a yogi, Swami Satyeswarananda Giri, in his biographical, Babaji, The Divine Himalyan Yogi. This yogi spent 12 years doing intense sadhana in the Himalyan mountains, after which he was approached by a semi-divine saint who took him on a similar aerial voyage. This same account describes how, at one point, this semi-divine saint momentarily transformed himself into a woman and then back into a man. It recalls Canseliet's description of a similar episode with Fulcanelli in Spain. Is the actual historic reality of these accounts as significant as their archetypal symbolic value?*

S.K.R. Well, I can only really talk about the Fulcanelli episode because Canseliet has told me a lot about it.

Canseliet explained how, a long time after the philosophical death of his master, he was invited to go to Spain and there he was taken to a mysterious estate where people walked about dressed in ancient costumes. The story is somewhat reminiscent -although he wasn't aware of it for a long time, - of the famous story of two ladies who were in Versailles and saw all sorts of 18th century happenings. Canseliet was coming out of this lab that he had been given to work in and he had his braces hanging off his shirt and shoulders, his shirt was untucked, he was sort of scruffy and he felt bad because suddenly, around the corner, came this Queen who was accompanied by a couple of women. They were dressed in magnificent costumes. There had been children playing, also dressed in these ancient costumes, and he thought "Oh, how marvelous that these kids are looking after these clothes so well." And as the Queen went by and he was sort of frozen on the spot, she turned her head and smiled. He was shocked to recognize his Master. So how that applies is that: Fulcanelli, at that stage, was the incarnation of Lady Alchemia herself. That's the best interpretation of that. Now, again, it is up to each person to whom these things occur to give whatever "spin" they want on such an incident.

D.K./J.C. *Jean-Julien Champagne, Pierre Dujols and Rene Schwaller de Lubicz hold nominations as candidates for the identity of the personage behind the Fulcanelli myth. Schwaller appears as a leading contender because of the striking parallels between his work on the Egyptian temple at Luxor which bears cathedral symbolism and the material presented in Fulcanelli's The Mystery of the Cathedrals. Could you please comment on this?*

S.K.R. I certainly can: My first reaction is to exclaim that all these theories are quite ludicrous and are not convincing, either. But you must understand that because of my friendship with Canseliet I witnessed his sadness and indignation when we discussed Champagne's name in that connection. I have already told Kenneth Rayner Johnson that it was absolute nonsense. However at the beginning of this year I read *AL-KEMI: A MEMOIR, HERMETIC, OCCULT, POLITICAL and PRIVATE ASPECTS OF R.A. SCHWALLER de LUBICZ* by Andre Vandenbroeck. This work quotes Schwaller giving a lot of details about Fulcanelli which relate to Champagne. Nevertheless something is wrong, it just does not quite hang together. In *FULCANELLI DEVOILE* by Genevieve Dubois she reproduces a fascinating letter precisely written by Canseliet to Schwaller de Lubicz (dated December 1932), wherein he writes: "It is possible that my name on the back of the envelope may not be absolutely unknown to you, as closely connected to Mr. Champagne in the last years of his life, you might have heard of me. Since his death, I am pursuing the goal of a seven year collaboration which had us rent two adjoining garrets, 59bis Rue Rochechouart. I had both the luck and the pleasure to receive in the last few days the loan of a most interesting book: *ADAM L'HOMME ROUGE* and thus to learn what our mutual friend had omitted to tell me that you are the author of this curious and learned work. You are displaying therein a profound knowledge of the subject of primitive androgyny as well as highly philosophical preoccupations, the very ones that Mr Champagne embraced when he returned from Plan de Grasse, (Schwaller's home and laboratory), and which seem to have upset his former

conceptions..." Canseliet goes on to describe how they both yielded to this new direction and went back to studying the caput mortem of the first work...Champagne and Schwaller had worked on discovering the secrets of medieval stained glass. They actually elucidated the enigma, pierced the mystery and were able to reproduce it. After nineteen years of work, they managed to discover the great secret. Now Canseliet, in that letter, would not address Schwaller as "Possibly you know who I am, etc. etc." if Schwaller had been Fulcanelli in the first place. Furthermore, Genevieve Dubois suggests that Canseliet himself was the victim of some mystification... She came to the conclusion that Schwaller, Dujols and Champagne were in fact, the authors, a triumvirate -in other words, the works were not the work of one man but of three people together, hidden under the identity of Fulcanelli. This can not be correct because everything Canseliet has told me about the matter refutes that. And what he wrote about Fulcanelli would point out that Fulcanelli was about 80 years old in 1922. So, you can count back and look at the dates of Schwaller, Champagne and Dujols. They don't correspond to anything like that. At any rate, ultimately, does it really matter? The answer is: It doesn't. And today people spend so much time looking at the outer reality and searching for that, instead of studying the Work. People want to know the autobiographical details about people and "pin things down". Well, they can't and it doesn't matter. The hermetic philosopher, at a certain point, transcends his identity and doffs off his ego-mortality, and enters into the Absolute. And the bargain for that is that you totally abandon who you were because it's totally irrelevant. It's like a husk that drops away.

D.K./J.C. *When we consider the value of an alchemical tome, for example, The Rosary of the Philosophers, is the text an end in itself or is laboratory work required? Do you have any favorite hermetic tracts that you continuously read?*

S.K.R. Good texts are extremely useful and there can be no practice without a sound basis in theory. And the only way to acquire this theory is by diligently reading, reading, rereading again and praying and working. So practice eventually completes all this reading. On the other hand, alchemy goes far beyond theory and practice into a living reality of its own.

The Hermetic Triumph is one of my favorites. Hermes, Sendivogius, Basil Valentine, Bernard Le Trevisan, d'Espagnet, Zachaire -these are the ones I read and reread and Fulcanelli, of course.

D.K./J.C. *The Hermetic Triumph, like Paracelsus' Alchemical Catechism, argues against vulgar mercury and gold as ingredients for elaborating the Philosopher's Stone. However, Henri de Lintaut's 1700, L'ami de L'Aurore (Friend of the Dawn), documents the technical details of this practice. When vulgar mercury is incubated with vulgar gold by a competent operator for a certain duration under precise temperature control and astrological influence, it becomes animated and fermentable. It may be a practical possibility, but does it obscure more profound metaphysical principles? Was it the clarification of these principles that motivated the author of the Hermetic Triumph?*

S.K.R. He doesn't say that...he doesn't say that, at all. I mean, there is an argument in the War of the Knights which is the first part of the Hermetic Triumph which is in three parts. The interview between the two protagonists which follows is an elucidation upon this treatise. So in that first part gold and mercury are arguing their worth against that of the Stone saying "you're a vile thing, etc. etc". These questions are asked in the Hermetic Triumph. Philalethes brings up what you're mentioning here, but it is a very deceptive way to work. There's a certain process whereby one can take -its not vulgar mercury -but one can take gold and reincrudate it and extract its seed. That process is extremely difficult to do -very interesting, but very, very costly. And the chances of erring are tremendously great. What can happen there is that you loose the whole thing and you'll end up with nothing but scoriae that are absolutely worthless. I've discussed this before with Canseliet at length, but I do not believe that it is a very good idea to deal with vulgar mercury in the first place. And vulgar mercury, by the way can be a reference to the first mercury. So it's a difficult thing because, again, we get into the tremendous semantics of alchemical literature.

D.K./J.C. *The recently published Opus Magnum catalogue which chronicles Czech alchemy features never before published illustrations from a Bohemian tract, Symbola Chiroglyphica. Could these illustrations also appropriately accompany the Hermetic Triumph? Do they document the same process?*

S.K.R. (Leafing through the catalogue): They are very good, classically based -but the style is rudimentary -but they are very interesting hieroglyphs...with precious indications...Of course, you could say they illustrate the same process since...they deal with exactly the same thing. But could they illustrate the Hermetic Triumph? I don't think so. They're not at all in that kind of style... but, in a way, they could. I mean, it's a Yes and No kind of answer. We're looking at them as we speak. It's hard to know what you mean. "Do they illustrate the same process?" They illustrate the whole process of alchemy... See (pointing to an illustration), the salamander and the pelican...what is very interesting is this (pointing to another)...this sign all over the place -very, very good...that I've never seen...always the orb -it's a very good indication (closing the book). It is a good manuscript to study and the iconography is, although not of high artistic quality, certainly very eloquent.

D.K./J.C. *You were personally acquainted with Lama Anagarica Govinda, a towering pinnacle of authority on Eastern wisdom. His introductory forward appears in W.Y. Evans-Wentz's classic TIBETAN BOOK of the DEAD. His FOUNDATIONS of TIBETAN MYSTICISM remains to be an acclaimed source work. All his writings constitute true gems of wisdom. You knew him personally. What was he like? Did his relationship with his wife, Li Gotami, actualize the alchemical concept of the "Soror Mystica"? Could you explain that kind of relationship?*

S.K.R. Lama Govinda was, perhaps, the greatest man that I've ever been gifted with meeting. He was a tremendously gentle and delightful man. When I first showed up on his doorstep at his Kesar Devi ashram in Almora, in the Himalayan foothills -which was more like a hermitage than an ashram, he opened the door. I introduced myself, and he said "oh please come in, I know exactly who you are." And he made me sit down in this delightful drawing room and then he pulled out a book by Rilke -but I mean, it was almost instantaneous: he reached up, pulled out this book by Rilke, opened it, put on his glasses and he said "oh yes, de Rola, right?" I mean the whole reference was right there -it was absolutely astonishing. And I felt as if I was a long lost relative, but in the highest sense of the word. I was very naive in those days and he always took time to explain things and show things in the most eloquent manner. He used a lot of visual techniques to teach me things which were very, very useful. He taught me, for instance, when I asked him about the Outside at a very precarious moment, he came out with this beautiful definition and said: "Well, the Outside is the Inside veiled in mystery." That's very nice.

Li Gotami was a Farsi from Bombay. She looked like a silent movie star. She had that Clara Bow kind of look and was dressed in Tibetan cloths. She cut a most charming figure. She was absolutely adorable. She was a Soror Mystica in the sense that she was tremendously supportive of her husband, admired him deeply and was always very discreet and was a source of joy and gaiety in one's life there. But that's all I can say about it right now.

D.K./J.C. *You lived for many years in Sri Lanka which, according to popular Tamil myth, is a small surviving land mass of an ancient submerged continent, possibly destroyed by the misuse of alchemical technology. Sri Lanka even today remains the domain of the Hindu divinity, Muruga, a patron of Buddhism as well as the Tamil Siddhar yogic-alchemical tradition. The iconography of Muruga seems reminiscent of the western magnum opus. For example, according to popular myth, Muruga slays two great demons which he transforms respectively into a rooster and a peacock. The rooster, hermetic herald of dawn, adorns his battle flag and the peacock becomes his mount or vehicle. The peacock often appears with a serpent clutched in its talons, implying the fixation of mercury. Muruga brandishes weapons of war in many of his 12 arms which invoke the idea of the hermetic secret fire. His chief weapon, a broad bladed lance, is popularly recognized as the ascending kundalini or transmutative serpent fire. Could all of this be accidental coincidence or a folly of misapplied hermetic interpretation?*

S.K.R. There's a French expression which we taught Lubos Antonin today. It's called tremendously "tire par les cheveux", meaning "pulled by the hair". Because in India -or rather Ceylon -the peacock doesn't have at all the same signification as in western occultism. By the way, going back to the last question, one more thing I wanted to say about Lama Govinda, through whom I obtained a certain number of Tibetan initiations, is that thanks to his tremendous knowledge of western esotericism, he was very much instrumental in my turning back towards western esotericism, after a lengthy plunge in Tibetan secret doctrines.

To return to the second question, I don't see any connection -except fortuitous ones in the universal unconscious. Certainly you can read it that way if you want to, there's no harm in it. But that's not necessarily what it means.

D.K./J.C. *Could you tell us about your film making projects?*

S.K.R. I made a film called The Shining Blood which fell into distribution Hell. It recently again, has drawn attention back to itself by critics who initially disliked it, who couldn't "forget it" after seeing hundreds of films. Hundreds of films later, they've requested to see it again because, they said, they couldn't get it out of their minds. The reason for that is that it attempted to use film-making in a classical fashion of an exoteric story having a completely esoteric content. Therefore, as everything had a secondary meaning -and the color was very meaningful in it and used on purpose in that manner -it was a mystical road movie, based really on the Arthurian legend and on the principle of "Amor Vinci Omnia". Love vanquishes all, -Love with a capital "L", transcendent Love, etc. So it's not an easy film because it's not an overt art-movie or a strictly action film. But everything in the film is linked in a very thought out way. There is no detail in the film that is insignificant. But perhaps this is not apparent. It hasn't been apparent to everybody on the first showing. On the other hand, people steeped in Castaneda and interested in these matters have been utterly fascinated. And there are tremendous devotees of this picture.

I wanted to follow it up with a story which I've written on a sort of modern version of the myth of Venus and Tannhäuser which is replete with hermetic imagery and deals with the conflict between the conception of love and desire, with small letters, as opposed to Divine Love and Divine Desire and the despotic rule of love. Again it's a form of initiation story and deals, like The Shining Blood, with the transmutation of consciousness. I have several other projects in different veins. I've adapted Crowley's Moonchild which is also in the pipeline. You know, in Hollywood and elsewhere, projects take forever. My interest in these things is to cast as many bottles into the sea as

I can. If I get help to realize any of those, it'll be good, but I'm not setting all my hope on it because I have other duties.

D.K./J.C. *What kind of contributions to hermetic understanding can we expect from you in the future?*

S.K.R. I have several books I'm preparing, a number of translations, including the forthcoming Hermetic Triumph. I am still hoping to resolve this problem that we've had with Thames and Hudson over my work on the Splendor Solis and to come up with an acceptable compromise for all parties so that the many years invested in this project will come to fruition, otherwise I'll have to do it with another publisher. But I'm hoping to do it with Thames and Hudson. I also wanted to expand and present the material that I've discovered at the Vatican Library in a more complete fashion in a new book on alchemy in general. Furthermore I have a project presenting the iconography of alchemy in the 18th century, especially with the imagery of several manuscripts that are in France and representing some 160 odd pictures or more, and a number of 18th century prints, etc. That's just sort of the tip of the iceberg I'm working actively on. Plus on this trip with my companions, we're constantly discovering new things. Thanks to Michal Pober and Dr. Lobos Antonin(1) we've been able to look at some extraordinary things which, of course, I'd like to include in a forthcoming publication. I should also mention Vladislav Zadrobilek(2) with whom we had a very important meeting at his house, which is full of treasures. He showed me a number of extraordinary source materials which could add extensively to another expanded book on alchemy.

D.K./J.C. *Stash, I'd like to thank you not only for making time here for us today but also for your life's work of keeping the dream alive. Thank you, Stash.*

(1) Dr Lobos Antonin was interviewed in the Stone, issue No. 27 see also:

<http://www.levity.com/alchemy/caezza5.html>

(2) Vladislav Zadrobilek was interviewed in the Stone, issue No 28 see also:

<http://www.levity.com/alchemy/caezza6.html>

This interview was conducted on the evening of September 6th, 1998 at the hunting lodge of Count Sporck, the 18th century father of Czech Masonry, on the outskirts of the ancient mining village of Kutna Hora in the presence Art Kompolt, Lobos Antonin, Michal Pober and his dog Marushka. I must acknowledge profound thanks to Dan Kenney, the hermeticist who engaged Stash with my questions. Grateful thanks also to William Hollister, Dr. Lubos Antonin and Michal Pober for assistance in arranging this interview. Finally a special thanks also to my Atalanta Fugiens, my Soror Mystica, Miss Natalie Collins who serves as my deepest inspiration.

Vladislav Zadrobilek's monumental volume, OPUS MAGNUM: THE BOOK OF SACRED GEOMETRY, ALCHEMY, KABBALA and SECRET SOCIETIES OF BOHEMIA, mentioned in this interview is presently available from the book dealer, Todd Pratum, www.pratum.com or knowledge@pratum.com. It is reviewed at length in his recent catalogue No. 47 and in The Stone, No. 28.

This interview originally appeared in issue No. 32 of THE STONE, May-June 1999.

An Interview with Mike Dickman - Parisian hermetic translator

Joseph Caezza

A Interview With A Parisian Hermetic Translator by Joseph Caezza

I first encountered Michael Dickman at the 1997 Prague conference on ALCHEMY AND THE HERMETIC TRADITION. Casual conversation revealed his profound understanding not only of Hermeticism but Eastern Mysticism as well, particularly Buddhist and Taoist traditions. His impeccable erudition remains matched by sincere humility and ardent practice. Subscribers to Adam McLean's Internet forum will recognize him as a frequent contributor. A published collection of Dickman's work has been recently released by McLean as ALCHEMICAL COMPENDIUM I: A COLLECTION OF ALCHEMICAL TREATISES TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH". It constitutes Hermetic Studies No. 3 in an ongoing series. He also translated MAGNUM OPUS Hermetic Source Work Series No. 25: INTELLECTUAL CATILENAE of Michael Maier (17th century). He studied Yang style Tai Chi Chaun with Yang Zhenduo and Ningmpa Tibetan Buddhism and Dzog Chen under H.H. Khyentse Rimpoche

and H.H. Dudjom Rimpoche. In addition to western alchemical literature he maintains an extensive library of original Tibetan texts, translations of which appear regularly in editions limited to fellow Buddhist practitioners. In the style of the great sage, Marpa the translator, Michael Dickman, the Hermetic translator, treads the path of an esoteric ambassador bridging vastly different cultures. I met Michael midday September 9th, 1999 (9/9/99) on the Parvis of Notre Dame de Paris to conduct this interview.

J.C. What first attracted you to hermetic literature?

M.D. I was searching for an already established language to express Oriental ideas, specifically Tibetan ideas. I worked my way through the Golden Dawn over a period of ten years, reading on the side the works of Crowley, Waite and Mead and so on...the French schools, and what have you. But I knew early on that this was not it. This is not what it's about. Then I started into Mead's THrice GREATEST HERMES, and there it was. I knew where the western tradition had gone, started reading my classics again, and - very slowly - worked round to alchemy. Alchemy and Hermeticism represent the purest mystical wisdom of the west.

J.C. Even the more popular classic texts, for example, THE ROSARY OF THE PHILOSOPHERS, THE TURBA PHILOSOPHORUM and THE HERMETIC TRIUMPH seem hopelessly enigmatic. What kind of author writes such a work and for what kind of audience? Do you have any favorites that you read and reread continuously?

M.D. I'm not convinced they write obscurely so much as in a heavily coded language in the hope that those who read them will become intrigued and take the trouble to keep reading until they find out what they really mean. They are very wise and keen that you should understand too, but they leave it up to you. They write in a guarded way as not to defile the TRUTH with words. Their words are for people who have enquiring spirits. They want you to read their texts from the inside. They want you to stand in their shoes. Even if they know the words will never get you there. SPLENDOR SOLIS, ATALANTA FUGIENS, LAMBSPRING...These are some of my favorite texts.

J.C. The Sanskrit scholar, Dr. Douglas Brooks speculates that Tantrism emerged from primitive Hindu alchemical traditions. What is the relation between Tantra, yantra worship and alchemy? How does this relate to the Gothic cathedrals?

M.D. I don't quite agree with Doug Brooks. I think alchemy emerged from Tantrism. Tantra really is the root of everything that is Indian, be this Aryan or Pre-Aryan. Sir John Woodroffe discovered this and was very much a champion of the idea. Alchemy comes in part from the ancient smiths. The ancient smiths were outcasts, beyond cast. Tantra, yantra worship and alchemy are really very similar on many levels - even almost the same thing. These practices lead to very similar if not identical experiences on many scores. One thing that is for sure is that body, speech and mind must all be engaged. The cathedrals grew like yantra seeds. They grew like this magnificent edifice before us now as living plants growing out of the aspirations of the common people, the clergy and the workmen. These Gothic cathedrals are living yantras. That is to say that they function as living manifestations or emanations of enlightenment.

J.C. I met an ascetic who now lives in Assisi, Italy. He had spent many years in India. On the basis of his experience he advised me that all of western mysticism is a sideshow compared to India. How do you react to such a statement?

M.D. That's a ball of shit. There are great souls everywhere.

J.C. Some contemporary authors cite the Blessed Virgin Mary as a manifestation of Kundalini. New age enthusiasts claim that the gothic cathedrals can trigger powerful kundalini type religious experiences because of their architectural basis in long forgotten principles of sacred geometry. Is this vein hype?

M.D. Notre Dame de Paris is the sacred center of this city. It's the bindu or seed of the city that grew around it in a dynamic play of subtle energy. It's a manifestation of Primordial Awareness. The experiences people have here are preliminary. They represent only the first level of initiation. People today in their desperate search experience a twinkling of sacredness here and then believe they understand the whole mystery. Sacred geometry is only one of many starting points. Then there's the question of whether they ever actually do understand it.

J.C. Titus Burckhart among others interprets the "Hail Mary" prayer as an invocation to the conjunction of sulfur and mercury. The Mass itself appears as a parody of the Magnum Opus. Your translation of NATURE DISCOVERED by an Unknown Knight contains a section entitled "Christian Chemistry" that expounds the seven sacraments as metaphors for alchemical manipulation. Do French people today appreciate the esoteric aspect of the Catholic Church?

M.D. The Mass is not a parody of the Magnum Opus. The Mass is an exact manifestation of the Magnum Opus. Most Parisian Catholics have no idea of what they're about. They're Sunday Christians only. Many French people today are fascinated with all things esoteric. But it's only an intellectual fascination. Alchemical wisdom can not be understood intellectually but only experienced...or -better put- Alchemical wisdom can only be understood intellectually IF experienced.

J.C. In recent years much light has been shown on the Fulcanelli enigma. Among your colleagues in Paris is there any consensus that Rene Schwaller de Lubicz was the genius behind the "MYSTERY OF THE CATHEDRALS"?

M.D. There is no consensus here. I used to believe it was Dujols. Now people generally point to Champagne. I am more impressed by Canseliet. It would have been fortunate to have met him but I arrived here too late for that.

J.C. Your recent book features an intriguing tract: A MOST CURIOUS EXPLICATION OF THE HIEROGLYPHIC AND PHYSICAL ENIGMAS AND FIGURES TO BE FOUND ON THE GRAND PORTAL OF THE METROPOLITAN CATHEDRAL OF NOTRE DAME by Lord Esprit Gobineau de Montluisant in 1640.

Much of the iconography he explains is nowhere to be found on the present day facade. How do you account for that?

M.D. This Cathedral has been rebuilt five times over the past eight hundred years. Restoration efforts of Viollet le Duc were not faithful to the intentions of the original design. Fulcanelli laments at length about this in MYSTERY OF THE CATHEDRALS.

J.C. Fulcanelli explains the statue of St Marcellus on the trumeau of St Ann's Portal on the western facade of Notre Dame as a reference to the Dry Way elaborated in a crucible at very high temperatures. In your translation of Montluisant, in section 9 of this tract he describes the same icon as a reference to a process elaborated in a "crystalline egg", a glass flask used for the Humid Way. Such a glass flask could not endure the temperatures required for the Dry Way. How do you reconcile the inconsistency of these two authors?

M.D. These texts can be read on many levels. It's not a matter of one way or the other but possibly both at the same time. These authors aren't bound by the same rules of logic that confine you and I. These two texts are not inconsistent.

J.C. Contemporary alchemical commentators fall into two categories, those that deal with practical laboratory operation and those that deal in terms of "psychospiritual babble". What approach do you follow?

M.D. One may attempt to approach alchemical symbols the way Jung and his followers have done, or to choose to view the whole subject as mere metaphors for life's struggles, but that kind of thing will not help to elucidate what, in their veiled manner the adepts sought to impart. Be it said, that in his *l'Alchimie Expliquee sur ses Textes Classiques*, Eugene Canseliet, in a lengthy chapter entitled "Deceptive and Demented Enticements", holds forth against the interpretations of Rene Guenon, Gaston Bachelard and Carl Gustav Jung as totally misleading as to the veritable goals and significance of Alchemy. This is not to denigrate the work of at least the last two of these within their own fields, or to deny the importance of certain alchemical symbols within the interpretative purview of the fields in question, but it does, especially when read in conjunction with Fulcanelli's assertion that man is not himself the subject of the art, clearly attest to the unquestionable existence of a difference between a so-called "psychological" interpretation of the Great Art, and the actual intention of the genuine adepts thereof.

Not that Jungian or other interpretations of the Alchemical imagery are wrong but it is quite certain that, for various reasons, Jung did misinterpret the original intentions of the ancient authors, as in another slightly different context, he was led to do with his reading, based on inadequate translations, of Tibetan and Chinese thought.

One must simply be prudent. Alchemy exists in and deals with the time beyond time, which is Eternity, and is concerned only with the restoration of the Lost Estate, that is to say the realization of the divine and inherent potential, the purification and spiritualization of matter, and the materialization and incarnation of spirit. To this end, every effort must be made to search out every last detail of the ultimate meaning of the words of our forefathers.

One is once again and forcefully reminded of the ultimate exhortation of the Mutus Liber, to wit, Ora, Lege, Lege, Relege, Labora et Invenies...Pray, Read, Read, Reread, Work and you shall Find . Only through prayers, profound and humble study and then trying one's realizations against the touchstone of reality and the declared results of the adepts themselves will one even begin to understand.

J.C. Why does one pursue hermetic knowledge?

M.D. There are many reasons for seeking knowledge, as many as there are seekers thereof probably, but the reason for seeking alchemical knowledge is clearly stated in all texts to be that, of one's own good fortune, one may aid the fortune of others, particularly the indigent and abandoned. In other words, that wisdom is to manifest as compassion, and that compassion and compassion alone is the enactment of wisdom. All other goals are fools gold.

It is all very well to be scholarly and precise, or fired-up and visionary but if these points of view, however apparently clever lead one away from the path and back into the labyrinth of one's own hubris, preconception and confusion, of what practical use are they to anybody at all? And is it not the touchstone of Alchemy that it is an infinitely practical art?

J.C. In the course of our acquaintance you have often expressed profound concern with ecological and humanitarian issues. How does this follow from hermetic vision?

M.D. The universe is sacred. People must learn to deal with it that way.

J.C. Do you have any projects that you're working on now that you'd like to talk about?

M.D. I'm translating L'Ami de L'Aurore, by Henri de Lintaut, (1700). I'm also writing, recording and performing music. In the future I look forward to a lengthy retreat, if possible...at least 6 months to a year.

J.C. On behalf of the Invisible College I'd like to thank you not only for making time for me here today but for your work of keeping the dream alive. Thank you Mike Dickman.

This interview was conducted on September 9th, 1999 at the threshold to the central porch on the western entrance to Notre Dame de Paris. Michael then escorted me to the Gothic masterpiece, Sainte Chapelle and then to the ancient church tower of Saint Jacques, the starting point of the medieval pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella.

We then proceeded on a walking tour of the Latin Quarter which emphasized Tibetan import outlets and esoteric bookstores. Foremost among these were J. C. Bailly's 'Gutenberg Reprints', located at 4 rue du Savoie, devoted exclusively to Alchemy and 'La Table d'Emeraude', Paris's premier hermetic bookstore located at 21 rue de la Huchette.

Once again I thank my beloved Soror Mystica, Miss Natalie Collins, without who's inspiration this work could not have been accomplished.

From France I traveled to Prague where Vladislav Zadrobilek (1) was holding a major exhibit on Count Sporck, a 17th century aristocrat with strong esoteric interests. Sporck is still regarded, perhaps falsely, to be the father of Bohemian Masonic tradition. Lubos Antonin (2) a Hermetic librarian at the National Museum once again lead me on a walking tour to some of the more obscure mystic sites of Prague's Old Town. Both Zadrobilek and Antonin in collaboration with the Dutch philanthropist, Joseph Rittman will produce a major exhibit on Rosicrucian tradition slated for the summer of 2000. Our colleague, Michal Pober continues his efforts to institute a museum of Alchemy in the ancient mining town of Kutna Hora. There is hope that Manfred Junius may give a workshop there in Lab work next summer. Junius, the author of The Practical Handbook of Plant Alchemy recently toured through Kutna Hora with his students.

In other news of interest Joscelyn Godwin's long awaited translation of the Dream of Polyphilus, The Hypnerotomachia, will be available through Amazon.com in October. This 15th century tome is fun filled and action packed with heavy metal alchemical idioms, innuendos and allegories. I also recently examined a prepublication copy of a remarkable text, A Monument to the End of Time: Alchemy, Fulcanelli and the Great Cross, Volume I, The Cross at Hendaye, by J. Weidner and V. Bridges. The first installment of a 3 volumes set (!) the study will soon be released by Aethyrea Books. As if that wasn't enough, the publication of Fulcanelli's mysterious third book, FINIS GLORIAE MUNDI, has been announced on the Internet. See: <http://www.liber-mirabilis.nu/frlv005.html> The fine arts edition will be available for approximately \$ 750.00. Draw your own conclusions.

(1) Vladislav Zadrobilek was interviewed in THE STONE, No 28 see also <http://www.levity.com/alchemy/caezza6.html>

(2) Dr Lubos Antonin was interviewed in THE STONE, No 27 see also <http://www.levity.com/alchemy/caezza5.html>

ALCHEMICAL COMPENDIUM I: A COLLECTION OF ALCHEMICAL TREATISES TRANSLATED FROM FRENCH, translated by Michael Dickman, 1999, Hermetic Studies No. 3, Glasgow, 140pp. (36 pounds sterling) see http://dialspace.dial.pipex.com/alchemy/herm_studies3.html

Here is a superb collection of ten obscure 16th, 17th and 18th century French Alchemical works. The translator expresses reservations about whether or not these various authors refer to practical operative lab work or mere armchair psychospiritual babble. Careful reading and long meditation reveal that all of these tracts concern operative manipulations. Each is "good". Each testifies to illuminated insight into the mystery of Being at the heart of Alchemy.

Two tracts by Bernard Trevisan, "The Green Dream" and "Parabole" from his, Book of Natural Philosophy of Metals, open this compendium. Written in the oblique cabalistic manner these fables abound in surrealist images. Like other tracts in this collection they offer brief scenarios reminiscent of Rosenkreutz's Chemical Wedding. The juiciest heart of this book appears in the next four tracts, "Concerning the Material of the Stone", "The Torch of Natural Philosophy", "The Hermetic Apocalypse" and "Nature Discovered". Flowing from anonymous sages who need not assert their academic authority by posting capital letters after their names, they invite us to consider the most subtle archetypal process of Nature. Often these texts vacillate between explicit lab manipulations and hallucinatory journeys accompanied by bizarre happenings. A passage from the commentary to the "Hermetic Apocalypse" calls to mind the contemporary concept of the 'Invisible College' made popular by Joscelyn Godwin in his ongoing series for Lapis magazine:

"The society of Unknown Philosophers is unbounded by notions of kingdom, realm or particular place; but spreads

throughout the universe. An institution dictated by reason, illumined by religion and which follows after virtue, should be known to all men. Worldly protectors are without avail for admission to this choice assembly; worldly greatness is as nothing there; there is a man naught but a man, but veritably man"

Another tract, "Nature Discovered" by an Unknown Knight, remains remarkable as the little known work of an unquestionable adept. After an intense discourse on laboratory methods it features a section, "Christian Chemistry" that reveals the esoteric dimension of that great undiscovered treasure, the Roman Catholic Church. Even more impressive, the final section of this tract, "Poetic Chemistry" explicates with meticulous detail the alchemical import of Greek mythology. One tract alone, "A Most Curious Explication of the Hieroglyphic and Physical Enigmas and Figures to be Found on the Grand Portal of the Cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris" by 'Lord Esprit Gobineau de Montluisant, Gentleman of Chartres, Lover of Philosophy Natural and Alchemical', is worth the price of the entire compendium. Writing in the Spring of 1640 he gives us precious impressions of images mutilated during the French Revolution. Fulcanelli made a career out of deciphering symbolism hidden on the western facade of Notre Dame but he stood on the shoulders of this savant.

The two final tracts will be familiar to most hard core connoisseurs of this genre. "The Epistle on the Philosophical Fire" by John Pontanus offers in covert language one of the simplest procedures for elaborating the Philosopher's Stone. "A Letter to a True Disciple of Hermes Wherein are Six Cardinal Keys of the Secret Philosophy", comprises the final section of the Hermetic Triumph. Stanislas Klossowski de Rola describes this as "the best of the best of 17th century alchemical literature".

The compendium, produced in a limited edition of only 300 copies, printed and bound by hand by Adam McLean himself comes signed, dated and numbered. Bound in a leather-like material with its title in gold lettering it already maintains status as a collectors item. This volume will serve as a worthy reference for any serious student of Alchemy.

Susanna Åkerman. Christina of Sweden (1626-1689), the Porta Magica and the Italian poets of the Golden and Rosy Cross.



Christina of Sweden (1626-1689),
the Porta Magica
and the Italian poets
of the Golden and Rosy Cross.

Queen Christina's practise in alchemy preoccupied her for most of her adult life. Her interest in alchemy also has some intriguing Rosicrucian connections. The original Rosicrucian pamphlets of 1614 spread high expectations for a new age and a universal reformation of the arts and were circulated among radical Paracelsians in Northern Europe. The Rosicrucian elements that were to surface in Italy, however, appear to have grown out of a purely alchemical interest where the transmutational operations promised a future restoration of the "golden age" and was best expressed in poetry.

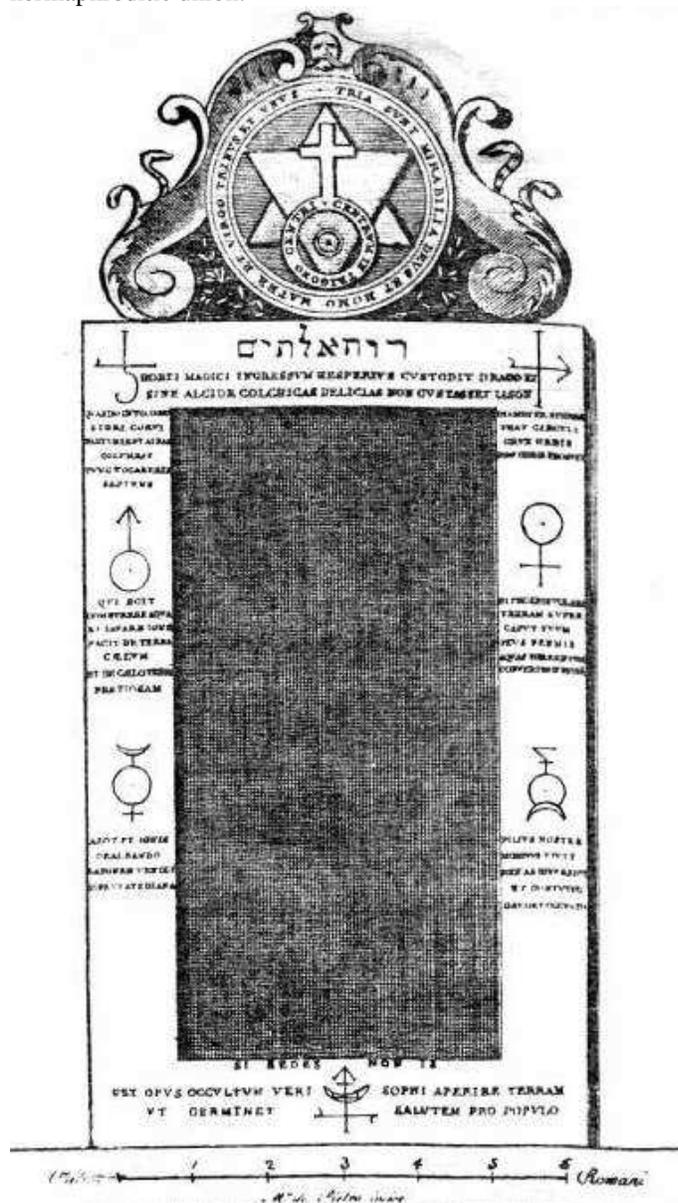
While the royal antiquarian in Stockholm, Johannes Bureus, dedicated Christina a manuscript copy of his speculations on the mystical origin of the Runes, his *Adulruna Rediviva*, in 1643 and a copy of his apocalyptic work, the *Roar of the Northern Lion*, in 1644, it is not known whether he showed her his reply to the Rosicrucian *Fama*, his *Fama e Scanzia Redux* of 1616. Perhaps influenced by spiritual readings, Christina wanted to institute an Order of Immanuel in 1646, but her advisor Johann Adler Salvius said it would be regarded as child's play and the idea never materialized. Instead she instituted the Order of the Amaranthe in 1653 with its emblem of an ever green garland signifying immortal life. The amaranth leaves were known by the Greeks to grow in Colchis beyond the Black Sea. She conferred the Order on her Spanish aids who helped her prepare her conversion to Catholicism after her abdication in 1654. She left Sweden and settled in Rome as the convert of the age.

Prior to that that, however, Christina had been approached by the alchemist Johannes Franck, who described her future reign as the fulfillment of Paracelsus' prophecy of a return of Helias Artista and of Sendivogius' vision of the the rise of a metallic monarchy of the North. With these visions in store Franck urged on the Queen to start searching for the ruby red powder of the philosophers. He expressed these hopes in the tract that he offered her: *Colloquium philosophicum cum diis montanis* (Upsala 1651). A year later, in 1652, Christina was offered a text described as "magia cabalistica", by the Hermetic engraver Michel Le Blon, thus mediating the offer of Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel. Le Blon culled a copy of Jacob Boehme's "little prayer book" from the Behmenist and mystic Abraham van Franckenberg and proceeded to translate it into French while in Stockholm in 1653. Christina was now turning towards Catholicism, but it is possible that she heard of the translation project from Le Blon, who acted as her art curator. At about this time she induced the Greek specialist Johannes Schefferus to write a history of the Pythagoreans, which was published in Sweden a decade later as *De natura et constitutione philosophiae Italicae seu pythagoricae* (Upsala, 1664). Christina's preference for Greek manuscripts was criticized by Descartes when he visited Stockholm in 1650. Christina said in reply that she thought his ideas were already formulated by the sceptic Sextus Empiricus and by St. Augustine. She also read a copy of Iamblichus' *De mysteriis aegyptiaca*, a text that uses Platonic and Hermetic sources in its descriptions of theurgy and divination, methods of coming into contact with gods and demons.

In 1656 in Pesaro Christina wrote to the Greek scholar Lucas Holstenius in Rome, who edited Porphyri's *Life of Pythagoras*, and revealing her interests said "Platonic works are as rare here as the unicorn." Also, in Pesaro she was greeted in verse by Francesco Maria Santinelli, a fertile poet who was brought into her service. A year later, Santinelli's brother, Ludovico, was present at Christina's murder of Monaldescho at Fontainebleau. Francesco Maria was on business in Rome during this infamous event, but was still employed in Christina's very active scheming. Monaldescho had betrayed the Queen's French supported plan to again rise to power by a surprise attack on the Spanish rule in Naples. After the scandal of the murder, both brothers had to leave Christina's court. In 1659, Santinelli wrote a poem, *Carlo V*, dedicated to emperor Leopold in Vienna. In it, one notes, there is the line "la mia Rosa Croce Aurea fortuna" (V:89). Later in 1666, Santinelli wrote an alchemical poem with commentary, *Lux obnubilata suapte natura refulgens*, (Light shining forth by it own nature out of darkness) while using the pseudonym Fra Marc' Antonio Crasselame Chinese. In another set of verse, written in 1656 in Rome, by the Marquise Massimiliano Palombara, *La Bugia* - the second version which now resides in Christina's collection in the Vatican as Ms. *Reginensis Latini 1521* - there is the line "un compagnia intitolata della rosea croce o come altro dicono dell' aurea croce". These scattered remarks add to the evidence that a Rosicrucian identity had developed

among alchemists in Italy – an identity that may even be seen as prefiguring the eighteenth century alchemical Gold- und Rosencreutz Orden, made public by Sincerus Rhenatus (Salomon Richter) in 1710.

In 1656, as Mino Gabriele points out, one S. Francesco Melosio performed some verse on la Bugia (the candlelight) in Christina's Academy with phrases like "la Bugia su l'argento e vera alchimia" (Ms. Barb. Lat. 3885 ff. 85r-88r). Christina thus almost certainly came into contact with poets and alchemists who had taken part of the Rosicrucian expectations. She also came to know some aspects of alchemy and were to collect and practise it. There is a drawing with comments in her own hand that shows some alchemical distillation equipment. Yet, we must remember that the lines on the Rosicrucians in Palombara's document do not occur in Christina's version of La Bugia. There is, however, another contemporary French manuscript in her collection called Veritas Hermetica (Ms. Reg. Lat. 1218). This text has a few lines on the gathering of dew and its processing and refers to some Fratres Rores Cocti – brothers of cooked dew. Christina also owned some forty alchemical manuscripts by the foremost medieval authors, as well as practical handbooks. They included works by Geber, Johan Scotus, Arnold de Villa Nova, Raimund Lull, Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, Benard Trevisano, George Ripley, George Anrath d' Argentine, Johan Grasshof and a Rosarium Philosophorum – with its alchemical imagery of merging the solar-King and the lunar-Queen into a hermaphroditic union.



There is also the Porta Magica raised in 1680 in the Roman garden of Palombara which carries a portal stone with an emblem from Henricus Madathanus' alchemical allegory *Aureum Seculum Redivivum* of 1621. It consists of a cross above a circle in which is inscribed a hexagram with the text "centrum in trigono centri". Mino Gabriele draws attention to the geometrical construction and shows that it is similar to that of the 21st emblem of Michael Maier's *Atalanta Fugiens* (Frankfurt 1617) where a man with a pair of compasses is in the process of constructing a hexagram by drawing a triangle within a larger circle while at its base a square is placed within a smaller circle. Palombara's door is flanked by alchemical insignia and various Latin device describe the alchemical process. The seven signs are taken from Johannes de Monte-Snyder, *Commentatio de Pharmaco Catholico* (Amsterdam 1666) and are in sequence: Saturn-lead, Jupiter-tin, Mars-iron, Venus-bronze, Mercury, Antimony and Vitriol. The door still stands to be seen on Piazza Vittorio Emanuele in Rome.

A legend circulates saying that the door was raised as a commemoration of a successful transmutation that took place in Christina's chambers. This version of events was first told in 1804 in an Italian description of Rome in which it is said that northern youth, a "giovane ultramontane," came to Christina's court and produced some scraps of gold, but that he then disappeared. As we have seen Christina actually owns Palombara's alchemical manuscript *La Bugia* and other verse by him. She also accorded him functions in her court and supported his family after his death. Christina was thus Palombara's patron and this extended to his alchemical poetry. Her "inspiring proximity" and resources were valued also by other literary men. After her death she was elected symbolical head, "Basilissa," of the poets forming the *Academia Arcadia*, thus continuing her own series of academies held in her palace.

The Porta Magica is topped with the Hebrew inscription *Ruach Elohim* or the Spirit of the Lord and around the emblem is the text: *TRIA SUNT MIRABILIA DEUS ET HOMO MATER ET VIRGO TRINUS ET UNUS*. In another plate, now lost, was the device *VILLAE IANUAM TRANANDO RECLUDENS IASON OBTINET LOCUPLES VELLUS MEDEAE* 1680 (Passing by opening the door of the villa, Iason obtained the rich fleece of Medea 1680).

Also on the Porta there is an inscription alluding to the travels of the Argonauts: *HORTI MAGICI INGRESSUM HESPERIUS CUSTODIT DRACO ET/ SINE ALCIDE COLCHIAS DELICIAS NON GUSTASSET IASON* (The hesperian dragon guards the opening of the the magical garden and without Hercules Iason would not have tasted the delicacies of Colchis).

From left to right the inscriptions state *QUANDO IN TUA DOMO NIGRI CORVI PARTURIENT ALBAS COLUMBAS TUNC VOCABERIS SAPIENS* (When in your house black ravens will give birth to white doves, then you are going to be called wise). *DIAMETER SPHAERAE THAU CIRCULI CRUX ORBIS NON ORBIS PROSUNT* (The diameter of the sphere, the tau of the circle, the cross of the globe, are of no use to the world). *QUI SCIT COMBURERE AQUA ET LAVARE IGNE FACIT DE TERRA CAELUM ET DE CAELO TERRAM PRETIOSAM* (He who knows how to burn with water and wash with fire makes out of the earth heaven and out of the heaven precious earth). *SI FECERIS VOLARE TERRAM SUPER CAPUT TUUM EIUS PENNIS AQUAS TORRENTUM CONVERTES IN PETRAM* (If you will throw the earth over your head with its hair you will convert into stone the torrents of water).

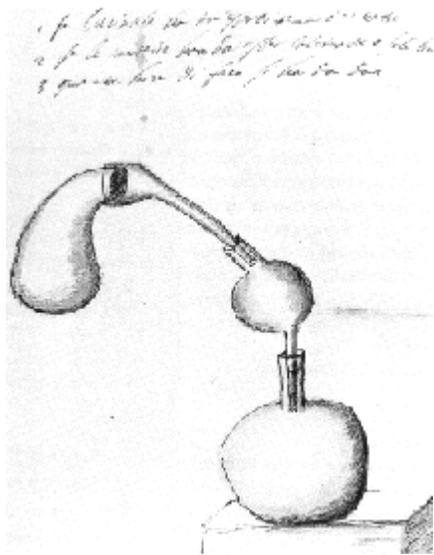
AZOTH ET IGNIS DEALBANDO LATONAM VENIET SINE VESTE DIANA (When azoth and fire whitens Latona, Diana will come without clothes). *FILIUS NOSTER MORTUS VIVIT REX AB IGNE REDIT ET CONIUGO GAUDET OCCULTO* (Our dead son lives, the king turns from the fire and takes pleasure in the occult conjunction). *EST OPUS OCCULTUM VERI SOPHI APERIRE TERRAM UT GERMINET SALUTEM PRO POPULO* (It is the occult work of the true sapient to open the earth in order to generate salvation for the people). On the threshold there is the short line which can be read both ways: *SI SEDES NON IS* (If you sit you cannot go, if you don't sit go).

In the same year, 1680, a tract was published at Ulm by Johannes de Monte Hermetis with the title: *Explicatio Centri in Trigono Centri per Somnium – Das ist: Erläuterung dess Hermetischen Güldenens Fluss*. The text contains five parts, first an Aenigma Cabalisticum, then the explicatio centri in trigono centri and then two alchemical commentaries on the operations in the *Opus Philosophicum* written by "dem Löwen dess Rothen Creutzes". Last was a text on astronomical medicine, on how to cure illness through the mediation of the stars. The explicatio describes the merging of the upward and downward triangles representing philosophical fire and philosophical water

and is contemporary with the raising of the Porta Magica but, disappointingly, it does not shed further light on Palombara's initiative.



Henricus Madathanus' *Aureum Seculum Redivivum* is suggestive in Christina's case because it describes various women sages such as Rachel and Leah, and a queenly figure that performs various roles in the text. (See the accompanying text *The Golden Age Restored*). Significantly, Madathanus ends the text by saying that he is a "frater aurae crucis". In 1625 it was reprinted both in a separate edition and in the *Musaeum Hermeticum* by Lucas Jennis, who also printed Michael Maier's Rosicrucian works. The emblem was taken over by Wiener von Sonnenfels in 1747 in his *Splendor lucis, oder Glanz des Lichts* published at Vienna. Madathanus' lower part of the emblem, "centrum in trigono centri", was reproduced in the well known work that circulated in the Gold- und Rosencreutz Orden, the *Geheime Figuren der Rosencreutzer* (Altona 1785-88).



Christina was very eager to know more of alchemy and brought in a younger woman called Sibylla into the experiments. She also employed a working alchemist, Pietro Antonio Bandiera, to run her laboratory and finally testamentated him the equipment. An alchemical tract was dedicated to her by Giovanni Batista Comastri, the *Specchio della Verita* (Venice, 1683). There is a document in her own hand, entitled "Il laboratorio filosofico – paradossi chimici," but it appears to be notes from a text with the same title. The last text that Christina read, found by her deathbed in 1689, was a letter on the universal medicine, the alkahest, by Samuel Forberger.

Was Christina perhaps an adept involved in Palombara's closest circle, or was she merely a patron full of curiosity? She clearly was a very forceful woman. She claimed that her mind was entirely masculine and that she lacked what she saw as the normal faults of womanhood. This belief was to materialize in her ardent hope for a real transmutation. In her collection of papers that she testamentated to Cardinal Azzolino, now in Riksarkivet, Stockholm, there is an Italian text on which Christina has written that it was given to her in April 1682. In it, Christina's abdication and travel to Rome is first described. Suddenly, in one sentence, it is said "la natura perfettera l'opera" and instead a strong youth by name Alexander appears. The text goes on to tell of Alexander's future travel to Constantinople to convert the Turks. Since she as ex-Queen took the name Christina Alexandra in Rome, it appears that the prophecy with its wonderful metamorphosis spoke to Christina's inner dreams of perfecting herself. In this the Aristotelian view of women as undeveloped men had a role to play, but also the alchemical vision of polarities and ultimate perfection.

Yet, we may have some doubts of her expertise. In a letter to Azzolino in Hamburg in March 1667 she writes of the report of a successful transmutation performed by a Dutch peasant. The learned doctor Helvetius, who formerly had been sceptical towards alchemy was present and now guaranteed its fulfillment. Christina adds that with one grain of the projection powder one is able to convert "500 livres" of lead, that is 250 kg, into 24 carats of gold. This is far out of proportion as the tradition teaches us that the real weights is perhaps one grain to 15 g of gold. She does not say that the result was obtained through a multiplication process. Maybe she grew to learn more, especially after meeting Borri and after setting up her own laboratory in Rome. Christina knew something of alchemy, we may infer, and we may rest with one of her maxims where she says: "la Chimie est une belle science. Elle est l'anatomie de la nature et la veritable clef qui ouvre tous les tresors. Elle donne la richesse, la santé, la gloire et la veritable sagesse a son possesseur." She added that while alchemy had recently been degraded by charlatans, it remained as the royal science. True to her Platonic ideals she had medals made as a gift to her visitors. It carried a shining sun on one side and with the text on the other: "Nec falso, nec alieno – with neither false nor borrowed /light/." This was how she liked to present herself : i. e. as a philosopher-Queen.

The philosophy involved was not the modern rationalism of Descartes but the age-old philosophia perennis and the theory of alchemical transmutation.

Literature:

Susanna Åkerman, *Queen Christina of Sweden and her Circle: The Transformation of a Philosophical Libertine*. Brill, Leiden 1991.

Susanna Åkerman, *Rose Cross Over the Baltic: The Spread of Rosicrucianism in Northern Europe*. Brill, Leiden 1998.

Jeanne Bignami Odier and Anna Maria Partini, "Cristina di Svezia e le scienze occulte" *Physis* 1983, pp. 251-278.

P. C. Van Boeren, *Codices Vossiani Chymici*. Leiden 1975.

Eugène Canseliet, *Deux Logis Alchimique: En marge de la science et de l'histoire*. Pauvert, Paris 1979 (1945).

Giovanni Batista Comastri, *Specchio della Verita – dedicata alla Regina Cristina di Svezia*, Venezia 1683. A cura di Anna Maria Partini. Edizione Mediterranee, Rome 1989.

Johannes Franck, *Alkemiska skrifter: Hermetiska teser om den filosofiska stenens grundläggande principer*. Utg. Carl-Michael Edenborg. Philosophiska förlaget, Stockholm 1992.

Mino Gabriele, *Il giardino di Hermes: Massimiliano Palombara alchimista e rosacroce nella Roma del Seicento*. (Con la prima edizione del codice autografo della Bugia – 1656). Editrice Ianua, Rome 1986.

Kjell Lekeby, "Drottning Kristinas gudomliga metamorfos. Från intersexualitet till mansblivande" *Fenix* 1997:2.

Marchese Massimiliano Palombara, *La Bugia: Rime ermetiche e altri scritti*. Da un Codice Reginense del sec. XVII. A cura di Anna Maria Partini. Edizione Mediterranee, Rome 1983.

La Porta Magica: Luoghi e memorie nel giardino di piazza Vittorio. A cura di Nicoletta Cardano. Fratelli Palombi Editori, Rome 1990.

Francesco Maria Santinelli, *Sonetti Alchimici e altri scritti inediti*. A cura di Anna Maria Partini. Edizione Mediterranee, Rome 1985.

Arne Wettermark "Christine de Suède et la science des roys: Quelques maximes a la lumiere de la tradition hémétique." *Nouvelles de la Republique des lettres* 1990:2 pp. 61-82.

A medieval forerunner to the crest of J. V.

Andreae

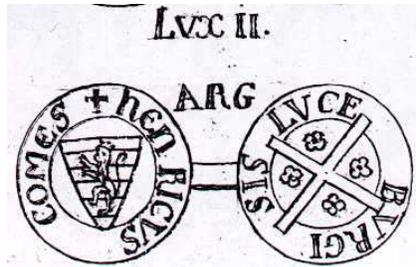
Susanna Åkerman

A medieval forerunner to the crest of J. V. Andreae

Susanna Åkerman:



The family crest of J. V. Andreae consists of the cross of St. Andrew and four roses. Many take its symbolism to have inspired the creation of the name of the figure of Christian Rosencreutz in the *Fama fraternitatis roseae crucis* (1614), a text now generally held to have been written by Andreae. The family crest was designed by Johannes Valentin's grandfather Jakob Andreae, the reformation ideologue and defender of Luther's evangelical tradition. It has been argued that the design with roses and cross was inspired by Luther's personal crest consisting of a white rose with a red heart and cross in the middle. The cross of St. Andrew readily suggested itself to Jakob Andreae because of his family name.



It is, however, exciting to come across the very same crest in a suggestive context many centuries before. On a medal printed as "lvx ii" in the very beginning of vol. V of Dom Augustin Calmet's *Histoire de Lorraine* (Nancy, 1752) we find the crest of Henric of Luxemburg. It is described on p. cxlvii as "une croix de St. Andrée accompagnés de quatre roses". As one can plainly see the crest is identical to that of J. V. Andreae. Henric of Luxemburg was elected King of the Germans and Romans in 1308 and descended upon Italy to be invested with an iron crown as Holy Roman emperor in Milano in 1312.

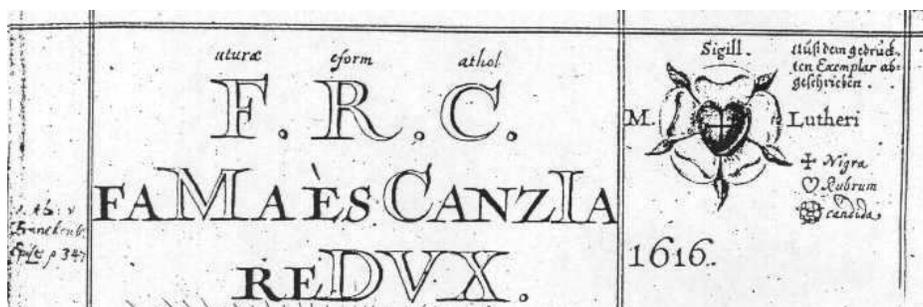


After this initial success in uniting Italy against the influence of Pope Clemens V, a plan worked out with the aid of his cousin Thiebaut de Bar, Henric suddenly died in 1313. It is remarkable that Dante places him in the supreme realm reached at the end of the *Divina Commedia*. In canto xxx of the *Paradiso* (written around 1316) Dante sees him (in Mark Musa's translation) "under the gold of the eternal rose... in our vast white-robed consistory:"

In that great chair already set with crown above it and which draws
your eyes to it, before you summon to this nuptial feast, shall sit the
soul, predestined emperor, of that Great Henry who one day will come
to set straight Italy before her time.

In earlier cantos Henric is codified as the Griffin that will act as messianic emperor and save the Ghibelline party in Italy. More enigmatically, according to recent research by Jean Hein, Dante also envisions Henric's still living son Johan, King of Bohemia, as a future redeemer and is codified in the text as the Greyhound.

Is it a mere coincidence that the trial of the Templars in France takes place in these very years (1307-1314)? Perhaps significant, when Henric received the Pope's command in 1307, he dissolved the Templar organisation in Luxemburg, dispersed its goods to the Order of St. John in Jerusalem, but did not arrest individual members. Heraldry was a well defined science in the sixteenth century when Andreae designed his crest. The romantic interpretation would be that Andreae knew of Henric's status as esoteric redeemer, valued his crest and therefore honored his memory by taking it up again. This view of events would speak to the proposals of Gabriele Rossetti (1783-1854) and René Guénon (1886-1951), respectively, that Dante's *Paradiso* codifies his initiation into a Rosicrucian-style esotericism, perhaps mediated by the sodality of the Fedeli D'Amore, a Platonic group in Italy. The crest could even be the sign of membership in a special order.



The sceptical interpretation is more straightforward: the cross of St. Andrew works as an archetype ready to be filled in with four objects and in a Christian context the four roses come to mind. In any case, the parallel is striking and one wonders if there are others who have used Henric of Luxemburg's crest up till Jakob Andreae's time.

Literature:

Peter Armour, *Dante's Griffin and the history of the world: a study of the earthly paradise: (Purgatorio cantos xxix-xxxiii)*. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989.

Dom Augustin Calmet, *Histoire de Lorraine... depuis l'entrée de Jules Cesar dans les Gaules jusqu'à la cession de la Lorraine, arrivée en 1737, inclusivement*. 7 vols. Nancy, 1745-1757

René Guénon, *L'esoterisme de Dante*. Gallimard, Paris, 1957.

Jean Hein, *Enigmacité et messianisme dans la "Divine Comédie"*. Leo S. Olschki, Firenze, 1992.

Jules Mersch, "Les Templiers au Luxembourg," *Biographie National du pays de Luxembourg* Vol. 11, Fasc. XXI. Luxembourg, 1975

John Warwick Montgomery, *Cross and Crucible. Johannes Valentin Andreae (1586-1654): Phoenix of the theologians*. Martinus Nijhoff, the Hague, 1973.

Roland Pauler, *Die Deutschen Könige und Italien im 14. Jahrhundert: von Heinrich VII bis Karl IV.*

Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt, 1997.

Gabriele Rossetti, *Il mistero dell' Amor platonico*. London, 1840

Idem., *La Beatrice di Dante, ragionimenti critici*. London, 1842.

Mark House - Newton And Flamel On Star Regulus Of Antimony And Iron

Newton And Flamel On Star Regulus Of Antimony And Iron...Part 1

Gale E. Christianson[1] in his scholarly book subtitled "Isaac Newton & His Times," in chapter 9 entitled: The Treasures of Darkness, presents excerpts from Newton's alchemical writings.

Principally, the quotations are from the early to late 1670s, focussing specifically on making regulus of iron and antimony to further produce a philosophic double mercury that was animated by several distillations and subsequently caused swelling and putrefaction in gold.

Nicolas Flamel, in his Breviary, a division of his book "Abraham the Jew," gives essentially a straightforward description of the same process for the Great Work.

This article will attempt to sort out in part, Newton's path, while also touching upon Robert Boyle's related experiments, and making some comparison to the Flamel Work.

Commentary on these two paths may be helpful to receive some details where they are missing in Newton's writings and in Christianson's additional notions, since some details seem to have their appearance in Flamel's study.

Here in this chapter on Newton's breakthrough experience, is evidenced interesting parallels that also prescribe much of LPN's up-to-date research to convey more fully the apparent omitted details. Included are Newton's proportions in the processes to obtain the Starry regulus of antimony and iron; Lunar Regulus, and Lunar Venusian Regulus.

By 1670 Newton's attention had focussed on the regulus of antimony, a substance that was to remain near the center of his thoughts for as long as he pursued the hermetic art.

We know antimony as a metallic element, a hard, extremely brittle, glistening, silver-white, crystalline material used in a wide variety of alloys.

Christianson here speaks as the chemists of our time do by using the term alloys to employ the use of antimony [sulfide] i.e. the ore Sb_2S_3 .

It should however be noted that the iron must not be used in excess, therefore the regulus is not an alloy at any stage.

Christianson's next comments show that it's not the trisulfide we need, but the metal stibnite. LPN has shown that it's necessary to separate the free sulfur from the stibnite by heating the broken up antimony ore in a heat resistant tube where it's melted and dropped as small pellets into distilled water to obtain the desired material for regulus.

To the alchemists, however, antimony was not the metal itself but stibnite, the lead-gray ore from which it was extracted by heating it with charcoal or some other mild reducing agent.

The metallic antimony sinks to the bottom, and this (our element) is what the alchemists called the regulus of antimony.

The last two paragraphs speak of a reducing agent [this should be done in a furnace in a crucible] saltpeter or potassium sodium nitrate acts as a fluxing agent and iron and eventually silver will act as the reducing agents. When the regulus is poured into the warmed mold the metal sinks down [you may tap on the mold with a hammer to help it sink down to the bottom while the scoria solidifies as it cools on top of the metal.] A button of metal is obtained this way, which must undergo further purifications to reach the star regulus.

The name probably derived from the Latin regulus, meaning petty king. Because the regulus of antimony combines readily with gold (the king of metals) it became important to the process of refining the precious metal and an object of considerable experimental interest to seventeenth-century adepts.

The regulus was also separated from stibnite by the introduction of various metallic reducing agents, in which case it became the regulus of Venus (copper), the regulus of Jupiter (tin), the regulus of Saturn (lead), or most importantly, the regulus of Mars (iron).

It was thought, quite erroneously, that the "seed" of the metal used to reduce the regulus from the ore remained embedded in the regulus itself, thus raising all sorts of tantalizing possibilities in Newton's mind.

The seed of course is in the scoria and also in minute quantity in the metals applied in the work. The seed is the sperm of the metals and Newton probably knew that he was to locate this seed and to cultivate it; sew it in the Duplex or animated, philosophic mercury.

The star regulus to which has been added silver; its ensuing purification to purple or violet color; additionally triple distilled Hg is incorporated, its then washed and ground, and washed again until it is a pure and shining mirror...the black particles that are washed away from the amalgam is kept for further research.

The earliest evidence of his interest in the different reguli had surfaced in the form of notes copied into the chemical dictionary between 1666 and 1667. [2] Now, some two years later, the young adept felt sufficiently emboldened to compose his own essay on their preparation. As usual, he wrote with the confidence born of firsthand experience: Isaac Newton

"These rules in general should be observed. 1st if the fire be quick. 2nd if the crucible be thoroughly heated before anything be put in; 3rd if metals be put in successively according to their degree of fusibility [iron], copper, antimony [stibnite], tin, [lead]. 4thly That they stand some time after fusion before they be poured off accordingly to the quantity of regulus they yield [iron] to keep it from hardening. 6th That if you would have the saltpeter flow without too great a heat, you may quicken it by throwing in a little more saltpeter mixed with 1/8 or 1/16 of charcoal finely powdered."

Clearly Newton had prepared many reguli and had found the right proportions and timings; both by waiting to pour the regulus, and probably discovered the correct appearance of the ready matter and manipulated the technique at the right moment.

Newton went on to enumerate the many telltale "signes" of failure that, in their turn, had disturbed the rapt tranquility of his laboratory. But with the perfection of his experimental technique success was soon assured:

Isaac Newton

"Thus with a good quick & smart fire - 4 of [iron] to - 9 of [stibnite] gave a most black & filthy scoria & the Regulus after a purgation or two, starred very well." [3]

LPN has suggested several mixes of nitrate and tartrate, purified stibnite, and iron nails. Newton directly refers to the black scoria [the crow] and 2 purgations (purifications) with the potassium nitrate (can take up to 3-4 purifications), that will obtain a 60 degree angled star. Note that unless you go over the star you will not have the right regulus for the work.

The term "starred" was here employed by Newton in its most literal sense. For if the antimony has been properly purified as in this instance, it forms long and slender crystals. During cooling the crystals in turn form triangular branches around a central point, taking on the aspect of a silver star.

Masters of the symbolic, the alchemists named this heart of antimony ore after Regulus, the bright double star near the heart of the constellation Leo. When the star regulus of antimony was achieved with the aid of a metallic reducing agent in the above experiment, Newton had produced the star regulus of Mars.

Further confirmation of his success is contained in a letter to Oldenburg of January 1672: "What the stellate Regulus of Mars (which I have sometimes used)...will do" as a reflecting mirror in a telescope "deserves particular examination. [4] Yet it was for profounder reasons than the fashioning of better telescope mirrors that Newton long remained concerned.

To obtain a very shining mirror-like surface Newton must have found just the right mixture, thus using silver he obtained the Lunar regulus. Newton and Flamel amalgamated this regulus with thrice distilled mercury. Once washed, it is a reflecting mirror.

At exactly what point and under what circumstances Newton began to contemplate seriously the principle of attraction between physical bodies is impossible to say. The general idea of gravity, though far from well developed, is certainly hinted at in the "Hypothesis of Light," the controversial paper he sent to the Royal Society in December 1675. It has been observed that the lines of crystals that appeared to radiate out from the center of the star regulus "might just as well be considered as radiating into the center, which gives them the character of attraction rather than the character of emission."

If, indeed, Newton viewed the star regulus in this light, then the very concept of gravitation "in which the lines of attraction run in to and converge in a center point" may have suggested itself to him. [5]

Present in this diminutive terrestrial orb was the invisible cosmic glue that binds the planets to the stars and the solar systems to the galaxies of the macrocosm. Most probably, however, the idea of gravitation had not taken such definite form in Newton's mind in the early 1670s, though there is no question that at its roots eventually found ready nourishment in the fertile field of his alchemical thought.

It's extremely interesting to note that gravity is compared to the central point of geometric crystallization. Newton must have recognized as Flamel did that through the numerous 7-9 eagles or distillations that the crystalline structure of the regulus amalgam was progressively adjusting and rising in a set pattern towards a cubic fundamental matrix. Above this pattern is the absolute or inter atomic energy which surpasses the atomic material energy. To distill the amalgam above 9 times generally leads to an explosion. The cubic structure is the most perfect of the crystals having perfect right angles and equilateral triangles in its arrangement. This matter is the seed risen to its highest purity.

Nor, if Newton's notes on Basil Valentine are accepted at face value, did he mistake the star regulus for the philosopher's stone, as had more than a few bedazzled adepts.[6] Instead, Newton looked upon the star as a most promising step in the creation of the philosophical mercury, the materia prima or first matter from which all substances are formed.

Robert Boyle obviously experimented much with the reguli, including the regulus of antimony and iron.

Excerpt from text on British Royal Society:

Robert Boyle, in his book "On Unsuccessfulness of Experiments"[7] says: "And it may perhaps also be from some diversity either in antimonies or irons, that eminent scientists (chemists) have (as we have observed) often failed in their endeavors to make the starry regulus of Mars and Antimony.

In so much that diverse artists fondly believe and teach (what our experience will not permit us to allow) that there is a certain respect to times and constellations requisite to the producing of this (I confess admirable) body."

On a clear, uncloudy, and windless day, the regulus will become starred quite easily when you're ready, and sufficiently skilled in the process. The clear weather helps considerably, but then so does the bond between the matters and the operator.

In the mid-1670s, Newton composed a paper of some 1,200 words entitled "Clavis" ("The Key"). This intriguing document, so concise and polished, gives evidence of being the last in a succession of drafts, the compilation of which had by then become one of Newton's distinctive intellectual trademarks.

The contents represent the distillate of years already spent in the meticulous study of the star reguli in the hope of extracting philosophical mercury from common metals. It was clearly Newton's belief that he had succeeded in doing just that.

It was not extracting philosophic mercury from common metals that Isaac Newton was after, but THE Philosophic Mercury or amalgam that would make the little trees of tiny crystalline branches grow, the sophic gold, so that he could bathe his gold in it, to multiply it, and animate it, for its magical properties.

Newton began with the star regulus of Mars (Iron) which was fused with a small quantity of pure silver, the "Doves of Diana." To this he added common mercury, amalgamating the mixture in a sealed vessel over a "slow fire." The amalgam was then ground for "1/8 of an hour in a mortar...until it spits out its blackness."

Repeated flushings, grindings, and washings left an alloy "like shining and cuppellated silver." A series of seven to nine more distillations and washings produced a mercury seemingly capable of dissolving all metals, especially intractable gold. The cauda pavonis, the multicolored tail of the peacock described by ancient alchemists, unfolded before Newton's very eyes:

Note that Nicolas Flamel experienced the same things while manipulating the amalgam, the gold, and the silver.

Below Newton writes:

Isaac Newton

"I know whereof I write, for I have in the fire manifold glasses with gold and this mercury. They grow in these glasses in the form of a tree, and by a continued circulation the trees are dissolved again with the work into a new mercury. I have such a vessel in the fire with gold thus dissolved, but extrinsically and intrinsically into a mercury as living and mobile as any mercury found in the world. For it makes gold begin to swell, to be swollen, and to putrefy, and to spring forth into sprouts and branches, changing colors daily, the appearances of which fascinate me every day. I reckon this is a great secret in Alchemy."

The Philosophers Of Nature excerpt from Guelph, Ontario, Canada, 1992.

Martial Regulus is not good enough...

We can make an amalgam of [Star] Regulus and silver which equals the Lunar Regulus, or a [Star] Regulus of silver and copper which = the Lunar Venusian Regulus. When this last amalgam Lunar Venusian Regulus is well prepared it is a light purple color.

Make a fine powder from this Lunar, or Lunar Venusian Regulus, add triple distilled Mercury (i.e. distilled Hg, caution must be exercised when handling Hg, even when cold its vapors are very toxic), and place the fine powder with the triple distilled {Hg} mercury into a tumbler to mix together thoroughly.

When you stop the tumbler, (leave on for 12 hours) you will have a butter [e.g. a buttery-like amalgam]. Note: Remove the butter from the tumbler with (surgical) rubber gloves and wear goggles (caution - this butter is very corrosive), clean the tumbler with distilled water right away otherwise it hardens in an hour. The water turns black and a black powder forms. Wash the amalgam thoroughly, persist until it is mirror-like. Set this water and black powder aside in dark vessels.

There are three products which can be obtained from these amalgams i.e. sophic mercury, live mercury, and animated mercury.

Distill this amalgam (butter). This [according to Flamel's Breviary] is known as the Philosophical Sublimations and the Chores of Hercules, or the Flying of the Seven Eagles, the result will be an Animated Mercury.

The double mercury or duplex [animated mercury] is then seeded {this is known as Sowing to obtain the Elixir.} (note: seeding can be done with the seed contained in the scoria of the first fusion or with live mercury, with animated cinnabar, with native gold, the black powder, or live sulfur) and placed into an incubator.

Obtaining the Elixir is when the colors come; black; white; orange; red.

At this high stage of the work Multiplication becomes a next step using the red stone in the same fire and same vessel and animated mercury.

Then comes the Revolutions of the Wheel where the power of the red stone increases by powers of ten. Even leading to an eternal lamp diffusing an eternal light...

CARES TO BE TAKEN FOR THE AMALGAM

1. Proportions: The triple distilled mercury Hg weight will be from 3 to 5 times the Lunar Venusian Regulus weight, generally.

2. Proportions are not crucial, as the animation occurs during the successive eagles. At each eagle (distillation) the mercury animates by taking the metallic life from antimony through silver (the medium silver is a transfer metal, the transfer occurs when the metals are melted). Absorption of the energy is more important in the first eagles than in the latter. In an eagle the life of the regulus weakens silver this is called the Dead Doves of Diana, and this same silver can be used indefinitely for more amalgams. An eagle means: amalgam with mercury Hg, and regulus and distillation of the amalgam.

The dissolution of gold, not its multiplication, is what most interested Isaac Newton. He measured the magnitude of his supposed achievement against Boyle's oft-repeated alchemical dictum: "It is easier to make gold than to destroy

it." In other words, once someone has solved the knotty riddle of what a substance is made of, producing that substance should be comparatively easy, a familiar enough notion to the student of modern chemistry.[8] Newton's pursuit of the true philosophical mercury had caused him to draw heavily upon the works of George Starkey, who, as previously noted published under the pseudonym Eireanaeus Philalethes. Nine of Starkey's books graced the shelves of Newton's library when he died, a number matched only by the indispensable treatises of Count Michael Maier.[9] The mediation of special mercuries were set forth in a manner strikingly similar to those expressed by Newton in the "Clavis" manuscript.[10] Moreover, Starkey sought to put this knowledge to a practical use by effecting the process of transmutation.

Philalethes (see *An Open Entrance to the Closed Palace of the King*) gives the process for making regulus and amalgam that Newton and Flamel do. It being so similar that without doubt Newton knew that Starkey was an adept in the work, and after reading an article published by Oldenburg, and written by Robert Boyle in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* entitled "Of the Incalescence of Quicksilver with Gold, generously supplied by B.R.":

Newton, who did not get around to reading his issue of the transactions until April 1676, had no trouble identifying the author as Robert Boyle. Boyle wrote of having discovered a special mercury that grows hot (incandescent) when mixed with gold. He considered it a breakthrough in the preparation of medicines, but he was also wary of the great harm its disclosure might do. For if Boyle had refined a true philosophical mercury, a discovery Newton privately claimed as his own, it could be used by "ill hands" to multiply gold, thus lifting the lid from a Pandora's box of endless "political inconveniences."

Boyle sought advice from the "wise and skilful" as to whether he should make known to the world the specific ingredients of his recipe for the mercury.[11]

Newton, it seems was the only adept who chose to reply, at least in writing [to Oldenburg]. He cautioned Oldenburg to "keep this letter private to your self."

His usual desire for secrecy was underscored by the knowledge that the attempted transmutation of metals was legally punishable by hanging. As an alchemist, Newton could not but question Boyle's optimistic conclusion regarding the mercury. He had explored methods similar to Boyle's, only to abandon them for more encouraging prospects. Still, Newton counseled caution, partly perhaps to avoid alienating a respected colleague, and partly because Boyle might know more than he had let on:

Isaac Newton to Oldenburg

"It may possibly be an inlet to something more noble, not to be communicated without immense damage to the world if there should be any verity in the Hermetic writers, therefore I question not but that the great wisdom of the noble Author will sway him to high silence till he shall be resolved of what consequence the thing may be either by his own experience, or the judgment of some other...that is of a true Hermetic Philosopher... there being other things beside the transmutation of metals (if those great pretenders brag not) which none but they understand." End of quote.

While Newton doubtless shared Boyle's concern for the dire economic and social consequences that must follow from an easy transmutation, one senses that this cautionary advice was rooted in other than altruistic grounds. No common "goldmaker," Newton's personal anxiety surfaced when he employed the self-revealing phrase "there being other things beside transmutation of metals." If Boyle were to disclose this great secret of the ancients, Newton's belief in his special relationship with the Almighty must suffer irreparable harm. The gates of the *prisca sapientia* would have been breached, and to the vulgar materialists would belong the desecrated spoils.

Flamel and Newton, like all true adepts of alchemy revered the Most High and Divine Will of God. Boyle may too have held a faith denying the philosophy of the times that Descartes put forth, "separating body from spirit in nature, to deny, as it were, that any "occult" forces, such as attraction and repulsion, are manifest in this great chain of creation. Though a mechanist tried and true, Newton could never be persuaded that spirit was absent from the operations of nature."

As a member of the inner circle that directed the general course of Royal Society activities, Boyle was surely aware of Newton's reticence in scientific correspondence. Yet it seems doubtful that Boyle was taken aback when Oldenburg informed him of the Lucasian Professor's response to his recent paper.

Indeed, he had good reason to think that his newfound friend might have written even more.

Boyle, after all, was the seventeenth century's most astute practitioner of "chymistry," and he had been present some months earlier during the reading of Newton's much-debated "Hypothesis of Light." Interpreted by most as the treatise on mechanical philosophy Newton meant it to be, the paper's equally profound if veiled alchemical implications could hardly have escaped Boyle, especially considering that Newton accepted and elaborated on a number of his ideas.

The study of alchemy for spiritual quickening lost its romance and adventure in the 17th century, particularly for the vogue chemists that would turn away from the past to embrace an unknown but promising future of enterprise and commerce.

Robert Boyle and Isaac Newton were two individuals important to the art in a century replete with nascent discovery. This renaissance period of practicality, inspired men of conscience to the design of the Royal Society's objectives:

"The business and design of the Royal Society," as Robert Hooke wrote, is "to attempt the recovery of such allowable arts and inventions as are lost," and "to examine all systems, theories, principles, hypotheses, elements, histories, and experiments of things natural, mathematical and mechanical, invented, recorded, or practiced by any considerable authors ancient or modern." Nor will the Society "own any hypothesis" until "by mature debate and clear arguments, chiefly such as are deduced from legitimate experiments, the truth of such experiments be demonstrated invincibly."

1. Free Press, 1984 In the Presence of the Creator.
2. MS. Don. b. 15, ff. 4v-5r
3. U.L.C. ADD. ms. 3975, p. 82.
4. I.N. Corres., I:82.
5. B.J.T.D., p. 150.
6. Keynes MS. 64, f. 4r.
7. Opera, ed. 1772 i, 325.
8. B.J.T.D., p. 185.
9. J.R.H., pp. 65, 215, 243
10. One student of Newton's alchemy has argued that he probably copied "Clavis" from a lost manuscript of Starkey. Karen Figala, "Newton as Alchemist," History of Science, XV (1977): 107. For an opposite view, see Richard S. Westfall, "The Role of Alchemy in Newton's Career," p. 207, and B.J.T.D., pp. 175-78.
11. Philosophical Transactions, X (1675-76): 515-33.

Proportions for Martial Regulus mixes.

Notes from lecture given by Yves Arbez in St. Charles for the 3rd LPN Seminar.
A.M.W. House

Note: Have found that weather must be hot outside to get good Regule, clear sky and little wind. When the elements are disturbed the Martial Regulus Star won't appear. See "On the Unsuccessfulness of Experiments" by Robert Boyle and my article on Flamel and Newton; THE STONE. Also when you make Regulus in terms of constellations and at what hours should be observed for research.

A. This mix uses red hot nails and iron powder.

1. 30 grams iron nails heated red hot
2. 90 grams Sb₂S₃ purified
3. 10 grams of iron powder
4. 30 grams KNO₃ [nitre]

B.

1. 120 grams purified Sb₂S₃
2. 90 grams Tartrate (potassium sodium)
3. 60 grams salt petre (nitre)
4. 50 grams iron powder

C.

1. 90 grams purified Sb₂S₃
2. 80 grams potassium sodium tartrate

3. 40 grams nitre
4. 40 grams iron powder

D. Using red raw tartar here is more dangerous and can cause explosions, but if you go gently (slowly add the tartar) LPN France reports more of the seed of gold in the filthy scoria upon the first pouring of the martial regulus. The raw Tartar gives more seed of gold.

1. 90 grams purified Sb₂S₃
2. 50 grams Red Tartar (raw)
3. 40 grams nitre
4. 30 grams iron nails
5. 10 grams iron powder

Glossary of Terms

*Sb₂S₃ = Purified Stibnite

Nitre = Potassium Sodium Nitrate

Tartar = Red raw Tartar

Tartrate = Potassium Sodium Tartrate

Iron = Iron nails heated or not; or Iron powder

* To get this purified stibnite you have to melt the stibnite and let it drip into water releasing the free sulfur and gangue from the antimony. You can use a stainless steel tube and heating tape around the tube. Put the big chunks of stibnite at the bottom with the smaller bits above them. Your antimony will look like pellets after they fall in the water. Use as is with your above Regulus mix's.

Extracting The Seed Of Gold

By A.M.W. House

What could be more important to an alchemist than isolating the seed of gold and cultivating it? The far reaching avenues of multiple opportunities that unfold, when success is achieved, have yet to be fully explored or imagined. All that is knowable comes from a seed. The seed is the explication of an emerging something from a nothing. A seed needs to be nurtured either by man or by nature's womb alone. The seeds that develop and sprout their species are the progeny conformed to its capacity for life here in the physical sphere.

Fermentation, germination, and putrefaction studies have revealed some of the most notable descriptions of seemingly incomprehensible and unfathomable processes in nature and the laboratory. These natural & artificially produced processes are the most fascinating life functions that can be scrutinized by man.

Celestial cultivators or Agriculturists are what some alchemists have portrayed themselves as. Perhaps not so subtly, they instruct enthusiastic seekers in this objective when they are approaching the philosophical work of nature.

An excerpt of Jean Dubuis from April, Seminar 1993, Chicago.

Reference is made to the text The Sky of the Philosophers - Coelum Philosophorum.

"It's in future projects to treat them [the scoria] quite differently."

Here is a reference to Coelum Philosophorum's treatment of the first scoria, which LPN has found to be very useful from this text.

"If you look at your text, it's just to extract the seed from the scoria, and this is a...what you want to do won't work" [i.e. using olive oil to get the seed]. A.M.W.H.

Note: Pierre Klein asked about using olive oil [here Pierre was asking about perhaps another process and Jean misheard his question] for obtaining gold seed.

Jean Dubuis's answer: "We have been working for 18 months on the problem, extracting the golden seed."

Jean notes that The Heaven of the Philosophers [Coelum Philo.] has a series of traps in it and LPN does not quite work in the direction of this book. "When I spoke this, I had not expected to incite questions, but since I am very much tuned on the problem, those quantities are false solutions in the book."

"I thought you were speaking of how to extract the auric seed, which is one of the rare and interesting parts of this

book." (Coelum Philo.)

"This auric seed, you can have it with ammoniac salt revived.... I was about to say, that human urine cannot be processed in the modern world."

Actually, there are two solutions:

1. "You make some butter of antimony, being very careful with your hands and lungs, and you deliquesce it, you distill the deliquescence, and keep the liquid. You re-deliquesce the butter, and then when you've got enough water after several deliquescence and subsequent distillations, you solve coagula on the dead ammoniac salt, and in the end you have what's called the armoniac salt. The R stands for the living salt that has authority."

["Ammonium chloride that is now Armoniac salt."]

"This term Armoniac is a participle of the Harmoniac or harmonius salt for man's use".

"It's a big problem, even if you have all the tools like me, it's a long work..."

2. "There's a simpler solution, that gives immediately the auric seed. Once you reduce the stibnite to Regulus you put the first scoria aside, especially the yellow and the green ones, and once their cold, put little chunks of them on a glass plate -- it starts deliquescing."

"I don't know about here (America) but at my place (France) it's done in two or three hours. It deliquesces in 2 or 3 hours. Those little parts that deliquesce you sand them with ammonium chloride, you put this armoniac salt on it, to just the limit of saturation, that they dissolve."

"You try to get the best [seed of gold] out of it, as you can. You don't have to go any further, the solution contains the armoniac salt and the seed."

First Scoria - Seed cont.

Q. "For the first reduction to regulus should we put tartar with niter in order to have the scoria?"

A. "If you are a very careful man, and not of an ancient structure, you prepare this thing with potassium nitrate and red powder (red raw tartar) if you go gently it won't burst, and you've got the whole thing the first time. If you're not too sure of how to conduct the experiments you don't put red powder (tartar) you put potassium sodium bi-tartrate, you have the same result, but to extract the seed it's a bit - not as good. All the extractions are good if you get what you want."

Note: The seed is most thoroughly captured by red tartar on the first reduction through the scoria produced, and subsequently deliquesced. Those places where the scoria show the deliquescence are sprinkled with armoniac salt. We're looking for the seed of gold and the deliquesced scoria that has been salted is placed in a glass pan with a cover and sublimated.

Q. "So what is the role of potassium sodium bi-tartrate?"

A. "The potassium sodium bi-tartrate prevents the antimony to transform into a glass, and once you've got this glass, which is a very black enamel - a very shiny, black, enamel. You put it back in a crucible, you put in twice its volume in bi-tartrate - you melt it and you get 50% of the Regulus [back]. You can do it 2 or 3 times, to have all the Regulus back, since it's not easy to obtain."

"It's a question of probability that's hard to measure, but if you work with gas it's much dependent on how you tune the flame, or on the presence or absence of oxygen in the gas (aeration of the torch tip). We're trying to tune the operation with electrical furnaces. We have a problem of preventing the oxygen to come on the Regulus."

This last sentence seems badly worded. It's more likely, that Jean meant that oxygen was having trouble getting to the Regulus. This may have been a mistranslation. Since with gas i.e. propane, you have the problem of oxygen solved. It's there in the flame with the fuel that's on fire. Whereas, electrical furnaces need a tube of sorts to inject oxygen to the regulus for a better blast effect of fluxing of the stibnite and iron.

Excerpt from first organizational group for Research in USA...

THIRD WORK: Sewing to get the Elixir, to get the seeds, to have philosophical sulfur.

1. Mercury Animated

Lunar Venusian Regulus - native gold - amalgamates with already animated mercury - the amalgam is washed & dried, when it is clean it is put in the incubator. The glass stopper must be Hermetically sealed [wax on top] for seal. at - 80 to 100 degrees Celsius.

Red powder forms (when using Lunar Venusian Regulus from the addition of copper to the lunar and martial regule, or white powder forms when using Lunar Regulus from the addition of silver to the martial regule).

2. Animated Mercury + native gold at 80 to 90 Celcius in incubator, you get white or red powder, as mentioned above.

3. Coelum Philosophorum: To make gold calx: Animated mercury + native gold - make an amalgam - put sea salt in the amalgam and distill. The sea salt is washed with distilled water. 1st a grey powder forms [the gold in an ashen state of reduction] - the operation is done 3 times and it obtains a calx of gold - a golden brownish color.

An Artificial Synthesis Of Gold? You Be The Judge - Mark House

An Artificial Synthesis Of Gold? You Be The Judge

The select processes presented here, presumably appertaining to research and development of Jollivet Castelot, are facsimiles of photocopied excerpts once written out longhand by W.L.V...these are taken from a 20th century French text, concerning Castelot, translated to English.

This research is in character, considered to be worthy of publishing for the conceivable, intrinsic value. Inasmuch as it is not the goal of alchemists to lust vicariously after texts extolling transmutations to make gold, nevertheless, these experiments were found to be of alchemical interest back in the 1920's. Was Castelot on to something of an alchemical nature? In the increase of the gold found in the metals used he may have manipulated the seed of gold.
A. M.W. House

[Back to articles](#) . [Back to home page](#).

[Here is the text starting at page 125.]

HOW I SUCCEEDED IN MAKING GOLD ACCORDING TO THE PROCESS OF MR. JOLLIVET CASTELOT - December 1925

By A. Ballandras

Dosage of Gold obtained by the second method -

The residue, which had been obtained by a mixture of:

Silver 10 grams

Tin 3 grams

Arsenic sulphide 3 grams

Antimony sulphide 3 grams

was crushed as much as possible and subdued (read: subjected) to a treatment of pure chloric acid like in the first method. [Here is a reference to a first method - not presented here - the above being the second method presented by Ballandras from a text, the name and size of which is unknown to me.]

However, to completely eliminate the silver and the tin employer, I scrupled to begin the indicated treatments, that is to say that the powder which was obtained having been subdued first to the action of azotic acid then washed with distilled water, then subdued to the action of chloric acid, then once more washed with distilled water, and these different operations were begun once more with another portion of pure azotic acid, and another portion of pure chloric acid after having carefully washed the insoluble residue was subdued to the prolonged action of aqua regalis following: Chloric acid - 15 parts/ Azotic acid - 4-5 parts.

[Page 126]

It must be noted that this thing happened during the ebullition (bubbling;boiling). The washed residue contained the slighter part of gold, this thing would be found dissolved in the last liquor, which I obtained. After 18 hours of digestion at the temperature of about 25 degrees, I subdued the mixture to ebullition during 3 hours.

After refrigeration, I filtered on wool of glass and I looked if parts were not drawn along in suspense. Finding nothing I proceeded to an analysis of the liquor which I obtained. For that month I made two parts strictly equal of the liquor, the first being destined to qualitative analysis, the other quantitative.

A) Qualitative Analysis: Assay of usual reagents:

Chloride of Tin - Rose colored precipitate

Pure Soda in solution - Voluminous yellow reddish precipitate

Sulfate of Iron - During ebullition, metallic precipitate, black greenish very dense spangles.

B) Quantitative Analysis:

The second part of the liquor destined to undergo quantitative analysis was treated by H₂S when the most important part of chloric and azotic acids were driven out by a prolonged ebullition.

[Page 127]

This time the liquor was slightly acid and has a weak smell of chlorine. I called H₂S into action; about 20 minutes long. The black precipitate which I obtained was received by a filter paper carefully washed first with well distilled water, then with hot water and at last with chloric acid.

After drying in the vapor-bath, the precipitate was put in a capsule of porcelain and heated in a mould at about 850 degrees, so as to destroy the sulphides precipitated with gold i.e., the arsenic and the antimony. These were naturally decomposed by the temperature of 850 degrees to which it had been subdued during two hours.

The quantity of gold obtained was 0.238 grains. The half of the liquor having served for the dissolution having been turned to good use for the qualitative analysis it followed that the whole quantity of gold contained in the original liquor should be equal to double the quantity obtained. i.e., 0.476 grains of gold per 10 grams of silver employed, yield then was 0.476 grains of gold per gram silver. {I must point out that the obtaining of gold is not a mathematical regularity, that is to say, the purport (proportion) of residue changes according to the conditions of heating. }

[Page 131]

2) DRY METHOD

I acted on 22 grains of chemically pure silver supplied by Messrs. Poulenc of Paris and on 3.5 grains of chemically pure orpiment supplied by the Pharmacie Central of Paris. The mixture was heated to about 1600 C in a metal smelting furnace for about ¾ hour. The residue obtained was again melted for an hour with the addition of orpiment, after having been hammered for half an hour and re-melted with the addition of small quantities of orpiment every 10 minutes, it was withdrawn.

After cooling and the addition of chemically pure antimony sulphide, it was again put back into the furnace, small quantities of orpiment being thrown in every 5 minutes. The residue obtained had a dark metallic tint, after hammering it became slightly golden.

Analysis of the Residue

The residue dissolved in chemically pure 36 degree HNO₃ first cold and then hot, gave an abundant pulverulent deposit. This deposit after being washed and treated with HN₃ to dissolve the arsenic and antimony salts was completely dissolved in aqua regia. The liquor after being chlorinated and filtered was subjected to the reagents of Platinum and gold.

[Page 132]

Mr. Andre Vandenberghe who was acting as preparator for this experiment, had thought that in accordance with the law of evolution of matter, the transmutation of bodies into gold should be preceded or accompanied by their transmutation into platinum. According to Mendeleiev's progression, we have Pt - 195.2 and Au - 197.2

The reactions of gold were quite characteristic; the reactions of platinum also seemed to reveal its presence. The quantity of gold obtained in this experiment was estimated at about one gram. I emit the hypothesis that the arsenic acts as a catalyzer and the sulphur as a ferment in this transmutation.

Douai, December 1925

Jollivet Castelot

[Page 133]

A RECENT EXPERIMENT IN TRANSMUTATION I

By M. Jollivet Castelot

All my research work on transmutation since 1908 has started from the fact that gold is found in nature associated with antimony and arsenic sulphides as well as with Tellurium which is considered as the mineralizer of gold. I therefore considered it logical to introduce Tellurium into the artificial combination of silver and arsenic and antimony sulphides that I make. The following is an account of one of my recent experiments:

I prepared a mixture composed of 6 grams of chemically pure silver, 1 gram of native orpiment (Arsenic trisulphide A₅S₃) free from gold, 1 gram of chemically pure antimony sulphide, and 2 grams of chemically pure Tellurium. I added pure silica to the usual fluxes. This mixture was heated in the furnace in the usual way for one hour at a temperature of 1100 C (approximately) [note: parenthesis are not mine AMWH]

[Page 134]

The residue obtained was of a blackish grey color with violet reflections. It weighed 6.420 grains. When subjected to the action of nitric acid, the residue was attacked with difficulty and greenish metallic particles became detached.

The solution was then decanted and a greenish-yellow residue remained which was kept at the boiling point in nitric acid for several hours, after decanting off the liquor once again, the residue, which had not changed, was washed, treated with ammonia and then subjected to the action of aqua regia in which it was entirely dissolved after boiling

for several hours.

The solution after being chlorinated and then subjected to the reagents of gold, gave the following:

Potassium Ferrocyanide - greenish brown coloration.

Tin Protochloride + Tin Bichloride - a yellow bronze coloration and then a metallic deposit of the same shade.

Ammonia - coloration and precipitate identical with the preceding one and which became transformed into a yellow deposit of fulminating gold at the end of a few hours.

Formol - light yellowish black metallic precipitate.

Peroxide of Hydrogen - light very finely divided brownish black precipitate.

Oxalic acid - yellowish black precipitate.

Ferrous Sulphate - golden yellow metallic precipitate.

Caustic Potash - a fairly abundant golden yellow metallic precipitate at the end of a few hours.

The presence of gold was therefore very distinctly shown and a remarkable feature was that the metal obtained possessed the yellow bronze color of gold telluride and of native silver. I had therefore produced a bronze colored gold in my laboratory by artificial means thanks to the intervention of the Tellurium.

A certain amount of gold was certainly lost in this test as in all my previous tests, for it is known that arsenic, antimony and Tellurium entrain gold in their fusion and their volatilization. In order to obviate this disadvantage, I had thought of making the vapors of arsenic and antimony sulphides and of Tellurium act on the silver in fusion in a closed vessel by means of a special device, but I have been forced to give up this scheme for the time being on account of the difficulties met with for the construction of this apparatus, the cost of which would be very high. I consider it certain that if the vapors were allowed to bubble through the melted silver, a much higher yield of gold would be obtained than that I have obtained hitherto by an imperfect and too rapid contact of the bodies in presence; while it is undoubtedly necessary to make them react on one another in the state of vapor in a closed vessel.

Douai, April 24th, 1926

Jollivet Castelot

[Page 137]

THE CHEMICAL MANUFACTURE OF GOLD

ACCOUNT OF ONE OF MY LAST EXPERIMENTS IN THE TRANSMUTATION OF SILVER INTO GOLD

As a sequel to my previous work on the artificial synthesis of gold, I have introduced Tin into these new tests as it is also often associated with gold in nature. The following is a description of this new process, thanks to which the percentage of gold obtained destroys all the objections that are raised with regard to impurities.

I made an intimate mixture of 6 grams of chemically pure silver of which the purity was tested by a professional chemist, the Head of the laboratory of one of the most important Works of the region. 2 Grams of antimony sulphide, 1 gram of orpiment, and 1 gram of Tin; all these bodies were obtained from the Establishment Poulenc of Paris and were chemically pure. I added the usual fluxes and then heated the whole in a crucible in the furnace to about 1100 C for 2 about 1 hour, twice adding a small quantity of antimony sulphide.

The residue obtained was treated for a long period in pure 36 degree nitric acid, first cold and then at the boiling point.

[Page 138]

The insoluble residue was next washed with distilled water, treated with ammonia, washed again and finally treated for a long period with boiling aqua regia. The liquor when filtered and subjected to the reagents of gold showed the presence of this metal in the form of deposits³ which maybe estimated at 0.05 grains in all, which is very high considering the 6 grams of silver employed.

With Oxalic acid, the solution turned violet and gave an abundant black pulverulent precipitate.

With Hydrogen Peroxide, a very finely divided precipitate of gold.

With Formic Aldehyde, a brown precipitate of gold.

With Tin Protochloride, an intense violet pink coloration.

The addition of Tin to the other bodies has certainly facilitated the reactions of the gold and increased the yield of this metal which can be manufactured artificially by my process.

[Page 139]

It would be easy to show that, given the respective prices of gold and of the other substances that are used in my process to produce it, a profit could be obtained if the process were worked industrially; all the more so as the greater part of the silver employed can be recovered at each test.

I believe I now hold the key to the regular and even industrial manufacture of gold. But the industrial question is

voluntarily put aside from my thoughts, for my only object is the search for pure scientific truth.
Douai, April 15th, 1927 Jolivet Castelot

[Page 140]

TABLE OF REACTIONS

"GOLD"

$C_2H_2O_4$ - Abundant deposit of metallic gold.

H_2O_2 (basic) - Brown precipitate.

$K_4 Fe Cy_6 \cdot 3H_2O$ - Green coloration.

Na_2CO_3 (in ebullition) - Brownish precipitate

"PLATINUM & GOLD"

NH_3 - Reddish yellow precipitate (Au); topped by a yellow precipitate (Pt).

KOH - Reddish yellow precipitate (Au); topped by a yellow precipitate (Pt).

$SnCl_2 \cdot 2H_2O$ - Solution colored brown with reactions of platinum salts and deposit of black powder.

KI - Solution becomes reddish followed by a discharge of iodine and a brown precipitate (Platinum iodide).

[Page 141]

EXTRACTS FROM THE PRESS

"It must be admitted that it is extraordinary and incomprehensible that France for the past ten years has refused to take an interest in the experiments of a rich and universally respected scientist who has given proofs of his worth, even after the conclusive experiments carried out by an official chemist, Mr Ballandras of Lyons."

Andre Ibels, La Razon, June 8, 1927

"It is unjust, gentlemen, that a scientist of the value of Mr. Jollivet Castelot should be held in suspicion at the very moment when he is losing his sight through overwork. To continue his work, however embarrassing it may be to yours, is a sacred duty."

Declaration by Mademoiselle M.L. of Paris.

Professor of Engineering at the Conservatoire

des Arts et Metiers, Paris, at the Chemical Congress in Paris. October 1927

"Oh! it is not that Mr. Jollivet Castelot has not attempted to make his invention known in France, on the contrary, he has written leaflets and books and has founded reviews for this purpose... Not only was he not taken seriously, but he was also a butt to the sarcasm and even to the insults of the official scientists in general and of the Nobelist Perrin in particular. The Acedemie des Sciences itself - as usual - refused to record his communication."

Andre Ibels, Nouveau Journal de Nice

October 16, 1927

Most Excellent Excerpts

by Anthony M. House C.H.

Most Excellent Excerpts

by

Anthony M. House C.H.

1989

NOTES ON SOURCES:

Aphorismi seu Circulus Majus et Circulus Minus or the Lesser Circulation is from an unknown but obvious Master. The many references to Frater Albertus come from the magazines - Parachemica, Parachemy, Essentia, and his books Alchemist's Handbook and Alchemist of the Rocky Mountains.

Notes on the Rudolf Glauber method that are in parenthesis are by professor Michael Junius.

Grossman is a German author in the Herbal work.

The Spagyric Technique by Robert Bartlett comes from *Essentia*.
An attempt at the Circulatum Minus is also from a student's article in *Essentia*.
The Four Elements by Frater K.H. comes from *Parachemy* Fall '77' vol.5, no. 4.

THREE UNIVERSAL FORCES

Manfred M. Junius (Practical Handbook of Plant Alchemy)

1. The tiny building blocks of the atoms, which form matter - the SALT principle.
2. The life principle, Prana, which tries to materialize in countless forms, from simple molecules to the most complicated structures. We recognize it in the MERCURY principle.
3. Consciousness, intelligence, which guides and forms all life. It is the soul, atman, the SULPHUR principle.

These three philosophical principles are accessible to our human senses in the form of matter which manifests in four different states:

- (1) EARTH-solid (cold)
- (2) WATER-liquid (moist)
- (3) AIR-gaseous (dry)
- (4) FIRE-radiant or etheric (hot)

Within the four elements a fifth is present, the Quintessence, which however, is not one of the four elements. It permeates the whole universe. The Quintessence is the force that binds everything. It is the cohesive force of all living creatures and all existing things.

ON SALTS

The extraction of the water soluble salts is done as follows:

The calcined ash is put in a beaker and covered with double or triple the amount of distilled water. Everything is slowly heated and stirred. Now the water soluble salts dissolve, while the insoluble ones settle. The clear liquid is decanted and filtered. The residue that remains after filtration of the solution is also called caput Mortuum (death's head). To get this quite pure, we must rinse it many times with distilled water. The Ph factor can be tested with litmus paper.

Chemically viewed, the water soluble salts consist chiefly of potassium carbonate and approximately 10 to 20% of other salts, such as potassium chloride, potassium sulphate, and sodium carbonate. These water soluble salts are fusible at about 900 degrees Celsius.

The salts that are not water soluble (caput Mortuum), consist chiefly of calcium, silicon, phosphorus, and magnesium. They contain traces of other metals. To melt the fixed salt temperatures of over 1500 degrees are required.

The Seven Basics

Seven Herbal Planetary Elixirs by Frater Albertus

There is a law in physics which, simply stated, says that all matter is transparent to energy except that matter which is in resonance to it (energy) and that the energy will be imparted to that body of matter. In Alchemy it is stated that ¼ oz. of prepared medicant is equal to 20 lbs. of the raw material from which it is made. It would seem that we are concentrating these "energies" and then placing a very small and acceptable amount of these in our bodies to help refine it. To gain the most from our "herb-basics," we must also work on the other levels of our being. The "virtues" of our herbs will do much to promote health in our bodies, but to gain the most from them we must also take "something" for our other "bodies." We are 3 in 1; body, mind, and soul; physical, mental, and emotional. We must make a conscious effort to change the imperfect, to place into our other bodies the "concentrates" that will impart the "energies" we want to work for us.

What is happening in the "7-basics" is a very gradual replacement of our body chemistry, to replace those things which in our "later" life causes aging. In the young the change is not or barely noticeable; but in the older bodies it is felt more intensely and quickly. Example: things will seem to be very "normal," then all of a sudden we start feeling an acceleration of little aches and pains, unexplained fatigue, emotional and mental confusion, the whole gamut of retarding agents. Then for some unexplained reason, we pass on to a state of "blah" neither good nor bad, just there

and just doing with no real "Entheos." Yet later, if we are doing our homework, there comes a very small "opening." We sense something is at work. We start to "wake up." We start to "feel." But there also comes the realization that we must now be very careful of our every word, thought, act, and emotion. It is as if we have gone to the mountains and every step must now be watched to insure complete success. A careless move could very well spell out injury or worse, for the high paths are less forgiving than the wide valley roads. However, once the main body of work has been done, the real dividends will continue to re-new themselves for the rest of our lives. In the twilight years of our existence, we will find our bodies will function perfectly, for those things which would have "aged" us are not present. We had previously "opened" the METAL of our bodies, FIRED them (tortured), and finally replaced or returned to the opened-body metal an essence not normally found there. The cells were opened and purged of the toxic materials long ago and then replaced with the concentrated, refined "virtues."

We are in a process of hooking-up directly to the Power station itself. We are in a process of aligning ourselves up with, coming into HARMONY (resonance) with it, flowing with it not fighting it. Once in the main stream of IT, being caught in its powerful currents, our slightest move, thought, wish, etc. will be impressed in and around us NOW! There will be little or no wait-time. Just as the tiny micro-switch throws the main power bus in the electric generating plant, so we will function. This automatically implies that we know what we are doing, who we are, and what our job is.

We begin our "apprentice" training in the plant world, the most forgiving of man-type errors, and continue up into the more exact and precise mineral world.

ELIXIR AND CLYSSUS

The preparation of elixir requires a thorough knowledge and experience, since an exchange of powers and substances takes place among the species. Any one who wants good recipes should hunt for them by studying old texts and manuscripts. Many of the elixirs in these were prepared with simple technical aids.

If the elixirs are mixtures of extracts of various species of plants, the clyssus is a preparation of recombined extracts of only one plant. The reunion of sulphur, salt, and mercury hardly gives trouble, as everything can simply be recombined. The salts are imbibed with mercury, to which is added the volatile sulphur, or the sulphur is first poured on the salts, and then the mercury is added. The imbibition is to be done gradually until the salt no longer absorbs anything. In this state the clyssus thus prepared can be melted and poured into a form to cool.

It is a kind of a plant stone which contains, in a concentrated form, certain curative powers of the plant from which it derives. Due to the strong concentration of the salts, it has quite a diuretic and purging effect, and it also improves digestion. A clyssus can be thinned as well as highly concentrated according to the individual practice of the spagyrist. Le Febure advises the following proportions: one part salt, two parts sulphur, three parts mercury. These quantities result in a more solid clyssus.

Among the classical recipes we also find pointers on how to combine the essentials by means of a simultaneous distilling apparatus. To this end, we put the three essentials into three different flasks, which then go under one alembic for distilling and are distilled through a common condenser. The classical elixirs always contain the salts that are extracted through incineration and calcination of the plant residue. In the later literature elixir recipes also turn up that do not always contain the calcined salts. Depending on their composition, elixirs have specific effects on the organism i.e. some stimulate the circulation, others help digestion or sleep, others again have a cathartic effect, and so forth. In the former times the so-called Life Elixirs and cordials were popular. They were general tonic elixirs. Elixirs are taken either with a spoon or thinned with water or wine.

(Manfred M. Junius) Practical Handbook of Plant Alchemy

ON VEGETABLE STONE

In alchemy there are stones and stones. Text and practice, however, make it plain that a genuine Lapis Vegetabilis, in the true sense of the word, is more than a clyssus, insofar as in the last part of its preparation it must always go through the slow process of fixation in the fixing glass. Later, the glass is broken and the stone taken out or it is cast while still hot. Fixation takes place in a hermetically sealed glass through prolonged heating in a hot-air furnace, the Athanor.

This applies to stones from the fresh plants, dry plants, honey, and also from wine. Non-fixed compounds of salts, sulphur, and mercury are stone-like compounds and are certainly true spagyric preparations, but they are not plant stones in the higher and real sense.

Let us now turn to the preparation of a solid vegetable stone, also called the plant stone, herbal stone, rock, cat,

pebble etc. That there are different views about the concept of a clyssus, it is similar with the stones. We have already made the acquaintance of the liquid plant stone in connection with the Circulatum Minus. It has the ability to separate. Although in alchemical circles it is often said that the fixed plant stone can also separate, I am skeptical about this assertion, as I do not find it confirmed in the majority of the texts on this subject or in practice. The tiny "small membrane" that appears on top when a fixed plant stone is brought into maceration does not represent a real or actual separation, in my view. Anyone who has experienced a genuine separation with the Circulatum will never confuse it with the effect of the plant stone on fresh plants in water. For a separation the liquid plant stone, however, is always greatly stressed in the relevant works. Conversely, the Circulatum Minus itself is not a medicine; it serves only to separate the oils and magisteries which then have great medicinal value.
Taken from: The Practical Handbook of Plant Alchemy (Manfred M. Junius.)

THE SPAGYRIC PLANT STONE

The following is excerpted from "The Alchemist of the Rocky Mountains" by Frater Albertus Spagyricus
Take whatever plant you select, or any part thereof. I would recommend the entire plant where it is called for. Take the fresh plant preferably, but you may also use the dried plant if the fresh is not available.
Distill from it its essential oil by steam. If no special steam distillation apparatus is at hand, a pressure cooker will do very nicely. Insert a tube into the opening where the weight rests on the vent and collect the steam through a condenser and the oil will separate from the water in the receiving vessel.
Thus you have the alchemical sulfur in the form of an oil...
Take the residue including the water you added in the beginning to produce the steam and to keep the plant from getting scorched. Put all this in a large bottle or container and add some sugar and/or a little regular yeast and let it ferment. This takes about seven or more days in a moderate heat.
When the fermentation ceases distill from it its alcohol, or your alchemical Mercury. Thus you have the Herbal Mercury...
Having gotten this far, evaporate the water, dry the residue and incinerate over a hot fire. This will yield at first a black, then gray substance and finally becomes white in the process of calcination, as it is called.
This can be shortened by taking the light gray ashes and leeching them with distilled water where the water soluble salts will dissolve in the water. Filter this and test it with Ph paper. It will show very alkaline indicating a deep blue color on the indicated litmus paper.
Evaporate the water and you will have a white Salt...
These three are put together in a retort by first adding the salt in a sufficient amount depending on the size of the retort so that the bottom of the retort is covered not more than one fourth.
Then add enough of the spirit or distilled alcohol, the alchemical spirit and some of the essential oil, until the salt, which is the mineral, has absorbed all it can of both and has enough of both liquid additions swimming above it to the height of a fingers thickness.
Distill very slowly off what will come over until the salt is dry.
Keep the heat up and calcine in the same retort. Let it cool. After an hour or longer add to the salt in the retort what has been distilled out previously and repeat this until the salt has absorbed all that is put back of what is distilled out. Then have in readiness more of the spirit (alcohol) and sulfur (oil) and add to the salt as before. Do this as long as necessary until the same amount of spirit and sulfur distills over as you have added the last time.
This is the sign that the salt has all it can hold...
Keep calcining and you will have a Plant Stone, which you may use to help cure what the herb is supposed to accomplish.
Do not let the work get too dry, keep enough of the herbs sulfur on hand...Sulfur keeps the stone from dissolving. If it gets too dry add more sulfur.
You may also hang this Stone in another herb macerating in a jar. It will extract all the essence, namely the three essentials mercury-sulfur-salt to the top which you may skim off. In this way the Plant Stone will save you the work of making a stone of every plant.
Here you have the whole story of how to do the little work in a few simple words.
Frater Albertus

OPUS VEGETABILE, ISAAC HOLLANDUS ON THE ALKALI

Alkali is the salt extracted through the calcination of the whole plant. To this end, the closed calcination is suggested, which Libavius also advises. In the preparation of the alkalis, the salts are extracted as much as possible

with the plants "own water" i.e., with the water of the plant carefully distilled through heating and then made visible through slow evaporation. Otherwise, spring water is recommended for the extraction of the salts. The alkali, however, arises out of the total essence of the substances, so that it carries with itself the inner powers, while only the corpus is separated. It is extracted from vegetable, animal, and mineral substances which are all together reverberated in ash or lime, during which the container must be closed as much as possible and the joints sealed to prevent even a trace of essence from escaping, and to keep the volatile together with the fixed.

MAKING SALARMENIAC

The fattest plants, however, which carry seed, are best for making salarmeniatic (sal armeniacus or ammonia salts). After these, the best are the hottest herbs, from which the most powerful and strongest salarmeniatic is made. know that there is still another spirit of salarmeniatic, that is, one extracted from saline things, which is also salarmeniatic, because the spirits of all insensitive things are called salarmeniatic when they are separated from their bodies, so that the spirit of all salts is called salarmeniatic.

But it is not the salmiac that the philosophers mean; the salarmeniatic extracted from plants, which contains the four elements. That is the salmiac which the philosophers mean, and from salmiac they make elixiria, but one cannot make elixirs from the other kind. That is the philosopher's soap and washing water with which they can clean the corpora, with it they dry the evil moisture of the elements, with it they also dissolve the corpora, and with it they conjoin the things that are contrary or antagonistic to each other. It is a flying spirit, one that comes and goes - and if it were not present, the Elixir would not succeed.

In this salmiac there are many hidden things that cannot all be described, because wonderful things can be accomplished with it if it has previously been fixed. But that is not necessary for this work. However, everything the salmiac from the salts achieves is also done by salmiac from the plants. And from the salmiac extracted from the plants and elixir can be made without the addition of other species - which cannot be done with the salarmeniatic from the salts. But the salarmeniatic can well be prepared with other species, so that with it the Mercury can be dissolved in water, likewise all other metals and all things, provided one proceeds with them as I have taught elsewhere. For now, enough of it.

HINTS ON THE HERBAL PROCESS

During the instruction period the most simple and basic methods are demonstrated and then applied by the student to prove the law under consideration. It must not be assumed that this is the only way by which the herbal substance can be brought to the state of medicinal preparation. After separation of the three essentials, namely: sulphur, salt and mercury, out of any of the plants in question, the process of purification has still puzzled some. The objective of the whitening or purging of the extraneous substances, still adhering to the three separated essentials, is to prepare them for their conjunction. All three must be in pure condition before it can be accomplished to the satisfaction of the Spagyrist. It has been found that after the first day of calcination of the feces, the salt, after it has been purged of the black color and begins to show gray, can then be covered with a wire gauze such as is used to place underneath a flask for distillation so that the asbestos shield will cover the calcinating dish. It seems that the whitening will take place faster and, most importantly, the fluffy substances now forming (the snow) will not be drifted off by the heat. Likewise, the sulphur (alchemical soul substance) which is always pure in itself and has only on the exterior the impurities clinging to it, will yield much faster to purgation. As was noted in the laboratory here, when the process is demonstrated in a few days the sulphur became as white as snow and even showed crystalline formations.

These are the true organic mineral salts where the oily appearance of the sulphur now has become pure. That it reacts differently from the salt when calcinated was proven by its cohesion and adhesion when lifted from the dish. The spoon or spatula when turned around would not let the calcined sulphur fall off. Experiments with the salt showed that it would not do that but would fall off as soon as the spoon or spatula was turned upside down. Since both will, in the course of time, have become white, common observation will not be able to keep them apart. The conjunction is then performed by having the mercury of the vegetable kingdom purified as described in the Alchemist's Handbook and the three, when absolutely pure, are then conjoined in three equal parts by either volume or weight. They will fuse when put into a vial and subjected to moderate heat. When they become too dry more of the purified mercury of the vegetable should be added until in the course of time it will congeal and become hard, as was shown. The purified salt, sulphur and mercury can also be placed in a small Erlen Meyer flask with a condenser, preferably a coil condenser attached to the top in an upright position and the circulation thus performed. Care should be taken not to have an excess of mercury in the flask. The conjunction should take place over a moderate fire to begin with and the fire can be increased as time goes on and the hardening becomes visible. Even then gradually

adding more of the mercury and keeping the process going for some time will increase the potency.

ANOTHER WAY

Another way has been tried and will work also when not sufficient equipment is at hand. The purified or near purified substances when having attained a gray coloring are placed in a bottle or vial and subjected to a continuous heat. In the tightly closed vessel it will become solid and change color then whiten as time goes on. The purer the substances the better, and the sooner the whitening will occur. The circulation described above using the coil condenser attached to the top with the gray calcined sulphur and salt can be added and circulated in a like manner. Another way is to take feces only, calcining then while the extracted tincture, derived by distillation from alcohol or water is being reserved and then added to the calcined feces that remain behind in the distillation flask. Constant circulation and repeated distillation and cohobation upon the calcined feces in the retort or distillation flask will also produce the desired results. As can be seen there are many ways to get the same results. Know the Law involved, understand its applications and then use not only the heat but also the intelligence which the dear Lord has given you. After all you are the one who is going to bring about the result and not the book learning or the notes that you wrote down!

Notes: VEGETABLE RADICAL MENSTRUUM

Place herb in weak acetic acid and rectified spirits of wine. Equal parts of both liquids are to be used. Distill, then digest and complete process of mixture and distillation, repeat two more times, making a total of three.

OF THE SEPARATION OF THE ELEMENTS, From Natural Magick - Baptista Porta

In every compound, there are four elements but for the most part, one is predominant, the rest are dull and unprofitable. Hence, when we speak of separating the elements of a compound, we mean the separating of that predominant one.

In the water-lily, the element of water is chief; Air, earth, and fire are in it, but in small proportion.

Hence there is but a small quantity of heat or dryness in it, because water overwhelms them all.

The same must be understood in other things also. But do not think, that we intend by the separation of the elements, to divide them absolutely, the air from the water and the water from the fire and earth; but only by a certain similitude, as what is the hotter than the rest, we call fire; the moisture of water, etc.

We count those airy, which fill the vessels and receivers, and easily burst them, and to fly out. When the elements are thus separated, they may afterwards be purified and attenuated.

The manner of extracting them, is various according to the diversity of natural things; for some must be calcined some sublimated, others distilled.

Note:

Herbs, flowers, and seeds require 1st degree of fire. B/M or water bath

Leaves, fruits, 2nd degree of fire. Ash bath

Roots, branches, trunks, 3rd degree of fire. Sand bath

Timber, 4th degree of fire. Open flame

THE FOUR ELEMENTS by FRATER K.H.

In the vegetable stone, our fire completes the work and of the four there remains only one. We will see in our final labor the hidden tincture, now revealed in its maturity. It was born in water, strengthened by air, matured by fire, to become our fiery vegetable stone, earth.

It was in death (dissolution as in fermentation) that our substance separated into these three essentials. We witnessed the spirit separating from the body and tincture (soul) now appeared in our menstruum saturated by this, Living Spirit. The body (salt) drops below and we see the separation of the three essentials performed by the hand of Nature alone. The essential point is this: without water the separation would not be possible.

This separation was brought about by the invisible fire which is the active principle and became manifest to our eyes as tincture or sulphur.

The work is ended when that which is volatile becomes fixed and fixed volatile. Thereby two materials coalesce together to become a Living substance such as that which did not exist before.

Note:

The Opus Major is just an incident in the Opus Minor or the Little Work. (Frater Albertus)
An alchemical result can replenish itself; Spagyric preparations cannot, they are used up. (F. Albertus)
If salts are not pure enough (white) some carbonaceous residue is left in them.
That which is essential cannot be destroyed by fire, only purified.

GROSSMAN'S HERBAL ELIXIR

Fifty pounds of a fresh, flowering plant including root, stem, leaves and seeds are cleaned from drying leaves and other impurities and then washed.

OILS- After cutting the plant into small pieces, water is poured over it and then slowly distilled. Any oil that shows is separated from the water and the water thus obtained without the oil, which is now kept separate, is poured back over the plant to which has been added one to two teaspoons of yeast.

ALCOHOL- All of this is placed in a wooden container and slightly covered so it can ferment. One has to watch that placed in a distillation flask and distilled until nothing more distills over. A steam distillation is best.

SALT- What remains in the flask is calcined, leached out with water, filtered and the filtrate slowly evaporated. The residue is saved. The former distillate is reduced by further distillation until two parts of the distillate come over to one part of the leached out salt.

Both are distilled once more and the soul separated from the first distillation is now added.

Taken from: The Alchemist's Handbook

Note:

Melissa dead head calcined to white in a furnace at 500 degrees celsius for two to three hours fused into a yellow color.

When dissolved in H₂O the distillate showed a yellow color. Not all of the sulphur was taken out of the macerated and circulated herb when calcined.

For liquid extraction use volatile solvent such as ether of a lower specific gravity than solution to be extracted. Use ether on water plant extraction to recover essential oil.

Keep heat below 600 degrees celsius for minerals and herb salts to get snow white salts. Crystal mineral salts will appear snow white after leaching.

Identifying some first steps of Alchemical Initiation

By Anthony M. House

Identifying Some First Steps Of Alchemical Initiation By Anthony M. House

Out Of Unity You Arise, To Return To Unity Is Your Destiny, The Mind Discovers The Path Of Return While The Heart Provides The Key To Progress Each Step Along The Way

Inner Contact

We must know that we are needing to find our own path in the initiatory work. In addition to the 7 "Fama" commandments proposed for the servants of the Invisible Order, (see lesson 11 of general esoterics) there are no

rigid restrictions for the student to comply to, yet, LPN France has generously shown us an outer work indispensable for inner contact to occur.

Experience has shown them that this contact is with the Genius within us all.

The Angel that is your higher self. Your lunar astral vehicle that becomes known to you by the eventual passage into the astral realms. We again individually verify the paths of return to unite with our origin.

Identifying some preparatory steps to research allows us to recover just where we have to look for direction in the initiatory respect of the eclectic paths of alchemy.

This effusive foregoing study will increasingly allow us ample access to the program of the outer work. Gaining a higher access allows for a more complete synthesis to emerge.

When significant contact is made you will know it. I can certify the profound effects that the correctly prepared stone of horsetail (Saturn) holds. A Saturn stone made by Michel Auger of LPN France, put me in contact with Divine Love (the FIRE of Unity).

I personally experienced a profound sorrow and joy simultaneously. I lost control of my emotions as tears filled my eyes, and I sobbed aloud for more than an hour. This happened to me last September 1993, at the LPN seminar. Later, I consulted Patrice Maleze, Michel Auger, and Yves Arbez about my reaction. Patrice told me to try to laugh, as it has a countering effect on the tears.

Note: I have often observed Jean Dubuis attempting to hold back his emotion and tears while giving the seminars. Also, when Jean Dubuis is on the jazz (communing with the Grandfather (universe) he will often spontaneously grab hold of you, should you be near him at the moment, and press his lips to your forehead, just below the hairline.

One becomes a conduit and through which the great love flows out of Jean Dubuis, into you.

It's a rush! This is the Divine Love kiss of the Magister.

Patrice told me that because Michel A. had prepared it, I should tell him.

Michel Auger smiled knowingly and sat with me for a moment to console me. He didn't seem surprised, but pleased at the stones power, and as they had related in the lecture before giving the stone to those present, they asserted "It gives a Divine Love experience."

Yves, observing my reaction, took me aside and said "You are reborn today, on the inner plane," (fortunately Brigitte Donvez was there to translate for us), as he hugged me with genuine brotherly affection and respect.

This emotional reaction was powerful and fulfilling in many ways. Even today I well-up whenever I recall the experience. New vistas of inner symbolic reality have risen in turn in my conscious life, and today the inner walls blocking my growth, are dissolving away.

I might briefly mention too, that the caraway stone given in Oct. 1992 was a turning inward point for me. I had an instantaneous reaction that deleted all the mental data away and shifted attention to my heart perception. I later told Marc-Gerald Cibard that my brain had turned to mush!

I have always been self reflective and I've experienced deep meditation while completing experiments in seclusion before, but the apparent power that this initiatic stone held, relocated my perception.

It shifted my awareness inwardly. I can also say that I've endured dreams that continue to show me everyday (night) my psyche (this can be a very eye-opening event!), my station in life now, and some means to achieve a balance between everyday experience and inner life challenges. This pleased me greatly, causing some new details to form from within.

There will arise both voluntary and involuntary dreams that develop in the alchemists psyche and the images and symbols are not easy to read in the beginning, yet, they are as real as our waking reality.

See Horary Chart for dream analysis Fig. 1. This chart is useful for sorting out the confusing sequences awakened out of the time-space duality of dreams, while also systematizing from horary or natal information, an astrological approach.

Humanity automatically transmits thought by steps, to unity (the Fountain Source). We are as little kings (queens), on account of our inheritance, and we exchange data with the great king that IS the inner guide.

We are contacting the program of the unconscious realms in our heightened dreams and the resonant powers we contact allow us to temporarily merge with a new level of harmonic energy.

For posterity, and for self study, keeping a notebook of dream activities is a good way to remember a pattern that's unfolding. The symbols in the unconscious are doorways to transcendent meaning.

CARAWAY STONE

Let's begin with a stone of Caraway, which is asserted to be THE vegetable stone to make for initial, albeit

temporary, inner lunar astral plane contact with Hod (Mercury) through dream states at first and later - waking visions. The level called Hod has another name called Thoth Hermes.
So it will give you information on Thoth qabala, and on Hermes alchemy. But these will be personal explanations to start your own way.

This stone opens this path. This path is the path of Shin the letter of the fire, but you must understand that this name fire is just like love. And there (path 31) will come the Divine Love path that will let you start alchemy. When you do your own stone the experience will be strictly personal. A permanent contact in the interior worlds of the sephiroth can be achieved by use of the White and Red Stones of the metallic kingdom. A later article can cover the Flamel Path and initiation steps. Now, some steps to take in the vegetable kingdom.

METHOD: 98-99% alcohol is poured over approximately 12 lbs of seeds of caraway for 24 hours to mark the alcohol with the seeds. Then the alcohol is distilled off and set aside to be used later.

SULFUR

Fresh seeds (recommended up to 40 lbs.) are steam distilled with distilled rain water (or distilled water) for the essential oil. The thoroughly depleted seeds are then calcined and leached. Note that by allowing the seeds to rest and cool for 12 to 24 hours you can often get the same amount of oil from the same seeds. Just leave the seeds in the same flask and vary between work (distilling) and rest (cooling).

SALT

What you have to know first is that in nature 2 states occur. The crystalline one that's the state of order, and the amorphous state, the chaos one. The alchemical experiments are supported by the order state. So we will speak about certain types of crystals and some rules concerning these crystals.
But just what's necessary for alchemy. The crystals come from the fact that the atoms have a spiritual volume. And you can only put these spirits within 2 types.
With spheres like a cubic pattern or like the rhombohedral pattern. In reality the spheres don't touch, they are far from one another, but they always respect these 2 rules of network. See Fig. 2. And these 2 rules of network are based, and give 7 types of crystals in nature. In qabalistic and alchemistic tradition there are crystal attributions that are types of crystals. Plants are chosen according to the crystallization of the salt of the sulfur corresponding to:

Saturn/Cubic,
Jupiter/Quadratic,
Mars/Orthorhombic,
Sun/Monoclinic,
Venus/Triclinic,
Mercury/Rhombohedral,
Moon/Hexagonal,

Earth - has no particular crystallization, but may be set on any of the sephirotic levels of crystallization. Here Drosera is known to carry all 7 planetary flows, like its counterpart antimony.
So every sephirotic level is a resonance level in your inner world. We have not checked every level but I think for 2 of these levels we have to pick experiments that show that the tradition is right.

The first type of crystal is the cubic crystal.

This crystal is on the sephirotic level (of) Binah (3). There are 2 types of crystals that are perfect. Cubic and Rhombohedral. The cubic one is the most perfect, because all its sides are equal and all its angles are right. And along the path down to the density of matter, crystals lose their perfection. If you want to work in alchemy, if you want to make stones and bring them to a sephirotic level, you must have the corresponding crystal to the self.

N.B. Let's examine briefly this important Self aspect. An example given by LPN France is this:
Given that you would produce a stone of whatsoever level, in this case let's continue with the Hod (Mercury) stone of caraway. The personal initiation can guide you to undertake further improvements (thus more power) in your technique and manipulation of the three essentials and FIRE from the atmosphere.

So an initiatic stone at the level of Hod (Mercury) produced by a person of a lower, or perhaps higher level than the stone obtained, may or may not react appreciatively to that level upon using the stones.
It should be noted that the inner level of the person (during its making) is imprinted upon the matrix of the stone and

cannot rise above the stage of your own level. Determining your personal inner level is a sure way to get started rightly in the initiatory personal path.

The example supplied here draws a distinction to be recognized that alchemically, initiatic stones can be above, or below the inner level of your inner self.

You see that in alchemy, every step from higher to lower and vice versa requires starting at the onset. Graduating to the fix the volatile and volatilize the fixed formula of this alchemical program, demands a really precise understanding (gained by experience) of the raising of the FIRE (Angel or secret fire).

Some help in this regard has been presented by LPN France.

Raising the secret fire in the amalgam (of the Flamel Work) for instance, to produce animated (raised initiatic energy) mercury, and the examples of transfer of life and energy in the kingdoms has back up statements covered in the Mendeleyev table of elements presentation, this allows some means of testing the power of stones, elixirs, elements etc. that have initiatic strength (force).

I can see several different research levels that would involve obtaining (principally) initiatic plant stones that are quickly produced (please see article in issue #1 of Ora et Labora), verses stones that are of the white stages and require a more rigorous and lengthy preparation. To deliberately answer whether the same initiatic strength is present in both.

Presently, we have from LPN France long experience about making truly, initiatic preparations. As well as their collective investigations of effects from their use. For months, and even years at a time. After significant initial contact, using the plant stones is no longer necessary. Again, the time for making inner world contact varies with each person.

We may find too, that our older stones produced from the beginning of our work, may not have as much strength as more recently improved stones do. Time and experience will show us.

PHILOSOPHICAL SEPARATION

If, (as the argument goes), whether or not a plant stone can - separate the three essentials from an immersion into a macerating media - is possible (some recent disclosure from Russ and Sue House says that these stones can cause a simple separation), it's proper to note, as well, that stones further produced by them, from the real philosophic separation of these essentials; by a correctly prepared plant stone, obtain and allow a higher (meaning - more harmonious) effect on the inner levels.

Still, in all, the inner self has a level and this level needs to be explored out for personal contact on the paths of return.

SALT continued..

Crystals (salt of the sulfur) can be obtained through the cloudy water obtained from the distillation in an oil separation device, (See Fig. 3, also refer to article in Ora et Labora, issue #2) and must be passed through solve coagula to obtain the crystals very large and transparent.

We'll see later, how to obtain the salt of the sulfur needed for sephirotic comparison, in the white stages section of the article.

Note: In Guelph, Canada, Jean Dubuis showed those present a jar filled with caraway crystals that were very clear (transparent) and large. Crystals will grow like tiny branches in the saturated cloudy water when we slowly evaporate (don't boil) the water, thus reducing the amount of extraneous water by vaporizing it and carefully scooping out the crystals as they form on the surface of the liquid. Dry them, and set these newly formed crystals aside.

The first crystals to appear can be separated from the later solve coagulae (crystallizations). These former crystals can be used as seeds to push coagulation along when saturation is weakened and the salt crystals begin to stop forming. Adding a few of these first crystals to the water will allow the formation to begin again. Finally, we obtain a point where the salt crystals refuse to form, this is the highest degree of purification.

Note: A high percentage of alcohol can be produced by macerating rectified wine - about 94-95% - in a warm place with potassium carbonate, then it's distilled with boiling stones, alembic, and/or kjeldahl flask, and a potassium trap at the vacuum tap - see excerpt from Lesson 29 Spagyrics below:

MERCURY

The first thing to obtain is a perfect Mercury. If it isn't absolute, it contains water; so 99 % alcohol still contains 10

ml of water per liter. This water dissolves a little bit of mineral salt and the Mercury/Salt separation can't be perfect.

We suppose that thanks to our preceding lessons you have easily obtained a Mercury of at least 90 %.

To understand the means we chose in the process we are going to describe, we should know what we call "the wear and tear" of things, from the alchemical point of view.

For example, if we throw a small amount of salt in water; at first the water is at rest; the salt dissolves very rapidly. Add some more salt: the dissolution is slower. Add more salt and there is refusal: the water is saturated and doesn't want to dissolve any more salt.

You can heat the water to give it some more strength: eventually the dissolution of the salt will stop once more when a new saturation occurs. Potassium carbonate absorbs the water of the alcohol, but the more it absorbs of this water the less dynamic it becomes.

This same phenomenon renders the preparation of absolute alcohol difficult. The less water in it, the more avidity for water; the more the carbonate absorbed water, the less avidity it has for it. In addition, potassium carbonate attacks glass; the flask or bottle you use should only serve for this particular operation because frosted glass can never be completely cleaned.

Experience shows that in this operation potassium carbonate agglomerates into a lump and the attempts to remove it from the round bottom flask often results in the flask or the bottle breaking.

Following the same alchemical principles, it is better to reuse the potassium carbonate because it becomes more refined and opens correspondingly to the number of times it is used.

For the following operations we used canning jars made of glass, which have several advantages, in addition to being cheap. They can take water-baths, resist vacuum, and have air-tight caps. The only disadvantage is their cover: for distillation, you must either buy a reactor-cover which fits the type of jar you chose, or bore a hole 8 mm in diameter through the glass cover and adapt a standard tube of 8 mm. The boring is easy and requires only a few minutes. We should then obtain a carbide drill (bit) well sharpened. During the operation, lubricate with turpentine ; as soon as the bit comes through the other side, reverse the piece to complete the hole.

When our material is ready, the sequence of the operations proceeds as follows: calcine the potassium carbonate at 350 C (662 F) for at least an hour. Fill the jar half-way with the carbonate and pour 90 % alcohol within 2 cm (one inch) of the top. Close with an air-tight cover and let the mix act for 24 hrs.

Shake two or three times during that period. The jar is then placed in a water-bath regulated by a thermostat or placed on an electric plate with a thermostat. The temperature of the water in the water-bath is maintained at 85 C (185 F).

Of course, during this operation, the jar is capped by an 8 mm tube equipped cover.

The distillation train is equipped with a check-valve, a condenser and a round bottom flask; the whole forming an air-tight unit which prevents the alcohol from absorbing atmospheric moisture.

Again, if you do not have a good mastery of distillation, and you are not certain of the capacity for removing heat of the condenser, the air-tightness of the system can cause an explosion.

You can avoid this inconvenience and at the same time prevent atmospheric moisture from entering by adding a moisture trap: an air outlet tube can be mounted on the receiving flask and this tube emerges in the atmosphere by means of a tube of 8 mm diameter and 20 to 25 cm long.

This tube is filled with calcined potassium carbonate which is maintained in place at both extremities with stoppers made with cotton padding. Distillation with this equipment yields an alcohol that reads between 96 % and 98 %.

With this alcohol we repeat the same process again but with only 1/6 of the volume of carbonate in the flask. The distillation will then yield an alcohol that reads more than 99 %.

A third distillation with 25 g of carbonate per liter will yield an alcohol reading a minimum of 99.8 %. This alcohol must be used immediately because it cannot be easily kept at that percentage. You need a perfectly air-tight ground glass flask which must be full to insure the preservation of this alcohol for some time.

After use, dissolve the carbonate in distilled water and filter the liquor. The liquor spontaneously separates into two parts: one is light and the other heavy. This is due to the fact that the carbonate also fixes a certain quantity of alcohol. The distillation of this liquor recollects the alcohol. One can also take advantage of this distillation to concentrate the liquor. Pour the liquor into a pyrex dish and slowly evaporate. Keep the carbonate you collect kept in an air-tight flask, it can be used again.

If after coagulation the carbonate is not perfectly white, do not calcine it. It must be dissolved, filtered and coagulated again. This process demonstrates furthermore how many impurities can be extracted from the alcohol.

WHITE STAGES of Vegetable Kingdom

With this very pure Mercury, we are going to undertake the making of the white stage of the elixirs, thus called

because the three principles which compose it are white or transparent when they are ready for the final coagulation. With this perfect Mercury, we need a plant as perfect as possible. The dry plant will be rid of its dust and damaged parts, etc. If it contains a residue of water, it will weaken the Mercury and so you should carefully dry the plant. This can take place, for example, in a desiccating jar. After you place the plant in a jar, add vacuum-tubes on one side of the water pump and on the other side toward the round bottom flask which contains the calcined potassium carbonate.

As the vacuum is made, you must close the circuit on the side of the water pump in order to avoid moisture from entering. The jar is maintained in a water-bath regulated at 60 C (140 F) for two to three hours. Under vacuum, at this temperature, the plant releases its residual water in the form of vapor absorbed by the carbonate.

Place the plant in the thimble of a Soxhlet which is filled with absolute alcohol. The upper part of the condenser of the extractor is closed with a silicon stopper so as to prevent moisture from entering. The round bottom flask of the extractor is heated to 85 C (185 F) in a water-bath so the Sulfur doesn't overheat. Several days of extraction are required to make sure the Sulfur has been extracted. Complete extraction of the Sulfur is essential.

The residue in the thimble is calcined and leached until the Salt becomes whiter than snow. You can recognize complete extraction of the Sulfur by the fact that the Salt is not sticky. Often this salt sparkles because it forms small crystals.

Distil the tincture. If the alcohol collected in this manner is no longer absolute, it can be treated with calcined carbonate as before.

When the tincture reaches the thickness of honey pour it into a crucible and calcine it. A black residue is obtained that is ground as fine as possible. Place it then in a quartz or porcelain dish, but not glass. Pour on the residue a distilled water solution containing 5% alcohol of the alcohol just collected.

Pour this solution on the residue until it covers it to a depth of 1/2 to 1 cm. After a night of maceration, the solution is slowly evaporated. The residue is calcined, reduced to powder and the cycle starts again. In a very few days the residue becomes sparkling white, whiter than snow: it is the Salt of the Sulfur. The crystals which appear in the Salt indicate the planetary attribution of the plant by their structure. This Salt of Sulfur is mixed in equal parts with the Salt obtained during the calcination of the plant. If there is a correct imbibition performed with the Mercury just collected, and it is put into the incubator, we are beginning to form the Vegetable Stone.

If you poured on a large quantity of Mercury, the volatile quality will prevail. However, the alcohol only becomes charged with Salt and Sulfur through repeated distillations. The volatile must progressively make the fixed volatile.

PURIFICATION OF SULFUR

Purification of the essential oils of oil producing plants and seeds is simple and only requires adding the steamed oil that floats on the distilled water, back into the lower flask from which the plants or seeds are being boiled.

The oil must become more clear and pure. Caraway essential oil looks cloudy the first few times it's separated. It gradually becomes more clear and pristine as the oil is re-steamed. You may note too, that for the planetary herbs chosen by LPN we have the following:

Saturn/Horsetail,
Jupiter/Melissa,
Mars/Madder,
Sun/Eyebright Euphrasia,
Venus/Alchemilla or Yarrow,
Mercury/Caraway or Lavender flowers,
Moon/Veronica,
Earth/Drosera i.e., Sundew.

I'm sure you'll note that many of these herbs lack adequate quantities of essential oil and this has proved to be a problem for LPN France, although they are now researching intensively to simplify, for everybody, extraction of the sulfur of these essential oil deficient plants.

Further research regarding plants or seeds etc. that exhibit a matrix that gives salt of sulfur crystals matching the sephirotic levels, deserves some pioneering attention.

If plants or seeds don't yield a sufficient amount of essential oils, or none at all, you need not dispense with their use, but check the salt crystals that arise from its honey-like resins (refer to the white stages of preparation).

LPN is extracting with hexane in the case of horsetail or with acetone, in a soxhlet, and slow evaporation is necessary to allow sufficient removal for the above mentioned plants.. The oil is then a honey-like consistency.

THE INCUBATOR

The incubator is very important because an even temperature must be maintained for the Angel (secret fire) of the angel water to be gradually raised in strength and power. You must be sure you have a good deliquescence, and carefully distill the resultant oil from the potassium carbonate that dissolved in the atmospheric dew. The fire (heater) outside the vessel (containing your developing stone) is the fire against nature and the inner fire (inside the 'egg') is to be coaxed out of its secret abode by this external constant temperature. This is the Vulcan aspect of the work and definitely demands certain standards to be maintained.

As to the construction of the incubator, with some steel wool and some wire we can construct an inner cubic structure where the hot plate can be fitted into place. The size is up to you. The heat source can be a deciding factor in the dimensions of your inner cubic chamber.

You'll want to gain access to your confecting stone, so you should install a door that allows full or partial viewing of the 'egg' inside. It's possible to use a rather thick heat resistant glass for the door.

Surrounding this inner chamber (but not the access door) is vermiculite (silica) enclosed with an outer shell also equipped with a sufficiently sealable door, again shaped like a cube.

Sheet metal can easily be shaped and soldered to complete the incubator. Use a heater that can be trusted to keep an even temperature for very long periods of time.

If you use light bulb heat make sure the bulb is painted black and the paint is heat resistant. No electrical light can be shined on the developing stone. Beware of light from the bulb leaking through cracks.

THE EGG

The essential oil, once it's purified, is imbibed (added to) the crystals, but only in a carefully sealed 'egg' so that no parasitic odors or sulfurs can contaminate or determine the prepared salts by exposure.

LPN uses a small glass vessel or 'egg' with a wide mouth and cork that has a stirring mechanism made of bent glass tubing going through the cork and an opening for a syringe filled with the essential oil to be inserted for imbibition (cohobation).

Keep in mind that when a syringe filled with essential oil is added by drops into the egg, the opening for the syringe must be closed off and sealed when imbibition is done, a good solution is a tube with a stop cock that can be closed and opened.

The oil is imbibed every week one hour after sunrise on Wednesday (for this stone of caraway is ruled by this planetary genius at this hour) it is stirred, incorporating the oil with salt, and incubated at 40 C until reaching a saturation point.

Then the same imbibition is done with the marked alcohol mentioned above to saturation, and again incubated. Lastly, deliquesced potassium carbonate (exposed to the night air) is distilled obtaining angel water, which is this distilled water charged by the atmospheric moisture with gur (prana), is added to its saturation point and again incubated, always at 40 C.

This is to charge the stone with initiatic fire energy. The initial stone is beige in color, but with up to 2 years of incubation it ripens to red-brown. Then it's completed. It will be ground into small crystals.

The crystals of all stones including caraway stone are taken with wine.

METHOD FOR TAKING CRYSTAL STONES OF PLANTS:

1. Coat finger with saliva
2. Touch finger on the desired dosage of crystals to be taken at the 1st hour on the day of the ruling intelligence
3. Touch finger with crystals adhering to tongue top
4. Red wine chaser

Apparently the idea is to swallow the crystals right away, they are dissolved with the wine in the stomach and release their fire and energy in the solar plexus. A distinction must be seen regarding the differences between medicinal and initiatory medicines here.

SOURCES: Spagyric Lesson 29; Transcript of LPN videos: Inner Consciousness through Dreams Oct. 1992; Horary Chart from The Hermetic Dream, 1978 - A highly recommended book.

SHAKING THE TREE:

Kundalini Yoga, Spiritual Alchemy, & the Mysteries of the Breath in Bhogar's 7000

English Rendering
by Layne Little

[Preface and Introduction](#)
[Translation of verses](#)
[Commentary](#)

Preface

"Our normal waking consciousness, rational consciousness as we call it, is but one special type of consciousness whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different."

-William James

This work is a translation of the first eighty verses of the writings of the seventeenth century alchemist-poet Bhogar. Written in Tamil, an ancient language still spoken in the south of India, these eighty verses deal specifically with the Yogic science of re-attuning the flow and distribution of subtle energy in the body.

The flow and distribution of this energy is thought to directly affect consciousness in the most crucial of ways. It is the balance and flow of breath in the two nostrils which guides the energy through the body. Breath and the movement of subtle energy is said to directly affect how we think and feel.

Any objective observation of the breath as we go about our day reveals that the mind and its functioning is mirrored in the quality of our breathing process. When we are relaxed and in a calm state of mind, our breathing is slow and even. Breath flows gently into our body and, on a purely physiological level, muscular tension is released with each exhalation. If we are nervous or experiencing stress, our breath is shallow and rapid, often disjointed, flowing in and out in a rather haphazard fashion.

If our mental and emotional state so profoundly affects how we breathe, one can in turn wonder if how we breathe also affects our state of mind and how we feel. Perhaps, it affects not only how we feel but also how we perceive the world, both our outer and our inner life.

The Yogic science, its practices and philosophy, is centered largely upon altering consciousness and psychological fine-tuning through the conscious control of our breathing process. This was also Bhogar's intention when he composed the eighty-two verses presented in this work. He has distilled the essence of Kundalini Yoga into a kind of guided meditation that presents the tradition's set of symbols, sequentially structured for visualization, interwoven with technical advice on regulating the breath.

The key to applying the Siddhar teachings presented in this work begins with a process of objective and unwavering observation of the breath and its direct relationship to the whole human organism. This practice of objective observation is essential in cultivating the meditative awareness needed to discern the subtle movement of the breath. In order for meditation to truly take place, the subject must identify with the breathing process rather than the mind's erratic wanderings. This allows the practitioner to observe the mind and its movements without being drawn back into the compulsive identification with thought.

At the initial outset of this practice one inevitably forgets the objective observation of thought, breath, and body again and again, but tradition encourages the practitioner to simply take note of the momentary loss of mindfulness and with persistence and patience return to being conscious of breath. Breath then becomes the anchor of mindful awareness.

Once mindful awareness is established, the meditator widens that sphere of awareness to include thought, emotion, bodily sensation and sound. Here again, the goal is to simply observe phenomena, our mind and bodies response to that stimuli without identifying with that response.

Although Bhogar's work deals specifically with using the breath and various meditation practices to initiate a transformation in consciousness, he seems to have made the assumption that his readers have achieved a certain level of proficiency in the more fundamental of yogic disciplines. This is perhaps a bit of an understatement, in that he does have a tendency to present his system concealed within the language of an adept and, at times, he makes no accommodations for even the practitioners from other schools of Yoga.

Works such as this were encoded in the secret languages of the varying schools to preserve the tradition without revealing the inner mysteries to the uninitiated. After researching other works from Bhogar's school of Siddha Siddhanta as well as works from various Tantric Yoga schools, I have presented in the commentary some of the more common and recurring usages of Bhogar's obscure language and what is inferred by the same in the Kundalini Yoga and meditation practices of the Siddha Siddhanta & Saiva Siddhanta schools.

Bhogar, like other Yogis of the various Yoga schools that have grown from tantric roots, employed a language of symbol, myth, and allegory to speak of the transmutation of subtle energy which leads to the transformation of consciousness.

The complex network of pathways (*nadis*) through which the subtle energy moves, is clearly defined. These pathways, 72,000 in number, are distributed throughout the *etheric body double*, running parallel to the Central Nervous System. Their location and function are usually presented in a fairly straight-forward way. Being closely aligned to the physical body makes them not as abstract as the six nerve plexus' known as *chakras*.

The term *chakra* (literally "wheel") refers to six centers of consciousness that run upwards along the spine at specific points where the *nadis* cluster together. These *nadi*-clusters form jump-points where the frequency of this energy (called "*Shakti*") vibrates on new and higher levels.

As the spine's vibratory frequency is quickened, neuron transmissions reach peak output and brain activity is heightened. The senses are also heightened, pushing thought through new neural pathways, opening up unexplored avenues of perception.

It is in describing these *chakras*, situated at the axis of the etheric body, that Yogis and Mystics have had difficulty in describing their subtle and enigmatic nature. Long ago they discovered symbolism as the most effective tool for conveying their insights and experiences as to how the *Kundalini Shakti* is awakened and caused to propel the human awareness up the spine and through the six *chakra* houses. This journey of consciousness culminates in the *Sahasrara*, the thousand petalled lotus that crowns the top of the head. *Sahasrara* is the seventh and final step of the journey, the fabled "un-*chakra*", where every possible level of consciousness is simultaneously perceived and one is said to perceive the universe from all vantage points at once, fully identified with every aspect of creation.

Contemplation of the symbol, applying the symbolic language to every aspect of life, opens up roads that penetrate into the subtle inner realms. Breath then becomes the vehicle of the undefiled and crystalline awareness that transverse the secret inner terrain, mounting upwards to the blossoming lotus of super-consciousness: *Sahasrara*.

Introduction

In all languages there have been poets and mystics who have practiced an alchemy of words. Poets who have transformed the baseness of a functional system of communication into an expression infinitely more vast; one that strives to enrich humanity in some essential way, breathing new life into human existence.

The Tamil poets have had the added advantage of using a language medium that is perhaps not as heavily encumbered as the rest; where the quality of sound and the impact of meaning seem to share a common ground as far as function is concerned.

Aesthetics and application need not be relegated to opposing ends of the spectrum of necessity. Words are meant to convey both feeling and meaning. Need we set the human heart and mind in opposition of one another when language is adopted as the vehicle of our expression? Poets in all ages, throughout the world, have defied man's tendency to cut asunder the union of heart and mind, and have instead celebrated this marriage as an invaluable asset in reconciling the incongruities of life.

The whole of the Tamil language is the poet's ally. It was born vibrant and malleable, ever ready to be shaped into rhyme or reason. It simply waits for the expelled breath. A breath that is filled with a great passion for life: be it the sighing of heart or the winds of thought.

Even the most dry and linear idea, when voiced with the Tamil tongue, is enlivened by this expelled breath. The sound produced has shape: fine curves & subtle contours, texture & color.

The beauty of Tamil does not rely on any trivial meaning which the mind might attach to it. The richness of the sound imbues the words with a life of their own, independent of any meaning that our concepts strive to convey.

There is an inherent sweetness to the Tamil tongue; and to the Tamil people themselves, "Life" (birth, growth, love, work, death; the struggle of it all) has a sweetness all it's own.

"Like moonlight and the sky,

like the warrior and his sharp sword,

*like the beautiful blossom and it's fragrance,
like the crocodile-shaped lute and it's music,
like the eye and it's lustre,
so is my sweet Tamil and I."*

*"If a stranger asked me, what was the name of my tribe,
an inexpressible joy would arise in my heart.
'I am a Dravidian,' I'd say, and my tongue would be all honey,
and my pride and glory would reach the skies."*

-Bharatidasan

Origins

The origins of these people and their language have been lost in some distant past; only legends remain... a handful of obscure memories. One of which speaks of how the Tamil language came to be...

There were seven great Seers, and one would suppose that they are still around, beyond the realm of form, watching the cogs of time spin round and round. One of them was named Agastya. He knew the secret of language: that all things are vibrating; that the name and its corresponding form are closer than we think.

Agastya paid a visit, long long ago, to the Sanskrit College at Benares, but he being a wandering hermit, clad in rags, humble-hearted, and having the pompous airs and assumptions of the scholar conspicuously absent, he was, needless to say, rejected outright. Distraught and forsaken, he returned to his little hut feeling very sad and terribly alone in the world. There he sought solace by praying to Chandraswami to teach him a language that was even sweeter than the sacred Sanskrit.

All of a sudden his house became fragrant. The God spoke softly, "Look in the corner". Agastya rushed to the corner of his house, and in a nook in the wall he found a small package. He unwrapped it and therein found a stack of Cadjan volumes.

His eyes darted over the inscribed words and he dropped to his knees shouting, "Tamil! Tamil!" ("Sweetness! Sweetness!"). The God taught Agastya the language of sweetness which he brought to the south and taught to the Dravidian people.

Thousands of years later the Siddhar alchemist Bhogar sat at a small shrine on the top of Palani Hill in the colonial days of 17th century Tamil Nadu. They say he had come to Tamil Country from China and crafted the icon of the Murugan of Palani Hill out of nine arsenics. Water poured in worship over that Murugan is credited with mysterious healing properties. He is said to have attained perfection through yoga, discovering all the universe hidden in the depths of consciousness. With a mind immersed in silent meditation, he related, in flowing verse, how the ensuing serenity he enjoyed became the gate to life's mysteries.

"Having become calm...

I perceived the accompanying experience.

Having experienced...

I have composed 7000."

Seven-thousand verses poured forth gracefully from a foreigner's hand. A foreigner who rejected much of grammar's laws; letting sound run wild in places, letting Tamil's sweetness speak for itself of Life's secrets.

These seven-thousand verses flow in graceful rhyme, a complex echoing of sounds whose meanings convey a flux of images: some humorous or straight forward, brimming with a simple wisdom; others enigmatic, encoded in the secret language of the mystic, haunting if not bizarre.

"My fine fellow,

If you see Nandi,

then you will know alchemy.

"To say even one word

is just noisy useless talk.

"It's like having a chat

with a corpse in the burning ground.

"Only by seeing the light

of the jewelled root

will the golden chain

of the Circle's End

come open."

As this preceding verse infers, Bhogar makes little attempt to explain the Siddhar mysteries. His work reads like a narration of his own free-flowing chain of consciousness, as if he embarked upon some journey through the tangled forest of his own subconscious, mapping out the landmarks along the way, as he propelled himself deeper and

deeper into the soil of human existence trying to ferret out the very root of consciousness. With each line he digs up another shovelful of the mind's soil, peeling back layer after layer of thought, of ways of perceiving "reality", until he could reveal the essential living root of being.

Bhogar's work is completely spontaneous. Not a slave to order, wonder explodes as verse in the deceptive guise of a child's conspiratorial mid-night whisperings upon waking from a dream. He tells his secrets with gravity, a touch of humor, and a wealth of unrelenting paternal warmth. Bending the laws of grammar, he even rejects being encumbered by the weight that our rigid meanings attribute to words. Discarding reason, he paints in sound and image an ancient uphill path to freedom.

He cast aside logic, dismissing it as empty noise, he sought essence. He makes no pretence that the mind's ceaseless ramblings bear any real fruit. As he so pointedly puts it:

*"With words and logic
you get nothing."*

Bhogar has made no attempt whatsoever to make his experience of these altered states of consciousness at all intelligible to the common man. Over vast centuries of experimentation with Yogic disciplines and meditation, people like Bhogar have reported their experiences in their own unique way. Oddly enough, there is a staggering consistency to these reports, that, particularly over the last hundred and fifty years, has attracted the attention of western scholars and scientists. Unfortunately though, they have always encountered some inherent difficulty in finding a way to apply the findings of these mystics to the existing models of the objective scientific world.

Tirumoolar

Bhogar's approach to meditation and Kundalini yoga, as well as his application of mythic images and Hindu ritual are by no means revolutionary. He followed so closely in the footsteps of Saiva Siddhanta's 8th century founder Tirumoolar that one is often amazed at the continuity of teaching and principle preserved and sustained over a period of one thousand years.

Between the 7th-11th century A.D. a strange synthesis of Indian esoteric schools was taking place. Saivite Tantrism, alchemy, magic, Vajrayana Buddhism, and Hatha Yoga began to merge. The Tantric mysteries, drawing together all of the mystic's tools under one roof, made such distinctions obsolete. Function over form became the rule. Mystics were no longer concerned with postulating the nature of the universe, nor with philosophical concepts and the like; they sought only that which produces a tangible effect, only that which transforms consciousness in an unshakable way. Intellectual theories proposing some "empirical truth", and the debates that ensued, lost their predominance and credibility as an emphasis on the purely experiential became the rule.

It is impossible to paint an accurate historical picture of this era of cataclysmic transition in India's philosophical arena. The writings of this period pay no mind and render no aid to chronological accuracy, and scholars, both east and west, endlessly propose a vast and conflicting array of dates for these works.

Not wanting to flog a dead horse, I make no attempt at proposing a way out of this historical maze, but one thing can be said for certain: after centuries that stretch back into pre-history, living secluded on the furthest outskirts of society, yoga came down out of its Himalayan sanctuary and entered the mainstream of Indian thought.

Yoga Comes Down

Sometime in the 8th century (and even this vague date is subject to much dispute) there was a high yogi, said to have reached the very precipice of perfection, who came wandering southward from his home on the holy mountain Kailash in Tibet. Legend has it that his name was Sundarar and that he came to Tamil country in search of his friend and fellow-yogi Agastyar who had taken up residence in the Pothiya Hills. After joining his friend for a time, Sundarar wandered deeper into the south.

One evening just after dusk, on the outskirts of a little village called Tiruvavaduthurai, he came upon a small herd of cows lowing and bellowing mournfully.

As he came nearer he saw that the cows, obviously very upset, were standing round the dead body of a cow-herd. A few hours earlier, Moolan the cow-herd, was stung on the heel by a serpent. His soul had gone to pasture, and his body lay crumpled in the grassy field.

It was getting quite dark and Sundarar, taking pity on the poor cows, shifted his awareness into the body of Moolan. Leaving his original body hidden in the hollow of a log Sundarar brought the much relieved cows home wearing the guise of the cow-herd Moolan.

The new 'Moolan' was no longer your average cow-herd, but a great yogi. You can imagine the consternation of his wife when Moolan refused to return home. In frustration, she called together the village elders who examined Moolan. They found that the little cow-herd had become a saint. They had no recourse but to advise Moolan's wife to let the sage wander as he like.

When the yogi went back to the grassy field in search of his body... it had disappeared. The saint disregarded this minor inconvenience as Siva's grace. He went to Chidambaram, Dancing Siva's holy city, and seated himself at the

base of a pipal tree. People began to flock there to see the holy man.

Most often he was lost in the trance-like ecstasy of samadhi, but every now and again he would look out at the world and utter a few words about the wonders to be found inside. His words always came out in verse.

*"The brinjal seeds were sown
and the bitter gourds grew;
when I dug out the dust,
I found the pumpkin blossoming."*

-Tirumantiram: 2869

One legend says that only once a year the saint would leave his meditation and speak that one precious verse that the faithful would note down. Tirumantiram, the book that has compiled these utterances, is three-thousand verses long. So the people say that the sage sat under that pipal tree for three-thousand years.

Perhaps this seems a little far-fetched, but it may very well be true from Moolan's (Tirumoolar's) point of view. You see, what the people don't take into account, is the Tirumantiram's description of the Tantric Buddhist concept of Kaalachakra. "Kaalachakra is a system of yoga which stresses that (a) the universe, with all its objects and localities, is situated in the body and (b) time with all its varieties (viz., day, night, month and year) exists in the body in its process of the prana vayu (the vital wind). It believes that by pranayama (the controlling of the prana vayu) time could be controlled."

As in this case, problems of interpretation are always evident when one tries to apply one's own sociological conventions and cultural predisposition to the obscure musings of the mystic. Naturally a pursuit of a more scholarly interpretation of mystical poetry is no different.

Understanding Tamil Poetry

In Songs of Experience Norman Cutler discusses the problems that western critics have in applying their western set of literary values to the Tamil Bhakti poetry (from which Bhogar's style ultimately develops): "Because bhakti poetry disrespects and even undermines distinctions, it is subversive to certain hallowed principles favored by many literary critics in the West."

In the West poetry generally takes an array of words and phrases, and through extensive ornamentation weaves them together by relying on their decoration to create a sense of order and unity in the work. The ideas and images find integration by dilution, by dulling the sharp-edge of the words with rhetoric. The stark impact of the idea or image is sacrificed when the author employs his lavish display to convey a sense of cohesiveness to his audience.

The western critic lets some Classical sense of order be the judge of beauty. He can rarely penetrate the gaudy mask of ornamentation and discern what substance is there, the many stark and coarser parts of the skeleton that support a shroud of order.

"The bhakti poet and, even more so, the sectarian interpreters of the saints poems offer a challenge to this way of looking at literature. Unlike many Western critics who find multiplicity underlying the superficial appearance of unity, the commentators find unity underlying a seemingly multiple surface."

Just look at our Bhogar: shooting out in rapid fire, a jumble of images that makes the mind's train jump its tracks and go speeding off into the wilderness of the human psyche. His poetry seems but a barrage of images, terse and sharp, that gather momentum in the stillness and silence that frames them on the page. It is the economy of language that empowers the idea and makes the words resonant. Better still are those chasm-like spaces between words that make an image tower over the clutter of our mind's empty noise. The space between words provides us with an opening through which we can escape the tyranny of the mind.

The Gateway of Earth & Stone

At the top of Palani Hill, near the holy Murugan which Bhogar had crafted from nine arsenics, there is an opening in the Earth; it is a hole in the ground; the mouth of a cave which lies below. Bhogar often lowered himself into the Earth, sat in the cave, accessing Life's hidden secrets. He performed great austerities there, the magnitude of which very few in this modern age can fathom.

There at the opening Bhogar erected a humble shrine to the Great Mother: a few yantras, a couple of five-metal icons baring the form of the Mother and her son Murugan. He worshipped a small emerald lingam there, about ten inches in height. His one and only disciple, Pulipani (perhaps the only one who truly understood the sage), kept him company at the entrance to the underground cavern on the top of Palani Hill.

When Bhogar felt that his outer work was done, he entered the gateway of earth and stone and sat down in the darkness of the cave. Faithful Pulipani heaved a stone slab over the entrance, sealing Bhogar forever in the blackness of his earthen womb.

For thirteen generations Pulipani's descendants have watched over that stone slab that marks the gateway to the underground chamber. Long ago, Bhogar's little shrine was set atop that hallowed spot, and even today, is still worshipped by the vigilant sons of the faithful Pulipani.

They say that Bhogar is seated quietly in meditation even now; alone in the darkness; watching the slow passage of time.

His breath is still. His mind is quiet, his heart unwavering; but through the dense dark matter of his earthly form stabs the vibrant & relentless flame of the Kundalini Shakti. There he waits...

BHOGAR'S 7000

Kaapu

He has five hands
and an elephants face.

He has that tusk
like the sweet crescent moon.

He is Siva's son,
the tender leaf of wisdom.

Set within my consciousness
I praise his feet.

1

I praise the feet
of the Elephant-Faced One.

I praise the feet
of God.

I praise the feet
of the mother who gave me birth;
proffering grace
with but a glance.

I praise the feet
of Hari and Brahma.

I praise the feet
of Saraswati.

I praise the Grace-Bestowing Lakshmi's
feet like flowers.

I praise Moolar's feet,
my grandfather
who dwells in
the Sleepless Sleep.

I praise the noble feet
of the kindly Kalangi.

I praise the feet
of the Seers, who have attained
the State of "Without Distinction".

Oh! The fullness of the plentitude of their genuine guard.

2 The History of the Book

It was Siva
who told the 7000.

I just noted down
all of his shastra's secrets.

With seven chapters,
that book

is the King of Gurus;
pouring forth
it's alchemical methods.

I asked for Grandfather's secrets;
and learned

from listening
to the quality
of his direct teaching.

I listened to sweet Kalangi...

and see!
I have put forth
these 7000.
3 Muladhara
By looking
the root seems egg-like in form.
The reason being
is that it is here
that the tri-konam stands.
A ring adorns it's three angles
and outside...
there are four petals.
By approaching
one perceives
the four lotus letters:
the goodly *Va, Cha, Sa, Sha*.
By diving deep
one discovers
the inner light of the triad...
Om-kaara!
Make an effort,
and within it
you'll find *A-kaaram*.

4

Upon the *A-kaaram*
Ganesha stands,
in another angle
the *U-kaaram* stands,
it is in the *U-kaaram*
that Vallabai Shakti stands.
And in one tapering corner
there is the plantain flower.
Below the face
of the *Bhu-kaaram*
is the Kundalini Shakti.
She is like a serpent maiden,
coiled...
And ready to strike.
Having pierced
the Circle's End,
she stands
rejoicing.
This plane
is beyond even
the Sleepless Sleep.

5

This place
is the root level
of existence.
Here stands
a beautiful plantain flower
of eight petals.
To enter
Siva is standing
within her mouth.
The goodly Siva

is just *Si-kaaram*, isn't he?
Like ten thousand suns.
If your action is base
she simply won't open her mouth
and the flower
will be shut.
Oh Son!
In eight petals
there are eight shaktis.
The shaktis are there
to steal your power.
If you ask what their eight names are,
fittingly so,
they'll be...
"Size of an Atom"
"Float on the Air"

6

They'll be...
"Become Great"
"Be Heavy"
With...
"Eternal Sovereignty"
"Mesmerize"
"Attainment"
And...
"Transmigration"
These eight renowned goddesses
stand in the field,
keeping the petals closed.
Who knows why?
They won't let you see Nandi
and rise up.
But you will drink nectar,
the very substance of sky.
As you breath in
say, "*Va*",
and immediately hold the breath.
Then puff away.

7

If you puff
and make the eight shaktis swoon
they'll open all the petals
and go staggering off.
By using the heart of the flower
you'll make them obey
the Mother's commands.
Try to enter it,
and if you see Nandi
your yoga is sure to happen.
But if you argue,
she won't open the door.
She'll keep it shut
for ten years.
Fix the breath within
anyway you can.
If it runs to the left,

say "Va".

You'll get it.

8

In obtaining Nandi
one retains the breath
with "A".

If it runs to the right,

say "Si"

and draw it in.

Keep holding
and retaining

with "A".

The six streets
become level
and are clearly perceived.

Raise it up
and it will appear
like the light of a ruby.

My fine fellow,
at the root

you will see the truth.

Stay put.

Vallabai Shakti will come.

She is glorious
and green in color.

9

The green-hued Vallabai
will become sub-servient
and bow down.

She'll tell you
the appropriate time
for the appropriate chakra.

If the basis of Muladhara
is perfected...

You can go anywhere,
wandering freely
throughout the three worlds.

The dull-hued body
will mellow
and shine.

All impurities
will be removed
and the six chakras
will become visible
to the eye.

In the Sleepless Sleep
all subtlety
can be perceived.

Look and see.

10

What is seen
is the eight elements
merging into four.

In a flash
the flame of the root
can be seen.

The light
of the dark flame
will blind the eyes.
This is when
Ganapati
dances before you.
He will give your yoga
the assurance it needs
by saying,
"Take your time."
He'll relate
the True Polymorph Alchemy
and he'll tell you
the very nature of Sadasiva
by saying,...
"Straightness".
If you stop now,
there goes
your yoga.

11

Don't leave thinking it's over.
Remain at the root.
While going
or while staying...
Concentrate the mind.
Be in a place
where you don't have to listen
to the noise
of other's talk.
Procure
fixing the target
by working
from the outside in.
Don't leave out the breath
thinking it's impossible.
Join your mind
to the root,
establishing it there.
Initially
it seems so difficult,
you'll think it's a waste.
But don't just leave.
With ceaseless effort,
merge the mind.
Concentrate.

12

It is difficult
To get accustomed
to thinking in these terms.
But if you enter within and look,
you are sure to see the fire shining...
(That is, until the mind gets scattered.)
If you see the pure light
you will be happy.
The intertwined
Ida & Pingala

will be joined,
and Shushumna
will rise up
in the center.
The ever approaching
Lord of Death
will become frightened
and run far away.
Every day
will seem like a second.
You'll see.

13

Just by being so inclined,
you can easily
perceive the root.
Retain
the good breath.
Then blow and blow.
In the life-sustaining chakra
stand on and on.
My fine fellow,
If you see Nandi,
then you will know alchemy.
To say even one word
is just noisy useless talk.
It's like having a chat
with a corpse in the burning ground.
Only by seeing the light
of the jeweled root
will the golden chain
of the Circle's End
come open.

14

The time
when the Circle's End
is opened,
the mind
will be subdued.
It will be like
a piece of straw
caught
in a whirlpool.
That becomes
the end of all paths
for climbing the chakras.
The eight great siddhis
will manifest.
Without being spoiled
by the sleep
of the Circle's End,
mount the horse
of measured breath.
But if you die
in the Corner of Degradation,
there will be nothing.

The mounting is difficult
so climb on gently.

15

Mount
by making the five senses
into a pestle.

Escape
by transforming A-kaaram
into the mortar.

Cool off
by letting desire
be the form you grind.
Trap the slippery mind.
Gain strength
by remaining still
and then pulverize the mind completely.

Isn't it tumultuous
when you try to spoil it's work?

Heal
by having both yoga
and wisdom.

Without knowing this,
krores have died.

16

Even having worldly wants,
longing for 10,000 human births.
Even with the desire
for fine dining.

Even with being baffled
by the compelling lust for women.

Even with that hunger for gold
that locks men in delusion.

Even with the intoxication
of seeking security in bondage.

The world beckons...
and all

are bewildered.

Yet
people's mouths
go on speaking
of "wisdom".

17

If you say it's over
then nothing's possible.

Just take a close look
at the precious scriptures.

You'll see
that everyone
who suppressed
the breath
died.

Without
killing yourself
by suppressing the breath,
try asking...

At the steadfast center

in the base of the neck
there is a "bag".
Tirelessly
bind breath
within Vayu's house.
Friend,
the donkey
that is bound and tethered
won't run anywhere.
It is within the sixteen
that the soul's beauty
manifests.

18

At the root
is Ganesha's feet.
Firmly placed,
let the breath
be ignited there.
Inevitably,
if the Pranayama
goes wrong,...
just stop.
Then inhale,
bringing the breath
down
to the floor.
The embryonic
unit of time
goes up and up
and the knowledge
of all the specific symptoms
appears.
But
the one
who allows
the backtracking breath
to escape...
He is not a man.
The word for him...
Is "**cow**".

19

With words
and logic...
you get nothing!
With great strength
hold back the senses
and bind them up.
With great effort
fix the letter
in the two eyes,
establishing the mind
therein.
With a little skill
Breath, the horse,
can be saddled
with *Si*,

Saddle of the Firm Grip.

With silence,
you can hitch
the horse
to the root.

You need only set
the Circle's End alight
and see!

20

Once ignited...
Dine on honey.
Dine on karpam.
Perfect this body
which is the ancient universe.

Once revealed...

Dine on the heavy Moolikai herb.
Purge yourself of filth,
and in one's face
the light of the eye
goes beyond all limits.

Tilt the head

and cough up the phlegm
from the back of the throat.

Remove that which is unripened
from within the layers
of the six realms.

Once starved...

Cleave the five senses
with the sword.

Don't forget...

Both night and day,
you must fix the breath.

21

Fix the path.

Stand at the root.

Don't forget

to stand in the One.

When your clear...

Shake the base of the tree.

Hopping along...

You can climb upwards.

What a wonder!

You can even climb to the peak!

When you have become accustomed
to igniting the root...

You can cross the river,
leaping beyond the Last Outpost.

Raise the Twelve Inch Flame
and enter it.

Knowing Sound's End
you will reach the goal.

22

By joining the Sahasrara lotus flower
you reach and mount the Moon's sphere.

Entering there...

The sumptuous mind

is plucked
by the one with an elephant's face.
To Vallabai,
she who manifests herself as Kundalini,
to that mother...
Even from far away...
worship those feet
with incense
and many twinkling lamps.
Do service;
and by employing discrimination...
Even from far away...
you can give freely
the Milk of Soma
and can fix Victory's banner.
There at the base
hitch your horse.

23

Once bound,
offer your folded hands
to Mother Kundalini.
Place Ganapati and Vallabai
in your mind
and say...
*"Give me the path
to come crashing
against the bud
making it open."*
By embracing
the eight sharp-edged shaktis
it's all over.
Gather nectar
and drink.
Friend,
It's by abandoning "doing"
that they open the door.
Take the leap...
Bow down
and praise Nandi's feet.
All the means for rising
will easily manifest.

24

Nandi can come here easily.
Being friendly,
he will give
the eight into eight;
the sixty-four.
The malleable alchemy
will stand before you
with folded arms.
The hidden essence
will appear explicit
and complete.
Happily,
the body reaches the state
where it ceases

to decay.
Fixing thought
you become merged
in Him.
You see
the dance of He,
whom they say
drank poison.
The wonder!
Being merged
in the sound
of his anklets!
25
Being free...
Don't fall
into Longing's fire.
Every day
see Vedanta
to the very end.
Don't engage others
in unnecessary
idle chatter.
Play dumb,
but watch
very very carefully.
Don't kill,
lie,
or spread confusion.
Merge
and thereby mount
the horse
of measured breath.
Don't let the delirious libation
of the ego
destroy you.
Remove illusion.
26
Once removed...
The senses are severed
and completely rejected.
In the morning
push the sleepiness out
and eat...
Lifting in-breath
and out-breath.
Adorn then
the Self
with measures
of breathlessness,
awareness
born of itself.
This is the attack...
and a flood of nectar
comes in response,
so eat...
Strip off your mantle

of attachment
and aversion.
Proffer an even row
of Pranayamas.
Don't forget
to stay firmly set
upon the path.

27

Having done so...
Study the mind carefully
by fixing thought.
Don't let the senses
confuse you.
You'll see Ganesha.
Gather flowers,
do puja,
and knock.
Cultivate mindfulness
and retain the breath.
How suitable...
"Om Shreem Hreem Kleem!"
Higher still, to spell out...
"Gum Gum Ganapati!"
How quickly Nandi shines
like ten thousand suns.
If you see
the light
in the Good Circle...
Death won't dance.

28

In asking
what acts
without desire...
Fine sound
and touch,
form
and smell,
taste unhindered...
All the senses five.
The mind
should go along
the proper path:
Incessantly clinging
to discrimination,
without ever letting go.
You liberate the senses
by chopping them off
and throwing them away.
Touch nothing!
Get rid of your ears!
Don't ask
even a single word!...
Then look all around you.

29

Look around...
And hear yet the test.

Without eyes sparkling
one cannot see the form.
Fire it up and see...

If you keep
the nostrils shut,
the fertile scent
won't be discerned.

Feed it and see...

If you drop salt
into your mouth,
it is completely salty.

One perceives there
only that salty taste.
Cause an ant to climb
and see...

If it climbs slowly
upon your body,
it is knowledge too
that has climbed
to a point
where sensation
is perceived.

30

If you get the mind
to stand separate
from the Self,
then you will have the discrimination
of the Divine Minister of Knowledge.
At your leisure,
engage the mind
in your daily Pranayama.

Rise
and climb upwards.

Inhale in the left nostril,
then let the breath ripen
as you retain it at the root.

Don't fail
to inhale sharply
through the right.

Then keep the breath
standing at the root.

Clearly perceiving the other shore,
climb up and up.

31

It was my Grandfather
who said,

"Climb and see."

But it was
Kalangi Nathar
who gave me birth.

Patanjali,

Viyagiramar,

and Sivayogi Muni

all so rightly said,

"Look!

This is the path!"

They explained
how to mount
and go beyond.
And it was
the Great Mother supreme
who said,
"This is it!"
Having become calm...
I perceived the accompanying experience.
Having experienced...
I have composed 7000.

32

Fixing
the *Si*-kaaram letter,
Yogis
contemplate it
outside.
But True Knowledge
is not something
to be amassed
and held.
There are those who talk;
bantering,
"Blah, Blah, Blah",
in empty space.
Lingering on...
With just one word,
70,000
have gone to hell.
Entering birth
is being washed out to sea.
But becoming ripened,
the Siddhars all,
speak the *Si*
within the root.
There,
in contemplation
and meditation
they can see.

33

By meditation and inner restrain
they perform worship.
The sound
of the drum
and the conch
is heard
in the ears.
Those who meditate
hear the sound
of the anklet's
movement.
They see
the performance
of Chidambaara's
great dance.
Those who meditate

drink endlessly
from the torrent
of Satchitananda
that Devi pours forth.
Those who meditate daily
fix the chain
of the firm mind
to Siva & Devi's feet.

34

Once you fix the mind's chain
You need only lock it up
and you will become
joyous bliss complete.
Once locked...
retaining the breath,
they stand
as the Immovable Pillar.
Aiyaa!

In that single instant
when the mind is fixed,
they seek out the Sound's End
in the vastness of space.
Having raised
the Twelve-inch Flame,
it is entered.

There they offer worship
residing at the Sound's End.

35 Svadishtana

Having worshiped the root
and leapt beyond,
one learns that there
is a trepidatious four inches
scaled in the leaping.

The Lord
has made this
Brahma's house.
What is spoken of
as Svadishtana
is its name.

Superscribed
about its four circles
there are six petals.
In those petals
there are letters fixed...

Ba, Bha, Ma, Ya, Ra, La.

And appropriately,
the seed in the center
is *Na-La*.

36

The letter *Na*
also belongs to Brahma.
But the letter *La*
is the Earth's seed.
While the letter *Bhu*
is the dwelling place
of Turiya and the like.

It manifests itself
as the celebrated Veda.
The letter A
is the swan vehicle.
It's color is golden.
One aspect
of Brahma's action
operates upon
hair and bone,
flesh and skin,
and the nerves.
These five.

37

At the side
of Golden-colored Brahma
who rules the five,
stands the deathless Vaani.
Know this!
The protective
Four-faced Lord
who gives
Abaaya & Vatham
is beautiful.
With a yogi's armrest,
waterpot,
and rosary.
With the soft petals
of the lotus
strung onto
a garland of jewels.
With nine telling gems
that adorn his crown.
Perfect your meditation
and stop the breath.
Let the Noble Silence
be the mantra you recite.
There contemplate...

38

Having contemplated...
Meditate upon Saraswati.
Praise her.
To empower your ascent
ask for truth.
She alone
is the mother
who confers all knowledge.
The Treasure of Compassion
the mother who wears the tongue.
Having come before you,
one would be a fool
ever to leave.
Zealously
standing in her presence
one becomes free.
The Virgin Goddess
reveals the perfection

of yoga and alchemy,
immortality and wisdom,
just by batting her eyelids.

39

Having spoken thus...
Meditate,
placing the breath there.
As you pull it in,
say, "*Na*",
place it,
and then retain it.
The fine letter *Na*
has given birth
to thousands.
They say it is
the Forest
of Good and Wicked Acts.
They say that
to leave birth behind
one should gather
the appropriate flowers,
perform aarchana,
and sing praises.
Then leave
the holy realm
of the Four-faced One
and enter
the sacred realm
of holy Maal,
who measured
the Earth.

40 Manipura

Holy Maal's house
is six inches
upward.
A fortress
shaped
like the flawless crescent,
surrounded
by ten petals,
white as milk.
The petals I speak of
have ten letters...
Da, Dha, Nna, Ta, Tha, Dda, Ddha
of the tongue;
and the unwavering
Na, Pa, Fa.
In the center
of the element water
stands a Banyan Tree
called *Ma*.
It's seed: *Va*
can be realized.

41

In the realized House of Manipura
is where the Sleepless Sleep abides.

The inseparable left-hand side
of the Yajur Veda
is of an undiminishing
crystalline color.
The six ripened tastes
will be perceived.
The five will manifest:
water-like secretions,
marrow & blood,
brain & the excited seed.
There is the great conch,
the chakra,
and the vehicle
Garuda.

42

The vehicle manifests.
As does He,
the one
by Lakshmi's side.
With breath
hold and retain *Ma*.
With great weight
say, "*Om Namo Narayana*".
Adjust yourself.
Repeat the name.
Offer your prayerful hands.
This body,
that is all the universe,
the Mother protects.
In the Concealment's Confusion,
the Mother
is spinning round.
Beauty,
all that which compels us,
became the house.
It is the ancient
that resides
within the ripened house.

43

This house
became
the Shakti of Concealment's house.
So many enjoyments
and desire
abandoned
this house.
The withered mind
fretted away in
this house.
All manner of illusion
dwells in
this great house.
Neutral thought destroyed,
lost in a ghost's dance,
the girl is sought,
while wandering about,

throughout
this vast house.
Caste
is completely decimated
in this house.
Become assimilated.
Retain the breath...
And attack!
44
By attacking...
The Flower of the Moon's Orb,
Sahasrara's lotus petals,
are worn.
With all
the remaining incense
and twinkling lamps,
use the mind properly,
do the mental worship.
You can make it happen;
just by saying,
*"Grant me the grace
to climb."*
Say,
*"Grant me the eight siddhis.
Send them to me."*
Get rid of the five senses
and the organs along with them.
Say,
*"Stop me
from siding with them."*
Worship this way.
45
By doing this...
Maal & Lakshmi's
minds will be pleased.
They'll give you the siddhis.
They'll tell you
why it's important
to climb slowly.
They'll tell you
how action
is timely done,
so that you
may gain
the joyous body
beyond death.
They'll tell you the truth
about making your yoga
steadfast.
For subtlety...
They'll announce
from limb to limb
all the aspects
of Ashtanga Yoga,
and how one goes about
employing it

to stir up
the Self.
46 Anahata
Just climb up
eight inches
beyond Knowledge
and listen
for the House of Anahata.
To break in
a triangle stands,
a ripened circle,
and twelve petals.
Consider...
Ka, Kha, Ga, Gha, Nga, Cha, Chha
And that which is named...
Ja, Jha, Nya, Ta, Tha.
For completion
the letters
stand
within the ripened petals.
There is found
the Upwards Sleep.
47
The Shikaara letter
is in the middle.
It is the Aanmai.
It is the element fire,
coppery-red in color.
The fire's seed
is *Ram*.
The light of Om
is like 10,000 suns.
Rudra and Rudri
stand in the middle.
In asking
what their qualities are...
Veracious eating,
sloth,
fear,
and sleep.
48
As for sleep...
Wake up!
And softly join
the girl.
My friend,
It is Siva & Uma's duty
to give the Five Delights.
Growing upwards
there is
the jeweled throne.
Together with Uma,
He of the Matted Locks,
with deer and club,
and the striped tiger skin.
Effulgent

like 10,000 suns.
He who supports.
Smeared with sacred ash.
God of Gods!
The Compassionate One
wearing a snake
for an ornament.

49

Meditate on him.
Place the breath
at the pillar
and say,
"Om Aam Aum Sivaya Namaha".
Say, *"Om"*
and there contemplate
the feet
of Mother Rudri.
Make the rigid mind
compatible.
Say, *"Aam"*
and employ knowledge
to push aside
the five senses.
Say, *"The Mother
without beginning or end."*
Say, *"Give me
the grace
of your glance."*
And keep
the cautious mind
in the light.

50

That light is Nandi.
It becomes the vehicle.
It becomes one limb
of the Sam Veda.
Leap over
the Merry Milk of Lust.
Grey hair and wrinkles,
the clouded eye and inert space
are to be destroyed
and wonder
is to be
poured forth.
One who holds to it,
watching His dance,
sees the meager dance
of all wisdom
as a waste.
Retain
with an aim
and watch carefully.

51

Observe carefully...
At the prop
in the middle,

an effulgence
will be seen.
It is just like how,
to the eagle,
the target is visible
even at night.
Concentrate...
Fetter your mind
to His feet.
With knowledge
stay in the stillness.
Systematically...
Ask which path
to climb,
and receive
the 8x8 siddhis.
Being molded...
Listen to all
of the alchemical secrets.
Ask specifically
for the path
to the Perfection of Deathlessness.
52

But without having to ask...
the Moon's Sphere
will be entered.
Without delay...
Pluck a flower
from the vine
and place it
at the feet
of Shiva and Shakti.
The undistorted mind
shall merge
into the soles
of the sacred feet.
Don't just sit there!
Think the mantra!
Think the mantra!
Don't forget the breath!
Fix it
and lock it.
Residue still remains...
Get rid of it!
With incense and lamps
praise God,
and then bid him
"Adieu".
You can climb
easily now.

53 Vishuddha
Having Climbed...
One finds
that there is a twelve inch jump,
a rising,
to the Shrine of Vishuddha.

It transforms itself
into a six-pointed star
and a circle.

The Great One
has sixteen petals
for it's six points.

In the petals
there are letters:

A & Aa

I & Ee

U & Oo

The ever present...

Ru & Roo

Lu with Loo

Becoming the support...

Ae-Ai

Oh-Au

Am-Aha!

54

In the beginning was *A*,
placed as the first
of the sixteen letters.

In the center
of the six points
the letter *Va* stands.

In the beginning *Va* stood
as Maheshwar and Maheshwari.

It is the realm
of the Great Dream.

In the beginning *Bhum*
became the element wind.

In the beginning
the renowned
seed-syllable *Ya*
became the Atharva Veda.

With a good mind
one can establish
the vehicle.

55

It is His duty
to establish friendship.

Walking and running,
lying inert
in a drunken stupor,
remaining in stillness,
and being in a state
of equanimity.

Ask the details
for sustaining
these states.

Adorning ourselves,
eating,

listening to our desires,
bubbling with anger,
and fighting...

The baring of these burdens

becomes like a running race.

But if you see
the very flesh
of *Om-kaara*.
The mouth of the spirit
will open.
Of this I'm sure.
You'll see.

56

Surely,
the Six Tastes
are in the mouth.
These tastes
are only present
in the mouth
and not beyond.
Friend,
the Circle Supreme
is in the base.
The Supreme Base
is ever of fine quality.
The Grand Finale
is pulling out
the eight weeds.
Equally join
the flawless four
into itself.
Undoubtedly,
you'll see
all the chakras.
Friend,
you are invited
to enter into the four.

57

You bring *Va*
within the four
as food.
The primordial
Om Nama Sivaya
sends breath upwards
into the House of the Wind.
Adding drop by drop,
bound up within
it shan't escape.
With the 16 surfaces
spread wide,
the natural beauty
of the soul
will manifest.
Because of the abundance
of the soul's beauty
one will evoke superbly
and become skilled.

58

Becoming skillful
one relishes the taste.

The soul's beauty remains,
and eight merges into four.
Being in the outer world,
four becomes space.
The beautiful soul
and the intellect
waned like the moon.
Becoming empty,
grey haired,
and wrinkled;
it dies.
But they will not see
the good soul's departure.
For an instant
the sound
will be discerned
in the neck.
Along with the specifics
of Obscuration's Dance.
59

Standing
in the House of the Wind,
remain still;
and lock the chain
to the Holy Mother's feet.
In the Golden Moon Mandala,
with flowers
salute her.
Worship her feet
and lock the breath.
Say, "*Give me the means
to climb up
the steps of the ladder.*"
Praise the pure
Principle of Intelligence.
Ask the way
to the Perfection of Alchemy,
to the Perfection of Yoga,
to the Perfection of the Great Deathlessness,
vast as space.
60

The path will manifest.
Think the mantra
again and again.
Don't forget
to embrace the breath
and lock it within.
It is attainable by all...
Just say A,
and if you remain
retaining the breath...
Mother and Father
will be pleased at heart.
The path will manifest
and they'll tell you
the alchemical process.

They'll tell you
the process
of climbing with the breath.
Then leave the abode
of the vibrant Maheshwar.
Just rise upwards
going eleven inches above.
Climb.

61 Ajna

Having climbed up
to the center of the eyebrows,
something will stand there
exceeding the vastness
of the universe.

Climb up it's tail.

It is like

a circular house.

There will be a ring

with *Ha* and *La*

for it's petals.

Use them

to climb to the center

where you will find

the letter *Ya*.

Climb upwards with *Va*,

the elemental seed of the ethers,

and you will find

Manomani and Sadasiva

standing before you.

This state

is the House of Awakening.

62

This house has

the color of the cloud.

It's role

is to cultivate the five:

lust and anger,

withering miserliness,

delusion,

and imposing jealousy.

Come closer

and you'll see

the Four-faced One,

Maal,

Siva,

and Maheshwar

guarding well

the four directions.

But it is Sadasiva that rules,

he is the captain...

And if you've seen the captain,

you've seen everything.

63

If you see the captain,

all of your doubts

will be resolved.

The tunic of desire and differentiation
will be abandoned.
Those who see the captain,
merge with the Mother.
They see the nature
of Satchitananda.
Those who see the captain,
attain the perfections all.
A bandit at the captain's side
can even steal the five colors.
My friend,
the captain cannot be seen
by any other means.
Naturally,...
He'll tell you
how to fix the breath.

64

Having said this,
Ajna will manifest.
In this chakra
relish Manomani
as she is spelled out
before you.
Listen to the mantra
I tell you secretly...
The uniting...
Ka Ea Ee La Hreem
and in the middle...
Ha Sa Ka La Hreem
and then...
Sa Ka La Hreem
These are the three parts
of the Panchadaasakshaari,
the fifteen letters.
Spell them out carefully...
And set yourself
on fire!

65

Being set aflame...
If you see the Mother's feet,
all of your devilish delusions
will be destroyed.
Being fixed...
Eight will be added to four,
and all the siddhi's
of Sound's End
will manifest
in an instant.
Being locked...
You can enter the body
of your loved one.
You can cross the Hair Bridge
over the River of Fire.
Being lengthened...
You come to know that
which needs no support,

and the symbol
becomes clearly defined in thought.
66

To think of it...

-is to absorb the five senses.

-is to have disease,

old age and death,

grey hair and wrinkles

depart.

"Neighing" like a horse...

-one can,

in the blink of an eye,

quickly recapture

the departing soul.

By embracing it...

-one maintains it,

even in the waking state.

-one sees the Mother

dancing with the Father.

Being prosperous...

-those who have perfected

service, action, and yoga

become wisdom itself.

67 The Guru's Feet

You leap behind

even that part of the self

that is the Mother.

Listen

as I tell you

of the Lonely Place

eight inches above.

There

strive to unite

with the Guru's feet...

In the 1008 petals

is the pentacle "Invincible".

All the five...

the *A*-kaaram,

the *U*-kaaram,

the *M*-kaaram,

the full spectrum of vibration,

and the bindu

stand within these five angles.

You will see.

68

Look at the *Om*-kaara.

It becomes pure light

and rises upwards.

It assumes a form

that is bodiless and undefiled.

Place within it

the spreading breath,

expanding outwards.

If you want the union

to take place,

don't let it run

out of control.
Stop it and see into it.
Let it be said outright...
The thing in the beginning,
the Self
that is the very basis of Vedanta,
one need not even try
to comprehend.

69 Gayatri

It is called
"the Incomprehensible Brahmarantiram".
It is clear as crystal.
The path
cannot be had
by striving.
Eternal,
yet fleeting,
it is without form.
It is Truth...
eternal,
unstained,
and ever full.
This fullness
of Satchitananda
cannot be simply plucked
like a flower.

Rarely spoken of...

It is the Pathless Path:

Niranjanaaya Vidmahe

Niraabaasaaya Dhimahi

Soonukshma Prachodaayat.

70

They being light,
repeat the twenty-four syllables
which stand
as the crystalline gayatri.
Without letting the mind
run along the sense organs path,
call the breath to you,
stop it's movement,
and place it there.
That region
becomes light,
as one in stillness
retains the breath.
Repeat the Chitsarupa Gayatri,
sever earthly birth,
and you will become
absorbed in fullness.
No more going.
No more coming.
Only That
which is manifest.

71 Dwadashanta (the Twelve-inch Flame)

In climbing above
there is the Twelve-inch Flame.

Running along that path,
one divides the eleven and sees...
The gracious Mother Unmai,
with the eight siddhis,...
Parai, full of grace,
and He who is the supreme.
I've clearly revealed these eleven,
and that is not easy...
considering "I", my lowly self,
have not seen it.
But the gracious Nandi
has so nicely established it
in these 7000.
That which "I"
have not seen.

72

You will see
all of the hidden pathways.
It is difficult,
but if you bite
onto the tip of the nose
there will be union.
If you eat without eating
and firmly focus your gaze
within the nape of the neck
you will see what is there.
One sees
that Kundalini Yoga
is not crooked.
Fix your gaze.
You will see
the eleven
and the One.
When you look
into the center,
it is not a coy thing.
There the good Siva
with Rudra
are shining
like 10,000 suns.

73

It all happens
in accordance
with what is written
in the book
that is likened unto the Sun.
When you get acquainted
with how the breath
spreads and flows,
and when you have seen
the Word
that is likened unto the Sky...
All will become fertile,
baring the tender coconut
in vast abundance.
Then one wonders...

"What's the use
of a coconut
to a dog
like me?"
This is the time
to look
upon the goodness
of one's yogic attainments.
Look to the very end
of that
which is Kingly Divinity,
and listen to the method
of the residing breath.

74

Listen.

At the root
you are spewing forth
Va-kaaram.
Down deep
do worship.
Si-kaaram won't leave you.
Breath in.
Breath in for a long time,
then exhale and see...
In the stainless Kundalini
Nandi will be perceived.
My useful friend,
There
see the Word
which comes
from Nandi.
For the great siddhis eight
and jnana...
daily you must place the breath
with the *Ma-kaaram* mantra.
You have seen
the finer path,
now see
that you
establish it.

75

Being established...
after leaping the root,
one reaches
the Abode of Kanchan.
Being merged,
fix your gaze
upon *Va-kaaram*.
When *Si-kaaram*
shines within,
exhale.
Then your past births
will leave you.
Because the proprietous
Four-faced One is seen,
one can take the leap

from Kanchan's abode.

Then embrace
the Realm of Maal.

76

Having embraced Him,
one becomes filled up
with *Va-kaaram*.

This becomes
the Great Tapas:
exhaling from within
the *Si-kaaram*.

Being expansive...

The five grey hairs
are removed.

Then you will become
a boy again.

Sixteen years of age
you'll be.

Slithering on,
you can cross over Maal
into Rudra's abode.

Fix awareness
on the sensation of breath
and attack.

Once brought in,
then exhale the *Si-kaaram*.

The body
will run red
and the siddhi
will manifest.

77

The siddhi being manifest,
leap from Rudra's abode
entering the clear realm
of Maheshwar.

Remain still
and inhale
the elephantine *Va-kaaram*.

Then from within that
exhale *Si-kaaram*.

You will become
a ten year old boy.

It is said
that this

is like
becoming
the myrobalam fruit.

Become like a bellows.

Practice Siva Yoga.

You'll have
all the Medicines of Energy
in no time.

78

In no time
you will leap past
Maheshwar's abode.

Stand
in the encircling
Sadasiva.
Position
the irrefutable *Si-kaaram*
and gaze into it.
The departure
of the Great Awareness
will come to pass.
At the feet of Mother Manomani,
she who will not punish her children,
one should be watchful
with the same care
as when one places the breath.
The True Knowledge,
beyond disdain,
is actually
formless.
The True Fragrance
you are sure
to manifest.
79
If you stand
at the Guru's feet,
Breath,
called, "the Long Siva Yoga",
will be offered as food.
One comes to witness
the Mother's vast plentitude
that is all existence.
The eternal path
of applying
the *Va & Sa* letters,
being what is on hand,
is applied both here and there.
Intelligently
observe the mind,
and the attainment
will be great.
The fiery poison
that has been removed,
will be severed completely,
and a unique abundance
will manifest
as the Principle of Intelligence.
80 Bhogar's Leap Into the Universe
As the Principle of Intelligence itself
I leapt into the universe.
Nandi clearly elucidated
the nature of the universe.
For the sake of all beings
there is a path
that becomes a vehicle
for the five senses.
The universe that appeared before me
was arranged in layers.

Grandfather said,
"Enter the tenth one."
I took what was given me
and put it in my mouth.
Another bunch
of mercurial amalgams
I tied onto my wrist.
Off I went.
Entering the universe
of fire and light.
94 (In Conclusion)
Invite the breath,
the outer space,
to come within your house.
If you are unwavering,
placing it there
as though you were
putting oil in a lamp,...
They shall meet.
Breath and God
becoming one.
Like wind becoming breath
there is no individual intelligence.
The Great Awareness becomes Siva.
He and breath
merge into one.
It is this light becoming breath
that redeems the soul.
Surely this is the truth
of Siva Yoga!
95
In fact...
There is no perfection
as easy as this...
My dear lad,
there is nothing else!
There have been so very many souls
throughout time, that even if
you searched this whole Earth,
you shan't find them all.
Subtle
and yet of high regard
this breath.
The Sound's End
manifests easily...
The Subtle manifests...
The generous Alchemists,
the Siddhars,
the Rishis,
the Yogis...
They are like the breath.
There is nothing to be accomplished.
Turn back
and look.

WHAT

IT

ALL

MEANS...

Kaapu ("protection")

Tamil works, like most Hindu works, often begin with an opening invocation to Ganesha, the Lord of Obstacles.

This same verse appears as the Kaapu of Tirumoolar's Tirumantiram, but some believe that it is a latter addition. As to whether Bhogar selected this verse as his opening is also in question.

The fifth hand of the elephant-headed god is the Tutikai, his trunk. I mention this only to point out some of the associations of Ganesha's trunk in the Saiva Siddhanta tradition...

A lovely verse of Moolar's dealing with the Kundalini's mysteries makes reference to the Tutikai...

"Left hand.

Right hand.

Both hands...

Change!

If you eat

With the Hand of Worship

you need not be depleted.

If you abandon sleep

and become a realized adept

you need not die.

You can live forever."

Tutikai means "the elephant's trunk" but its literal meaning is a combination of the verb tuti "to worship" and kai "hand", "the Hand of Worship".

Tirumoolar here speaks of eating amrita, the nectar of immortality, "the very substance of sky". When you eat with the left or right hand, with ida and pingala nadi, you dine upon the dual throng. Pleasure and pain is served in endless helpings, and your menu is limited.

When one allows the prana to stretch forth the Tutikai one can reach nectar. Ganesha seated in Muladhara, can, with his trunk, that is Shushumna Nadi scoop up helpings of nectar on one's behalf.

1

Bhogar refers to Moolar (Tirumoolar) when speaking of his grandfather "dwelling in the Sleepless Sleep".

Throughout the tradition the Siddhars speak with supreme reverence for the fourth state: Turiya, "the Sleepless Sleep".

There are four primary states of consciousness:

1. Nanavu: IA Jaagrata "the waking state; consciousness"
2. Kanavu: IA Swapna "the dream state; sub-consciousness"
3. Tookam: IA Sushubdi "the deep sleep state; unconsciousness"
4. Turiya: IA Turiya "the conscious sleep state; the sleepless sleep"

The first three states are within the sphere of our daily experience, while the fourth state is accessed only when the mind, ever imposing definitions, ever striving to organize phenomena, becomes quiet, entranced, at rest, "asleep". While consciousness, pure and unswayed by assumption, becomes awake to objective reality, and stands as a witness to life, essentially as it is.

"And Mind too is unconscious according to Vedanta. For all that is not the conscious self is the unconscious object.

This does not mean that it is unconscious in itself. On the contrary all is essentially conscious, but that it is unconscious because it is the object of the conscious self. For mind limits Consciousness so as to enable man to have finite experience. There is no Mind without consciousness as its background, though supreme Consciousness is Mindless (Amanah). Where there is no mind (Amanah), there is no limitation. Consciousness remaining in one aspect unchanged changes in its other aspect as an active Power which manifests as Mind and Body. Man then is Pure Consciousness (Cit) vehicled by its Power as Mind and Body."

This enigmatic fourth state is this limitless consciousness Sir John Woodroffe speaks of in his The Serpent Power, but there is a fifth state even more of an enigma than The Sleepless Sleep. Rarely spoken of, they call it Turiyaatitam "Beyond the Sleepless Sleep". It is the super-conscious state, the universal mind, where there is no object, only one vast and luminous self-awareness that contains within it all things.

2

The poet begins by informing his readers that those secrets contained within his verse are what he apprehended while seated in the presence of the Divine, as though Siva himself gave Bhogar a glimpse of some sacred work,

written by the very hand of God, and containing all of the secrets of the universe.

As mentioned earlier, these eighty-two verses are taken from Bhogar's collection of 7000 which, he tells us here, he has drawn from "the divine book" that maps out the movement of the individual awareness through all of the thousand-fold manifestations of spirit on each of the seven planes. Hence his reference is presented in seven chapters, a thousand verses each.

In The Poets of the Powers, Kamil Zvelbil gives us a list of the names of twenty-five Tamil Siddhas and their caste-origin which he acquired through some unspecified source. Popular legend speaks of Bhogar as being of Chinese origin. Most scholars dismiss this claim as hear-say, yet Zvelbil presents this one obscure and vital thread which substantiates this legend.

Bhogar's caste is listed as *Cinatecakkuyavar*, 'a Chinese potter'. His guru Kalangi also appears on the list as *Cinattuacari*, 'a Chinese preceptor'.

Perhaps Bhogar's relationship with Kalangi began in the old country in some Chinese Tantric school. Certainly many of Bhogar's verses convey a faint whispering of Taoist thought, not to mention the outstanding correspondences found between the Siddhar tradition & the Taoist alchemical schools of the period.

Kalangi was a poet in his own right, composing the Kalangi Nanavinda Rahasiyam-30, and using his other name Kamalamuni, he composed the Kamalamuni Nanasuttiram-76.

3

"By looking

the root seems egg-like in form."

The word *Moolam* can mean either "root" or "source". It refers to the Muladhara, the chakra or nerve plexus found at the base of the spine. The Muladhara is the starting point of the journey of consciousness, as awareness is propelled up the Shashumna Nadi by the force of the awakened Kundalini energy which lies in its dormant state in Muladhara. In speaking of Muladhara and this journey of consciousness the great tantric dictum

"What is here is everywhere.

What is not here is nowhere."

becomes essential to understand the process of the transmutation of consciousness, where the beginning is the perfect reflection of the end.

When Bhogar begins his description of this journey of consciousness he begins at its root, Muladhara. He describes the root as being egg-like. The expression he uses is another Tamil word adopted from the Sanskrit. The word *Anndam* carries a double meaning. One being "egg", which implies unmanifest potential; while the other, "universe", represents the completeness of that potential made manifest. So this opening verse could also be translated...

"By looking

the root is like the universe."

The movement of consciousness is like the movement of sound. Like a single note alighting on the air. It's essential quality does not change, it expands. How does consciousness, a solitary point of awareness, this primordial egg, become the universe?

"Nada is the first produced movement in the ideating cosmic consciousness leading up to the Sound-Brahman (Sabda-Brahman), whence all ideas, the language in which they are expressed (Sabda), and the objects (Artha) which they denote, are derived.

"Bindu literally means a point and the dot (Anusvara), which denotes in Sanskrit the nasal breathing. It is placed in the Chandra-bindu nasal breathing above Nada. In its technical Mantra sense it denotes the state of active Consciousness or Shakti in which the "I" or illuminating aspect of Consciousness identifies itself with the total "This". It subjectifies the "This", thereby becoming a point (Bindu) of consciousness with it."

4

There is a universe within a speck of dust or a single grain of sand; universes within universes. Likewise the whole universe flows within the sap of the root Muladhara.

By diving deep one discovers the light of *Om-kaara*; a triad of sound that creates, sustains, and dissolves the universe. It is a triad of the three sacred letters that unite to form the cry of the living universe, "A-U-M". All things born, all things living, all things dying are contained within the sounds that form this triangle at Muladhara.

Shashumna, like the sacred thread, the holy vestment of the Brahmin, is said to be a three-fold, one within the other: Shashumna (the subtle), Vajra (the jewel or thunderbolt), and the innermost Chitrini. In the tantric work Sat-Chakra-Nirupa it says that near the mouth of Shashumna's inner nadi, Vajra, and at the pericarp of the Muladhara "there shines the beautifully luminous and soft, lightning-like triangle which is Kama-rupa" (i.e. that which causes Kama, "desire/love" to be felt). The triangle is said to contain a wind (Vayu) named Kandarpa which holds within the three points of the triangle every point in the universe. Kandarpa is a name of Kama, the God of Love.

*"The ignorant prate that Love and Siva are two,
But none do know that Love alone is Siva.
When men but know that Love and Siva are the same,
Love as Siva, they e'er remain."*

The three points of the triangle are formed by the movement of sound from A to U to M. The pure awareness of Siva encompassing all pours forth and is expressed in the dynamic power of Shakti which manifests as matter, the field in which consciousness plays.

*"By One letter all worlds became;
By Two letters (A&U), He the Two became Siva and Shakti;
By Three letters (A,U,&M), He the light became;
By letter M was Maya ushered in."*

When beginning the journey at the root of consciousness, Bhogar tells us that one meets the masculine principle standing upon the syllable A in the form of Ganesha, the Lord of Gateways. His consort Vallabhai Shakti stands upon U and a line unites them. Their union bares an issue. Bhogar tells us that this issue is each one of us, we who stand upon the syllable *Bhu*, we who stand upon the Earth.

Instead of using the *Ma* that is Maya the Mother, he uses *Bhu* that is the Sanskrit word for the Mother Earth, or perhaps he intended to employ a purer Tamil reading of the character. Then it would read as "*Pu*", perhaps inferring the Tamil word for flower "Poo". Whatever was his intent (that clever fellow stacked the deck with endless layers of hidden meaning) he chose to draw attention to the lower point of the triangle, draw attention to the birth of all manifestation as the plantain flower.

*"And in one tapering corner
there is the plantain flower."*

Leaving out the *Ma*, he says that here beneath the face of *Bhu*, at the very root of earthly existence, one finds the Kundalini Shakti, dangerous and serpentine. Just to bring awareness here is enough to make her enter Shashumna. Just to bring awareness here is to reach the root of consciousness; that place beyond even the sleepless sleep. Shashumna in Sanskrit means literally "the Subtle"; while Sulimulai, the Tamil word for Shashumna Nadi, means "the Circle's End". This term perhaps refers to the circle around this triangle from which Shashumna rises upwards, or perhaps the term infers that Shashumna is the path through which one escapes the endless cycle of death and rebirth.

5-6

Numerologically, the number eight refers to the initial interaction of the four basic elements that leads to their diffusion into the multitude of manifest forms that constitute this universe. As long as the basic elements are perceived in their essential state consciousness is unified, but once this interaction takes place (at least at far as perception & interpretation in concerned) consciousness is diffused into the permutations of manifest matter and thus subject to the limitations of nature's laws.

Manifestation is presided over by 8 Shaktis, who are personifications of the 8 siddhis (siddhi meaning "power" or "perfection"). These Shaktis stand outside of, yet dictate, nature's laws and the laws of human limitation. To perceive the root level of existence (to perceive manifest matter, this Earth, reduced to its 4 essential elements and their initial eight-fold interaction) is to look over creation from the outside in. It is to see the clockworks of the universe and sidestep the barrier that superscribes manifestation.

This state is one of vast perspective; it just precedes the dawning of true wisdom, and it is this lack of wisdom which puts the Yogi in a dangerous position... where the shaktis may try to steal one's power.

This danger, *this temptation of the 8 siddhis*, may be explained thus: Imagine having the insight born of closely observing the constituents of all the circumstances that cause the varieties of human response. We are the products of our environment. Our environment defines who we are. Our sense of self, our sense of who and what we are, arises in response to a set of ever changing circumstances. What if one were to perceive that pattern, manipulate those circumstances and, by extension, the outlook of others for personal gain? What drastic repercussions would ensue?

When gaining this initial perspective over the fundamental laws that govern the universe's operation one is tempted by these Shaktis to disregard such laws and to misuse one's insight, abandoning the path of integrating the individual self into the Absolute.

These siddhis are mentioned again and again in India's vast & varied array of literatures. An examination of these 8 siddhis complemented by a study of the writings of Mystics and Yogis reveals that, though these powers are predominantly taken at face value to infer an ability to manipulate matter and influence external phenomena through an act of will, these siddhis conform perfectly to the various narratives of the inner experiences of the Mystic. To the Mystic, the descriptions of these siddhis speak of the way in which consciousness, unfettered by linear thinking,

becomes malleable, flows out and returns, expands and contracts, how it, by its own nature, adjusts and harmonizes itself to the oscillations of circumstance. It (consciousness) savours any object placed within its scope by pouring itself into that object, becoming all that the senses perceive, all that the mind creates, and still its essential nature remains constant and its purity undefiled.

The siddhis are always spoken of as a great stumbling block, something extremely dangerous, and yet a precious commodity; not as "the goal" in and of themselves, but as a tool for perceiving the vastness of existence both subjectively and in its entirety.

Tirumoolar describes the siddhis in verse 668 of the Tirumantiram...

"To become tiny as the atom within atom (Anima)

To become big in unshakable proportions (Mahima)

To become light as vapour in levitation (Laghima)

To enter into other bodies in transmigration (Prapti)

To be in all things, omni-pervasive (Prakamya)

To be lord of all creation in omnipotence (Isatvam)

To be everywhere in omnipresence (Vasitvam)

---These eight are the Siddhis Great."

Bhogar introduces them much more dramatically, personified as eight formidable ladies occupying the eight petals of the plantain flower; hidden at the root of consciousness. They govern over nature's law, limiting the self, defining the multiplicity of form, restricting the flow of consciousness. They are, on the gross level, the latent tendencies of the mind, its movement & processes.

Bhogar recommends the Yogic discipline of pranayama, breathing with intent, to win them over, to soften their rigid grasp, and to set their liberating aspects in motion.

At the root one finds Siva by entering the mouth of the serpent. A foreboding image which foreshadows the coming confrontation with the infinitude of one's own being.

He is hidden in the heart of the flower. If, through the breath, awareness can be turned upon itself, Nandi (Siva) is seen. One then finds the center of all phenomena. Then the flow and expansion of consciousness can be directed by one's own will, irrevocably united to the will of the Great Mother... "You'll make them [the eight shaktis] obey the Mother's commands."

To enter within the plantain flower, one cannot reach there by striving. Awareness must simply settle into its natural state. No amount of "effort" can make this depth of meditation be achieved. The mind cannot be convinced to become silent and receptive. Internal argument only compounds the problem. This is why Yoga has developed a vast system of means to rectify and pacify the mind's internal struggle.

Bhogar in verse number six gives the first piece of the puzzle in relating his system of pranayama. This system, which applies the sacred Panchakshara mantra to well established Yogic breath manipulations, reinforces the traditional breathing practices by engaging the mind in mental repetition of the Panchakshara syllables. This becomes just difficult enough to demand the mind's full engagement and complete concentration on repeating the mantra in proper sequence with the movement of the breath.

One begins this practice by drawing in the breath with the syllable *Va*. The breath is to be then immediately retained by the mental utterance of *Ya*. As the mantra is spoken in the mind, one shifts the breath into the lower diaphragm and fixes awareness at the base of the spine. The mind is held steadfast at the root and, before one feels light-headed (the breath is controlled, but never repressed), one exhales with the mantra *Si*.

Si-Va's name becomes the out and in flowing breath. The syllable *A* (transformed into *Ya* through Tamil's grammatical law of sandhi), the first sound to issue from primordial stillness, is the mantra of retention. Release with *Si*. Invite the breath to come within by mentally repeating the mantra *Va* (the Tamil word meaning "come"). Using *Si-Va's* name to concentrate the mind, breath begins to deepen in equal measure. After some time, as one becomes calm and listens to the sound of the breath flowing in and out, one begins to hear the syllables *Va* & *Si* being made spontaneously by the movement of breath. *Va-Si* in Tamil means "breath". Siva is hidden within vasi.

Bhogar's "puffing" practice helps to take firm hold of the mind's reigns, giving focus and direction to thought by flooding the brain with oxygen, opening the neural network, and energizing cellular activity in a sudden and dynamic way. The technical term of this practice is *Kapala Bhati* ("Skull Shining") and as one of the Four Purifications is an ideal way of beginning one's daily Yoga practice.

"*Kapala Bhati* is a series of forced exhalations: Exhale and inhale quickly and lightly through both nostrils.

Emphasize the exhale, letting the inhalation come as a natural reflex.. After one series of exhalations, which should last no longer than one minute, rest and breath naturally. Then repeat."

Kapala Bhati produces a rather intoxication effect in the practitioner, making the mind (and the eight shaktis) swoon. The flood of oxygen to the cells of the body and the brain is exhilarating. This practice wakes one up, centers

awareness, focuses concentration, and is an excellent preliminary to meditation.

Another "puffing" practice similar to Kapala Bhati is Bhastrika or "Bellows" which also offers the same "mental cleansing" effect. To practice Bhastrika one must be vigorous, not pausing between in-breath and out-breath.

Throughout, both in-breath and out-breath should be of equal duration, so begin by breathing slowly, balancing in-breath and out-breath while fixing awareness at the point where the air first passes into the nostrils, focusing on that sensation. As the in-breath/out-breath duration becomes balanced, one speeds up the breathing process to a point where the intensity of air flow is short and quick with a distinct feeling of impact as breath is drawn in and then pushed out with the contraction of the diaphragm. When this practice reaches a crescendo of speed and intensity (after about 20-25 exhalations), inhale slowly and completely and retain the breath as long as it is comfortable. This practice is the bellows that fans the alchemical fire of the Kundalini.

7

Here Bhogar introduces perhaps the most important pranayama practice of all: Nadi Shodanam or "Alternate Nostril Breathing". This practice is centered directly upon balancing the flow in the Ida & Pingala Nadis. This practice has had such a profound effect on its practitioners that its use has spread into Brahminical tradition and is employed by the priest at the beginning of each Hindu rite to focus the mind, unify & direct the flow of prana through the body, and aid in balancing and maximizing air intake for correct recitation of the mantra hymnals.

The practitioner uses the thumb and fingers of the right hand to alternate the flow of air through the right & left nostrils. Placing the hand in the form of the Vishnu mudra the left nostril is closed as one breathes in through the right. Through contraction of chest and abdomen, the air is shifted downwards towards Muladhara and retained, as the right nostril is then closed.

Then, through intention or visualization, breath is shifted to the left side of the body, allowed to rise, and be expelled through the left nostril. One then breathes in through the left, shifts and retains the breath, and exhales through the right. The practice continues repeating itself in this manner. Before beginning this practice it is good to ascertain in which nostril is the air flow predominant. Bhogar offers a mantra prescription for the imbalanced flow of air in the nostrils.

8

*"The six streets
become level
and are clearly perceived."*

As awareness is refined through the pranayama practice, the spectrum of the various states of consciousness becomes apparent. The work at Muladhara is perfected through perceiving the manner in which the mind moves and expands. It is like a gymnasium where the fluidity of awareness is exercised.

Before the Yogi can move on from Muladhara he must integrate the expansiveness of his awareness with the physical constraints of the body, the inconsistency of the emotions, and the restlessness of the mind. All of the realms must be brought together, reduced to their essence, and traced back to the root. No aspect of life can be overlooked. The aspirant must simplify the manner in which he perceives *existence* until all facets can be addressed with the same complete attentiveness. Bhogar presents a set of equations in this work that define these facets or movements of the mind.

9

Vallabai here embodies the Kundalini Shakti itself. Because when a personalized relationship is established with the energy personified than one "listens" with more care and understanding to its natural movement and need not fear the premature expansion of consciousness.

By becoming a balanced and integrated individual on the earth plane, the root (Muladhara) of the whole person is properly nurtured and set in balance with nature. The body gains added lustre as the mind becomes calm, clear and receptive, entering the Turiya state where all the various levels of phenomenal existence becomes easily apprehended.

10

The eight constituents sub-divide back into the fundamental state of the four elements (earth, wind, fire, & air). These are the prime building blocks of manifest existence. Awareness withdraws deeper within as the mind's functions are quieted by the simplicity of a universe composed, in its entirety, of only four basic elements. Without the interference of restless and undirected thought, awareness is contracted and refined, like the sun's light focused and intensified through the magnifying glass of the concentrated mind. Focused on the root (metaphorically) it ignites.

The four petals of the Muladhara plexus are clusters of nadis each bearing (at least in a symbolic sense) an elemental characteristic. These four elements become the kindling that fuel the fire (the aroused Kundalini) in which Ganesha dances out this divine play that is existence.

In Tantric Yoga and the Siddhar Yoga system the aspirant begins at Muladhara to set about recreating the universe inside himself in all its panoramic glory: from the first spark of creation, dividing and expanding into this web of "becoming" and culminating into the ultimate dissolution in the "un-chakra" Sahasrara, where all the possible permutations of manifestation are represented as the thousand petals united in a single blossoming flower. Although a great portion of Bhogar's work is devoted to the alchemical science, his reference here to "the True Polymorph Alchemy" has little to do with the act of changing base metals into gold. It is common for the Siddhars to speak of the awakening of the Kundalini with alchemical terms.

*"Honey-like semen is the mercury
The controlled breath is the herb
The fire at Muladhara is the oven
The product is the Philosopher's Stone
Oh man! Find this stone in the body
And fly in the sky at will."*

The True Polymorph Alchemy is the attainment of the ability to let the awareness, having become malleable and unfettered by the mind's distinctions, flow into and become all that comes to perception's doorstep. When an object is perceived the aspirant does not employ the mind to judge its intrinsic qualities and functions. Nor is the mind used to reinforce a sense of "self" by defining the relationship of subject to object. This kind of inference is an intrinsic quality of the mind's functioning. It makes us all products of our environment. All victims of the pathways of interpretation that thought takes in organizing and structuring the information gathered by the senses. The sum total of this information and the way in which it is organized in the deeper recesses of the mind not only forms our conception of "reality" and molds the ego, it also dynamically affects our perception and interpretation of all new input that flows in through the senses. This information is filtered by the intellect, and immediately becomes subject to our habitual and reactionary system of interpretation. We are creatures of habit. Our patterns of thought have a tendency to get caught in a rut, which the movement of the same recurring set of thought patterns digs deeper and deeper. As we grow older, it becomes more and more difficult to open up new pathways of intellectualization. "You can't teach an old dog new tricks" or assimilate new ways of thinking, and so we suffer and stagnate in a dreary world which the mind has dug out for us.

Often by adulthood, the mind, grown sluggish and morose, hounds us with its fears of change, lack of breadth, inflexibility, and its stubborn complacency to remain stuck within the confines it has imposed upon us. Life loses its vitality and spontaneity, and best we can hope for is a little distraction from our monotonous life struggling and stumbling through our pathetic little world.

11

*"While going
or while staying...
concentrate the mind."*

In action or in inaction, while seated in meditation or surrounded by the hustle and bustle of the marketplace, mindfulness of breath and concentration of mind should be applied. Yoga, and particularly the Tantric teachings, are of use only if applied to every aspect of life. Meditation is not meant for giving sanctuary or escape. It is to be practiced continuously, bringing a receptive quality to awareness, and bringing the care, sensitivity, and attention to detail that our precious human existence deserves. Meditation is not a particular way of sitting or thinking. Nor should it be some vain struggle to subdue the mind. It is a quality of seeing, embracing what *is* with eyes wide open. Not judging, not daydreaming, not resisting, just a simple and effortless acceptance of things wherever and in whatever circumstance we find ourselves.

"Be in a place where you don't have to listen to the noise of others talk." Bhogar seems to be advising his readers to disregard what others say, and let one's own insights and understanding be the guide. Let one trust in one's self. Let one make an assessment of reality that is not compounded by the judgements of others, or even the mind, as in the Meyjnanapulampal ("the Wailing of True Wisdom"), where Battiragiriya cries out the great Siddhar adage: "Arivai Arival Arinthu" ("to know knowledge by knowledge") in verse twenty-four.

*"Forgetting trivial happiness,
Knowing knowledge by knowledge itself,
when shall I cut off this cycle
of falling into wombs."*

The knowledge he speaks of is apprehended only by personal experience. This is the difference between "believing" and "knowing", between that which is "learned" and that which is truly "understood".

12

Just by balancing the flow of breath in the right and left nostrils, directing (through visualization) the breath's movement to the spine's base, and fixing the mind in Muladhara, the fire of Kundalini is kindled and the streams of Prana in the Ida and Pingala Nadis unite pouring into the Shashumna Nadi. The passage of time becomes meaningless as the mind merged with the root remains perfectly balanced in the immediate present.

13

Another interpretation of the Tamil word "Sulimunai" would have "the circle's end" be more ideally rendered as "the spiral's end". Shushumna is the nadi that rises up from the serpent coiled 3 ? times around the lingam at the base of the spine. The lingam is the root of the divine in man. It is the cosmic pillar, the axis upon which the world turns. It is the hub of the wheel of Samskara. It is the cosmic axis of the spine upon which our senses and organs of action turn round. It is the center of our universe, intimate and accessible to all. The great Siddhar saint of the nineteenth century, Ramalingar, described his journey up the spine in a thirty-two verse poem which begins by describing the spine as a mountain of light, the mythical mount Meru, abode of the gods, Olympus of the East...

"A mountain of light appeared.

Mother, in it there was a street.

There was a street!"

Shushumna is the street that climbs the mountain of the spine, but until the Kundalini awakens, the spine keeps us firmly chained to the earth, to the realm of matter, with the golden chain of attachment and aversion, the sweet and bitter fruits of the Tree of Life.

14

The word *munai* in *Sulimunai* is the same word translated here as "corner" in *Ilimunai*- "the Corner of Degradation". "The Sleep of the Circle's End" and "dying in the Corner of Degradation" are in both cases referring to the same danger. When one, through consciousness expansion and through a greater understanding of the mechanism that is this universe, pushes past the limitations of the individual self and gains the eight siddhis, one will inevitably face the danger of identifying the ego as the actor, as the worker of miracles, as superior to the rest of this universe indivisible. So "the Sleep of the Circle's End" is when awareness, having recognized itself as "the One Consciousness", falls once again into dispersion and separation as the ego asserts itself and the individual will is reinforced.

15

The awareness anchored in the quietude (of A-kaaram) observes the mind's endless array of responses to sense objects, watches patiently and without concern the pushing and pulling of the mind. When one's very center is detached and still, the mind cannot help but to follow suit and become calm, but at the outset it is one restless and "slippery" fish-- try to take hold of it and it will slip through your fingers. Hold it gently, however, giving it room to roam, and it can be contained in the vastness of a more spacious awareness.

16

Here Bhogar makes a striking observation:

"Even with the intoxication

of seeking security in bondage

The world beckons...

and all

are bewildered."

We live in fear, struggling day by day to hoard up wealth and resources so that we can endure. But wealth and resources must be protected, property and livestock require upkeep and maintenance, and business needs careful strategy and hard work.

Our fear and our struggle then extends beyond the maintenance of our bodies. Life's demands grow and expand beyond our daily needs. Simple necessities quickly become very complicated. We forget the freedom of simplicity and embrace instead "security in bondage".

The problem isn't in working hard or having too much. The problem is living in fear and forgetting to savour our precious and fleeting existence. Insecurity and fear wield the whip that drives us to struggle on and on, rather than letting love of life transform all we do into the simple joy of existence, of participating in life instead of fighting against the inevitability of death.

17

The practice of Pranayama should always be comfortable if not euphoric. One need never suppress the breath. Pranayama should not be an act of effort or a struggle. The body knows instinctively what it requires and so the Pranayama practitioner should always remain attentive & listen to the body's needs.

A mastery of the Ujjayi Pranayama (the "Victorious Breath") is a crucial aid in controlling the breath. The practice helps to reveal the terrain of the respiratory system. Ujjayi is the principle practice used to control the flow of prana.

"Ujjayi means 'victorious'; by this pranayama one can gain control over prana. This pranayama has a heating effect. Before doing ujjayi it is helpful to wash the tongue and rinse the throat to loosen phlegm."

This instruction in the practice of the Ujjayi Pranayama comes from Baba Hari Dass' Ashtanga Yoga Primer. Like Baba Hari Dass, Bhogar also recommends cleansing the throat as one aspect of purification in preparation for daily practice.

"Close the mouth and inhale through both nostrils, slightly tightening the glottis by bending the head forward to produce a choking sob, accompanied by a slight sniff. It should sound like a child sobbing. In the beginning one can inhale in five sobs; when it is perfected the sobs can run into each other. Hold the breath in the upper part of the chest for two to three seconds, then close the right nostril, and exhale through the left. Immediately after exhalation, inhale again through both nostrils and repeat. Begin with ten rounds and increase to forty over a period of three months.

Note: One may also exhale through both nostrils." (Which is the more common practice.)

This practice is extremely useful in defining where the breath moves and shifts in the body. The sensation of the breath's movement during practice is intense and will help to quite effortlessly draw the mind along the breath's passage through the respiratory system. Sensation in the region of the throat is especially pronounced. Here is where one gains a sense of "the bag" that Bhogar mentions.

His reference here to Vayu's House (the house that rules the air element) is allocated to the throat chakra (Vishuddha). Unlike the attributions given in other schools, Bhogar has designated Vishuddha to govern air rather than Anahata. The reader will note that Bhogar's elemental attributions for the chakras transpose the more common allocations of the Sat-Cakra-Nirupu up one level, leaving Muladhara without clear definition, an ambiguous root from whence the muddied mixture of elements rise up to levels of purer expression as blossoms on the vine. Jalandhara Bandha (Throat Lock) binds the breath after inhalation, "tethers the donkey," by simply tilting the head forward and pressing the chin tightly into the hollow of the neck. Baba Hari Dass points out that, "According to Yoga physiology a subtle nectar flows from *sahasrara chakra*, falls to *manipura chakra*, and is consumed by gastric fire. *Jalandhara bandha* prevents the nectar from falling, which brings calmness, long life, and good health. Thus the name *jalandhara*, which means 'cloud-holding, receptacle of vital fluid'."

18

As breath and mind becomes firmly fixed at the root, one becomes balanced, standing at the hub of the wheel of change. Here time loses all meaning. A single moment seems to stretch on into eternity as the mind teeters precariously towards its old tendencies of habitual response and other conditioned modes of thinking. The mind struggles to thrust up images before the immovable awareness. These images reveal "the specific symptoms" of latent pathways along which the mind moves and in which the mind is stuck, unable to divert its course of movement to new and broader avenues of perception.

19

The mantra of Ajna, the third eye chakra, is "Om". Yogis, when seated in meditation, will roll up the eyes and fix the awareness at the point between the brows. The Tamil character for Om resembles a peacock standing on one leg with its tail fanned out. The Siddhar Ramalingar makes use of this image in one of his verses describing his experiences in meditation:

"Up in the sky

I saw the peacock's dance

The peacock became a cuckoo, sister.

The peacock became a cuckoo."

In the thoughtless space between the brows he saw the Om-kaara vibrating. It manifests as sound resounding (the cuckoo). Often in the quietude of meditation, one will discern the sound in the ears. Mystics around the world describe it variously as the voice of angels, running water, the chirping of crickets, the tinkling of bells, or the humming of bees. Bhogar mentions the phenomenon of hearing the sound, as he begins the movement from Muladhara to Svadishtana, in verse 24 as the sweet chime of God's anklets as He dances out this play of existence:

"The wonder!

Being merged

in the sound

of His anklets."

Ajit Mookerjee, in Kundalini: the Arousal of the Inner Energy, describes the specific sounds heard in each of the five lower chakras, "When Kundalini awakens, the aspirant listens to cosmic sound. When the Kundalini leaves Muladhara, he hears the chirping of a cricket; when he crosses to Svadishtana, the tinkling of an anklet; in the Manipura, the sound of a bell; at the Anahata, the music of a flute, and finally, when Kundalini crosses to

Vishuddha, the cosmic sound Om, the first manifestation of Shiva-Shakti as Sonic Consciousness. The proper knowledge and understanding of Sonic Consciousness leads to the attainment of Supreme Consciousness."

20

"Time was when I despised the body;

but then I saw the God within.

The body, I realized, is the Lord's temple;

And so I began preserving it with care infinite."

The Siddhar Yoga system, as with other schools of Yoga that grew out of the Tantric traditions, is a holistic system intended to transform the person on all levels: spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical. Purification of the body has often been a prerequisite before the more advanced Yoga practices can be perfected. Emphasis on the necessity of the well-being of the physical instrument has led the Siddhars to develop a vast system of herbal medicines and other prescriptions for preventative maintenance geared towards giving the practitioner good health and longevity. Karpams are predominantly used for longevity, but these mysterious medical preparations, composed of herbs, metal oxides, and arsenics, are also said to confer siddhis to the user. "Application of herbs for the attainment of siddhis is mentioned even in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. In the Tamil Siddha works, these Karpams are recommended as an adjunct to the Kundalini Yoga practice."

I must confess that I have been unable to find any reference to what "the heavy Moolikai herb" actually is, but it is common for the earlier Siddhar medical terms and their names for herbs to be forgotten. Nonetheless, Siddhar medicine is becoming more and more in vogue in present day Tamil Nadu as scores of clinics open and practitioners gain wider recognition.

21

"To shake the base of the tree" means to "vibrate the spine", while climbing upwards by "hopping" refers to the jumps in states of consciousness that one takes as he moves from chakra to chakra. It is the Kundalini that is the river of consciousness through which the individual awareness crosses over into the Universal Mind.

Bhogar has devoted a section of this work (verses 71 - 79) entirely to the Dvadashantam, the "12-inch flame".

Alternately, it is described as rising either from Ajna chakra, the point between the brows, or from Sahasrara at the crown of the head, and tapers into space 12 inches above its point of origin. It is the divine flame in which the individual spirit is consumed: dissolved into eternity.

22

"Neither mantra, nor song, nor arts four and sixty

Ever sundereth birth and its accursed bonds.

Then did I take Yoga's way, and lo!

I met the Sun, Moon and Fire on the way to Cranium,

And they showed the Supreme Way!"

The tradition divides the body into three parts. The stomach and abdomen is ruled by Agni, the God of Fire. The breast houses the Sun, and the head is the rounded sphere of the Moon, crowned by the Sahasrara lotus flower. Bhogar portrays Ganesha holding aloft the mind's flower, grasped in his tutikai (Shashumna), lifted upwards into the sky (Akasha).

The great mother Vallabai Shakti gives birth to the shakti in us all, and in turn, Bhogar advises us to redirect that force of life in us back to its source: the Great Mother.

Even from far away, through Manasa Puja (mental worship) one can reach beyond the web-like matrix of matter, transmuting thought itself into the image, the very being, of the Divine Mother.

The Milk of Soma, the sublimated seed, the Nectar of Immortality, hidden within the body, pours outward giving life to all things. Sustaining all things, the banner of awareness is raised to the zenith of the flagpole Shashumna.

23

The secret of action, as taught in the Bhagavad Gita, lies in the quality of awareness brought to activity. If the mind is clear and receptive, unattached to the fruits of action (be they "good" or "bad"), then one's inner nature takes over and one begins to act in accord with the Universal Will. Then the universe enacts its will through the individual.

Abandoning selfish desire, abandoning attachment and aversion, one does without "doing".

24

As testified by the ancient Chinese text, the I Ching, the essential characteristics of the universe can be reduced to the same equation which denotes the Vastu Purusha Mandala: $8 \times 8 = 64$. In this equation, 8×8 reflects the universes alchemical transmutation of the 8 components interacting with one another to produce the 64 primary characteristics or essences that compose the manifest universe. The four elements become eight. The eight becomes sixty-four. The sixty-four manifest as all possibility, the same 64 qualities that compose the things outside us are also found within. When the malleable alchemy is revealed all these primary qualities are effortlessly perceived. The mind becomes

fluid, mirroring the 64 facets of nature as they arise and fall from view, and the essence hidden behind phenomena, the One hidden behind the many, appears "explicit and complete".

25

*"The universes seven,
The cosmic space beyond,
The life---animate and inanimate---
The gunas three, the Vedas ancient,
The Gods that create and preserve
And their Primal Lord that is Siva---
All they are but in me."*

Vedanta (lit. "the end of the Vedas"), whose name infers "the end of all knowledge", is the all-encompassing vision of the intricate mechanism that is this universe. It allows the viewer to ferret out the cause behind the bewildering array of effects. One sees Vedanta to its very end by once and for all reconciling the dichotomy within.

This reconciliation begins by merging the solar & lunar nadis (Ida & Pingala) into Shashumna, by balancing and integrating the flow of breath through the two nostrils, by mounting the horse of measured breath.

26

Breath sustains us. Its gift of life deserves our attentive recognition of this simple fact. Bhogar acknowledges the importance of daily practice, a daily need to set aside a time of quiet reflection; savouring breath's gift; dining on the breath of life.

27

There is a practice in South India of supplicating Ganesha by knocking three times on the temples. This is said to momentarily unite the Ida & Pingala currents and send a flood of nectar down to Muladhara, a flood of nectar which pours over Ganesha, awakens the God within, filling him with joy, bathing him with ecstasy. It transforms the body into the sanctum of pure spirit.

Another means of supplicating Ganesha is the repetition of the mantra:

*Om Shreem Hreem Kleem
Gum Gum Ganapati*

The word *puja* means "worship", while "the Good Circle" refers to the circle at Muladhara in which the trikonam stands.

29

All that is discerned by the sense faculties is a reflection of the level of consciousness at which we function. All is an extension of the state in which awareness is situated. As conscious expands so does the periphery of perception.

32

All the various permutations of sound are contained within the body. Each sound hangs on the Tree of Shashumna like ripened fruit, vibrating as the pranic winds move & flow through the nadis. We see all fifty characters of the Sanskrit alphabet inscribed upon the petals of the flowering vine of the spine. To outwardly vibrate the mantra cannot compare to the impact of the mantra that resonates within. As testified by the power of the Sanskrit vowels in Schrader's Introduction to the Pancharatna, "the fourteen vowels gradually emerge from their latent condition [in A-Kaaram] by proceeding, with the Kundalini Shakti, from the Muladhara to the navel, the heart, and finally the throat where the first uttered sound arising is the aspirate, for which reason the Visarga [the aspiration] is interpreted literally as 'creation', its counterpart, the Anusvara or Bindu is an analogous way declared to represent the 'withdrawal' of speech. The Anusvara is also called 'sun', and the Visarga 'moon', and the sounds *a, i, u, r, l, e, o*, and *aa, ee, oo, rr, ll, ai, au* are respectively 'sunbeams' and 'moonbeams' and as such connected with day and night and with the nadis called Pingala and Ida."

34

The Immovable Pillar is the hub of the Wheel of Time. It is the still, silent, and changeless space at the center of all things.

When awareness is positioned where "the mind stands separate from the self" all of space, all of time, seems to simultaneously come into view. The mind, held in the silence, "having fallen into the silence that lies between words", the silence which holds the Om-kaara, the space which frames the character(s) on the page, all lie at the End of Sound, at the Aantam.

The Sanskrit root *anta* (tamil: *aantam*) can be found suffixed to words like Naath-Aantam "Sound's End" or prefixed to words like *antaati*. *Antaati* refers to a prosodic device, which Bhogar happens to employ through the bulk of his 7000 verses. This device brings continuity to the work, gives a cohesiveness to all that is expressed, and guides the train of thought from one verse to the next without leaving room for the mind's ramblings to reassert themselves.

The *antaati* is where the verse **begins with the end** of the previous verse, begins with the final word or phrase of the

verse that came before.

Strangely enough, this is in no way confining for Bhogar. Quite the contrary: He goes into each new verse carrying with him the momentum of the last. One is amazed at the richness of meaning that he draws from the closing phrase as he dramatically turns the movement of each new verse on a single word towards a new and surprising destination. Now and again, this device can produce in the reader the sudden satori-like flash of insight, turning awareness, much like a zen koan, towards the place where "the mind stands separate from itself". It is where the mind, held in the silence that holds the Om-kaara, becomes pacified by the ensuing ecstasy of viewing all things from the inside out. It is the point of view of the Immovable Point that is both everywhere and nowhere. Where one looks upon all of creation, simultaneously from each and every perspective.

35-36

Four inches above the root is Svadishtana. In this system Svadishtana incorporates some of the earth element associations and symbolism that is attributed in other traditions to Muladhara. The Siddhar system, placing Ganesha at the root rather than Brahma, transposes the attributions of the Gods one station. So Svadishtana becomes Brahma's House.

Although the placement of all the elements & presiding Deities is shifted a station in the Siddhar allocations, still the number of petals and the distribution of the letters remains for the most part consistent with the other systems. Bhogar gives this chakra two biju ("seed") mantras: the biju of Brahma "*Nam*" & the earth biju "*Lam*". The biju "*Bhu*", here also mentioned is the name of earth.

The letter *A* being the beginning of creation takes the form of the Creator's swan vehicle. Likewise this chakra is associated with the creative powers of procreation.

Each chakra governs a specific portions of our physical body and it's functions; in this case they being hair, bone, flesh, skin, and nerve.

37

Vaani, Brahma's "deathless" consort, is another name of Saraswati, Goddess of Knowledge. She together with Brahma sets about creating matter from energy.

The four-faced Brahma appears here with the "nine telling gems" that adorn his crown. They are called the Navaratna, the nine planetary bodies believed to radiate potent influences that mold fate and guide the soul along life's path.

38

Saraswati governs speech & the imparting of knowledge, this is why she is said to be "the Mother who wears the tongue".

39

Brahma's letter *Na* is the essence of creation, the giver of life, the progenitor of the field of action: "the forest of good and wicked acts".

The term *aarchana* refers to a form of ritual worship.

40

Maal's realm is the chakra Manipura, the "City of Gems". This is the seat of the intellect. It is the mind's fortress formed in the shape of the watery crescent. Rising from the waters is a Banyon Tree that grows from it's mantra seed *Mam*. This is the Kalpataru, the Wish-fulfilling Tree of Indra's heaven. Found at the heart of the mind lotus, it's roots penetrate into the deep dark waters of the subconscious. It is yet another of the many recurring Cosmic Axis motifs littered throughout the text, where awareness, poised at the silent center of thought, shades the body of the God (Vishnu) who is seated beneath the ancient tree, found at the center of the City of Gems.

42

*"In the Concealment's Confusion
the Mother
is spinning round."*

Caught in the web of her own illusion (Maya). The Mother spins round within us as our own mind, ego, and feelings:

The mind's latent tendencies define phenomena and, in turn, build the House of Manipura. The mind makes distinctions, naming some objects as "beautiful/desirable/good", while others "ugly/undesirable/bad", and thus sets the bait that motivates us to pursue some external ideal; but in the perfected Manipura, within the ripened intellect one discovers the ancient mystery of the mind turned upon itself.

43

Here again Bhogar speaks of the Manipura, the lotus of the intellect as the house that conceals objective reality, that vainly seeks joy in transient objects.

When the mind's latent unity is dichotomized by attachment and aversion one wanders aimlessly in thought trying to uncover the girl (Shakti) who sets these winds of thought (Creation's play) in motion.

44

The Moon's Orb is the head and it's flower Sahasrara.

Manasa Puja (mental worship) is the practice of visualizing every ritual component and the act of offering. It completely internalizes not only the act of worship, but the object of worship as well bridging the rift between the Divine and man.

45

Ashtanga Yoga is "the Eight-limbed Yoga" first systematized by Patanjali between the 8th-9th centuries B.C. His work, the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, defines these eight limbs as..

- 1) Yama (restraints)
- 2) Niyama (observances)
- 3) Asana (a physical posture or pose; a way of sitting)
- 4) Pranayama (control of prana, breath)
- 5) Pratyahara (withdrawing the mind from sense perception)
- 6) Dharana (concentration)
- 7) Dhyana (meditation)
- 8) Samadhi (super-consciousness)

46

"Knowledge" refers to the House of Manipura.

Here we see the ascending triangle in the heart lotus, Anahata, which mirrors the descending triangle in Muladhara. The triangle in Anahata is the gate through which one passes into the realms beyond the physical.

The Upwards Sleep proports the coming of the fifth state.

47

In this verse Bhogar employs a clever pun: The word *Shikaara* refers to the central tower of a Hindu temple, which indicates where the deity has been installed, in the chamber below; but he simultaneously is referring to the *Si-kaaram*, the fiery letter *Si*, poised at the center of the Panchakshatra Mantra Na-Ma-Si-Va-Ya.

48

Again, "the girl" is the Shakti.

49

Rudra is the presiding deity of this chakra, and Rudri, his consort.

51

As the spine was once the chain that binds us to matter, when the Kundalini is awakened, the spine becomes a prop that supports the universe.

Even the siddhis, acting upon themselves (8x8), numerically mimic the sixty-four essences that create the various evolutes of matter.

52

As each chakra is reached, it should be offered. The lotus should be mentally plucked from the vine (of the spine) and offered to Siva & Shakti.

53

The six-pointed star, ascending and descending triangles intertwined, is the meeting of heaven and earth, the union of Siva and Shakti, whose final merging takes place in Ajna.

54

Va is the biju of the water element, which in the beginning stood as the Causal Sea: an infinite ocean of all-possibility from which all things arise. It holds within it's depths the Great Dream of the multiplicity of existence.

Ya is the biju of the air, also allocated to this chakra as in Woodroffe's works.

56

"These tastes are only in the mouth and not beyond." What we perceive through the sense organs does not necessarily ensure that we are getting an accurate interpretation of "reality".

57

Va is the raechaka mantra which Bhogar applies to the in-breath. The in-breath enters and sustains the four elements that comprise the body.

The House of the Wind is Vishuddha and the "16 surfaces" it's petals. Here the individual soul begins it's process of dissolution into the absolute.

61

The biju of the Ajna chakra is *Om*. The Tamil character appears to have a tail. It is surrounded by a circle that has two petals.

The *Ya* referred to here is not the biju of the air element, but rather it is the final syllable of the Panchakshara. The mantra begins in Muladhara with *Om*--- then moves up the spine applying one syllable to each chakra *Na-Ma-Si-Va-Ya*, which then culminates in the pristine silence of Sahasrara.

I can offer little explanation for his attribution of the biju *Va* to the element ether. *Va* in other systems is attributed to the element water and placed in Svadisthana. I can only suspect that this is another reference to the Panchakshara *Va* used to accompany the inward flowing breath.

64

In the sixty-fourth verse, a numerically significant point in Bhogar's work, the 8 constituents & the 8 shaktis intermingle to produce the 64 components that make up the universe, (all that can be "known").

Here Bhogar reveals the Panchadaasakshaari Mantra (lit. "the 15 syllable mantra). This is the Mother's secret mantra, a closely guarded secret of amongst Brahmins even today. This mantra is so highly esteemed among them that they will even interweave its syllables with the ancient Gayatri of the Rig Veda.

Bhogar gives this fifteen syllable mantra garland of Manomani to his readers not without some reservation. If you count the number of syllables he relates, the number comes up fourteen. He has intentionally left one crucial syllable out of the verse. The equation is incomplete. Rendered useless by the omission of a single character.

Were it complete, it would put one in direct contact with the goddess Manomani, the Kundalini personified. It forms the very heart of this body of verse addressing the mysteries of Kundalini.

65

"Eight will be added unto four..." i.e. the eight siddhis will be applied to the four elements that compose earthly matter.

"You can enter the body of your loved one." means that you can project awareness into organic matter, see the world through others eyes, savour union with all beings, and leap the boundaries of flesh and form.

*"You can cross the hair bridge
over the River of Fire."*

This line gives us one of Bhogar's more vivid allegorical images: of the trepidatious crossing over from the realm of matter into the realm of spirit. The hair bridge is the Chitrini Nadi, the innermost thread of Shashumna. The River of Fire is the Kundalini Shakti.

"...and the symbol

becomes clearly defined in thought."

Having a concentrated mind, fixed on the symbol, is a crucial part of Bhogar's system. The symbolism is indispensable. One must have a reference point in order to direct the movement of awareness and an object with which to engage the mind.

Bhogar's system gives three primary tools to awaken and direct the Kundalini Shakti:

- 1) Pranayama
- 2) Mantra
- 3) Symbols for visualization

Throughout this work he has given a rough draft of the sequence of their application, trouble shoots some of the dangers to be encountered, and offers his own unique kind of fatherly advice on how one lives with Yogic insight.

67

"That part of the self that is the Mother" encompasses all of us except that one primordial spark of changeless awareness. She is all thought, all experience, flesh & fluid, the senses & their objects, the mind & the subconscious, both ego & id.

Leaping beyond Her, all manifestation is dissolved back into the Great Self that is He: Sada Siva.

69

Gayatri is a particular form of mantra introduced in the Rig Veda. This particular Gayatri translates:

"I understand the flawless.

I meditate upon that which casts no reflection.

May that subtle principle

bestow grace upon us."

71

One's individual self burns away passing through the first eleven inches of the Twelve Inch Flame. Then, at its peak, within the final unit beyond, the aspirant discovers the supreme. Of what exists there, cannot be claimed to have been seen by anyone, for the "I" has been burnt away and the mystery of that twelfth inch stands as witness to itself.

There is no room here for the subject-object dichotomy. Only being It can bare testament to It's validity.

72

In verse 72 the poet tells us, "You will see all of the hidden pathways". These, of course, being the 72,000 nadis through which the vital force (prana) is propelled. One need only center awareness on the point where air first passes into the nostrils ("...if you bite on the tip of the nose there will be union."), there the air flow can be balanced and the streams of breath united.

"Eat without eating", dine on the Ujjayi breath shifting awareness to the distinctive sensation in the throat and "you will see what is there".

Since the Kundalini Shakti is coiled around the lingam at Muladhara she is called 'Kubjika' ("the Hunchback"), but from the point of view of the Twelve Inch Flame she is a straight line which stretches on into infinity.

73

There is an old Tamil proverb which says:

*"What's the use of a coconut
to a dog?"*

A dog cannot penetrate its hard outer shell and savour its sweet milk & tender fruit. The mind continually spews forth its doubts and insecurities (and the Yogi's mind is no different), But thoughts such as these should be combated with reflection, reason, and the renewed vigor to practice "the method of the residing breath" with unwavering diligence.

74

Here the path repeats itself as Bhogar guides us once again through the whole elaborate process (of scaling the chakras) in only six verses:

Ma sends breath down to the Banyon Tree that rises up from Svadisthana. Its left & right roots are joined in Muladhara and rise upwards as the celestial tree, Kalpataru.

76

"The five grey hairs" refers to the hair found at the top of the head, the moustache, the beard, on the chest, and in the pubic region.

The body turns a reddish hue as the Kundalini is aroused. There will also be a concentration of heat in the region of the awakened chakra, as Woodroffe also attests to in The Serpent Power, "There is one simple test whether the Shakti is actually aroused. When she is aroused intense heat is felt at that spot but when she leaves a particular centre that part so left becomes as cold and apparently lifeless as a corpse. The progress upwards may thus be externally verified by others. When the Shakti (Power) has reached the upper-brain (Sahasrara) the whole body is cold and corpse-like; except the top of the skull, where some warmth is felt, this being the place where the static and kinetic aspects of Consciousness unite." At this point the body appears pale, cool, and glows with a soft lustre.

77

The myrobalam fruit is clear in color. It allegorically refers to adopting the fluid character of the changing environment. Placed in the hand, it takes on the color of the skin, inferring the malleability of pure consciousness.

78

It has been said that the enlightened sage exudes a particular fragrance, what Bhogar calls, "the True Fragrance", the scent of the Divine.

80

Mercurial amalgams were employed by the Siddhars for various works. One of which being to gain the power of flight; but it is difficult to say whether this infers a physical phenomenon or a kind of astral projection. Whichever it may be, Bhogar used the mercurial amalgam to take him to the furthest frontiers of creation, beyond space and time, to the periphery of the universe, the farthest shores of his own being.

94-95

I have added these two closing verses to convey Bhogar's most intimate insights on the true character of the breath: The mind/body is a vessel into which Siva pours as the breath of life. Breath and Siva are one.

We all share a common soul, a common breath, a common life. Siva flows through creation, entering the body as breath; but then Mind rises up, surveying the apparent multiplicity of existence, asserting its individuality, stating, "I am the doer". This marks the birth of the ego and the beginning of a life in isolation, cut off from a universe which all are irrevocably connected to.

But there is no need to struggle in our alienation and aloneness. We are alone because there is only One: the Great Awareness (which becomes Siva, who, in turn, becomes breath).

If we are unwavering, always mindful of breath (the giver of life); receiving it with reverence, gratitude, & humility; receiving it as Holy Communion; there is no longer any need for struggling & striving.

Breathing in: God becomes many; and each and every being may savour the Divine within. **Breathing out:** One

need not have any reservation, but let the vessel become emptied into the Divine Ocean of space... vibrant with the pranic essence, infinite & indivisible.

"There is nothing to be accomplished.

*Turn back [the Holy Breath]
and look."*

Disclaimer

"He alone who has been acquainted with the wealth of the six lotuses by Maha-Yoga is able to explain the inner principles thereof. Not even the most excellent among the wise, nor the oldest in experience, is able, without the mercy of the Guru, to explain the inner principles relating to the six Lotuses..."

In most cases, I have resisted the temptation to rearrange the order of Bhogar's words. This refusal on my part may make the translated portion of this work seem more choppy and disjointed in places, but I feel that the sequence in which Bhogar presents these words and images is important, and that any attempt on my part to make Bhogar's 7000 "more readable" would subvert the effect that his work was intended to instill in the reader.

This is more than just a map of consciousness or a technical manual on Kundalini Yoga. What may at first appear as Bhogar's inability to be clear and concise, I assure you, is neither empty embellishment, nor the rantings of a madman. The images which he uses are not digressions in the narrative, but a carefully structured stream of ideas and symbols.

This is not just a poem, but a guided meditation, where Bhogar presents more than just a map of the inner terrain: He specifies what the tools are, when & where they are to be employed. All is given freely... encoded within the context of these haunting visions with which the mind must busy itself by conjuring up, lest the journey's momentum be lost in clinging to paltry matters of technique.

An Introduction to the Tamil Siddhas: Their Tantric Roots, Alchemy, Poetry, and the True Nature of their Heresy Within the Context of South Indian Shaivite Society

by Layne Little

anjaneya@ix.netcom.com

(Please Note: This paper was originally presented at a symposium on world religions at the University of Utah in the spring of '97. It was haphazardly strung together almost overnight. Unfortunately, I failed to carefully list my sources and footnote their contributions. I have tried to list the most significant references at the tail of this article, but it is by no means complete. Nor to I give them proper credit in the body of the work. I apologize profusely for this oversight, and welcome comments and criticism on this or any other issues. I must especially acknowledge how much Dr. David Gordon White and Dr. Kamil Zvebil have contributed to this raggle-taggle introduction to Siddha tradition. Thanks!)

[Back to Indian alchemy.](#)

The Tamil Siddhas are a religious order of mystics found in the southern part of India, who's origins can be traced back to the eighth century. They form a distinctive part of a larger movement which spread throughout South Asia, from Sri Lanka in the South to Tibet in the north, between the seventh and eleventh centuries. Siddhas everywhere share common practices, cosmology, and symbols derived from Tantrism whether the practitioner is Hindu, Buddhist, or Jain. All are part of a "pan-Indian tantric yoga movement" which Eliade described as formulating over a five hundred year period, between the 7th and the 11th centuries, but fully flowering only after the 12th century. Excluding perhaps the Buddhist Siddhas, all such groups are considered radical, if not dangerous, by the orthodoxy. An intriguing aspect of the Tamil Siddha cult is that it shares with the orthodox Saiva Siddhanta sect a common text which defines the philosophy of both groups. Since each sect emphasized different aspects of the teaching they quickly became widely divergent, with the two orders often at odds. The Siddhas would be scoffing at temple worship, reliance upon Brahminical authority, and proclaiming the injustice of caste; while the Saiva Siddhantins would berate the Siddhas much as M. Srinivasa Iyengar did in 1914 when he wrote that the Siddhas are "mostly

plagiarists and impostors" and in addition, "Being eaters of opium & dwellers in the land of dreams, their conceit knew no bounds".

At times the Siddhantins have even engaged in an organized effort to eliminate the Siddhar faction. For example, one movement, observed in the latter half of the nineteenth century, systematically sought out any copy of the writings of the heretical Siddha-poet Sivavakkiyar, and promptly destroyed them.

The rift between the two orders has been sharply polarized by the fact that some Saiva Siddhantins, who mostly worship their God Shiva as the Lingam or sacred Phallus, have had a difficult time accepting the Siddhas tendency to emphasize the Goddess. To the Tamil Siddhas, Shiva is the unqualified and ultimate reality beyond form or comprehension, but Shakti, the Goddess, is immanent and accessible as the divine force abiding within the body itself. There she can be coaxed & subdued, manipulated & directed. As the serpent power Kundalini, flowing through the subtle body, she can propel the consciousness of the Siddhar into union with the Absolute. Though the orthodox Saiva Siddhantin may content himself with the worship of Shiva in the temple through the rituals of the priest, the Siddha placates the goddess to intercede on his behalf and expand the consciousness of the Siddha beyond all limitation, where he may become Shiva himself. Notions, such as this, being fundamental to the Tamil Siddha, has struck the Shaivite orthodox as heretical.

Within the context of Hindu myth the name *Siddha* originally denoted one of the eighteen categories of celestial beings. These beings of semi-divine status were said to be of great purity and their dwelling was thought to be in the sky between the earth and the sun. Later they became associated with a class of more adept human being, often an accomplished yogi. The term had been derived from the Sanskrit root *siddh* meaning "fulfillment" or "achievement," so the noun came to refer to one who had attained perfection. Because the Tamil language lacks the aspirated consonants of Sanskrit the word has been written and pronounced by the Tamils as *cittar*. This has lead the Tamils to associate the word more with the Sanskrit term *chit*, meaning "consciousness."

This appellation is evident even in the Shaivite devotionals known as the Tevaram hymns of the 6th & 7th centuries that would later become part of the Saiva Siddhanta canon. There the term is applied not only to one of the 18 categories of divine beings but also to God Shiva himself, who is a *cittar* because the very nature of God is consciousness. Likewise, it describes the devotee as also being a *cittar* since his consciousness is always immersed in the Divine presence. By the 12th-13th century the term has taken on new meaning as we learn from the writings of Perumparrapuliur Nambi who describes the God Shiva as the *cittar* alchemist who is working strange miracles in the city of Madurai.

Essentially though, the term Siddha or Cittar has the same connotations as it does when referring to the 84 Siddhas of Vajrayana Buddhism, the Natha Siddhas of North India, or the medieval alchemists known as the Rasa Siddhas. It is a movement born of a synthesis of Vajrayana Buddhism, Shaivite Tantrism, Indian Alchemy, magic, and the hatha yoga and pranayama disciplines as expounded by the ascetic saint Goraknath. Although, in the present era, the term is often applied to any form of unorthodox mystic or saint.

All of the writings of the Tamil Siddhas, whether defining philosophical viewpoints, yogic practices, or presenting alchemical recipes for herbal tinctures and base metal amalgams were presented in poetic form, often employing the more difficult meters that harkened back to the ancient Tamil Sangam Age. These works are also riddled with tantric imagery, references to Kundalini, and clues to control the dangerous feminine power through breathing practices or the recitation of the Goddess's secret names. Because of the enigmatic nature of the Siddha imagery, and their philosophy structured in direct defiance of human logic, few scholars have ventured to address the Tamil Siddhas and then often only as mere curiosities. Needless to say, the vast majority of the Tamil Siddha works have never been translated, as has been the case with some of the verses presented here.

One of the most basic characteristics of Tamil composition, and one that is particularly relevant to Siddha poetry, is the tendency to layer the work so that each word or image builds upon the last. Because each component image is presented so as to be viewed autonomously and in relationship both sequentially and to the totality of the verse, the images of the poem may seem slightly disjointed and contradictory. Though this may at first seem to undermine the aesthetic quality and over-complicate the simple act of enjoying poetry, the Tamil Siddha compositions pattern the imagery to expound the subtle complexity of their philosophical concepts or to map out the terrain of the inner landscape which is dominated by the dormant serpent energy.

Though most of the Indian Siddha schools did not come into their own until the 12th century, we find that the southern variant, the Tamil Siddha school, had a fully defined system in the eighth century itself. It was at this time that Tirumular, himself one of the 64 canonized Shaivite saints or *Nayanars* of the Saiva Siddhanta sect, authored the Tirumantiram which fully defined the nature of the Tamil Siddha cult up until the present era. The text also became the 10th book of the Saiva Siddhanta canon, which is referred to as the Tirumurai. Though it was the one work outlining the philosophy of the Saiva Siddhanta cult, the orthodox followers within the Saiva Siddhanta sect have always had a difficult time fully accepting the many passages which discuss the worship of the Goddess and

the Kundalini Yoga practices so characteristic of Tantrism. On the other hand, the Siddhas have viewed these same passages as the most critical in formulating their esoteric doctrines on the arousal of the serpent energy. As we can see in verse 730, the Siddhantins were confronted with the tantric orientation of their philosopher Tirumular, when he relates that it is the human body itself that is the temple of the Goddess Shakti...

In Shakti's temple
if you control
the left & the right
you can hear a lute
in the center of your face.
And Shiva will come out
dancing sweetly.
I swear upon Sada Nandi
we have spoken the truth.

Here Tirumular discusses the basis of Kundalini Yoga whereby the breath, carrying one of the vital airs known as *prana*, flows into the solar and lunar currents which run from the right and left nostrils down to the base of the spine and are there brought into union. The point of this union is at the root chakra Muladhara, the first of six chakras or nerve plexuses through which the Kundalini energy will flow. This energy is moved by the solar and lunar streams of vital breath that have entered the central current at Muladhara and will ascend upwards through the six chakras, each corresponding to a higher and more expansive state of consciousness. The individual awareness is sublimated into divine union at the crown of the head. It is a kind of inner journey towards the infinitude of the Divine, but begins only after the two streams flow into the central current as we learn from verse 801 of the Tirumantiram...

801

Left hand
Right hand
Both hands...
Change!!!
He who eats
with the hand of worship
need not be depleted.
The conscious ones
capable of abandoning sleep
need not die...
they can live forever.

The term used to denote the 'hand of worship' is *Tutikai*. *Tuti* is a verb meaning "to worship," *kai* is the noun meaning "hand". Together, as *Tutikai*, the expression also means the "elephant's trunk." This interpretation is equally viable in that Ganesha, the elephant-headed god of gateways and new beginnings is said to reside in the body at the base of the spine, at the root chakra Muladhara where the two currents flow together and enter central current Shashumna. Shashumna is sometimes envisioned as the trunk of Ganesha raised aloft and holding the full blown lotus of enlightenment, Sahasrara, at the crown of the head. What is eaten is amrita, conceived of as both the nectar of spiritual ecstasy and the elixir of immortality.

Tantra appears in its definitive form around the 4th century, but its beginnings seem to reach back much earlier. Elements of tantric thought had already pervaded the south by the time of Tirumular, as they had seeped into yogic theory and practice at some antecedent time and even impacted temple ritual and the budding bhakti cults. Tantra was more deeply rooted in a fluid set of symbolic constructs than a static enunciation of doctrine. It represents a profound refinement of the symbol system of Hindu-Buddhist South Asia. Its emphasis on the experiential aspects of the individual's religious experience collided with the Shaivite orthodoxy like the Gnostic heresy did with the early Christian Church.

In an effort to demonstrate that the macrocosm is reflected within the microcosm, Tantra began to emphasize that the universe, in all its totality, is contained within the body of the individual. It superimposed universal symbols over the human body to help demonstrate this relationship. The spine, along which the Shashumna or central channel ran, became the cosmic axis. All the Gods that oversaw the mechanism that is this universe we-re hidden in the lotus centers of the body's chakras, like blossoms flowering on the vine of the spine. But it was the portly god Ganesha, who guarded the gate to the inner world. He became a patron of Kundalini yoga in the South and was invoked by the female Siddha mendicant Avaiyar, in this excerpt from her 14th century work Vinayagar Agaval. Here she relates how the elephant-headed god has reconciled the dualistic nature of the universe as the various manifestations of Shiva were taught to be part of her inner savoring.

He has concentrated my mind,
clarified my intellect,
and said,
*"Light & Darkness
share a common place."*
He presses me down
into the grace giving ecstasy.
In my ear
he renders limitless bliss.
He has revealed Sada Shiva
within the sound.
He has revealed the Shiva Lingam
within the mind.
And he has revealed that...
*The smaller than the smallest,
The larger than the largest,
stands within...
like ripe sugarcane.*

In about 1661, as Aurangzeb set about to expand his kingdom throughout the subcontinent and free the land of heretics, he was at the same time extending his protection to an obscure Hindu monastery in the Punjab. At the time in question Anand Nath, the abbot of the monastery and a Natha Siddha alchemist, was providing history's great persecutor of Hinduism a regular supply of treated mercury which promised to confer longevity. At the same time in the deep south, the Tamil Siddha alchemist Bhogar, who had supposedly migrated from China along with his guru Kalangi Nathar, was establishing a shrine to the God Murugan on the top of Palani Hill. It was there that he composed his 7000 verses on Kundalini Yoga, alchemy, and Siddha medicine. By medieval times Indian alchemy had come into vogue much like tantra had done almost a millennium earlier. And though the Indian alchemists also sought to develop the chemical processes of transforming base metals into gold as in Europe & the Middle East, they often emphasized the pursuit of bodily perfection and the preparation of the elixir of immortality as the Chinese alchemists had sought. They often viewed their experience of the inner processes of Kundalini Yoga as mirroring the chemical process of the alchemical work.

Though nine hundred years after Tirumular, Bhogar is still wrestling with the serpent energy, even in the midst of his alchemical operations. Though now, the Kundalini is personified as the consort of Ganesha, the Goddess Vallabai...

9 The green-hued Vallabai
will become subservient
and bow down.
She'll tell you
the appropriate time
for the appropriate chakra.
If the basis of Muladhara
is perfected...
You can go anywhere,
wandering freely
throughout the three worlds.

The dull-hued body
will mellow
and shine.
All impurities
will be removed
and the six chakras
will become visible
to the eye.
The gold-colored alchemy
will heed your every word.
In the Sleepless Sleep

all subtlety
can be perceived.
Look and see.

In a particularly odd verse of Bhogar, we find him describing a visionary experience involving the ingestion of an unidentified substance and the wearing of mercurial amalgams.

80 Bhogar's Leap Into the Universe

As the Principle of Intelligence itself
I leapt into the cosmos.

Shiva clearly elucidated
the nature of this universe.
For the sake of all beings
there is a path
that becomes a vehicle
for the five senses.
The universe that appeared before me
was arranged in layers.

Grandfather (Tirumular) said,
"Enter the tenth one."
I took what was given me
and put it in my mouth.

And a bunch
of mercurial amalgams
I tied onto my wrist.
Off I went.

Entering the universe
of fire and light.

In 1293, on his way back from China, Marco Polo got a taste of South India when he stopped along the Malabar Coast. He records a meeting he had with a group of yogi alchemists who, by preparing a tincture of mercury and sulfur, were afforded a lifespan of 150-200 years. Mercury was viewed as the seminal seed of Shiva. It formed a part of the alchemical triad of mercury sulfur and air, corresponding to the trinity of moon sun, and wind. Breath controlled through the practices of Pranayama, transformed the body's winds into a spiritual mediator that could unify the solar and lunar currents within the body. Much like the alchemical process applied air to mercury and sulfur to form the amalgam that brought the work to completion.

Consciousness was seen to ride the vehicle of breath into union with the absolute in the Sahasrara chakra at the top of the head. The Siddha could, through the intercession of the Goddess, placated by manipulation of the breath, expand consciousness to the point where it becomes what is called the Maha Chitta or "Great Awareness" which is the God Shiva himself. Here is one of the closing verses of Bhogar's discussion of Kundalini Yoga..

94

Invite the breath,
the outer space,
to come within your house.

If you are unwavering,
placing it there
as though you were
putting oil in a lamp,...
They shall meet.
Breath and God
becoming one.
Like wind becoming breath
there is no individual intelligence.

The Great Awareness becomes Siva.

He and breath
merge into one.

It is this light becoming breath
that redeems the soul.
Surely this is the truth
of Siva Yoga!

In the modern era, the Siddhas have had a profound influence on contemporary Tamil society because of the impact of a single poet who lived in the last century. Ramalingar was born in 1823 near Chidambaram, the greatest of all Shaivite temples. Naturally, the heretical nature of his teaching and the growing number of his disciples caused the protest of temple officials and a variety of Saiva Siddhanta institutions throughout the region. Eventually they were forced to call in Arumuga Naalavar from Jaffna to put an end to Ramalingar. As a Tamil scholar and Shaivite authority, the orthodox religious leaders throughout the area, were confident that he could expose the fallacy of Ramalingar's teaching and defrock the heretical saint. Arumuga quickly set about organizing public meetings to provide a platform on which to abuse Ramalingar and a horde of pamphlets were circulated issuing public warning about this dangerous little man. Eventually though, Arumuga was forced to take legal action and filed a suit against the saint. The gentle Ramalingar was dragged into court, but eloquently speaking in his own defense, easily won the case.

The nature of Ramalingar's heresy is found to be all the more insidious when we learn that he also cherished and called his own the devotional hymns of Saiva Siddhanta saints other than Tirumular. One of these, the last of the canonized 64, was Manikkavasagar, who had a profound influence on Ramalingar and Siddha devotionalism in general. Manikkavasagar's name means "He who's utterances are rubies" and in the 9th century he beautifully wrote this mini creation myth in flowing verse...

*Becoming sky & earth
Wind & light
Becoming flesh & spirit
All that truly is
& all that which is not
Becoming the Lord,
He makes those who say,
"I" & "mine"
Dance in the show
Becoming sky
& standing there...
How can my words
praise Him?*

In this final work of Ramalingar, we see a different side of the heretical Siddhas. Not the enigmatic ramblings or harsh riddles of the ascetic, but a tender ode, that views the Siddha's experience of union as the distilled essence of life's sweetness. In this poem Ramalingar praises Saint Manikkavasagar, and weaves his verse with a complex echoing of sound as he speaks again and again of the sweetness of his mystic absorption experienced when hearing the poetry of the saint. This fervent merging, savored by the ecstatic Ramalingar is described with the Tamil word *Kalantha*, from the verb root *Kala* meaning "to flow together", "to make as one", as it also denotes a sexual union.

*One with sky Manikkavasagar,
your words...
One with me when I sing
Nectar of sugarcane
One with honey
One with milk
and one with the sweetness
of the fertile fruit
One with my flesh
One with my soul
Insatiable
is that sweetness!*

Although Ramalingar's hymns were penned in praise of the God Shiva, they were often addressed to a feminine audience with unqualified personal designations such as 'Amma' or 'Akka', 'Mother' or 'Sister'. Perhaps indicating

that the hymn was meant for an internal and distinctly feminine force that could propel the invocation along the proper channels of the inner cosmos, towards Shiva's divine abode.

The fact that his songs began to be sung in the schools, villages and even the temples of 19th century Cennai, began to outrage the orthodox Shaivites in the area. He, as all other Tamil Siddhas, was somewhat iconoclastic, not adequately deferential to temple or Brahminical tradition. He did not worship the linga. Forgoing all such images, he perpetrated the greatest of heresies by blatantly revealing the true face of God veiled within volumes of tantric lore. At the shrine he established at Vadalur, behind the curtain that housed the holy of holy's, he established a single flame's light to illuminate a mirror that would reflect the image of the worshipper as the secret face of god and final mystery of the Tamil Siddha cult.

References:

Eliade, Mircea. *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*. Princeton: Bollingen, 1969.

Francis, T. Dayanandan. *The Mission and Message of Ramalinga Swamy*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1990.

Little, Layne. *Shaking the Tree: Kundalini Yoga, Spiritual Alchemy, & the Mysteries of the Breath in Bhogar's 7000*. Unpublished, 1994.

Venkataraman, R. *A History of the Tamil Siddha Cult*. Madurai: Ennes Publications, 1990.

White, David Gordon. *The Alchemical Body: Siddha Traditions in Medieval India*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996. (By far the best work of its kind. Its exploration of the North Indian schools is indepth and unparralelled.)

Zvelebil, Kamil V. *Tamil Literature*. Leiden, 1975.

---*The Poets of the Powers*. London: Rider, 1973.

---*Tamil Lexicon*. ???

A Single Flame's Light: Reflections on the Poetry of Ramalingar

**An Introduction to the poet-saint's works.
by Layne Little**

anjaneya@ix.netcom.com

[Back to Indian alchemy.](#)

It was his brother who found him.....

the little boy, eight years of age, standing alone in the darkness of his room. A single flame's light danced across his face. His eyes, glossed over with ecstasy, held the image of his face (gone slack with wonder) reflected in the mirror in front of him.

Before recorded history, an era so ancient that their poet's voices have long since faded into silence, the Tamil people of Southern India worshipped their god Murugan in blackened caves or atop windswept hills with ecstatic dance and the beating of drums; but in 1831, in the silence of that lamp lit room, the boy Ramalingar worshipped the ancient god standing before him; hewn from the play of light and shadow in the mirror that reflected his own face. Somehow that moment changed the boy forever. He became a mystic. His eyes, that had held for a moment the flame's light, looked upon all things with a newfound wonder; saw the teeming multiplicity of life as writhing in the ecstasy of a single essence, a single presence, the Light of Grace (Arut Perum Jyoti). He was to become "unquestionably the greatest Tamil poet of the 19th century." (-Kamil Zvelebil, [Tamil Literature](#), p113) He began composing poetry when he was nine and never stopped until one day in 1874 when he mysteriously disappeared. This essay strives to address the common source of both the mystic and the poet. It strives to ferret out the fount of inspiration in every man, (but its not "what you think").

"The words of our language are not clearly defined. They have several meanings which pass only vaguely through our mind and remain largely in our subconsciousness when we hear a word.

"The inaccuracy and ambiguity of our language is essential for poets who work largely with its subconscious layers and associations." (-Fritjof Capra, The Tao of Physics, p39)

While the ambiguities of language confine the conscious mind to a vague interpretation of reality, those same ambiguities of language are employed by poets and mystics to speak to the subconscious of the listener. Likewise, Ramalingar used even the space between words and images to cleave the rational mind and reach into the deeper recesses of his readers consciousness. His language of mythical and symbolic imagery expands language from word units, with their small arena of conflicting associations, to symbolic units comprising a vaster area of conceptual and emotional meaning.

"Mythical language is much less restricted by logic and common sense. It is full of magic and paradoxical situations rich in suggestive images and never precise, and can convey the way in which mystics experience reality much better than factual language." (-ibid)

Ramalingar's brilliant flashes of mythic imagery leave little room for the rational mind to drive in it's wedge of differentiation. His work abides as an anthem to his own journey beyond the rational; his leap beyond the confines of language to an experience of a profound mindfulness that his images seeks to induce in his readers.

One of Ramalingar's images in particular recurs throughout his works. He repeats it as a kind of invocation at the beginning and end of each poem, moreover he refers to it continuously within the body of his compositions. Strange that a single word was enough to awaken the visionary within. His enigmatic reference to what he might simply define as an "inner place", functioned for him as a device to center his awareness at a point within his psyche where the tumultuous mind was quieted. From that silence he found he could express his experience of that place.

The content of his invocation does nothing more than define that place, giving a symbolic reference to a level of perception...

"Tiruchittrambalam"

1) *Sacred Hall of the Mind*

2) *Holy Heart Hall*

3) *The Common Place within the Sacred Heart/Mind*

This invocation is the point of departure for the reader who embarks upon an uphill path through the tangled forests of the subconscious, discovering many wonders along the ascent. The recurrent image of the sacred hall seems hidden at every step, as if the hall was both the beginning and the end of the journey, and every point in between. It is like that silence between words, where understanding reigns and nothing need be said.

"This is a world painted as if it were composed of objects like apples and tables, qualities like red and green, and actions like walking, sitting, and slurping. This is a world, in other words, of nouns, adjectives, and verbs, with a few minor parts of speech stuck in to glue these basic building blocks together.

"Nature is a continuity, which we might represent as a line:_____ But our language tells us that the world is made up of "things" that we have named. Those aspects of the world that we do not name have little of no existence for us. Our named world, in contrast to the continuity of nature, looks like a broken line: _ _ _ _ _ This line represents the named "things" and the spaces are those aspects of reality that remain without names and that do not exist for us." (-James Powell, Tao of Symbols, p36-37)

Images like the Sacred Hall of the Mind represent the quietude of thought beyond names, where all of nature is reflected in its unfathomable totality. The Sacred Hall is the line, the continuous, the hall of the awareness seated in the profound solitude of meditation, it is the spacious silence that frames the letters on the page.

Ramalingar guides the adventurous into far off, unexplored realms of consciousness, pulling up in hoards the deeply rooted imagery of the psyche; but he keeps reminding us about the uncluttered spaciousness of the Common Hall of the Heart. He asks us to relinquish our disjointed perception of reality, our "named" reality that is broken up into the few bits of phenomena that can be defined, stamped with a label, and thereby be "known".

"What we are looking for is who's looking."

-Saint Francis

Ramalingar's
Aani Pon Ambalattae
or
"At the Hall of Solid Gold"

English rendering by Layne Little

Pallavi (refrain):

In the Hall of Solid Gold

What visions I saw.

What wondrous visions!---Oh Mother

What wondrous visions!

Kannihal (stanzas):

1) A mountain of light appeared.

There was a street in it.---Oh Mother

There was a street.

2) I went along that street

and in the middle of it

there was a platform.---Oh Mother

There was a platform.

3) I mounted the platform

There I discovered a hall---Oh Mother

There was a hall.

4) I searched the hall

and found a mansion

rising above it.---Oh Mother

There was a mansion.

5) All of its seven levels

were filled with wonders.

How can I describe it?---Oh Mother

How can I describe it?

6) In one story

there was a glittering pearl-white stone.

It turned into a blue sapphire.---Oh Mother

It turned into a blue sapphire.

7) On another world plane

that blue-black stone

transformed itself into red coral.---Oh Mother

All became fruitful.

8) On another plane

the green emerald

became a red ruby.---Oh Mother

It became a red ruby.

9) After that level

I saw a giant pearl

Become a diamond jewel---Oh Mother

It became the great jewel.

10) In a different plane

I was confronted with

a vast mass of coral

changing into moonstone.---Oh Mother

Changing into moonstone.

11) The next level I speak of

is decorated

with a multifarious array of jewels.

These turned to gold.---Oh Mother
These turned to gold.
12) In another place
All the gems I've spoken of
Became crystal.---Oh Mother
Became crystal.
13) Above the seven levels! 1
There was a pillar
A most agreeable golden pillar.---Oh Mother
A creative golden pillar.
14) The time when I saw
the golden pillar and climbed,
I saw a freshness...;
How can I describe it?---Oh Mother
A freshness...; How can I describe it?
15) While climbing there
I viewed a sort
that can't be spoken of.
Of boundless measure!---Oh Mother
Of boundless measure!
16) There and there...;
were Shaktis
in the thousands and thousands
They were coming!---Oh Mother.
They were coming!
17) I was not deceived
by the delusions that assailed me
But attained a special state of grace.---Oh Mother
I attained the special grace.
18) By the ways of the adept
I climbed that great pillar
And saw its jeweled peak.---Oh Mother
And saw its jeweled peak.
19) Above the jeweled peak
There stood the mountain's summit.
It was then that I saw it.---Oh Mother
It was then that I saw it.
20) Above the mountain's peak
In 1008 carat gold
Was the temple!---Oh Mother
Was the temple.
21) I saw the temple,
and there was its towering gate.
Without hesitating, I went inside.---Oh Mother
Without hesitating, I went inside.
22) Inside the towering gate
were Shaktis and Shaktas
in the tens of thousands, many tens of thousands.---Oh Mother
Tens of thousands, many tens of thousands.
23) There they were colored...;
colored white and colored red
of the colors five they were.---Oh Mother
of the colors five.
24) There they all asked
"Who is this here?";

I went beyond.---Oh Mother

I went beyond.

25) Having gone beyond

I came to the sacred doorway.

Where there were five Shaktis.---Oh Mother

Where there were five Shaktis.

26) These other Shaktis stood

to show the path above.

I reached the jeweled doorway.---Oh Mother

I reached the jeweled doorway.

27) Contemplating in that doorway,

there was a woman and a man...;

Two of them were there.---Oh Mother

There were two of them.

28) I drew near that holy entrance

and there they revealed...?

I looked out with love.---Oh Mother

I looked out with love.

29) The Mother of Bliss

was at Heaven's Gate!

My Mother!---Oh Mother

My Mother!

30) I looked upon her,

received her grace,

and dined on nectar.---Oh Mother

I dined on nectar.

31) With her support and grace,

I saw the sanctum

of the Dancing King!---Oh Mother

I saw the sanctum!

32) I entered the sanctum

and attained all that can be attained!

Only God knows!---Oh Mother

Only God knows!

1 Note nilai usually refers to a state or condition, implying permanenece, while the verb may mean to fix the eyes on one point or object

Avaiyar's Vinayagar Agaval

English rendering by Layne Little

In the 14th century, a female ascetic, often envisioned as a wise wandering crone, took the name of Avaiyar. Her namesake of the ancient Sangam age was the prototypical Mother Goose of South India who authored the canon of moral guidelines that still form a mainstay to children's education in contemporary Tamil Nadu. The character of the Sangam Avaiyar sharply contrasts the Avaiyar of the 14th century whose occult leanings parody the benign, granny-like persona of her ancient predecessor. The 14th century Avaiyar was perhaps the third female poet to assume this name, but the distinctive character of her work, the Vinayagar Agaval, has forever immortalized this obscure figure as a poetical giant in Tamil literary history. Though the Vinayagar Agaval is recited in temples and homes at the shrines of the jovial elephant-headed god Ganesha (the mystical Janus of the Hindu pantheon), the text is at the same time ridden with the occult imagery of the Tamil Siddhas. How this incomprehensible text became a mainstay of contemporary Hinduism in Tamil Nadu is a mystery; for its obscure references to kundalini yoga and tantrism is sure to mean very little to the average devotee of the portly god. At first glance the work seems conservative enough; as it begins with the traditional contemplation of the god from foot to crown. But it promptly veers off into the domain of the mystic as she invokes Ganesha as the embodiment of Turiya. Turiya, or "the Sleepless Sleep" is a state of deep yogic trance, where the aspirant sleeps to the illusionary and transient realm of gross sense phenomena

and wakes to the infinitude of the inner realm. By first invoking her patron as this adept state of consciousness, her perception and expression shifts from the outer image of the god and the external realm of perception to the inner mystery she perceives as both her own and the god's internal landscape. Though not officially recognized as such by the often hostile orthodoxy, Avaiyar's work follows the familiar pattern of other Tamil Siddha literature. Of course the most obvious distinction between the orthodox Saiva Siddhanta literature and that of the Siddha heterodoxy, is the latter's emphasis on tantric imagery and practice. Though the Tamil Siddha tradition retains a propensity for employing the same bhakti rhetoric of the orthodoxy, the pervasive presence of the goddess further betrays its divergence from the conservative Shaivite patriarchy which insists that the unruly goddess image be subordinate to that of a male god. Avaiyar's experience of Ganesha manifesting as "a mother" is a sure sign on her crossing the line of Brahminically sanctioned tradition. Her intricate weaving of devotion, world-denying asceticism, and occult symbolism enriches the Vinayagar Agaval with the versatility of the Tamil Siddha tradition. Because of the obscure nature of this symbolism, I recommend that you refer to 'Shaking the Tree', also found here in the Alchemy Virtual Library. A more thorough explanation of these verses is presently under preparation and should be online shortly. Questions are welcome, address them to Layne Little at: anjaneya@ix.netcom.com
[Back to articles](#) . [Back to Indian alchemy](#).

Avaiyar's Vinayagar Agaval

The anklets
on the red lotus feet
of the cool baby elephant
sing many songs.
The golden waist chain
and fine skirts
resting upon his rainbow waist
beautifully shining.
His weighty tusk!
His elephant face
& the auspicious orange mark
is easy to perceive.
Five hands,
goad & noose,
his body of deep blue
has made my breast its home.

His hanging mouth,
four sets of shoulders,
three eyes,
and three musk trails...
His two ears,
with golden hair shining,
and three threads intertwined
upon his glowing breast...
He is the true knowledge:
Turiya, the Sleepless Sleep,

goes beyond
the word's meaning.

Wonder

has stood personified
as the Wish-fulfilling Tree!

As the Bull Elephant!

He who rides the mouse
sniffs out the three fruits.
I begged him,
*"Take me now...
as your servant!"*

He appeared as a mother
and showered his grace upon me.
Cleaved from me
the confusion that...
"Once born, I shant die."

Thus the pristine
and primal letters five
shall unite with me.
Shall came and enter my heart.

Assuming the Guru's guise
and keeping a sacred foot
upon this Earth,
he establishes life's meaning.

He joyously bestowed the grace
of the Path of No-Suffering.

Wielding his tusk as a weapon,
he weeds out
the cruel fruits of action.

My ears devour his teaching
without ever being filled.

He reveals the insatiable
Clarity of Wisdom.
The means to master the five senses.

He has sweetly graced me
with joyous compassion.

He proclaimed
that single thought
which shrinks
the delusionary power of the senses.

Putting an end
to this birth
and the next,
he has removed darkness,
and graced me with all
the four stages of mukti (enlightenment).

He cuts off the delusion
of the three impurities.

With one mantra
he showed how
the Nine Openings
and the Five Sense Doors
can be shut...

This is the *Ankusha* (elephant-goad)
of the six chakras:

Without stopping...

Standing firmly...

Let idle chatter be discarded.

He announced the letter
of the Idylla & Pingala
and showed that the end
of the Circle's Edge
is in the skull.

The snake hangs
on the pillar
that is the junction
of the three realms.

He helped me realize
it's tongue.

In the *Kundalini*
one joins the silence...

It breaks open...
and the mantra that rises up
comes out
because of his teaching.

The rising flame,
breaking out
of Muladhara,
is caused to rise
by the wind.

Born of the single thought
which he has taught.

He related...

The state of drinking Amrita,

The movements of the Sun,

& the character of

The One Who Favors the Lily (the Moon).

He revealed
the 8+8 facets
of Vishudha Chakra
along with all the qualities
of my bodies wheels.

He sweetly graced me
with the ability to contemplate
the six faces gross
and the four faces subtle.

He enabled me to perceive
the subtle body,
and gain the darshan
of the Eight States.

He has revealed
within my mind
the Skull's Gate,
and given the sweet grace
of being established in mukti.

He made me know myself.
He showered me with grace.

He pulled out past karma...
by its root.

Without a single word or thought
my mind is one with him.

He has concentrated my mind,
clarified my intellect,
and said,

"Light & Darkness

share a common place."

He presses me down
into the grace giving ecstasy.

In my ear
he renders limitless bliss.

He has weeded out all difficulty
and shown the path of grace.

He has revealed Sada Shiva
within the sound.
He has revealed the Shiva Lingam
within the mind.

And he has revealed that...

The smaller than the smallest,

The larger than the largest,

stands within...

like ripe sugarcane.

He made me understand
the role of the ash
smeared on the brows
of the devotees merged in truth,

with whom

he made me

one.

He made both heart & mind
achieve the state of knowing
the precious meaning
of the Five Letters.

*Having given to me
the True Nature of All Existence...*

*I am ruled
by the wise Vinayagar...*

at whose feet

I take refuge.

Isabella and Richard Ingalese by Tim Scot

Isabella and Richard Ingalese Did they confect the Philosopher's Stone?

A report on 20th Century testimony.
by Tim Scott.

The complete library of credible personal experiences with operative alchemy would fit comfortably in a picnic cooler, with plenty of room for your lunch. If you limit the books to 20th Century accounts, the collection will be just about small enough to carry in your pocket. This is not too surprising, perhaps, considering the enormous discipline and difficulty of the Great Work of alchemy. Further, it's easy to understand why someone who had developed a technique to cure disease, give immortality and change common metals into precious would be somewhat reticent about his accomplishments. Accounts of people who have attempted it and failed are just as scarce. This brings us to an account of a 20th Century American couple who claimed that they had confected the Stone of the Wise, which they even used to resurrect of a woman dead 30 minutes. I have to add immediately that this story is as notable for the questions it leaves unanswered as for the incredible assertions it makes. I am not attempting to draw a veil of mystery: I simply have been unable to find out any more details.

Perhaps someone reading this will be able to provide more information or lead me to a source that will elucidate the mysteries. I was originally led to the story of the Ingaleses by a sidebar in the "Alchemy" article of the (landmark) occult encyclopedia, *Man, Myth and Magic*, originally published in 1970. I managed to acquire a reprint of Richard Ingalese's notes for a public lecture he gave on alchemy in 1927. (Reprinted in Frater Albertus' "Golden Manuscripts" series, entitled "They Made the Philosopher's Stone.") I also acquired a copy of an article on the Ingaleses, which appeared in the Nov. 1928 issue of the *Occult Review*.

Isabella and Richard Ingalese (born 1862 and 1854 [although the Library of Congress gives his birth year as 1863...), respectively) lived originally in New York City before 1910. Mrs Ingalese was occupied full time as a psychic, healer and teacher, and her husband was a lawye. In addition, they were also avid students of what was then called "New Thought" and wrote a number of books, many of which can still be found in used bookstores today. The two or three I've read contain no mention of alchemy at all and indeed are indistinguishable to me from countless other "metaphysical" books which authors seemed to crank out in the early 1900s: vaporous metaphysical theories with no practical application.

In the *The Occult Review* article, Mrs Ingalese explained to author Barbara McKenzie how she and her husband became interested in alchemy: "The years after middle life began to draw on, when much reading of works on alchemy left her in grave doubt as to whether the writers were dealing with a spiritual or a practical discovery...Mrs Ingalese frankly told me that at this time her primary interest in a possible discovery was to stay advancing age and perhaps add another score of working years to man's so-called allotted span." The couple then moved to Los

Angeles --I could not discover why--for the express purpose of attempting to create the physical Philosopher's Stone. A suitable house was acquired and a laboratory outfitted, as they pored over the available books and manuscripts to choose a course of action. Everyone who has studied alchemical literature knows it is fraught with blinds, symbolism, hidden meanings, contradictions and omissions. Mrs Ingalese's psychic gifts proved to be of value as they winnowed the material. Their original goal was to create the Oil of Gold. But, in Richard's pamphlet describing their work, he wrote, "...gold at \$240 a pound is an expensive thing to experiment with; and, after a while it dawned on us that the principle would be the same if we used copper at 15c a pound. So the experiments were transferred to the cheaper metal." (Compare to the cost of gold today! But the ratio of its cost to that of copper is approximately 4500:1 whereas the figures quoted above show a ratio of 1600:1.)

After three years of painstaking labor and a steady draining of their financial resources, Mrs Ingalese produced the first success: the red oil of copper. Richard wrote (in "They Made..."): "We thought that victory was close at hand, but found it was still some years away. The fifth year gave us the oil of sulphur, but not until we had many fires and explosions and two asphyxiations. The sixth year produced the oil of mercury, the basis of all Alchemy...By this time we had sold all our securities and had two mortgages on our home, but had determined to continue with the work until we met with success, if it took this life and all subsequent ones. But we had all the oils required to make the Stone, and, thus encouraged, we tried to crystallize and fuse them. In 1917 we succeeded in making the White Stone of the Philosophers." The Ingalese continued the time-honored tradition of using animals to try new drugs. "We dared not try it on ourselves at first. But there was a third member of our family, a beautiful Angora cat of which we were very fond. We took a vote to see which of the three should test out the Stone, and the cat, neglecting to vote, was elected. It survived the first dose, and we repeated it on the following two days, with the cat becoming more frisky than usual...After that we tried it ourselves, each taking a dose at the same moment so we would exanimate together if it should prove fatal. But it proved beneficial and energized our bodies."

The writer for the Occult Review was less hesitant to sample the Stone. When Mrs Ingalese asked her if she would care to see and taste the Red Stone she wrote, "I willingly accepted." She then goes on to describe how Mrs Ingalese "[dipped] a silver knife in the bottle and quickly restoppering it, placed the smear--it was little more--on my tongue, saying it must lie there and not be swallowed. I immediately noticed an intense bitterness, which is said to be the gold, but other metals I could not detect. In two or three seconds it had been absorbed or dispersed, so that not even a flavour remained in my mouth."

Returning to the account in Richard's lecture: "Encouraged by this success, we redoubled our efforts to make the Red Stone of the Philosophers, which is the one most mentioned in Alchemical writings. This effort was continuous from 1917 to 1920, when our quest was rewarded." Apparently, the Ingalese's work was supported in a more than verbal way: After creating and potentizing the Red Stone, Richard writes: "There were several elderly people whom we were under obligations to help in case our search proved successful, and we offered to share the results of our efforts with them; but, being wisely cautious, they preferred to wait until we had tried out the Stone for a year." I am presuming they obtained investors for their work, in exchange for the promise to share the fruits of it with them should the experiment succeed.

"After that, our renewal club was formed and we all took the magic medicine...Mrs Ingalese and I have not done as well as some of the other members of the group because of the condition we were in when we commenced the treatment. From 1911 to 1920, [the couple was then aged 57-66 and 49-54] though having the knowledge and the means to keep our bodies healthful we did not use mind or any medicine in that behalf because, we could not have known what effect the Alchemical products would have on us. From a physiological viewpoint, those were important years in our lives, since our bodies had reached an age when strict attention and care were necessary to prevent quick deterioration. But, even under those conditions, our bodies now attest the power of the Stone, as all who have known us for the last two decades can testify."

As to the Stone's efficacy, Richard makes some interesting observations: "...we tried the stone on many 'incurables.' The number of cases cured was remarkable, but we found it not infallible...We know that the Stone restores virility in men at any age, and normal desire in both sexes."

"If a woman has recently passed her change of life, it restores all normal functioning of the sex organs. But, if she has long passed that period, then, childbearing is out of the question."

Ms McKenzie adds: "The cure of a case of cancer, given up by all the doctors, was also claimed. After a few doses the disease was said to be arrested, and after some months' treatment was completely cured."

"I did not verify these statements," notes Ms McKenzie, "but record them as given." Richard also mentions:

"...incredible as it may appear, I know of one alchemist more than 600 years old, and one whose age is more than 400, and another whose age is 200, and all of these look and function as do men in the prime of life at about 40 years." But even this is not as astonishing as his matter-of-fact description of the resuscitation of a dead woman, the wife of a prominent local physician. "Half an hour had elapsed and her body was growing cold. A dose of the

dissolved White Stone was put into the mouth of the corpse without perceptible result. Fifteen minutes later a second dose was administered and the heart commenced to pulsate weakly. Fifteen minutes later a third dose was given and soon the woman opened her eyes. In the course of a few weeks the woman became convalescent, after which she lived seven years."

This is incredibly tantalizing and, prima facie, unbelievable. But what purpose could be served by Ingalese fabricating this story? Surely there must be some corroborating material somewhere. A whole host of other questions suggest themselves: What did the resuscitated woman finally die from, and at what age? What caused her to die in the first place? What other techniques (if any) were used to attempt to revive her? Why wasn't the Stone used again in the second place? Richard ended his pamphlet stating that, even at their advanced ages of 67 and 73, both he and his wife looked and felt young and extremely healthy.

"This is our testimony in behalf of Alchemy and the Alchemists, which each person may accept, or reject, according to his conviction, until such time as our bodies, now 67 and 73 years of age, respectively, by their youth and vigor, will compel acceptance of our statements."

And then...? I'm afraid I haven't the slightest idea. What happened next? How long did Richard and Isabella live? How did they die? Where did they live? Did anyone else write of them? What happened to their laboratory, their notes, and--for that matter--their store of the White and the Red Stones? Is it possible that there is a cupboard in some old house or building in L.A. containing some vials of a panacea or an elixir of immortality? What about the other members of the "Renewal Club"? Would it not be enlightening to learn their later histories? What about the multi-centenarian alchemists Richard claimed to know? Did Richard and Isabella have any students carry on their work? If so, who were they? Did they publish anything? Frater Albertus, in the introduction to his edition of Richard's pamphlet, loftily states, "We are not greatly concerned here with the individuals known as Richard and Isabella Ingalese nor to their whereabouts up to the nineteen thirties and thereafter." Are we not, indeed, dear Frater? It would seem to me that it would be intensely interesting to a practical alchemist to learn more about two of the incredibly few people who ever explicitly claimed have succeeded in the Great Work.

Ingalese also wrote: "We have never made gold, nor gems. That is a branch that is exceedingly interesting; and when we have the leisure, we shall pursue that part of the art..." Did they ever go on to this phase of the work? Both Richard in his pamphlet and Isabella in her interview seem to be the model of rational, sensible people. They do not give the impression of being fanatics, charlatans or self-deluded. Ms McKenzie writes: "These are big claims, and I was not in the least credulous regarding the matter, for time and direct observation of specific cases alone could justify the statements. But I was impressed by the modesty and care of the statements made by Mrs Ingalese." In fact, Richard gives several examples of charlatans, con-men and misguided seekers in the course of his talk, and makes the commonsensical observation: "If a person poses as a teacher, ask for some evidence of his knowledge before you enroll as his student...No honest man could object to such requirements." He is referring to alchemical teachers specifically, but certainly this is generally true. The next question that arises is: precisely how did they work? It is very difficult to find a clear path through the mass of alchemical literature, and teachers were no doubt hard to find in the early 1900s in Southern California.

The Ingaleses patiently read and collected alchemical books and manuscripts for more than a decade, and after a thorough examination of the available alchemical literature, Richard stated, clearly agreeing: "Some one has said, 'You can destroy all other books on alchemy, for their knowledge and more is contained in the alchemical writings of Paracelsus.'" Mrs Ingalese told the *Occult Review's* Mrs McKenzie that A. E. Waite's edition of *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Paracelsus* were "the volumes that afforded her the most encouragement and help in her subsequent efforts." But as far as specifics go, neither Richard in his pamphlet nor Isabella in her interview vouchsafed any details. As a woman alchemist, Isabella Ingalese is extremely unusual; in fact none appear in the literature I'm familiar with except as partners or assistants to their husbands. (In fact, a study of these women would be extremely interesting. I mentioned this to my wife, proposing the title "Alchemists and their women." She immediately retorted that a better title would be "Women and their Alchemists.")

A tangential sidelight: It is interesting to note another 20th Century Alchemist who claimed to have achieved the Magistry. This was Archibald Cockren, who wrote a small book published in London in 1940. The first 120 of its 158 pages were devoted to historical and theoretical overviews of Alchemy. Cockren then describes in a few pages, leaving out large and significant details, his laboratory alchemical work. Nowhere does he mention the Ingaleses, nor is there any indication he was aware of their work, even though the *Occult Review* article was published in London in 1927. However, there are interesting clues in his writing, which led William Leo, in his 1972 book "Alchemy" to attempt to "fill in the blanks."

Cockren's book would, I think, repay a closer analysis and perhaps that could be the subject of a future article.

Notes on Tantric Alchemy and the Purification of Mercury

Steven A. Feite

[Back to articles](#) . [Back to Indian alchemy](#).

Mercury, or parada in Sanskrit, has a long and detailed history of use. To the practitioner of the Tantras (and the medieval alchemists), it was the key to the ultimate sacrament. The purpose of this article is to share some of my own discoveries on this fascinating and forgotten subject.

Parada traditionally has many different names, most of which are obscure synonyms in the *Sandhya Bhasya* (Skt.), or Twilight Language. The Twilight Language is an intentional language, intentionally designed to thwart the misuse of certain formulae. The use of these formulae were only intended for those who had experiential access to twilight states of consciousness, and were familiar with the unique symbolism of such dimensions. In the Natha lineage where the Alchemical teachings are preserved, these states were obtained through a thorough training in yoga or union, and its main method, *samadhi*, or mystical union.

Some of the common words used to symbolize parada are: rasa (essence), rasendra (because it is the most important of metals), suta (because of its ability to transmute gold), capala (on account of its volatility), rasa raja (ruler of metals)--and many others. Most of these words are synonymous with Shiva, indeed one of the most common synonyms refers to parada as the "semen of Shiva". This is in and of itself, very revealing. Shiva, in the Tantric literature, symbolizes **infinite time** (Skt.: Mahakala). This explains the esoteric symbolism embedded in Shiva's traditional iconography: a yogin crowned by the eclipsing moon: the sun and the moon conjoined. Karmic prana is withdrawn from the solar and lunar channels to become jnani (transcendental) lifeforce. There, Shiva and Shakti lie, beyond time, in the central channel (sushumna). In order for creation to come into being Shiva enters into "play" with his opposite, Shakti. Thus the concept of time, and limited experience becomes possible. In the process of making parada consumable, parada is mixed with this opposite; the only substance which can control Shiva's incredible potential, purified sulfur: the 'menses' or blood of Parvati (Shakti).

Technically speaking, Shakti is *Ahamkara* (Skt.) or literally 'the I-maker', the power behind 'I-ness', the kundalini shakti herself. A human only exists based on the fact that Ahamkara deceives herself into believing that she is mated to the limited physical body and its resident personality. When the kundalini shakti is completely 'uncoiled', she recognizes that she is Shiva's 'power'. Unfortunately, for the uninitiated or inexperienced person, once this shakti is 'awake to itself,' it forgets the limited body-mind, and remembers Shiva. She sacrifices her limited individuality to him and obtains instant enlightenment. The problem for the uninitiated is quite simple; those who have not trained in meditation and the total transcendence of limitations, both of time and of body-mind, will at worst lose the ability to identify with the body, i.e. physical death. At best, the huge influx of kundalini will overwhelm the limited energy/immune functions of the body like millions of volts of electricity running through low voltage wire. There is a misguided conception among new age-magical circles that the "fastest" way to enlightenment is to simply awaken the kundalini shakti. What they won't tell you is what to do with the incredible amounts of energy released. Most of the people I have talked to have no idea what to do with it! Remember always, that Shiva is also the Lord of death. Ahamkara, as the energy behind our essential egos, is the basis of all addiction. It is Ahamkara that addicts us even to the food we need to sustain life. The only real way to relieve this problem is to transmute Ahamkara's binding limitation by wedding her to her opposite: Shiva. The limitations of the 'I-maker' are then transformed by expansion into a balanced cosmic personality. Addiction to the God/Goddess, to a higher power, is the only permanent cure. It is interesting that even the twelve step groups seem to understand this important idea.

Mercury, as the semen of Lord Shiva, is the physical embodiment of the fire of transformation (tejas). It can provide incredible amounts of tejas to an organism, and can make them capable of digesting almost anything. This means digestion of physical substances as well as 'digestion' of the sense objects of the five senses, the digestion of experience itself. Parada can also provide unlimited amounts of prana. Thus with prana and tejas, fire and water, parada can provide unlimited ojas, the Quintessence. Because it controls these three, it can also control the three doshas, or bodily humors. Yet, by itself, mercury forms an insoluble salt which lodges in the brain and causes insanity or death. Ingesting mercury by itself is like raising kundalini through an imbalanced path. What mercury needs is something to balance it, to control its energy. That something is the element sulfur.

Sulfur is the elemental embodiment of blood, that which the body uses to create everything else (from an Ayurvedic perspective), and the only thing capable of controlling mercury. Sulfur is the womb which creates the child *Kajjali*, the black sulfide of mercury.

Kajjali is the alchemical child from which most of the other alchemical substances are created. The most famous of the mercury-based compounds is the rasayana (rejuvenative) Makaradwaja. Makaradwaja consists (primarily) of mercury, sulfur, and gold. This compound is capable of providing endurance, energy, increased immune function and longevity to its taker. Makaradwaja seems to work by allowing prana, tejas and ojas to flow into parts of the subtle physiology where it would not normally be able to flow, clearing many of the blockages which may be present. If taken prior to meditation or even sleep, it can even be seen to permeate the nadis (subtle energy-channels). Mercury allows the body to digest the otherwise only partly digestible element of gold. This allows the concentrated "solidified sunlight," gold, to gild the bodies immune system and aura. On a subtle level it actually has the appearance of a volatile mercury, streaming through the bodies channels. It is excellent for diseases such as A.I.D.S. and different forms of cancer. The average treatment routine, repeated on a yearly basis, should last for about a month, depending on the individual, usually in the coldest months of the year.

Members of the Bhairavi cult, worshippers of a particularly wrathful form of Lord Shiva, have been known to live hundreds of years through the alchemical use of such mercury-based compounds. Indeed some are said to have obtained immortality (by overcoming their innate addiction to time). Statues of the Bhairavi cult display some of the characteristics of this incredible life extension; beings so mutated from alchemical sadhana as to resemble other dimensional Bhairavis more than humans. This is their actual appearance, yet they may appear as any age to the observer, and do not usually display their true appearance to the uninitiated.

In Rasa Shastra, the Art of Tantric alchemy, Mercury is considered as a living substance--a living being. In the process of preparation it goes through all of the same processes as the sadhaka who seeks liberation, and the child or soul who seeks incarnation. First the mercury is 'awakened', made 'hungry', it is 'fed', made to 'swoon', and lastly 'killed'. 'Killing' refers to incineration in the symbolism of the Twilight Language. More than mere symbolism, the preparation of Mercury is the preparation for enlightenment itself, the true Gold of the Wise.

Nothing summarizes the goal of Tantric alchemy better than the following quote from the Rasahridaya Tantra (9th cent. A.D.) by the great sage Govinda Bhagavatpada, the Guru of Shankaracharya:

"It is only in the virtuous ones, the flame full of consciousness appears between the two eye brows which has the appearance of fire, lightening, or a sun. It is difficult to describe the nature of this excellent flame. It endows the person with eternal bliss and makes him free of all miseries. It is observable. It is peaceful and its attributes can be appreciated by the individual. The individual should concentrate his mind on this flame and the entire universe will appear before them like eternally vibrating consciousness...Those individuals who have attained this state of unity which is like amrita are the truly blessed ones." (Rasahridaya Tantra I:21-26)

(c) 1994, S.A. Feite

AMBIX Vol. 23, Part I, March 1976

ROGER BACON'S PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF ALCHEMY

by Edmund Brehm

ALCHEMY, throughout its history, has shown a dual nature. On the one hand, it has involved the use of chemical substances and so is claimed by the history of science as the precursor of modern chemistry. Yet at the same time, alchemy has, throughout its history, also been associated with the esoteric, spiritual beliefs of Hermeticism and thus is a proper subject for the historian of religious thought.

The chemical approach is easily understood. As the distinguished historian of alchemy, the late F. Sherwood Taylor, concluded: "The hopeless pursuit of the practical transmutation of metals was responsible for almost the whole of the development of chemical technique before the seventeenth century, and further led to the discovery of many important materials. This is the commonly recognized contribution of alchemy."¹ Mircea Eliade and others, on the other hand, have emphasized the soteriological function of alchemy as working toward the perfection and liberation of the human soul or spirit, a process symbolized in the perfection of metals into gold and of the human body to a state of optimum health and even immortality. Such an approach is complemented by the psychological studies of C. G. Jung, which correlate alchemical symbolism with the development of the psycho-religious life of the individual.

Eliade has conclusively demonstrated the religious nature of alchemy in Eastern cultures, and Jung has discussed the psychological basis of Western alchemy during its later period (the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries). But European alchemy during the Middle Ages, especially from a religious point of view, has received little attention. With both points of view in mind, I shall examine here the alchemical ideas of the thirteenth-century natural philosopher, [Roger Bacon](#), and suggest the position he occupies in the history of the "Hermetic Art". There is a large corpus of treatises on alchemy that bear Bacon's name and simply establishing the authenticity of his works has held much scholarly attention. For this study I have relied upon only those works that can with certainty be credited to the *Doctor Mirabilis*.²

Because of Bacon's importance to the development of modern science, he is always mentioned in general histories of alchemy and chemistry. For the most part, however, historians have not clarified Bacon's place in these developments. Considering his alchemical writings from the chemical point of view, there is little material that would justify many of the claims that have been made over the years about his importance to that science. This opinion agrees with that of Robert P. Multhauf, one of the more recent scholars who discusses this question. He points out that such a judgment was also shared by the famous alchemical "editors" of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, who seldom mention Bacon in their discussions of the great alchemists, or include works attributed to him in their printed collections.³

Bacon's chemistry is generally derivative and superficial. As one example, he reports a recipe at the beginning of his *Opus Minus* that, he says, is guaranteed to produce the "elixir". He first cites several works by Aristotle and Avicenna, then explains:

First there is pulverization, then solidification, then solution with ascension and depression [*i.e.*, distillation], and a melting and mixing together. And afterwards there is sublimation with attrition and mortification; then follows the corruption of the oil, that is, it is separated from spirit so that afterwards the fiery power may be increased. After this, we consider the "proposition of lime", the distillation of oil, and the evaporation of water, so that we may finally obtain the solution from the first [metal?] into the seventh, and a contention with acute fever. Truly, whoever knows how to do these things would have the perfect medicine, which the philosophers call the *Elixir*, which immerses itself in the liquefaction as it is consumed by the fire and does not flee [*i.e.*, evaporate].⁴

Taylor, after discussing such recipes, concluded that efforts to correlate such vague descriptions with actual chemical processes are futile.⁵ Yet the lack of any demonstrable contribution to chemical technique in Bacon's work was characteristic of his time, a period that was, as John Read described it, "redolent of the lamp rather than of the laboratory".⁶ Nevertheless, Bacon's theoretical ideas are equally unimpressive. His writings contain a great deal of unfounded criticism of other alchemists, much discussion of the importance of maintaining secrecy, and vague references to how very useful the Art is to theology, to medicine, to the state, and -- he emphasizes for Clement IV -- to the papacy. When Bacon discloses various "enigmas" to the Pope in his *Opus tertium* they turn out to be rather banal bits and pieces of alchemical lore, which most educated people of the time must have known, such as the correspondence between the seven metals and the seven celestial bodies, or the sulfur-mercury theory of metal formation. Bacon's division of alchemy into "speculative" and "practical" seems to me to have been overrated. In the first place, Bacon divided many branches of knowledge into speculative and practical aspects. Secondly, a dichotomy between the theoretical and practical aspects of alchemy had been recognized by adepts since Greek times.⁷

Viewed from the point of view of soteriology, Bacon's alchemical writings, taken by themselves, do not suggest a deep relationship between alchemy and religious experience. His idea that alchemy is useful to theology because it can determine the physical composition of the bodies of Adam and Eve may be curious, but it is not profound. His works lack the allegorical and symbolic elaboration, called in alchemy the *amplification*, which is the starting point of Jung's analysis of alchemical symbolism. Yet placed within the context of Bacon's entire conception of science and salvation, the soteriological nature of his alchemical ideas can be appreciated. His conception of science constitutes the amplification of his alchemy, and it implicitly links the alchemical process that produces the *elixir of life* to the soteriological path that leads through Christian morality to eternal salvation.

In all of Bacon's later works, he attempted to integrate all knowledge into a *scientia integralis*, an integrated, universal science. His vision of this universal science had its roots in his study around 1247 of *The Secrets of Secrets*, a book that spuriously purports to be the occult and most profound teachings of the philosopher Aristotle. Prior to 1247, Bacon's interests focused on the traditional topics of scholastic learning upon which he lectured at the

University of Paris. There he showed no tendency toward his later concern with science, astrology, alchemy, or magic. In fact, in his lectures on the Pseudo-Aristotelian treatise, *De Plantis*, Bacon even seems to deny the validity of alchemy, maintaining on philosophical grounds that transmutation of metals *per speciem* is impossible.⁸ But all of Bacon's interests change after he discovered *The Secrets of Secrets*: the work inspired Bacon's study of medicine, astrology, alchemy, and it was the seed for his vision of a universal science. "It cannot be emphasized too strongly," Steward C. Easton writes, "that the enormous difference between what Bacon now learns from the books of *Secrets* and all that he had previously studied was that the knowledge now acquired is practical.... His whole later life and the emotional intensity with which he pursued it can be traced to the impact of this book."⁹ Bacon set off studying medicine, the chief subject suggested by the *Secrets*, and around 1250 wrote a treatise on the retardation of old age in which two-thirds of the quotations are from this spurious work.¹⁰ In the next few years Bacon wrote a commentary to the *Secrets*; he studied astrology and alchemy, and he perhaps began the study of ancient languages, Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic. The one thing that now set Bacon apart from the other men of his time -- if, perhaps, only in Bacon's mind -- was his intuitive vision that all this knowledge is marvelously interrelated. Thus, Bacon learned from the *Secrets* that medicine is very useful because it provides a regimen for health, and combined with alchemy, it teaches how to prolong human life. Astrology is also most useful in this regard because of the complexional correspondences of the stars, humors, qualities, elements, and metals. And all these sciences are most useful, *utilissimae*, for theology because they can explain the composition of the bodies of Adam and Eve before the Fall and also describe the means by which the damned will be tortured in hell.

One can almost become caught up by Bacon's obvious enthusiasm, until he gets down to specific examples, and then one is struck by how *vague* everything is. Bacon's "gift for systematic analysis is greatly inferior to his imagination and vision", Easton observes.¹¹ Such a state of mind led to "an indiscriminating eclecticism detrimental to logical unity and harmony".¹² Yet clear in Bacon's mind was an intuitive vision of universal science, a vision that rests at the center of his work. Around it cluster his thoughts on revelation, astrology, morality, alchemy, salvation, the prolongation of life, and the other sciences. Some parts of his system, such as optics, are more fully thought out and developed than others, but their one unifying aspect, Bacon believed, is that they make up the *scientia integralis*. In trying to understand the personality behind Bacon's vision, we need not go as far as David Knowles, who asserts that Bacon's ideas "seem to have been vitiated by some deep psychological flaw, and by a restlessness and lack of control that prevented his brilliant talents and intuitive genius from attaining full realization".¹³ Yet the picture of Bacon which emerges from his writings is of a man who was moved by a highly-cathected emotional drive. It was this drive that gave Bacon the feeling of power and righteousness that carried him throughout his difficult career. The subjective reality of such a drive may also have lent experiential substance to his ideas on revelation, which Bacon believed to be the ultimate source of science. This revealed wisdom was in turn linked to human salvation:

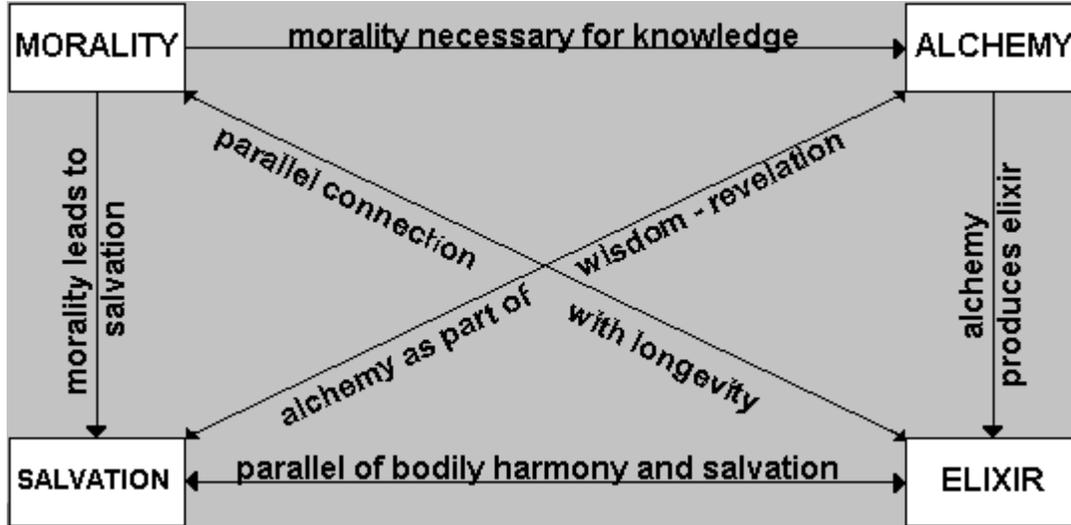
And God wishes all men to be saved and no man to perish, and His goodness is infinite; He always leaves some way possible for man through which he may be urged to seek his own salvation.... For this reason the goodness of God ordained that revelation would be given to the world that the human race might be saved.... And it is not surprising that the wisdom of philosophy is of this kind since this wisdom is only a general revelation made to all mankind because all wisdom is from God.¹⁴

Scientific knowledge may lead to salvation, but the prerequisite for this revealed wisdom of science is Christian morality. Bacon explains in his commentary to the *Secrets* that Moses, Abraham, and the other Hebrew patriarchs were the original founders of science, which was revealed to them by God because of their great sanctity. Even the ancient pagans -- Aristotle, of course, and Plato, Avicenna, and others -- by their exemplary lives, "arrived at the secrets of wisdom and acquired all the sciences. But we Christians," Bacon continues, "discover nothing worthy, the reason for which is that we do not have their morals. For it is impossible that wisdom stand with sin, but perfect virtue is required by her."¹⁵ This wisdom of philosophy, Bacon maintained, is not just the traditional studies of physics and metaphysics; it is all the sciences which make up the *scientia integrsalis*. And not a single piece of the whole can be omitted, he insists. In an attack upon Albertus Magnus, for example, Bacon writes that this master knows nothing of the science of perspective, which is necessary in order to know the whole, "and therefore, he can know nothing of the wisdom of philosophy". Then, moving on to alchemy, Bacon declares, "Indeed, he who has composed so many and such great volumes on natural matters . . . is ignorant of these fundamentals [of alchemy], and so his building cannot stand"-- *et ideo suum aedificium stare non potest!*¹⁶ Thus, one must know the secrets of alchemy in order to complete that edifice of wisdom that is so important for the salvation of man.

Alchemy is linked to salvation by another pillar in Bacon's intellectual structure: his medical ideas on the *elixir of life*. The alchemical "medicine" not only procures gold, he writes, but "what is infinitely more [important], it will

prolong life".¹⁷ The prolongation of life, furthermore, is in turn closely tied up with morality. Bacon explains to the Pope that there are two reasons for the premature onset of old age: the first is a lack of the proper regimen of health, which includes the use of alchemically concocted drugs and elixirs; the second reason is the decline of morality.¹⁸ Thus, a good Christian life allows one to receive the revelation of the universal science, which can be used in man's quest for salvation. It also helps to prolong his life, as was the case among the saintly patriarchs before the Flood.¹⁹ This prolongation of life in itself is a kind of proto-salvation, for just as the elixir works by bringing the elements and humors of the body into as perfect a harmony as is possible in this life, so at the Resurrection, the bodies of the saints will be brought into perfect harmony, while the damned will be tormented in hell by an eternal affliction of the bodily humors.²⁰

Here we can see implicit in Bacon's system an intimate interrelationship between alchemy, morality, the prolongation of life, and salvation. This matrix of ideas can be summarized most clearly in a diagram:



Such a set of relationships is strikingly similar to the symbiosis of tantric yoga and alchemy discussed by Eliade. In the Indian system, the spiritual development of the individual to liberation not only parallels, but is causally interrelated to the production of the elixir through alchemy and the attainment of physical immortality. Roger Bacon was not a medieval yogi, to be sure; but his system is consistent with the spirit of the fourteenth-century Tantrist, Madhava, who taught that alchemy "is not to be looked upon as merely eulogistic of the metal, it being immediately, through the conservation of the body, a means to the highest end, liberation."²¹

One should not exaggerate the importance of alchemy for Bacon; the other sciences were equally important to him. However, of all the components of the universal science, only alchemy and the elixir are integrated by Bacon so closely with his ideas on Christian morality and salvation. Bacon's formulation of this relationship, no matter how incompletely or even unconsciously developed, is an important link between the ancient soteriological tradition of alchemy and the first blossoming of the Art in Europe during the fourteenth century. Such a view of the underlying structure of Bacon's ideas relating to alchemy also agrees with the thesis of Jung and Eliade that the most significant, the most useful -- *utilissima* -- approach that we can take to alchemy is by way of the deeper psychological and religious pathways of the human mind and soul.

Edmund Brehm's email address is edmbrehm@micron.net.

REFERENCES

1. *The Alchemists*, New York, 1949, ix-x.

2. The published editions of these works are: *Opus Majus*, ed. J. H. Bridges, 3 vols., London, 1900; Eng. trans. Robert Burke, 2 vols., Philadelphia, 1928; *Opera quaedam hactenus inedita Fr. Rogeri Bacon*, ed. J. S. Brewer, Roll Series, no. 15, London, 1859, hereafter cited as "Brewer"; *Part of the Opus Tertium of Roger Bacon*, ed. A. G. Little, Aberdeen, 1912; *Secretum Secretorum cum Glossis et Notulis Rogori Baconi, Opera hactenus inedita Rogeri Baconi*, fasc. 5, ed. Robert Steele, Oxford, 1920 -- this collection hereafter cited as "O.H.I.", *De Erroribus Medicorum*, in O.H.I., fasc. 9, ed. A. G. Little and E. Withington, Oxford, 1928, 150-79. Cf. A. G. Little, "Roger Bacon's Works", in *Roger Bacon, Essays Contributed by Various Authors on the Occasion of the Commemoration of the Seventh Centenary of his Birth*, ed. A. G. Little, Oxford, 1914, 395-8, and D. W. Singer, "The Alchemical Writings of Roger Bacon", *Speculum*, 7 (1932), 80-6.

3. *The Origins of Chemistry*, London, 1966, 191-2.
4. *Opus minus* (Brewer), 314: Prius est pulverisatio cum congelatione, deinde resolutio, cum ascensione, et depressione, et incarcerationone, et mixtione. Et postea est sublimatio cum attritione et mortificatione, deinde sequitur corruptio olei, vel separatur a spiritu, ut post intendatur virtus ignea. Nam post haec intendimus calcis propositionem, et olei distillationem, et aquae exaltationem, ut ultimo quaeramus resolutionem a primo in septimum, et contentionem cum febre acuta. Qui vero haec sciret adimplere haberet medicinam perfectam, quam philosophi vocant *Elixir*, quae immergit se in liquefacto, ut consumeretur ab igne, nec fugeret.
5. *Alchemists* (I), 115.
6. *Prelude to Chemistry*, London, 1939, 43.
7. Wilhelm Ganzenmüller, *L'Alchimie au moyen âge*, trans. G. Petit-Dutaillis, Paris, 1940, 161-2.
8. *Quaestiones supra librum de plantis*, O.H.I., fasc. II, ed. Robert Steele, Oxford, 1932, 251-2.
9. *Roger Bacon and his Search for a Universal Science*, New York, 1952, 80-1, 86.
10. *De Retardatione Accidentium Senectutis cum aliis opusculis de rebus medicinalibus*, O.H.I., fasc. 9, ed. A. G. Little and E. Withington, Oxford, 1928, I-83.
11. *Roger Bacon* (9.) 168
12. Theodore Crowley, *Roger Bacon: The Problem of the Soul in his Philosophical Commentaries*, Louvain, 1950, 167.
13. *The Religious Orders in England*, Cambridge, 1960, iii, 215.
14. *Opus Tertium*, ed. Little, 64-5 *et passim*, quoted in translation by Easton, *Roger Bacon* (9), 75.
15. *Compendium Studii Philosophiae* (Brewer), 410-2.
16. *Opus Tertium* (Brewer), 37.
17. *Opus Majus* (Burke trans.), 627.
18. *Ibid.*, 617-18.
19. *Opus minus* (Brewer), 373.
20. *Ibid.*, 367-74.
21. *Saravadars anasamgraha*, trans. E. B. Cowell and A. E. Gough, 2nd ed., London, 1894, 140, quoted by Mircea Eliade, *Yoga, Immortality and Freedom*, trans. Willard R. Trask, 2nd ed., Princeton, 1969.

Doctor Robert Fludd (1574-1637) By Sharon M.W.

Permission to use this article has kindly been given by Sharon M.W. of the [The Ancient Rosae Crucis](#)

Doctor Robert Fludd (1574-1637)

By Sharon M.W.

Robert Fludd was born at Milgate House, in the parish of Bearsted and county of Kent, in the year 1574. His father was Sir Thomas Fludd who served Queen Elizabeth for many years and received his Knighthood for his services as War Treasurer in the Netherlands.

Little is known concerning the early life of Robert Fludd. At the age of seventeen, he entered St. John's College, Oxford and graduated B.A. and M.A. between the years 1596-1598. Although the spirit of the College St. John the Baptist was in the direction of a variety of knowledge, it still remained a center for theological studies. His years at St. John made a great impression upon him, and he remained "at all times a faithful and attached friend and member of the Church of England." (Craven, 22)

Fludd was more conservative than other Paracelsians of this time, and yet he had enough of his own radical philosophies to raise the eyebrows of his more conservative contemporaries. These interests may have developed during his six year journey throughout Europe following his graduation.

Upon graduation, Fludd decided to pursue the medical sciences and ventured to the Continent to further his studies as a roaming scholar. It was during these six years of study as a medical student that he became quite proficient in chemistry, an interest that led him into Paracelsian medical circles. He also developed a great interest in Rosicrucian philosophy and later was to become one of the Movement's most ardent supporters.

After his travels through Europe, Fludd returned to Oxford and by 1605, he had earned his degrees of Bachelor of Medicine and Doctor of Medicine. However, it was not until 1609 that he was finally admitted a Fellow of good standing, for a number of reasons. Although the application of Paracelsian chemicals into medicine was receiving less opposition by the Fellows of the College, Fludd's esoteric and mystical speculations were still under suspicion. Further, they found him arrogant and offensive. (Debus, 2)

However, after a series of unpleasant encounters, he was finally admitted to the London College of Physicians. He then established a practice in London. Fludd was successful enough to employ his own apothecary and maintain his own laboratory to prepare his chemical remedies, as well as carry on his alchemical experiments. The success of his practice was due not only to his skills, but to what has been attributed to his mystical approach, and to what has been described as a magnetic personality and "...his influence on the minds of his patients, producing a 'faith-natural,' which aided the 'well-working' of his drugs." (Craven, 29)

Further, in addition to established methods of diagnosis, Fludd also used a patient's horoscope for such a purpose, as well as to anticipate critical days.

In spite of his busy medical practice, Fludd also found time to write, and as a writer, became associated with the school of medical mystics who claimed to be in possession of the Key to Universal Sciences. His interest in the Rosicrucians continued and it is said that he became, during this time, an influential member of the Fraternity of the Rose Cross.

Significantly, in this early part of the Seventeenth Century, a great stir was created in Germany, and soon to spread across all of Europe, by the publication of the Rosicrucian Manifestoes: the *Fama Fraternitatus* and the *Confessio Fraternitatus*. These manifestoes were a call to the educated to unite in a scientific and spiritual reform of Europe. Through knowledge, humanity would be able to experience and understand the Divine in nature, the difference between the material and the spiritual, and their relationship with God. The learned to whom these Manifestoes were addressed included in their ranks students of alchemy, the cabala and mysticism. It is no wonder then that many who responded to the Manifestoes were of the medical and alchemical mind and almost all, such as Fludd, were involved in the Paracelsian tradition.

Part of the controversy surrounding the Manifestoes is based upon the fact they were written anonymously, and those who responded to the Manifestoes through the publication of letters and pamphlets did not necessarily receive official responses.

"In the library of Gottingen there is a body of letters addressed to the imaginary Order of 'Father Rosy-Cross, from 1614-1617, by persons offering themselves as members.' Other persons published small pamphlets on the subject, and even impostors appeared professing to be Rosicrucians, 'and deceived many.' No printed letters received printed answers. What answers, if any, were given privately, of course, cannot be known. A secret society will act secretly. No one could tell the result." (Craven, 39)

Another Paracelsian physician at this time and friend to Robert Fludd was Michael Maier. He explained this secrecy in his work entitled "*Silentium Post Clamores*," by maintaining that since ancient times, colleges existed to perpetuate studies in medicine and science and that such knowledge for its own protection was secretly passed from generation to generation through a system of initiation. He felt this system was somehow tied in with the writers of the "*Fama*" though not necessarily directly connected. It was this aspect of secrecy that invited so many different responses to the Manifestoes, some in support and others attacking them as fraudulent.

Maier is important in the life of Fludd for several reasons. One, he was dedicated to the religious and spiritual aspects of alchemy as Fludd was, and he is credited with introducing the Order of the Rose Cross into England. It is also alleged that he initiated his friend, Robert Fludd, into the order. Both writers were published by the same publishing concern, DeBry in Oppenheim, and both writers used the same engraver. They apparently were of great influence to each other in their respective works concerning the spiritual revitalization of science and medicine as well as in their relationship to the Rosicrucians.

Robert Fludd greatly admired and was in sympathy to the ideals and intent expressed in the manifestoes. He wrote several works to express this admiration, and thus became known as a Rosicrucian Apologist.

We will now quote directly from Craven's book.

"Fludd's apology for the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross was first issued in 1616, being printed in Leyden. It 'entitles him to be regarded as the high priest of their mysteries.' It is said that Maier visited Fludd in London in 1615, and the result of his visit was, we know, the publication of his '*Apologia*,' written in Latin, and published in Leyden in 1616...

...It is believed that the '*Apologia*' was issued at the request of Maier, and probably he took or sent to Leyden the MS. Fludd's studies in mysticism had now continued for several years. 'Since about the year 1600 he had begun to study the Cabala, magic, astrology and alchemy, as is proved by his '*Historia Utriusque Cosmi*.' Oppenheim, 1617, folio...

...The title of Fludd's first work is, *Apologia Commendiaria Fraternitatem de Rosea Cruce Suspicionis et Infamiae Maculis Aspersam Veritatis quasi Fluctibus abluens et abstergens*. Leyde 1616....

...The '*Apologia*' is in three parts...The different chapters have quotations or mottoes taken from the '*Confessio*.' The contents of the work are the germs of Fludd's subsequent writings. These develop his purpose in the '*Apologia*' to be

'to protect the purity and innocence of the society and to wipe off the spots of shame smeared over the Brethren, as with a stream of pure wisdom.'...

...at page 195, the author [Fludd] addresses the Brethren of the Rosy Cross. He refers to their promise to bring happiness to those who have been reduced to misery by the fall of Adam. He honours them because they serve Christ with pure and upright hearts. He asks pardon of the Brotherhood if, through his ignorance, he has made any error or mistake in his 'Apologia.' He adds, 'he wished nothing more or better than to be only the lowest associate in your order, that he might satisfy the inquisitive ears of men by a trustworthy spreading of your renown.' He then states shortly who he is. 'I am,' he says, 'of a distinguished noble race. My spouse is called 'desire of wisdom'; my children are the fruits produced by it...I have experienced and fortunately overcome the stormy sea, the steep mountains, the slippery vallies, ignorance on land, and the coarseness of the towns; the haughtiness and pride of the citizens, avarice, faithlessness, ignorance, foulness, almost all human inconveniences...I have found that almost everywhere vanity rules and triumphs. All seems to be self-assertive misery and vanity itself.' He then bids the brethren farewell, in all kindness and affection." (Craven, 42-45)

Robert Fludd's intense religious devotion and mystic quest caused him to be perpetually concerned with the creation myth as comprehended by man. In 1617, he published two works dealing with the subject.

The first was *Tractatus Theologo-Philosophicus*. It concerns Life, Death and Resurrection and is essentially a mystical and alchemical account of creation combined with his Mosaical philosophy. As a retelling of Genesis, it describes creation, the garden, Adam and the Fall. It begins with the premise that God, the Word and Light are the origin of the universal life, and the Devil, the origin of death. As an alchemical interpretation, it deals with the separations as a chemical process, or "'high Chymicall virtue' that effected 'the separation of one region from another'...Quite simply, 'earth is dense water, and water is dense air,...air is nothing else than dense and crass fire.'" (Debus, 12-13)

Divine Light remains a central theme throughout Fludd's writings and represents the active principle behind creation. He considered Adam to be the divine animal, his mind a palace of light and a perfect work of God. The resurrection represents the return to this state of being, before the Fall.

This work did not receive a great deal of attention or debate. However, its importance to us is that it is dedicated to the Brotherhood of the Rose Cross. In this work, Fludd maintains, says Craven, that "Those who were really sons of God were the light in the Word. Chief among these are the brethren of the Rosy Cross. They have all virtues. Their light is greater than the rising sun. We have, he exclaims 'Leonem fortissimum solem devorantem.' They possess the true alchemy." (Craven, 59)

Fludd ends this work by referring to a passage in the *Fama*, "descriptive of the heptagonal monument, supposed to be found in the famous vault, 'which was enlightened with another Sun, which was situated in the upper part in the centre of the building.' There was found the body of Brother R.C., and the inscription *Jesus mihi omnia*." (Craven, 60)

Concepts of *Tractatus* are continued in his next work. In 1617, Fludd published the first part of his largest work entitled, *Utriusque Cosmi Maioris scilicet et Minoris Metaphysica Physica Atque Technica Historia*. Overall, the work deals with the history of the Macrocosm from the abyss, the first Light, through the separations and diversities, to the Microcosm of man. It depicts the separation between the lower world of elements from the lower heavenly realm which in turn is separated from the celestial realm beyond the stars. It is based on the concept that all was created from the Light of God, and as the light emanated farther and farther into darkness, the more darkness subdues the light. This, however, is not strictly in a linear sense. The outpouring was both outward and inward. In other words, everything is both a macrocosm and microcosm. As man is a microcosm to the greater cosmos, he is also a macrocosm to the cells of the body, and the cells are a macrocosm to another microcosm until all circles are complete.

In all realms of creation there are beings: angels in the empyrean world; stars, planets and demons in the ethereal, and the elemental world of men, plants and minerals. "All these creatures partake of God's light in measure according to their place on the hierarchy. But there is one level in particular which, though not at the top of the hierarchy, is nevertheless particularly favoured by God. This is the Sun, which is placed at the crucial midpoint of the chain of being, where spirit and matter are in perfect equity and balance." (Godwin, 14)

All these beings are within an hierarchical structure and have within them a corresponding degree of light. Or, they are beings who serve the devil with their corresponding degree of darkness. The Sun is a midpoint of these realms and is considered by Fludd to be the Tabernacle of God. When the initiate comprehends the midpoint, he may recognize instantly those who serve the Light and those who serve the dark. However, the infallibility and purity of this recognition is only by the acceptance of the midpoint at the center of their being which reflects the Tabernacle and leads them the embrace of the Alpha and the Omega.

This macrocosmic history is dedicated to God and secondly to King James. Interestingly, his dedication to King James included a defense of the Rosicrucian brotherhood, a 'Declaratio brevis', the purpose of which was to defend the society from the suspicions of theologians. Letters of support from French and German associates were attached to the Declaration.

This work was never completed and was supposed to have been in two volumes, the first to contain two treatises, and the second, three. What was completed was not finished until 1624. It appears his views were based on a combination of Scriptural, Hermetic and alchemical authorities. Fludd believed that humankind "...should base their knowledge on revelation as seen in the Holy scripture and in Nature or God's book of creation. (Debus, 12)

His Mosaical philosophy, as stated, was also tied in with the mystical alchemical interpretations frequent among the Paracelsians of the time. Further, he often refers to Hermes Trismegistus in his works.

"Fludd starts with the hypothesis that 'all things were completely and ideally in God and of God before they were made; that from God all things did flow and spring, namely, out of a secret and hidden nature to a revealed and manifest condition.'" (Craven, 65)

God formed a thought in His mind which was the structure and form of the Macrocosm and through the power of love, the thought was brought into existence. This bringing forth was through a series of circles. Circumferences and circles are important images throughout the copperplate illustrations of "Historia."

The title page shows a diagram of the macrocosm and microcosm surrounded by an abundance of clouds. The circle is encompassed by a cord wrapped four times and pulled by a winged creature with hoofs, and on his head is the sandglass, depicting Time. Most of Fludd's illustrations represent the universe as a series of circles each surrounding the first, much like looking down into a spiral. He borrows from Trismegistus to illustrate the concentric flow, "God is the centre of everything whose circumference is no where to be found." (Craven, 65)

Fludd also uses other images such as triangles and squares. In the first chapter, he describes nature as "spiritus immenus, ineffabilis"; God, depicted as a triangle, is the artificer of all, and Man, is the image of God. God is also depicted as the Triangle within a circle. Inside the triangle are three inner circles -- elemental, ethereal and angelic.

"The light triangle of the Trinity represents God, who remains 'beyond all things,' entering the black hole of matter. As a result three worlds arise...in the center is the Tetragrammaton..." (Godwin, 52)

The images of the circles and triangle are of interest to us as we recall a triangular altar with three orbs, and that matter manifest according to the triangle and life according to the ideal of the circle.

Fludd then describes the threefold manifestation. The first material of the earth was formless and void, surrounded by darkness. From the chaotic abyss Light rose and order began. That is, order came from Chaos by the light acting upon it, and substance was formed. Light, always a central theme with Fludd, is pure fire. "It is light which gives the angelic world its glory and splendour...God dwells in 'light inaccessible.' Thus, 'the Light is the life of men.'" (Craven, 69)

"The purer part of the elementary substance rose into the upper, the heavenly, and more divine part of the macrocosmos, but the denser remained below. This applies also to angelic existences, and to the nature of man... ..the macrocosm has three 'regions'...the highest includes the heavens of the Trinity...is formed of perfect light and purest spirit. The middle... is the place of the stars, the state...of lesser light, neither very gross nor very subtle. The lower is itself divided in three parts: the tabernacle, second is the earth, and the middle is the region of water and air. The archetypal world remains in the Divine Mind." (Craven, 70)

Again, these concepts are illustrated by circular forms depicting the circular progression in the universe, a concept founded in Tractatus in which Fludd described the operation of God's order through the circumgyration of His threefold Light.

The next book in the Macrocosmic History concerns the Pythagorean concept of the music of the spheres, or sound created by the movement of the heavenly bodies and which makes the universe one musical instrument. "Earthly music is only the faint 'tradition of the angelic state, it remains in the mind of man as a dream of, and the sorrow for, the lost paradise.' The music is 'produced from the impact upon the paths of the planets, which stand as chords or strings, by the cross travel of the sun from note to note, as from planet to planet.'" (Craven, 72)

Fludd illustrates his point with a diagram of a sphere covered by an instrument with only one chord. The sun is the center of the picture. The different circles represent the issuance of the different notes. To each member of each realm, is assigned a note, Low G for earth up through gg for the highest division of the angelic world.

Later in the Microcosmic History Fludd continues this concept to show that the same Divine Harmony influences the interior of the "anima humana." The Microcosmic reflection of the Threefold Division, or Holy Trinity, is made complete by the heavenly music of the Divine Essence which illuminates the opaque body and creates a harmony between body and soul and makes it complete.

The next part of the treatise concerns the creatures of the angelic and ethereal worlds. In the angelic world, there are nine "good" daemons* in the hierarchy -- Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Virtues, Powers, Princes,

Archangels and Angels. The creatures of the Ethereal world are light, stars, planets and spirit. [In Greek mythology, 'Daemons' are any of the secondary divinities ranking between the gods and men.] Lucifer has his own nine orders with named princes: Beelzebub, Python, Belial, Asmodaeus, Satan, Meririm, Abaddon, Astaroth and Mammon. This implies the concept of correspondences between the lower and upper worlds. In other words, we do not turn our back to an evil earthly life and rise up to purely positive higher realms by a simple act of will. Rather, according to the dominant note within our natural, intelligent and spiritual self, we correspond to the country of which we are citizen. The return to the palace of light is by the mystical process of purification.

Fludd then describes the "Anima Mundi." As man has a soul, then must the macrocosmos have a soul. "This 'supreme intelligence' is of 'an angelicall nature'; 'God is all, and in all, and above all, and that in Him are all things, and in His spirit and word all things consist. God is in everything that existeth, seeing that from Him, by Him, and in Him are all things.'" (Craven, 74)

This concept of the "Anima Mundi", the soul of the world soul, brought Fludd a great deal of criticism and accusations of being a heretic, as we will see later. However, what is interesting about the Plate, The Ptolemaic Universe III which depicts the Anima Mundi is that it is very similar to a description in Chapter 12 of the Book of Revelations: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet and upon her head a crown of twelve stars."

The third chapter deals with the origin and diversity of the Macrocosm, and Fludd uses an image that is repeated later. "The sun, Fludd considers, is the centre and fountain of all life, all heat proceeds from it, and there has God placed His tabernacle. It must have a center, and there God dwells. Divine power issues forth from the sun. Thus 'the heavens declare the glory of God.' The sun is full of essential divinity, and took its origin when the light, which was expanded over all the heavens in place of the sun, was in the fourth day of creation." (Craven, 76)

Placing the tabernacle of God in a position that is more spiritual, less material than the earth, yet more material than the outer planets raised a few questions. Fludd compensated this issue by referring to the Sun as a second home, as it were, for God. Later, in defending many of his ideas, he notes in like manner that God works through secondary causes.

An illustration that is referred to as The Central Sun depicts concentric circles of the elements of Fire, Air, Water and Earth and in the center is the Sun. "Fludd derived this image from an alchemical experiment which he witnessed performed by a friend, and describes in detail the battle of elements which was reproduced in the vessel. At the end, he says, they extracted from the centre of the mass a 'solar substance', a precious gem 'like Lucifer fallen from heaven.'" (Godwin, 25)

Perhaps this experiment is reflected in Fludd's alchemical interpretation of Creation. "After the three stages the 'darkness of the lower region was treble after ye second heavens perfection.' The resultant chaos therefore contains the three true elements (fire, humidity and earth) and from them proceed the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms. This mystical alchemical account of Genesis also explains the major concentric spheres of our world." (Debus, 39)

The first part of "Historia" ends with treatments of the elemental world, mostly inanimate such as minerals, metals, plants and vegetables.

The second part of "Historia Technica" was published in 1618, a part of which concerns the universal arithmetic in eleven books. In 1619, the "Tomus Secudus" of the "Historia" was issued. It is divided in three tracts. The visual of the title shows a naked youth in the center of a circle and represents the Microcosm.

The work begins with a prayer of gratitude to God for His mercy and kindness, God the incomprehensible creator of man. Fludd calls upon man to worship and praise God, for from God man was imbued by the breath of life. "'Tu Solus, Tu Ter Maximus, O Jehova.' He is God, whose ineffable name shall be blessed forever.' The power of Jehova was one of the deepest realizations of Fludd." (Craven, 87)

Fludd then looks to the cause of discord in creation. "Although God, in the most Holy Trinity, is the original of concord, the Devil, on the other hand, is the parent of discord. Thus the strife between concord and discord produced between light and darkness. From this discord, introduced into the heavenly music and perfect progression of the spheres, has come the fear of death, the fall of Adam. Hence, bad is taken for good, hence the love of the world and vanity, hence the hatred of God, the Creator." (Craven, 92)

However, the pure soul can rise and be guided by the rays of wisdom to discern the path of rectitude. "The divine architect who formed the universe, made man equally perfect and complete, the image of His own greatness. The circle of existence was made complete. The circle of existence which formed the worlds, formed man...what perfection the world received, that also did man receive. Heaven and earth have their counterparts in the body and soul of man. As the universe is one, so body and soul are one. Thus man is properly called the image of God--the

other world--microcosmos...so man, regularly proportioned, can be bounded by a circle, at the centre of which are the organs of reproduction. Thus, is man the 'mundus minor.'" (Craven, 93)

As a microcosm, man reflects the Threefold nature of Divinity in terms of reason in the head, feeling in the heart and the means by which they emanate, so that the reason and feeling ultimately form a single unity by virtue of the third power. Further, as the Sun is the Tabernacle of God and mid-region of the macrocosm, so the heart is the Tabernacle of man and his center. Our heart then can become to us our personal and immediate pathway, awareness and realization of God's presence within us.

The soul of man is united with the Deity and various physical attributes are related to the angelic world. For this reason, "...in contradistinction to the lower creatures, he lifts his head upward...in ascertaining man's position as microcosm, he is to face the east." (Craven, 95)

Robert Fludd makes a distinction between what are the mortal and immortal parts of man. As stated, the soul is related to God. Our animal part belongs to nature and returns to the dark regions as dust to dust. The spirit of life, vital spirit, or we would call it, the Vital Life Force, is the central part. "It is ethereal, and is connected both with the true mind and the animal spirit. It is that life which is the cause of all the functional aspects of life." (Craven, 96) "Know truly, that man is framed and consisteth of flesh and an inward soule, and that either of this two hath his bliss and pleasure a part, for as much as the highest happiness and goodness of the Soul is God himself With the mellifluous influence of his sweetness; but the cheefest solace and pleasure of the flesh is the World With his delightful concupiscences. Againe consider that the World is but an external object, When contrarywise nothing is more internal and present With man then God, being that in him are all things, and againe he is exterior to each thing, in so much as he comprehendeth and is above all things. If God then be all in all, above all, Without all, and that be unity, Why shouldest thou so Wickedly teare and rent that Unity and goodness of God in pieces.

(Caluminiatours Vision (Fludd) cited Debus, 76)

In other words, the VLF is the midpoint between Cosmic Consciousness and Christ Consciousness. Cosmic Consciousness being the consciousness of the cosmos, the physical universe, matter and its inherent, underlying energies. Christ Consciousness being the perfected consciousness of the Divine Mind in man. Therefore, the Vital Life Force delivers to man in potentiality all manifestation, both physical and spiritual. It is the part of unity that we seek. The marriage of the bride and bridegroom, the goal of true alchemy.

The concept of the three in unity, whether we look at the three phases of consciousness, three points of the triangle, the threefold light, or Yod He Vau, is a recurring theme with Fludd and is reflected by other mystical writers as well. Philo said that there were three kinds of life: that which concerned God, that which was the creaturely life and the intermediate life which combined the two.

The soul of man, says Fludd, also has a threefold nature: corporal, spiritual and intellectual. Respectively the divisions function in spheres of (1) color and sensations, using perceptive attributes of consciousness, (2) spiritual correspondences and (3) reflection within the mind of the virtues.

The second section of Technica Historia is in seven parts which deal with Prophecy, Geomancy, Memory, the art of casting Nativities, Physiognomy, hand reading and the science of the Pyramid.

Again, Fludd brings in the concept of correspondence in the realm of divination. First, having a gift of prophecy does not necessarily make one a benevolent prophet, and the information received is not necessarily of a positive nature.

The distinction of the law of correspondence in terms of divination is an important one, is timeless, and can be readily related to current popular practices or claims. In other words, someone may claim to be a channel for some entity or spirit, or they may claim to call in the angels. Even if one were to accept that this were true, they would be quite gullible to assume that just because it is a disincarnate entity, it is, therefore, of a benevolent nature.

A prophet of pure heart may be filled with God's spirit and make known to others the will of God. However, Fludd admonishes, evil spirits also enter into men, but by the power of the devil, and try to foretell events. In other words, if a questionable entity wanted to win the confidence of a would-be prophet, then naturally they would provide a message or vision that proved out. Once this confidence is established, one can only imagine the rest. Fludd seems to believe, maintains Craven, that even before Christian times, each man had a good and bad spirit continually associating with him. Thus, a person's alignment and motive will have a bearing on messages received. Before a person enters into such a practice, they are advised by Fludd to remove sin and evil from their hearts in order to receive divine light in their soul. "The spirit of lying prophecy cannot stand in the presence of God, but by the light and power of Jehovah is silenced." (Craven, 104-105)

Otherwise, a person may find themselves speaking with gods they do not know. While some prophets may see clearly the Divine light immediately from God or through angels, there are also false gods who have no mission for God nor angels, but from Lucifer. Twelve laws are given to distinguish true from false prophets. (Craven, 104-105)

The doctrine of correspondence also indicates that on every level of the hierarchy from the mineral upwards there is a reflection of the next highest realm. In other words, minerals such as gold, or plants or herbs will contain within them certain attributes of an archetype that will imbue the person wearing or consuming the element certain corresponding effects which in turn prepares them to exercise a certain art.

A point to remember is that in the time of Fludd, the exercise of certain arts was confined to a relatively small group. The notables of this group were very religious people who were devoted to living a holy life. Their beliefs and motives may have acted as a safeguard against psychic confusion. Even so, Fludd went to a great extent to caution his readers to have a pure heart. It is curious to speculate what Fludd's advice would be in today's world where formulas and keys to magical practices are as accessible as a 900 number.

Fludd ends the second tractate with Theosophical and Cabalistic studies. He asks the reader to see in the Hebrew characters the fiery symbols of the sacred Trinity. He explains the ten sephiroths and interprets them as rays emanating from the Sun and acting as a garment of light with which Jehovah covered himself.

The tree of life illustrates his previous treatments of the hierarchal structures and different realms, and once again the Divine Light is an essential theme and the invisible Word of God. "The universal and mystical word, the light uncreated, is exhibited in universal nature by the watery Mem and the igneous Shin. So we are to venerate Jehovah as revealed in the light of the sun, moon and stars; in them, by them existing, and existing beyond all and in all. His power is seen both in macrocosm and microcosm, even in the fire of Gehenna." (Craven, 127)

Fludd ends this section acknowledging that his efforts may be met with mockery, but they were done in good conscience and patience. He does not seek riches but only desires to peacefully serve God. Fludd was correct in his anticipation that his work would be criticized and with great severity.

A French scientist and author named Marin Mersenne accused Fludd of being a magician, an atheist and heretic. Mersenne in a commentary on Genesis, objected to an alchemical interpretation of creation. While he saw the value in alchemy, he felt it should remain divorced from Theology and left entirely to medicine and science. Further, he did not like the idea of Christ being reduced to the angelic world and even worse, a mere angel. Fludd countered this as a misinterpretation on Mersenne's part by saying that a single principle manifests in different ways in different realms. Further, that the first light is reflected in the angelic world much like a mirror. Without the first light there would be no reflection, and without the reflection, nothing could be created. Again, the concept of second causes. Mersenne was also offended by the concept of the Anima Mundi, a criticism we noted earlier. He was quite outraged that, "All souls, whether of men or of brutes, are none other than particles of this same Soul." (Mersennes Letters, Debus 17)

To be accused of heresy, magic or atheism was a serious matter in Fludd's day. He must have been surprised at the accusation that he was an atheist. His writings clearly show his belief in God and his religious convictions. He had always remained faithful to the Church of England. Yet, he was open-minded to other institutions. In fact, he often tutored relatives of the Pope and other Roman Catholic young men. The Bishops of England were among his friends, and King James was his patron. Fludd felt that perhaps Mersenne simply wished him to change religions. Due to the conflicts taking place between religious institutions at this time, this is not very surprising. The fact that Fludd was receptive to different faiths in this climate of opposition, indicates his high level of tolerance and lack of prejudice.

A number of years went by before Fludd answered the charges leveled at him by Mersenne. First, in a book written on Genesis in which he defended his analogy of the Macrocosm and Microcosm as a model of the universe, insisting on the harmony that existed between the two worlds. Further, his view on the angelic world had nothing to do with magic, and cabalistic treatments are not a matter of heresy. Fludd claims his place is in the church catholic apart altogether from Rome. He appeals to the searcher of hearts to examine his very soul and see how false such an accusation is. He offers a prayer addressed to the "Eternal Wisdom, dwelling in light eternal--the spotless mirror of God's majesty." (Craven, 133)

In 1629 another piece was published by Fludd called *Sophiae Cum Moria Certamen*. Affixed to it was a folio, *Summum Bonum*, written under a pen name, Joachim Frizius. It has been said that Fludd denied authorship of the latter. However, subsequent scholars, including DeBus and Craven, feel that he did write *Summum*. The title page shows a rose on a cross stem. There are two bees, beehives and a spider's web across them. This work treats not only the essence of Alchemy, but was also a defense of the Brotherhood of the Rose Cross.

"The *Summum Bonum* treats of the noble art of magic, the foundation and nature of the Cabala, the essence of veritable alchemy, and the 'Causa Fratrum Roseae Crucis.' It identifies the palace or home of the Rosicrucians with the spiritual house of wisdom...The foundation of the mountain...is declared to be the 'Lapis Angularis,' the corner stone, cut out of the mountain without hands. The stone is Christ. It is the spiritual palace which the Rosicrucians desire to reveal, and is therefore no earthly or material abode." (Craven, 134)

The author explains the different kinds of magic, the divine and the foolish, and that all magic is not rejected by Christian authors. He points out the wise men who visited the new born Christ were Magi and that secret arts do not offend God. Fludd, or author, concludes with a summation which he addresses to the most Christian readers.

1. That all Christians are said to be living stones, they bear the same name and are the same in significance as S. Peter.
2. That all Christians are stones, members of the great "petra Catholilca," it follows that no single man, not even S. Peter, can alone be said to be the foundation of the Catholic Church.
3. As Christ lay hidden in the rock of Moses, and as the spiritual body lies hidden in the natural body, so the words of the apostle are true --"The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life."
4. The true corner stone is Christ.
5. The Incarnation opened the way to the knowledge of the what that corner stone is.
6. Vain, therefore, are all traditions and teachings which would persuade us that Cephias was this foundation.
7. God having willed to tabernacle amongst mortal men, uses the same imagery and confirms its explanation as now given. 'Listen' says the prophet, 'and see the rock from which ye were hewn.'

True alchemy is then treated. "Our gold is not the gold of the vulgar, but the living gold, the very gold of God...There is a spiritual chemistry, which purges by tears, sublimates by manners and virtues, decorates by sacramental graces, makes even the putrid body and the vile ashes to become living, and makes the soul capable of contemplating the things of heaven and the angelic world. This is the application of spiritual chemistry, by which, through the power of resurrection of I.C.D.N. will confirm unto the end." (Craven, 137-139)

The writer then takes up the cause of the Brethren of the Rose Cross. The writer states that he had already defended the Brethren in a previous tractate, a reference that leads Craven to conclude that both writers were Robert Fludd. The similarity of the two pieces, *Sophia* and *Summum*, put together also suggests the same author.

Fludd maintains that throughout history there has been a continuity of men who turned away from the gross and material in order to dedicate themselves to the spiritual life and investigation into the mysteries. These people have been few in number. "yet a few seek the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God, the hidden manna, the white stone, the white vesture. Their names are written in the book of life and they become pillars in the spiritual temple. These, indeed, inhabit the house of wisdom, which is founded on the mount." (Craven, 139- 140)

Mersenne had also accused the Rosicrucians of being heretics and blasphemous, and he challenged them to reveal their dwelling place.

To this the writer of *Summum Bonum* replies the house of the Rosicrucians is the House of the Holy Spirit. It is not a house made of stone, and again, a stone cut without hands. Nor is it a house built by magic or false alchemy, but rather it is a spiritual house..."the house of wisdom, built upon the `rational mount' or `rock spiritual'...The house constructed by the Brethren, then, is on the spiritual rock, and is built up of the mystical stones of wisdom. It is the mystic castle of Bethlehem --`de quo loquitur Evangelista Christus erat de castella Bethlehem'...

...an elect nation, who shall reign as kings and priests--called from darkness to light--who were once not a people, but are now the people of God. These are they 'that have put off the mortal clothing and put on the immortal, and have confessed the name of God, now are they crowned and receive palms'...they are called the sons of God, the elect of God, prophets and friends of God...the 'fraternitas Christiana.'" (Craven, 142)

It is this type of reference that added to the debate of whether or not the Brotherhood was visible or invisible. In anticipation of this, the author wants to reassure the reader of the actual existence of the Brotherhood and appends a letter supposedly written by an actual member of the Order to an initiate. "It was `written and sent by ye Brethren of R.C. to a certain Germaine, a copy whereof Dr. Fludd obtained of a Polander of Dantziche, his friend...'...the immoveable palace of the brethren is declared to be the centre of all things--it is `the resplendent and invisible castle which is built upon the mountaine of the Lord, out of whose root goeth forth a fountaine of living waters, and a river of love.' The letter is signed `F.T.F., in Light and C.'" (Craven, 147)

Other writers published charges against Fludd in addition to Mersenne. Like Mersenne, they objected to an alchemical interpretation of the Bible, the notion that Christ was reduced to a mere angel, and Fludd's concept of the "Anima Mundi" caused some discomfort as well. The problem arises when one tries to interpret a mystical analysis in a literal way.

Fludd explains to his critics that alchemy is a part of natural philosophy. It is the division of the pure from the impure, light from darkness, sin and vice from goodness and virtue. True alchemy seeks to comprehend the Creation and spirit of life and serves as a key to understanding both. In terms of the Creation, the separation of light and dark was set into motion by the eternal Fiat.

There are places in Fludd's writings that could indicate a leaning toward a Pantheistic point of view. Some writers have argued that he concluded that God is identical to matter. For example, Fludd held that all things were of God before they were made. From the blaze of power, life vibrates from the center to the circumference. However, he

also explained this as being a thought. He felt that all things owe their existence to God. But that does not necessarily conclude the God owes His existence to all created things. In other words, physical matter, through the theory of emanation, may be a manifestation of God, but is by no means the whole of God. Craven maintains that Fludd would have answered this debate by saying all things are full of God, as opposed to all things are God. Fludd is clear when he says "God is all, and in all, and above all..."

If we look at his concepts in terms of our First Degree, for example, we get a perspective of Fludd's three circles within the triangle that explains both concepts. In other words, if Fludd's critics were alive today, they might object to our saying that there is a vibrating spirit in matter that holds it together. They might look at us as saying that is the entirety of God. We, however, know that indicates one aspect of a triune expression, or to use Fludd's visuals, reflects only one of the three circles.

His critics were also unhappy over Fludd's concepts of the angelic world and again felt he placed Christ in this realm. However, Fludd clearly illustrates a hierarchal structure and even though daemons -- Seraphim, Cherubim, etc.-- watch over a planetary structure, they are not necessarily the same as the Divine or Absolute principle. To be sure, Fludd maintained a soul of the world. This soul was the cornerstone of the universal "petra" upon which the church was built, the philosopher's stone, signified by Christ both Divine and human, the corner stone having its effect in both the macrocosm and microcosm. This hardly reduces Christ to the celestial realm.

Further, Fludd believed that Christ was part of the Infinite Godhead. The realm of God has no beginning and no end. The temporal world has a beginning and an end. And the angelic world has a beginning, but no end. Therefore, by Fludd's own divisions, he could not have reduced Christ to the angelic realm.

However, images Fludd used such as the previously mentioned, "venerate Jevovah in the moon and stars..." probably led his critics to this conclusion. They took him literally and not metaphorically. Again the image of Divine light is a central theme. Fire represents the first cause. Therefore, a physical manifestation such as a fiery star would represent to Fludd a metaphor for the Divine principles of fire and light.

Fludd felt that God worked in the world through second causes and his depiction of their realms led his critics to believe that he equated the second causes as being identical with the first Cause.

Craven quotes Hargrave Jennings from his book *The Rosicrucians* where he interprets Fludd's ideas on this subject. "The Rosicrucians [through Fludd] declare in accordance with the Mosaic account of creation, -- which they maintain, is in no instance to be taken literally, but metaphorically, -- that two original principles, in the beginning, proceeded from the Divine Father. These are Light and Darkness, --or form or idea, and matter or plasticity. Matter, downwards, becomes fivefold, as it works its forms, according to the various operations of the first informing light...This produced the being (or thought) to whom, or to which creation was disclosed. This is properly the `Son.' or Second Ineffable Person of the Divine Trinity." (Craven, 159- 160)

Robert Fludd wrote scientific, medical and alchemical books in addition to his philosophical writings. He was consumed by his work and this feverish pitch may have contributed to his death, the cause of which is not known. He knew he was in a weakened state and that his time was soon to come. He methodically arranged his affairs and had prepared a special stone for his grave. He died September 8, 1637 and was buried in Bearsted Church. On the slab of the stone floor is the inscription:

In Jesu qui mihi omnia in vita morte resurgam Under this stone resteth the body of Robert Fludd of Phisick who changed this transitory life for an imortalthe VIII day of September A.D. MDCXXXVII being LXIII years of age, whose monument is erected in this chancell according to the forme by him prescribed

Even though Robert Fludd was devoted to the church of his baptism and was a religious person, he was also very independent from exoteric religion and recognized wisdom from a variety of sources. He embraced his church rather than reject it. Yet he transcended the theological concerns of the day by incorporating many different points of view. In keeping with the continuous images he used of expanding and concentric circles, Fludd sought an expanded and inclusive view of the greater world. He wished to see the spiritual world directly through metaphor, personally through ascension and intellectually, through science. He was a medical doctor and a Paracelsian. Yet he incorporated new alchemical ideas into his traditional and chosen profession, rather than try to destroy a tradition of which he was a part. We might even describe him as a Rosicrucian one who lived by Evolution, not by Revolution. As a writer and thinker, Fludd was unique. He lived in a time to see a separation in the world of medicine and the world of philosophy. His medical art may have seemed of the old way as he depended upon astrology, and his religious views were founded to a great extent in geocentric theories. Yet, he had his feet on two platforms: one from the old and one facing towards a future. Fludd lived in a time where there was a great crack in the cosmic egg, new light poured into the minds of men, the old warred for the status quo, the new warred to bring in change. Fludd stood at the center of his being, at the center of his beliefs and in the center of his dedication to the truth in healing and the truth to knowledge. He sought only to serve God and His creation.

He saw God in all things. "The intensity of reverence which saw the hand of God in everything, and His sacred presence generating, preserving, and controlling all, in an absolute nearness and actual filling of all in all, was the key to Fludd's character and writings...His connection with the Rosicrucian controversy arose from the deep respect in which he held his instructor, Michael Maier, and that cast of mind which saw wonders in Nature, which to most were but the outcome of common operation. That a society of the nature of the Rosy Cross existed, and that both Maier and Fludd were initiates, need not, I think, be now doubted by any disinterested students of the history of those wondrous sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. What its origin may have been, we shall, I suppose never know with any certainty, though there is some ground for supposing that it was in existence in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Its whole story is one of the most curious episodes in History." (Craven, 238-239)

Robert Fludd never married and left no heirs. However, as Craven ends his book, "The real successors of a writer like Fludd will be found in those who, assimilating his thoughts, and their results, hand on to others the encouraging hope that a time will come when all the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (Craven, 242)

Rosicrucians can also be said to be his successors, for Robert Fludd left us much. He defended the fraternity by saying the brethren did not seek the vulgar gold,... "but progress in virtue, by sublimation, by tears, by the inhaling of the divine breath of God, thus will the soul be sublimated, rendered subtle, able clearly to contemplate God, be conformed to a likeness with the angels; thus apparently dead, lifeless stones become living and philosophic stones. Such are the opinion and methods of the brethren; such is the alchemy and process referred to in their confession." (Craven, 149)

To end with final words from Robert Fludd himself: (Debus, 86)

"Farewell my freends let playne simplicity
Be stil your guide to lead you in your race
So shal ye neare approach to Vnity
And euermore obtayne from him his grace
For double dealers, false and treacherous men
Wil quickly be entrapt in Errours den."

Bibliography

Craven, J.B. Doctor Robert Fludd, William Peace & Sons 1902

Debus, Allen Robert Fludd and His Philosophicall Key, Neale Watson Academic Publications, Inc. 1979

Godwin, Joscelyn Robert Fludd, Hermetic Philosopher and Surveyor of Two Worlds, Thames & Hudson Ltd. 1979

Burt Humburg - On the Color Changes in the "Great Work"

On the Color Changes in the "Great Work", or the Alchemical Transformation of Matter

It is common knowledge that one aspect of alchemy was the transformation of base metals into gold. Although many alchemists were motivated by the prospect of wealth they stood to gain from transmuting metals into gold, some were motivated by the ideal of reaching perfection. That is, they preferred to view the toil of developing metal to the "perfect" element that is, gold as a parallel to the "Great Commission" of the Bible: the transmutation through grace which turns fallen sinners to saved Christians.

Twentieth Century science may look at this earnest view of alchemy with skepticism. After all, who today interprets a physical process capable of generating vast amounts of wealth as an act of God? Strange as it may now seem, this theological view was common in the Middle Ages. In a book that was to become the cornerstone of medieval education, Saint Augustine preached that the world we know is pointless.[1] As a result, the Church taught, "All that matters about this life is getting ready for the next one." [2] Not surprisingly then, in the Middle Ages, science was to defer to religion. James Burke explains: They wouldn't say, 'Hmmm. Here's a red flower.' They would say, 'Red for the blood of Christ, thorns for the pains of the devil, green for the emerald of sincerity,' and so on. Nothing really existed, except as a symbol for something else: something religious. And the only point in looking at all this would

be to remind you of those symbols. The whole of nature was nothing but a kind of giant, holy cryptogram to be decoded by the faithful.[3]

Therefore, it should come as no surprise that alchemists, as followers of the faith, came to find spiritual meaning in the alchemical work that they did.

The multi-layered meaning of the medieval alchemical texts is particularly evident in the writings of alchemists describing how best to perform the transmutation of metals or the "Great Work." In *Aurora Consurgens*, pseudo-Aquinas provides other alchemists with one of the steps in the "Great Work": In the third place he maketh soft, that is, he liquifieth the hardness of the earth and dissolveth its condensed and exceedingly compact parts, of which it is written: The rain of the Holy Spirit melteth. And the prophet: He shall send out his word and shall melt it, his wind shall blow and the waters shall run.[4]

These instructions would not be at all clear to the uninitiated. Another alchemist reading this passage would understand that the third step required water (or some other substance) to melt the metal. Another medieval person, uneducated in alchemy however, could assume that this was a quotation from the Bible.[5] The instructions disguise one meaning, the alchemical formula, while emphasizing another; the biblical commentary. Therefore, the instructions are written in code which poses the problem of how to read the text: For example, the other alchemist knew that fluid was required, but was that fluid water? Obviously, hiding the alchemical instructions in biblical commentary is problematic because biblical scriptures can be taken so many ways.

Add to that the promise of sermons or biblical commentary with which there is no intended alchemical meaning and the use of biblical commentary as an instructional medium for alchemy becomes even more problematic. For example, from the same quote, was the alchemist supposed to provide air to the reaction because of the phrase, "And the prophet his wind shall blow", or was that merely abstract prose? For an even more obscure example, later in this same work, pseudo Aquinas writes two pages on wisdom without offering a clear alchemical context for his sermon[6] and he isn't the only alchemist to digress from his ostensible subject of alchemy. Allegories like "Allegory of John of the Fountain" or "The Parabola of Madathanus" can reach six-thousand words and also drift from topic to topic.[7] So obscure are these instructional documents that historians cannot determine if the "Great Work" referred to turning lead into gold or finding an "elixir" or "Philosopher's Stone" which would turn lead into gold.[8] And so, alchemists described a process using secret and obscure imagery. But what indeed were they describing?

As any modern chemist knows, the alchemical transformation of lead into gold could never have occurred in the alchemist's laboratory. Indeed, with Chadwick's definition of an element being related to the number of protons an atom has, the possibility of an alchemical transformation is zero, since changing the number of protons an atom has requires expensive, hazardous, and what was then nonexistent radioactive bombardment by neutrons. Fredrick Soddy sums it up well: If man ever achieves this further control over Nature, it is quite certain that the last thing he would want to do would be to turn lead or mercury into gold for the sake of gold. The energy that would be liberated, if the control of these sub-atomic processes were possible as in the control of ordinary chemical changes, such as combustion, would far exceed in importance the value of the gold.[9]

It follows that since the alchemist never carried out his lead-to-gold experiment successfully, his instructions represented assumptions regarding the nature of what was thought to be good or perfect. In other words, alchemists fabricated instructions to accomplish their goal of transmutation the "Great Work" as they thought it ought to be. Some medieval ideas, representing perfection in both alchemy and theology, involve colors. Many alchemical works list specific colors and an order in which those colors should appear. This "color list" consistently figures throughout the writings:[10] black, white, and red. Similarly, alchemists fabricated this color list from ideals on how they thought the world ought to be.

Just as religion permeates the ideals of alchemical perfection, so the colors in the list may have been influenced by ideas of perfection represented by color. Strangely enough, the Bible contains few references to color in general,[11] but does use color more often in prophetic works.[12] Generally, white was used to symbolize purity and innocence[13] and black was not used as a symbol but as a means to describe literal reality.[14] If black were used as a "literal color", then it would be useless in the development of an idea of perfection, unless it were used as a starting point. This is the case, as Roberts explains, "A black color indicated that the material had been successfully broken down [into it's basic form]"[15] Black therefore makes a logical choice for the first color to be seen in the "Great Work" since it, as a color without symbolic meaning, can only represent imperfection.

The alchemist could have also looked at black and white as expressing the dichotomous nature of evil and good and therefore imperfection and perfection. Thus, the change from black to white is likened to the spiritual journey from sin to purity. An alchemical transformation of lead into gold would involve a change from a flat color, like black, to a brilliant color, like white or red. Consequently, the "Great Work" of alchemy parallels the "Great Commission"; that is, perfecting metal parallels the perfecting of the soul.

Although Christianity permeates alchemy and was therefore a major factor in the development of the color list it was not the only factor. Any social issue which, in the alchemist's view, required perfecting provided an analogy for alchemical purification and was incorporated into the allegorical dynamic. Women's humanity or lack thereof was one such social issue, since alchemists and medieval theologians saw women as incomplete or imperfect.[16] As such, a hierarchical world view which was antifeminist was incorporated into the alchemical writings.[17] Cooper, in his dictionary of symbols, associates males with activity, power, aggressiveness, and dominance, whereas females are associated with pacifism and submission, with being peaceful and at ease.[18] Accomplishing the transmutation of metals would have to involve a process of high reactivity in order to turn something like lead or mercury into gold. That being the case, symbolically the colors should represent a change from female to male. According to Cooper, black (the first stage of the "Great Work") indicates neuter and symbolizes dissolution.[19] White is symbolically associated with the feminine, and red is symbolically associated with the masculine.[20] From the implied gender of colors, one would expect the process represented to be black, white, then red. Alchemists, in constructing the color list, were likely to have incorporated their belief that the female was superior to the neuter, and that the male was more perfect than the female.

Social issues, like Christian symbolism, were not the only potential sources for the color list. Perhaps the alchemists were attempting to exploit natural evocations of color again fabricating the results from experiments to fit what they thought the results ought to be. It has been found that some colors can trigger specific reactions, even in animals.[21] Some artists anticipate primal reactions to color and select colors to generate moods in the viewers of their work.[22] Researchers have determined that "shape is associated with reasoning and color with emotion." [23] Therefore, if colors can be used to manipulate emotions, then moods could be associated with colors. To that end, the creators of the color list would have chosen colors which initially suggest feelings of death or stasis and lastly perfection. Since black is conventionally associated with death,[24] black would also be associated with decomposition. Since decomposition results in a renewal of raw materials,[25] black can be associated with the most basic form an object can take. Therefore, the alchemist, in creating the color list, may have picked black as the beginning to represent the first step in the "Great Work." Red, on the other hand, has been found to generate feelings of rage and images of movement.[26] Because any substance that turns lead or mercury into gold would have to be active as well, red was a logical choice for the final color on the list.

It should be clear that more than empirical observation was put into alchemical texts. Alchemists were imagining their world the way they wanted it to be instead of how it was. Sherwood Taylor states: We cannot, in fact, interpret these complicated and fragmentary recipes well enough to say definitely what occurred, but it is clear that they were felt to be enormously significant by the alchemists who studied them, and that gave rise to impressive symbolic writings.[27]

In fact, it was not until the Eighteenth century when Lavoisier's call to arms converted science from a discipline that described a world the way it ought to be to a discipline that described the world the way it was.[28] Until his work, the color list like many pseudo-scientific theories controlled the imaginations of alchemists in their laboratories as well as the progress of science in general.

Notes

[1] . Burke "In the Light of the Above."

[2] . *ibid.*, "Point of View."

[3] . *ibid.*, "In the Light of the Above."

[4] . Pseudo-Aquinas 89-90.

[5] . Literacy was most commonly found in the priesthood. Because the commoners had no literacy and consequently, no Bibles to read one of the priest's duties was to read the Bible to his congregation. Without a Bible to consult and cross-reference, the medieval commoner would doubtless view the passage as Biblical.

[6] . Aquinas 89, 91.

[7] . The alchemy home page [<http://www.levity.com/alchemy/home.htm>] is where copies of "Allegory of John of the Fountain" and "The Parabola of Madathanus," are stored.

[8] . In several references (Roberts, Brock), the two methods of performing the "Great Work" are used interchangeably, often in the same chapter. Thus, no effort will be made to distinguish the two.

[9] . Brock 40.

[10] . Probably because of an original alchemical instruction whose author was deemed with to have a "patriarch" status and whose work, consequently, was deemed authoritative. Later alchemists may have copied such a work, resulting in the color pattern. In either case, the reasons for the color order, as described in this essay, still stand, since someone had to fabricate the order first.

[11] . Hastings 456; Colors are used in one of three ways in the Bible: literal, apocalyptic, and ritual. Literal refers to

those colors which describe actual, historical colors. Apocalyptic colors were usually located in the prophetic works and were often allegorical. Finally, ritual colors refers to those colors which were required for a particular tradition the example being the colors of the 12 stones on the high priest's breastplate whenever the Ark of the Covenant was to be opened. Hastings suggests that literal colors were not to be used as allegories, since they refer to actual occurrences, and that ritual colors may have been chosen from the most brilliant or rare stones known at the time.

[12] . For an example of color used in a prophetic book, see Revelation 4, where God's throne room is described with many brilliant colors.

[13] . Cooper 42.

[14] . Hastings 458.

[15] . Roberts 63

[16] . Alchemical antifeminism derived from Judeo/Christianity. First, the female was the first sinner (Genesis 3:6). Second, God commanded that men were to rule over women (Genesis 3:16). Also, antifeminism was a prevalent theme of the Pauline New Testament. In fact, there is only one reference to a female alchemist: Mary the Coptic (who was not Catholic, but Jewish). As in Ben Johnson's "The Alchemist," any female alchemist, if indeed there were others, had to practice her art in even greater secrecy than men. For an example of alchemical sexism, refer to Roberts 89, where women are inhumanly portrayed as innate carriers of sin.

[17] . Although many dynamics of antifeminism are beyond the scope of this essay, it is interesting to note that results of experiments sometimes required the chemical symbolizing the female to be in dominance over that of the male. Rather than subject to women, the alchemist used hermaphroditism and made the female, at best, an equal.

[18] . Cooper 40-42.

[19] . *ibid.*, 39.

[20] . *ibid.*, 40-42.

[21] . Morris 95.

[22] . Metcalfe 58.

[23] . Garau vii.

[24] . Cooper 39.

[25] . Refers to the "death allows birth" idea, another common alchemical theme.

[26] . Cooper 40-41.

[27] . Taylor 50.

[28] . Lavoisier "Preface"; Lavoisier originally set out to improve the nomenclature of chemicals and chemical processes. Through his own research and experimentation, he concluded that the patriarchal system of science (the assumption that prior "scientific" findings, such as the 4 elements, were immutable) was responsible for the limitations of science. His work, which is written in a stern, insulting tone, stated that, among other things, prior assumptions should be skeptically tested, if not discarded altogether. Lavoisier is thus credited with the title "Father of Modern Chemistry" (Brock 88).

Works Cited

- Alchemy Home Page. [<http://www.levity.com/alchemy>]
- Brock, William H. *The Norton History of Chemistry*. Ed. Roy Porter. New York: W. W. Norton, 1992.
- Burke, James. "In the Light of the Above." *The Day the Universe Changed*. Writ. & Narr. James Burke. BBC-TV, 1985.
- _____. "Point of View." *The Day the Universe Changed*. Writ. & Narr. James Burke. BBC-TV, 1985.
- Cooper, J. C. *An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Traditional Symbols*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1978.
- Garau, Augusto. Foreword. *Color Harmonies*. By Rudolf Arnheim. Trans. Nicola Bruno. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1993.
- Hastings, James, ed. *A Dictionary of the Bible*. Vol. 1. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919
- Lavoisier, Antoine Laurent. Preface. *Elements of Chemistry in Great Books of the Western World*. Robert Hutchens, ed. Vol. 45. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952.
- Metcalfe, James A. "Using Color to Convey a Mood." *American Artist* June 1994: 58-63.
- Morris, Charles G. *Psychology*. 8th ed. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1993.
- Pseudo-Aquinas, Thomas. *Aurora Consurgens: A Document Attributed to Thomas Aquinas*. Trans. Marie Louis von Franz. New York: Pantheon Books, 1966.
- Roberts, Gareth. *The Mirror of Alchemy*. Toronto: Toronto UP, 1994.
- Taylor, Sherwood F. *The Alchemists*. New York: Henry Schuman, 1949.

Golden Moments- Nick Kollerstrom

This is a shortened version of an article published in the UK astrology Quarterly, and reprinted several times. It collects moments when alchemists claim to have made gold, and analyses these 'astrologically' in terms of the celestial aspects then present. They were found to have remarkable features in common. Perhaps a reader will locate more such dates?

When alchemists made Gold

There were various historic dates when the alchemists of old were supposed to have made gold. A collection of these, ranging from the fourteenth to the eighteenth century, has here been assembled. An astrological analysis was conducted, to see whether any special celestial aspects were present at such moments. Thereby we discern whether these events shared in common any particular quality of time.

Strong solar aspects were found to be present at these moments. Gold is the Sun-metal, which is the reason why one might expect such. Claims that gold had been made, on these famous occasions, stirred up great public excitement. We have limited this inquiry to such occasions as were witnessed, that is to say, on which the alchemist was not alone: these are witnessed and dated alchemical moments.

By this approach we may hope to avoid the futile question of whether the alchemists 'really' made gold. The times when such events were recorded could well have in common some special qualities: for example, if lead was traditionally the prima materia from which the gold was made, would one expect strong aspects to Saturn? Or, would Mercury play a key role on days when the 'Hermetic Art' was being consummated?

Altogether nine such moments were collected

1. drawn from: 'The Gold Makers' by K.Doberer(1948), 'The Secret Tradition in alchemy' by A.E.Waite (19), 'Alchemy' by E.J.Holmyard (1957), 'Alchemists and Gold' by Jacques Sadoul (1972), and 'The Arts of the Alchemists' by C.A.Burland (19**)
2. The date for Edward Kelly comes from the diaries of John Dee
3. while those for Hevelius and the Guildford alchemist Dr James Price appear in their own publications
4. Where more than one such date was available, as for the alchemists Seton and Price, only the first was used.

1. Flamel, 1382, Paris

In the 14th century, after 'years of unremitting labour', the French alchemist Nicholas Flamel recorded how he finally prepared the 'elixir':

'...I made projection of the Red Stone upon half a pound of mercury, ... the five-and-twentieth day of April following, the same year [1382] about five o'clock in the evening; which I transmuted truly into about the same quantity of pure gold, most certainly better than ordinary gold, being more soft and more pliable...I had indeed enough when I had once done it, but I found exceeding great pleasure and delight in seeing and contemplating the admirable works of Nature.' (Holmyard, p.245)

The chart of that time shows the golden Sun conjunct Mercury within a 5ø orb, and leaden Saturn (to 6ø), themselves 1ø apart. Pluto, the 'lord of transformation' conjoins Mercury to 8'. The red planet Mars casts a trine to this four-planet stellium.

2. Kelley, 1586, Trebona in Bohemia

In the mid-19th century a private diary of Doctor John Dee came to light, 'written in a very small illegible script on the margins of old almanacks.' The diary recounts that learned doctor's journey to Bohemia, in the company of Edward Kelley. In the year 1588, the Elizabethan courtier Dyer received from Dee the news that his colleague 'had at last achieved the secret of the ages, that Kelley could indeed transmute base metals into gold.' This news brought Dyer to Prague later in the year to see for himself how matters stood.

Dee's diary for 1586 tersely records some stages of the Work: 'March 24th, Mr K. put the glass in dung.... Dec 13th, Mr E.K. gave me the water, earth and all.' Then, on 19th December 'novi kalendarii', meaning the Gregorian calendar, at Trebona, in the castle of Count Rosenburg, 'E.K. made projection with his powder in the proportion of one minim upon an ounce and a quarter of mercury and produced nearly an ounce and a quarter of best gold; which gold we afterwards distributed from the crucible' (5).

On that day the Sun conjoined Mercury (2♅), trined Saturn (1♄) and squared Mars (4♂). Dee was undergoing his second Saturn-return, (5♄) synchronous with an exact fifth Jupiter return (♁♄). His Saturn therefore received the trine of transiting Sun (3♅) and transiting Mercury (1♅) on that day, while his North lunar Node was conjoined by them. Dr Dee remained ignorant of how the process had been achieved, until the 10th of May 1588, when his diary states: 'E.K. did open the Great Secret to me, God be thanked.' On that day the Sun exactly conjoined Saturn, and Mars (1♄), while the Moon was Full. It seems an appropriate day for Dee's insight, whatever that was. To Dyer, Kelley later wrote, recalling 'what delight we took together, when from the Metall simply calcined into powder after the usuall manner, distilling the Liquor so prepared with the same, we converted appropriat bodies (as our Astronomie inferiour teacheth) into Mercury, their first matter.' Where do we find a modern chemist recollecting the delight he took in a chemical operation? ('The Private Diary of Mr John Dee', p.22-3)

3. Seton, 1602, near Amsterdam

Jacob Haussen witnessed the Scotsman Alexander Seton making gold from lead, at Enkhuizen near Amsterdam. Seton engraved upon it the date and time (N.S.): 13 March, 1602, at 4 pm. The Sun was conjunct Mercury and trine Saturn, both to 1♄, square the nodes (4♄), and semisquare Uranus (8'). Neptune held the ascendent with Saturn at the I.C. Venus was just setting, in opposition to rising Mars (1♄). (Sadoul, p.119)

4. Richthausen, 1648, Prague

In the city of Prague, in 1648, the alchemist Richthausen performed a celebrated transmutation in the presence of Emperor Ferdinand III: 'with one grain of the powder provided by Richthausen, two and a half pounds of mercury were changed into gold. To commemorate the event the Emperor had a medal struck of the value of 300 ducats.. The inscription read (in Latin), 'The Divine Metamorphosis, exhibited at Prague, 15 January 1648, in the presence of his Imperial Majesty Ferdinand III.' On that day the Sun was trine Saturn (1♄) and conjunct Mars (3♂), and Mercury was conjunct the South Node (4♄). The Sun conjoined the natal Saturn of Emperor Ferdinand who, at thirty-nine years of age, had reached his Uranus-opposition (22'). (Holmyard,p.129)

5. Helvetius, 1667, The Hague

Helvetius was Physician to the Prince of Orange. At the prompting of his wife, on the morning of 19 January, he melted lead and sprinkled over it some powder, as directed by the stranger who had given it to him. He recorded his wonder at seeing the gold: 'Yea, could I have enjoyed Argus's eyes, with a hundred more, I could not sufficiently gaze upon this so admirable and almost miraculous a work of nature.' On that day, the Sun made a multiple conjunction with Mercury, Saturn and Neptune, all within 6♅. The event generated widespread interest. Spinoza came to inspect the crucible and declared himself convinced. (Holmyard, p.266)

6. Böttger, 1701, Germany

'At the end of a good supper on October 1st, 1701, the apothecary Zorn, after some encouraging glances from his faithful wife, invited journeyman Böttger to give at last a demonstration of his skill.' Four persons believed that they saw, at the house of Herr Zorn, silver become gold. In the heavens the new Moon was but 4♅ from the Sun. (Doberer, p.234)

7. Lascaris, 1709, Germany

Little is known about the fabled figure of 'Lascaris', except that he was ascribed as the source of the 'projection powder' used by various alchemists, and that his name derived from a German noble family. On the 16th February 1709 in the evening, 'he is believed to have changed mercury into gold and gold into silver, a double transmutation.' The event was performed near Lissa and witnessed by Liebnack, Counsellor of Wertherbourg. The story as told by Arthur Waite came from a German opus of 1832 (6). A highly empowered Sun then stood in a remarkable grand trine, in which four other planets were also involved; but as well as this, a Uranus-Pluto conjunction was then occurring, in close opposition to the Sun-conjunct Mercury.

8. 1716 Rhineland

The British Museum's numismatics department has a coin replica, of an original that was kept in Vienna. The front side of the coin shows a picture of the mythic figure of Chronos, with his scythe and hourglass, being transformed into Sol. On its back is inscribed in Latin, 'Chemical Metamorphosis of Saturn into Sol, that is of lead into gold,

witnessed by many on 31st December 1716, procured by His Serene Highness Charles Phillip, Count Palatinate of the Rhineland, Elector of Bavaria ... minted in perpetual memory, and donated to posterity'.
That day saw a grand trine of Sun, Pluto and Neptune, with Saturn conjunct the North Node in trine to Jupiter.
Burland p.?

9. Price, 1782, Guildford

James Price, Fellow of the Royal Society, was a wealthy man of high social standing, with an established reputation as a chemist. In Guildford, Surrey, he carried out seven alchemical projection experiments during May 1782, of which six were successful, causing 'an immense sensation.' The sixth of these was conducted on Saturday, 25 May, with three lords present, including Lords Onslow and Palmerston. The latter put half a grain of 'a certain powder of deep red colour' on to some heated mercury, and after a while it seemed to have turned to gold. A sample was sent to an assay-master 'recommended by the Clerk of the gold-smith's company' who reported the gold to be pure. It was then sent to an experienced goldsmith of Oxford, who said it was 'superior to Gold of the English standard.' In Price's initial experiments only a small fraction of the mercury turned to gold, for example 1/8 on the 9 May attempt, but on this occasion most of it did so.

A remarkable pattern built up in the heavens over May of 1782. The climax of Price's experiments came on 25 May, as a close Jupiter/Saturn conjunction opposed a close Mars/Uranus conjunction (SA OPP UR 2ø), an image of cosmic tension, while Sun-conjunct-Mercury completed a grand trine with Neptune and Pluto. When the experiments started on 6 May Mars was still 9ø from Uranus and the Sun stood in no particular aspect. The main thing of note at the start was Uranus' close opposition to Jupiter/ Saturn. Following the demonstration before Lords Onslow and Palmerston, a last trial took place on Tuesday 28 May. The fourfold opposition was still present as was the solar grand trine, but in addition the Moon came into conjunction with Jupiter/Saturn, enhancing that already tense opposition. King George was presented with gold from that experiment, and 'was pleased to express his approbation' (7).

The goldmaking dates

	Year	Date		Alchemist	Metal	Place
1)	1382	Apr 25	5pm	N.Flamel	Hg	Paris
2)	1586	Dec 19	NS	Kelly	Hg	Bohemia
3)	1602	Mar 13	4pm NS	A.Seton	Pb	Amsterdam
4)	1648	Jan 15		Richthausen	Hg	Prague
5)	1667	Jan 19	10am	Helvetius	Pb	The Hague
6)	1701	Oct 1	8pm	Böttger	Ag	Germany
7)	1709	Feb 16	Evg	Lascaris	Hg	Germany
8)	1716	Dec 31		-	Pb	Rhineland
9)	1782	May 25		J. Price	Hg	Guildford

Planetary frequencies

If we take these nine dates, and add up all the major aspects, of planetary conjunctions, oppositions and trines present in these events, to 5ø orb, and score them per planet, then the following totals result:

Major celestial aspects per planet

Sun 22,	Mercury 20,	Pluto 20,	Saturn 19,
Mars 16,	Uranus 14,	Neptune 14,	
Jupiter 13,	Venus 7,	Moon 7	

This Table scores three major aspects (conjunctions, oppositions and trines), to 5ø of orb, received by each planet, as present in the nine 'goldmaking' charts. The chance-expected score is here 9.0.

The planets are here arranged in sequence, from the Sun which had the greatest number of aspects to the Moon with least. For a given planet, it happens that by chance one would expect only nine such major aspects within the group (8,9), ie one per chart. Thus the last three planets, Jupiter, Venus and the Moon, have only scored around chance level. It thereby appears that, overall, there was a huge excess of these aspects in the goldmaking charts: 76 as compared to 45 expected, a seventy percent excess. This is highly unlikely to arise by chance. It is therefore evident that, overall, these charts had very strong major aspects.

In addition, more aspects were present to the Sun than to any other of the 'planets'. Sol was receiving well over twice as many aspects than expected, in fact an excess of 150%! There is a powerful contrast between the Sun at top of the

list and the Moon at the bottom, as if Luna's sensitive and reflective nature were positively unhelpful on such occasions. The two feminine planets Venus and Luna are conjointly at the bottom of the planetary-frequency list. Pluto is associated by astrologers with atomic transmutation: experiments in this realm began in the 1930s immediately following Pluto's discovery. It is a surprise to find this then-unknown planet second in the list of aspect frequencies after Sol. The high frequency of Pluto aspects appearing in the list of goldmaking moments does provide a strange and rather unexpected bridge between the alchemic endeavours of an earlier age and the atomic transmutations of the twentieth century (10,11). Indeed, we may here reflect that, in the Periodic Table of elements, mercury and gold are adjacent, so that a mere single electron distinguishes their atomic structures. Mercury and Saturn both scored highly, at twice their chance level. On days when the Hermetic Art was being consummated, it seems appropriate that Mercury should score so highly. Mercury was the most often-used metal for the transmutations, on five out of nine occasions, followed by lead. As the Sun cannot form trines or oppositions to Mercury or Venus, it has a slightly lower expected score. Thereby, major solar aspects are present in this group at at least 150% more than would be expected by chance. The aspects between Sun, Mercury and Saturn were:

The Sun-Mercury-Saturn Aspects

1) SU cnj ME 4«ø,	ME cnj SA 1ø	
2) SU cnj ME 2ø,	SU tri SA 1ø,	ME tri SA 3ø
3) SU cnj ME 1ø,	SU tri SA 45',	ME tri SA «ø
4)	SU tri SA 49'	R (SU-ME 18ø)
5) SU cnj ME 4ø,	ME cnj SA 1ø	R
6) -		(SU-ME 8ø)
7) SU cnj ME 3ø,	SU tri SA 2ø	ME tri SA 5ø
8) -		(SU-ME10ø)
9) SU cnj ME 3ø 44'		

By chance one would expect about three such aspects to be present in such a group, but here there are fifteen! Mercury spends one-eighth of the time within five degrees of the Sun, so the likelihood of finding this conjunction in two-thirds of the charts is remote. Mercury's average angle with the Sun in this group was six degrees, whereas normally it averages eighteen degrees.

Two of the goldmaking moments had Mercury moving retrograde, denoted by an 'R' in the Table. The two kinds of solar conjunctions made by Mercury, 'inferior' and 'superior', happen with equal frequency, the former when Mercury passes in front of the Sun and the latter when it is behind. The former is Mercury's closest approach, the only times when it goes retrograde (ie, appears to move backwards against the stars).

The Table shows six conjunction of Sun and Mercury, of which five are superior and only one is inferior (From the previous table, we notice that mercury was not the prima materia in the case of that inferior conjunction). Thus, the goldmaking moments often involved the Sun passing in between Earth and Mercury.

This group comprises all dated, witnessed goldmaking events I found. It would be of interest if more could be located, presumably in non-English language sources (12).

Acknowledgement: I am grateful to Adam McLean for advice in locating some dates.

References

- 1) The original version of this article, published in *Astrology (UK) Summer 1992*, had only seven golden moments; it lacked that of 1716.
- 2) Jacques Sadoul was a pseudonym, and the English translation 'Alchemists and Gold' was published by Neville Spearman in 1972. Hermetically enough, no copy of this opus exists in the London Library, nor it seems in any other London library.
- 3) 'The Private Diary of Dr John Dee', p.22, Ed. J.A.Haliwell, Camden Society, 1842.
- 4) J.F.Hevelius, 'Golden Calf', reprinted by the Alchemical Press, 1987, US. Dr James Price, 'An Account of Some Experiments on Mercury...' 1782.
- 5) M.Nicholl, *The Chemical Theatre*, 1980, p.243
- 6) A.E.Waite, *The Secret Tradition in Alchemy*, p.324; quoting from C.C.Schmieder, *Geschichte der Alchemie 1832, 1927*, p.481. Louis Figuier in *L'Alchemie at les Alchemistes 1860* p.328 also described this event, but cites the date of 16th February 1704, ie a decade earlier, in the village of Asch sur l'Eger; Waite says he found Figuier's accounts of Lascaris unreliable and told in a 'pseudo-historical manner' (Waite,

p.321). As the events happened in Germany, we may reasonably prefer the German version, not least because Schmieder troubles to state that the transmutation happened in the evening: it seems unlikely that this detail would be supplied, if the date erred by a decade.

- 7) Notes & Records of the Royal Society, Vol.9 p.109-14 'The Last of the Alchemists' by H.C.Cameron. Also E.J.Holmyard, p.267.
- 8) A 5ø orb gives 10ø of the ecliptic per aspect, and as there are two possible trine positions and only one for conjunctions and oppositions, where each planet can form aspects to nine others, each chart will have an expected aspect frequency of $10(1+1+2) \times 9 / 360 = 1$ per planet. For the Sun, due to the aspects it cannot form with Venus and Mercury, the equivalent figure is $\{10(1+1+2) \times 9 - 6\} / 360 = 0.95$ expected aspects per chart. Taking just the three aspects between SA, SU and ME for all nine charts, their expected frequency would be $10(1+1+2) \times 3 \times 9 / 360 = 3$.
- 9) For more details on computing these expected aspect frequencies, see 'Investigating Aspects' by the present writer, in 'Astrological Research Methods, Vol. 1' Ed. Mark Pottenger 1995 ISAR CA, pp.287-302.
- 10) See, eg, 'Pluto and Plutonium' by the present writer in The Astrological Journal, Autumn 1984.
- 11) Robert Chandler, 'Uranium, Plutonium and Black Alchemy' Bulletin of The Company of Astrologers, Summer 1995, 21-28.
- 12) A source of further witnessed, dated, goldmaking moments could well be 'L'Alchemie' by Jacques van Lennep (Belgium), 1982.

Planetary frequencies

Taking just the aspects between Sun, Mercury and Saturn gives:

- | | | |
|---------------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1) SU cnj ME 4«ø, | ME cnj SA 1ø | |
| 2) SU cnj ME 2ø, | SU tri SA 1ø, | ME tri SA 3ø |
| 3) SU cnj ME 1ø, | SU tri SA 45', | ME tri SA «ø |
| 4) | SU tri SA 49' | (SU-ME 18ø) |
| 5) SU cnj ME 4ø, | ME cnj SA 1ø | |
| 6) - | | (SU-ME 8ø) |
| 7) - | | (SU-ME 10ø) |
| 8) SU cnj ME 3ø 44' | | |

By chance one would expect two or three such aspects to be present in such a group, but here there are twelve. Mercury spends one-eighth of the time within five degrees of the Sun, so the likelihood of finding this conjunction in five out of eight charts is remote. Mercury's average angle with the Sun in this group was six degrees, whereas normally it averages eighteen degrees.

This group comprises all dated, witnessed goldmaking events in English-language texts that I could find. Solar aspects were indeed strong in this group, but it also showed other distinctive features.

J.B. van Helmont biography

DR. J.B. van HELMONT

biographie du Léonard de Vinci bruxellois



Ce médecin et chimiste belge (il est né à Bruxelles en 1577) est l'auteur d'une des plus importantes découvertes de la science, celle des gaz. Il reconnut d'abord la présence de l'acide carbonique et par déduction s'aperçut qu'il s'agissait là d'un corps chimique nouveau. Il nous dit en effet : "cet esprit qui ne peut être contenu dans des vaisseaux ni être réduit en un corps visible, je l'appelle d'un nouveau nom : gaz". Il reconnut aussi l'existence de l'hydrogène sulfuré dans le gros intestin de l'homme; il constata la présence d'un suc acide émis par l'estomac; il prépara l'acide chlorhydrique, l'huile de soufre, l'acétate d'ammoniaque, etc.

En 1618, alors qu'il travaillait dans son laboratoire de Vilvorde, Van Helmont reçut la visite d'un inconnu qui voulait, dit-il, l'entretenir d'une matière les intéressant tous deux. Le savant pensa tout d'abord avoir affaire à quelque confrère qui désirait lui parler de sujets médicaux, mais l'inconnu se mit bientôt à aborder l'art hermétique. Van Helmont l'arrêta tout de suite en lui disant qu'il considérait que l'alchimie était une superstition dénuée de toute réalité scientifique et qu'il ne voulait pas en entendre parler. L'étranger lui dit alors :

"je comprends que vous ne désiriez point en disputer, Maître Van Helmont, mais oseriez-vous vraiment prétendre que vous ne désiriez point voir ?"

Surpris, le savant lui demanda ce qu'il entendait exactement par voir. L'autre répondit :

"Ce n'est point une fable lorsque je vous affirme que la Pierre philosophale existe et qu'elle est douée d'un pouvoir transmutatoire. J'admets que vous ne me croyiez point, mais, refuserez-vous si je vous donne un morceau de cette Pierre et que je vous laisse opérer par vous-même ?

Van Helmont, pensant avoir affaire à un fou ou à un charlatan, lui répondit qu'il voulait bien expérimenter lui-même un morceau de la Pierre, étant entendu que son interlocuteur le laisserait opérer seul et dans les conditions choisies par lui. Il pensait ainsi décourager le personnage mais il n'en fut rien. Son visiteur accepta aussitôt et déposa sur une feuille de papier qui se trouvait sur la table du chimiste quelques grains de d'une poussière que Van Helmont décrit ainsi : "j'ai vu et manier la Pierre philosophale. Elle avait la couleur du safran en poudre, elle était lourde et brillante comme le verre en morceaux."

Cela fait, l'inconnu demanda à prendre congé, comme Van Helmont désirait savoir s'il reviendrait pour constater les résultats de l'expérience, son visiteur lui répondit que cela n'était pas nécessaire puisqu'il était assuré du succès de l'entreprise. En le raccompagnant, Van Helmont lui demanda pourquoi il avait spécialement tenu à lui faire faire cette expérience, et l'autre répondit qu'il désirait "convaincre l'illustre savant dont les travaux honoraient son pays". Un peu ébranlé par l'assurance de son interlocuteur, le chimiste décida de tenter l'expérience. Il fit préparer par ses aides de laboratoire un creuset où il plaça huit onces de mercure. Une fois le métal fondu, il y précipita la petite quantité de matière que lui avait donné l'inconnu, après l'avoir enveloppée dans un peu de papier, comme son visiteur le lui avait bien recommandé. Puis il plaça un couvercle sur le creuset et attendit un quart d'heure; au bout de ce temps, il fit inonder d'eau le creuset afin de le refroidir brutalement et le cassa : au centre se trouvait un morceau d'or d'un poids égal à celui du mercure qu'il y avait placé initialement.

Le récit que je viens de faire n'est nullement imaginaire, c'est Van Helmont lui-même qui coucha par écrit et fit publier sous son nom et sous sa responsabilité cette relation des événements.

Il eut en effet le courage et, pour tout dire, l'esprit scientifique, de reconnaître publiquement son erreur et de proclamer qu'il était désormais convaincu de la réalité de fait alchimique. En souvenir de cette extraordinaire expérience, il nomma un de ses fils Mercurius, et ce dernier, à son tour, devint un fervent défenseur de l'alchimie puisqu'il convertit ensuite l'illustre philosophe Leibniz. Lisons maintenant la conclusion de Louis Figuier : "Van Helmont, le chimiste le plus habile de son temps, était difficile à tromper; il était lui-même incapable d'imposture il n'avait aucun intérêt à mentir, puisqu'il ne tira jamais le moindre profit de cette observation. Enfin, l'expérience ayant eu lieu hors de la présence de l'alchimiste, il était difficile de soupçonner une fraude. Van Helmont fut si bien trompé à ce sujet, qu'il devint, à dater de ce jour, partisan avoué de l'alchimie." Il faut avouer que l'emploi du mot "trompé" par Figuier ne manque pas de sel, car il n'offre aucune explication raisonnable d'une éventuelle tromperie. En fait, il n'est pire sourd que celui qui ne veut pas entendre; Van Helmont, par contre, me paraît un exemple tout à fait remarquable d'un esprit scientifique ouvert, tel qu'il devrait toujours être.

LA VIE DU DIABOLIQUE DOCTEUR VAN HELMONT

Jean-Baptiste van Helmont vivait au temps de Louis XIII. Philosophe, médecin, alchimiste, physiologiste, il exerçait le magnétisme animal au mépris des avertissements de l'Inquisition. L'Eglise le disait fou, diabolique et hérétique. Il fut emprisonné à Malines, cloîtré à Bruxelles, assigné à résidence jusqu'à sa mort en 1644.

Ses crimes ?

Le rejet des dogmes de la science infuse pour chercher la vérité par l'expérience, l'invention du thermomètre ou la découverte du gaz ...

L'homme était issu d'une famille catholique de vieille noblesse flamande. Son père fut auditeur auprès de la Cour des Comptes du Brabant. Sur ordre du Duc d'Albe, il fit détruire les armoiries et saisir tous les biens du Comte d'Egmont après sa décapitation sur la Grand-Place.

Le jeune docteur van Helmont fut très marqué par ce sombre épisode. Son indépendance d'esprit à l'égard de la toute puissance de l'Eglise en sortit renforcée. Il avait étudié la médecine, la chimie et la philosophie à l'Université Catholique de Louvain. A cette époque, l'enseignement gravitait autour de la quête de la pierre philosophale, tandis que la médecine se gaussait de latin savant.

Jean-Baptiste van Helmont va bouleverser les conceptions médicales en rendant visite à ses patients.

Traditionnellement, les docteurs ne touchaient pas les malades. Le diagnostic était posé à la tête du client, Van Helmont décrira en latin et en néerlandais le fruit de ses expérimentations, ne croyant que ce qu'il voyait. Toujours à l'affût d'une observation scientifique, il se pencha sur la redéfinition des éléments.

Au Moyen Age, la terre, l'air, l'eau et le feu étaient les bases sacrées de la création universelle. Jean-Baptiste van Helmont fut parmi les premiers à mettre en doute ces fondements. Intuitivement, il a reniflé plusieurs "sortes d'air", en constatant un dégagement de CO₂ dans l'eau de Spa. Il définit le phénomène en créant le mot "gaz".

Trois siècles ont passé et un des ses descendants, Jan van Helmont, a rassemblé toutes les archives disponibles sur son ancêtre. Avec l'aide d'un historien, il vient d'éditer la première biographie de Léonard de Vinci bruxellois.

BRUXELLES, CAPITALE MYSTIQUE DE L'ALCHIMIE

Tout le monde connaît l'histoire de notre vieille ville de Bruxelles, mais peu de personnes connaissent son passé alchimique.

Pourtant, il fut une époque où une fois la nuit tombée, on apercevait parmi les soupiraux des caves quelques étranges lueurs qui n'étaient autres que celles des fourneaux de nos bons vieux alchimistes.

Leurs caves sentaient le soufre et le charbon et leur quête était celle de l'immortalité et de la transmutation du plomb en or.

On y trouve encore par ci, par là quelques vestiges symboliques de leur étrange savoir, pour cela il suffit de parcourir les ruelles de notre Grand Place et étudier les symbolismes de ses fresques.

On se souviendra d'ailleurs d'un étrange personnage nommé van Helmont qui marqua l'histoire par son étrange savoir sur la science de l'absolu.

Nous vous publions avec cet article la recette du grand oeuvre ayant, paraît-il, été écrit par l'alchimiste van Helmont et ceci en exclusivité car elle n'a jamais été publiée jusqu'à ce jour ... alors, à vos fourneaux.

La pierre des sages élaborées grâce aux trois vases philosophiques

VASE N°1 : "L'amalgame philosophique"

- on récolte de la ROSEE au printemps dans des conditions astrologiques très favorables à notre oeuvre.
- ensuite on DINAMISE cette rosée en l'exposant, dans un récipient en ZINC, aux rayons de la pleine lune.
- La rosée, une fois dynamisée, il ne lui manque plus que son levain, qui est notre sel "ALCALI" ou "CARBONATE DE POTASSIUM" en solution saturée et à la température de 70°C. A ce stade, on possède l'AMALGAME philosophique.

VASE N°2 : la préparation du mercure philosophique appelé "lion vert" la lune

- on place l'amalgame dans un vase percé à la hauteur par les 2/3 d'un petit tuyau creu.
- ensuite, on le met circuler (SUBLIMER) à une température de 37°C et pendant 7 mois, en rajoutant petit à petit la nouvelle rosée, au fur et à mesure que celle-ci diminue.
- l'amalgame en circulant va absorber des levures naturelles cataliseuses en suspension dans l'air ... on appelait jadis ces levures naturelles "poussières d'étoiles" ou feu secret.
- au bout de 7 mois, notre amalgame sera transformé en mercure philosophique appelé "MOSTOC" ou lion vert.

VASE N°3 : l'adjonction du soufre ou "lion rouge" - le soleil

- le mercure préparé, ne demande que la semence métallique de notre pierre, "notre soufre".
- on rajoutera donc au mercure 1/10 de soufre, c'est-à-dire du TRICHLORURE D'OR pulvérisé ... donc séparé de l'acide chlorhydrique.
- on peut également se servir de l'ANTIMOINE préparé philosophiquement par le "REGULE ETOILE".
- le soufre et le mercure unis ensemble seront enfermés hermétiquement dans un vase et placé durant une période de 9 mois dans l'ATHANOR, un four COSMOTELURIQUE à 42°C.
- trois couleurs principales se feront paraître durant cette COCTION : le NOIR, le BLANC et le ROUGE qui est notre pierre.
- après 9 mois, on sépare le subtil de l'épais, c'est-à-dire la pierre de son eau.

La projection

On jettera dans du plomb liquide une pincée de la pierre, et après 4 jours de fusion, par palier le plomb se changera en or.

Pour trouver les paliers, la clef est dans la musique.

La médecine

En médecine, on mettra 3 GRAINS de la pierre dans 1 litre de vin rouge ... on laisse reposer 24h et ce vin sera devenu une véritable tériaque qui guérira toutes les maladies et prolongera votre vie.

La multiplication de la pierre

La multiplication de la pierre se fait en nouvelle coction où la pierre remplacera le soufre ... donc 1/10 de la pierre avec du nouveau mercure.

LA PIERRE PHILOSOPHALE

Habituellement, tous les alchimistes consacraient l'essentiel de leur activité à transformer en or les métaux les plus ordinaires, du moins, ils essayaient. Ils gardaient jalousement les secrets de leurs travaux jusqu'au moment où ils étaient tout près de rendre l'âme. Alors seulement ils transmettaient leur savoir et leur expérience à un jeune disciple, comme le voulait la tradition. Le plus souvent, leurs révélations ne menaient à rien, car il ne suffisait pas de suivre

scrupuleusement une recette pour fabriquer le noble métal, paradoxalement, il fallait aussi chasser de son coeur tout désir de richesse.

Comme bien d'autres, Thomas Charnock en fit la cruelle expérience. Né à une époque où la science et la magie faisaient encore bon ménage, Thomas s'était voué à l'alchimie alors que, jeune étudiant, il ne possédait que quelques bribes de latin pour tout bagage intellectuel et pour toute fortune une poignée de piécettes provenant du modeste héritage d'un parent éloigné. D'abord il avait voyagé un peu partout en quête d'un maître qui voulût bien l'initier; et un jour il était arrivé dans la ville de Bath où, lui avait-on dit, un religieux pratiquait d'étranges expériences. C'était un vieillard dont la vie ne tenait qu'à un fil, il n'avait plus toute sa tête et avait presque perdu la vue. Néanmoins, il s'était rappelée l'essentiel de ses formules et, complaisamment, il avait divulgué à Thomas à peu près tout ce que celui-ci désirait connaître.

On ne sait pas en quoi consistaient ces fameuses formules car la longue lignée des alchimistes qui en assuraient la transmission est aujourd'hui éteinte. Le processus consistait, semble-t-il, à soumettre une solution très diluée de sels d'or à un cycle compliqué de douze distillations successives de natures différentes. Si le chercheur s'y prenait bien, il obtenait alors un caillou blanc très dur, qui par la suite, virait au rouge, c'était ce qu'on appelait la pierre philosophale, une substance mystérieuse qui non seulement permettait de transmuter en or les métaux ordinaires, mais aussi de tout embellir, de guérir les maladies les plus malignes et même de redonner la jeunesse.

Brûlant d'enthousiasme et désirant mettre sans délai en pratique ses nouvelles connaissances, Charnock dépensa ses derniers deniers à installer un laboratoire dans le vieux manoir délabré où il avait élu domicile. Il fit fabriquer le matériel nécessaire par des chaudronniers et des verriers des environs, ne voulant pas révéler la nature de ses travaux, il prétendit qu'il allait construire une tête d'airain, dotée de la parole, qui lui tiendrait compagnie pendant les longues nuits d'hiver. Puis, il obtura toutes les fenêtres de son laboratoire avec de lourds rideaux.

Finalement tout fut prêt. Il alluma le four. Sur les étagères, d'épais flacons emplis de mercure, d'ammoniaque, d'eau-forte, de poudre d'argent, de pépites d'or disputaient la place à des livres reliés en cuir et à des parchemins poussiéreux couverts de pattes de mouches. Des cornues, des alambics, des têtes, des mortiers s'entassaient un peu partout. Le coeur battant, Charnock se remémora tout ce qu'il avait appris du religieux, tout ce qu'il avait lu dans les grimoires, avant de se décider à verser une mesure de paillettes d'or dans un ballon d'eau régale. Puis il transvasa la solution dans une cornue.

Le contenu de la cornue changeait d'aspect à l'issue de chaque cycle. Parfois la substance, saisie de colère, émettait des vapeurs étranges, fort nocives, et Charnock se désespérait. D'autres fois elle devenait blanche, laiteuse, et l'alchimiste reprenait espoir. Un jour elle devint noire, visqueuse, un peu répugnante et resta comme morte, dans l'alambic. Charnock sentit le découragement le gagner, mais il se reprit vite. Il recommença l'opération, il aboutit au même résultat. Il retourna à ses livres, reprit tout depuis le début, sans plus de succès. Mais il s'acharna, il était tellement obsédé que, pendant les rares moments où il succombait au sommeil, il invoquait à voix haute les noms des grands maîtres : Ramon Lulle, Hermès Trismegistus, Zozimus l'Egyptien.

Il passait tout le jour à régler le feu et à contrôler la distillation. La nuit, il cherchait dans les grimoires les raisons de ses échecs. Il ne sortait que pour respirer lorsque les vapeurs d'acide devenaient trop épaisses.

Il y avait sûrement une erreur dans ses calculs, dans ses doses, ou dans ses manipulations; car qui aurait pu douter un seul instant des dires et des écrits des grands maîtres ? Il étudia la nature des éléments, les propriétés des matières, il consulta les cartes astrologiques et détermina les moments où les conjonctions des planètes étaient favorables.

Trismegistus n'avait-il pas déclaré que le bas était le reflet du haut ?

Bien qu'il persistât avec acharnement dans ses travaux, le succès le fuyait toujours. Avec le temps, sa passion s'était assagie et une sorte de sérénité s'était installée dans son âme. La crainte de l'échec ne troublait plus ses nuits et l'entretien de son four était devenu une règle de vie, presque une fin en soi.

En même temps, ses capacités de concentration et de réflexion augmentaient. Il découvrit que ses sautes d'humeur affectaient la matière qui se formait dans la cornue. Quand il était calme, le processus semblait se dérouler favorablement, s'il était soucieux, le liquide devenait aussi sombre que sa mélancolie.

Finalement, un jour, après bien des années, la matière devint blanche et se solidifia au fond de l'alambic. Pourtant Charnock avait procédé comme d'habitude, il comprit que le changement observé dans la cornue était semblable à celui qui s'était opéré en lui. Il faillit succomber à la jubilation mais il parvint à se dominer et il continua calmement le cycle de distillation. Il vit alors apparaître une petite tache rosée au milieu de la pierre blanche puis toute la matière tourna au rouge sang. Alors, ne pouvant plus contenir son exaltation, il saisit la pierre rouge et la plongea dans un chaudron rempli de plomb fondu. Le métal bouillant fusa, crachota et brusquement il prit la couleur de l'or. Après vingt années d'efforts incessants, Thomas Charnock avait atteint son but.

Il ne tenta pas d'exploiter sa découverte pour s'enrichir et goûter enfin aux vains plaisirs terrestres. Il se contenta de ce qu'il venait d'obtenir. Il lui avait fallu longtemps pour comprendre que l'important n'était pas le but, mais la façon

d'y parvenir. Cette longue quête de l'absolu avait fait de lui un sage et lui avait apporté bien plus que tout l'or du monde.

Commentary on the Emerald Tablet of Hermes - Rawn Clark

Commentary on the Emerald Tablet Of Hermes

Rawn Clark

Prologue

The exact origin of the Emerald Tablet (ET) of Hermes lies shrouded in mystery. Opinions vary widely, from the scholarly theory that it originated in the early period of Arabic alchemy, to the speculative fantasy of an Atlantean origin. The original document has not survived and all we are left with are translations of it. Of greatest impact on western thought, have been three 12th century Latin versions. In the past 200 years, several older Arabic translations have been discovered and rendered into English as well.

Some Arabic versions contain lines that claim the ET to be the testament of a person named 'Balinas', who enters a cave and sees Hermes sitting there holding an "emerald" (meaning "green stone", not necessarily that it was specifically an emerald) tablet upon which were written certain words in ancient Syriac. Apparently, Balinas left the cave and subsequently wrote down what he saw engraved upon Hermes' tablet. Whether historically accurate or not, these lines present us with a valuable mythological image: the inner search for meaning.

The Emerald Tablet is the foundation of western Alchemical thought and practice as we know it today. Alchemy is, essentially, the practical application of the Hermetic Philosophy, contrary to the common perception which posits Alchemy as a mere lust for gold.

There are quite a few different translations of the Emerald Tablet available, and I have chosen to use the 12th Century Latin translation from Steele and Singer (1928:p.492). I have however, constantly referred to my library of translations (14 in all) throughout my commentary, as each difference in wording produces a slightly different interpretation. I have tried to blend the meanings of the many into my comments upon this single version.

THE EMERALD TABLET OF HERMES

- 1) True, without falsehood, certain, most certain.
- 2) What is above is like what is below, and what is below, like that which is above. To make the miracle of the one thing.
- 3) And as all things were made from contemplation of one, so all things were born from one adaptation.
- 4) Its father is the Sun, its mother is the Moon.
- 5) The wind carried it in its womb, the earth breast fed it.
- 6) It is the father of all works of wonder in the world.
- 7) Its power is complete if turned towards earth, it will separate earth from fire, the subtle from the gross.
- 8) With great capacity (Wisdom) it ascends from earth to heaven. Again it descends to earth, and takes back the power of the above and the below.
- 9) Thus you will receive the glory of the distinctiveness of the world. All obscurity will flee from you.
- 10) This is the whole most strong strength of all strength, for it overcomes all subtle things, and penetrates all solid things.
- 11) Thus was the world created.
- 12) From this comes marvelous adaptations of which this is the procedure.
- 13) Therefore I am called Hermes Thrice-Crowned because I have three parts of the Wisdom of the whole world.
- 14) And complete is what I had to say about the work of the Sun.

Commentary

- 1) TRUE, WITHOUT FALSEHOOD, CERTAIN, MOST CERTAIN.

The Emerald Tablet (ET) begins by stating that its words are universally true. There are many, many levels of Truth, and the ET here specifies that its words apply on all of these levels. In this way, the ET gives us a key by which to test our understanding of its words...if at any level of our experience, these words do not ring true, then our understanding of them must needs be broadened.

2) WHAT IS ABOVE IS LIKE WHAT IS BELOW, AND WHAT IS BELOW, LIKE THAT WHICH IS ABOVE. TO MAKE THE MIRACLE OF THE ONE THING.

Here the ET defines The One Thing as an Infinite Continuum. The term above (or any of its variant translations) establishes two concepts: 1) the starting point from which there is an above; and 2) an unlimited upwardness. The term below likewise, establishes: 1) the starting point from which there is a below; and 2) an unlimited downwardness. The statement that ABOVE IS LIKE WHAT IS BELOW, and vice versa, places them on a continuum of alikeness. This creates an Infinite Continuum with only one thing clearly defined -- the Center, from which above and below stretch infinitely.

In an Infinite Continuum, Center occurs any and every who, what, when, where and why. There is no point along the Continuum from which above and below do not extend infinitely, and thus, equally. In this sense, the Infinite Continuum is a One Thing.

I call this One Thing: Self. It includes all things and all not-things, and is perhaps the most inclusive and powerful Continuum we can posit. Such a Continuum places us in relation to a bird in a tree, an other person, a substance worked with in an alchemical laboratory, an Archangel, disparate aspects of our personality, a river, to essentially anything we can imagine.

Within the Continuum, there is no such thing as a miracle in that the word implies an occurrence outside of Nature's Laws. The perspective of Hermetics is that what we assume to be miraculous is merely the interplay of Nature's Laws in ways that we do not comprehend, and not a breaking of those Laws. With that in mind, the ET's statement of the MIRACLE OF THE ONE THING, implies that only at the level of the whole of the Infinite Continuum, is the truly miraculous an actuality; and, that everything we do here within the Continuum, is merely the manipulation of Nature's Laws.

3) AND AS ALL THINGS WERE MADE FROM THE CONTEMPLATION OF ONE, SO ALL THINGS WERE BORN FROM ONE (by) ADAPTATION.

Having established the Infinite Continuum of Self -- The One Thing -- the ET now turns to a discussion of the production of life within this Continuum. The ET posits the ONE as "All Mind" and states that all THINGS arise from the CONTEMPLATION (meditation) of this ONE. Each of these THINGS, within the Continuum of Self, are self-conscious aspects of the One, of the All Mind, mirroring the power of the One, and must follow the methods of the One. So, as the One "makes" THINGS by contemplation, these THINGS must then "birth" what they desire by a similar process -- by adaptation of the process followed by the One.

4) ITS FATHER IS THE SUN, ITS MOTHER IS THE MOON.

5) THE WIND CARRIED IT IN ITS WOMB (belly), THE EARTH BREAST FED (nursed) IT.

6) IT IS THE FATHER OF ALL WORKS OF WONDER IN THE WORLD.

The ET now describes this "adapted" process of creation. As it applies to all things, my discussion here will of necessity, be able to cover only a few aspects of its applicability.

The imagery used is that of the human generative process (Father, Mother, Womb, Breast Fed), which is concurrently correlated to geo-centric symbols (Sun, Moon, Wind/Air, Earth). As an equation, it looks like this: (Father/Sun + Mother/Moon + Wind/Womb + Earth/Breast)

= equals =

Father of all works of wonder in the world.

Father/Sun:

This is the archetype of Force (as opposed to Form), of light (as opposed to dark), of Fire (as opposed to Water), of thought (as opposed to physical matter). It is half of a polarity -- its existence implying the simultaneous existence of its opposite pole (Mother/Moon).

Force, energy, creative intent, Mind, Yod, whatever level of this archetype one employs, it always seeks expression in Form. In an Hermetic sense, each specific vibration seeks expression through the levels of vibration which are directly below it. So each specific vibration is the expression of that which lies above it, and simultaneously, expresses itself through the

levels below it. The creative process outlined in this section of the ET, is a "downward" movement of Force into Form (the "upward" movement of Form into Force, comes later). The sperm of the Father, seeks the egg of the Mother; the rhythm of the Sun (12) is bound to the Earth by the rhythm of the Moon (13); the Individuality expresses itself through the personality; the mental infuses the astral; the light knows itself only when piercing the dark; Chokmah enters Binah.

Mother/Moon:

This is the archetype of in-Form-ing. It is the continuous movement of energy down the scale of vibration, expressing itself through ever denser manifestation. It receives the Sun's rays, changes them, and then reflects them to the Earth; it wraps its Womb around the egg which has captured the seed; it is the first Heh of Yod-Heh-Vav-Heh; Binah transformed by the seed

of Chokmah, from her state of Dark Sterile Mother, to that of Bright Fertile Mother.

Creation is primarily a Mother's Work, and this is shown by the next symbols which are aspects of the Mother archetype.

Wind/Womb:

In classical Hermetic treatment of the Elements, Air is seen as the product of Fire and Water, representing a synthesis of the two. Air acts as the intermediary between Fire and Water, and is in effect, produced by their interaction. Each, implies the existence of all three -- they exist only in combination. If we posit Fire as "upwardness", and Water as "downwardness", then Air would be a state of non-movement, a center between the two. Air has no movement of its own accord, yet adopts any movement which is impressed upon it. In the ET's equation, the movement impressed upon the Air is downward. Here the Air is WIND, implying a Force behind it, and stressing that it is an expression of this Force. This expression acts as a WOMB, carrying the creation through gestation to birth. The Air clearly acts here as the agency of a downward Force in its accretion of Form.

In Qabbalistic terminology, this is Tiphareth as the product of Chokmah and Binah; but in its active downward flow towards Malkuth. The Vav of YHVH in its aspect of seeking downward expression through the Heh-final. This is the inclusion of the other planetary influences into our earthly experience by the cycles of Sun and Moon. This is the Individual Self of the "Adept's consciousness", which expresses itself through the personality and physical body.

Earth/Breast Fed:

Fire + Water + Air = Earth, is a common conception of the Element's relationship; but at an archetypal level.

Practically and functionally however, Earth is experienced as an individual Element just like Fire, or Water. This is the archetype of Form itself. Whereas Water is the tendency to Form, Earth is the product of this tendency, the final clothing given to Force in its descent into expression. The Earth nourishes the creation, giving it solid and independent form.

This is Tiphareth clothed in Yesod, and manifest in Malkuth. The Heh-final of YHVH. This is the Individual Self, expressed through the personality, within a physical body.

Father of all works of wonder in the world:

These four Elements combined, plus the Fifth -- the conscious awareness of the creator -- result in independent life.

The ET symbolizes this here by describing the result as a Father, which brings us back to the beginning of our equation, like the Uroboros, finding its end in its beginning in an endless cycle of self discovery. This nascent Father is said to generate all works of wonder in the world. Note the distinction here between works of wonder and miracle, implying that within the Continuum, the Father obeys the Laws of Nature.

Of paramount importance in the process of creation outlined in the ET is the factor of the creator's conscious awareness. It is the Fifth Element, the Quintessence, and though assumed throughout, it is never directly named.

While the expression of the higher through the lower is a natural phenomena, it is only through the addition of conscious awareness that it produces the Father of all works of wonder in the world.

7) ITS POWER IS COMPLETE (integra) IF TURNED TOWARDS EARTH. IT WILL SEPARATE EARTH FROM FIRE, THE SUBTLE FROM THE GROSS.

The product of the ET's downward equation of creation, is a Father; or in an Elemental sense, a Fire. This is an active Force, though clothed in denser layers of vibration than Father/Sun. This Father/Fire is none other than the Quintessence clothed in physical Form -- the power of conscious awareness as expressed through the human being.

The ET states that this power of conscious awareness is *integra* (whole, complete, entire) if *versa fuerit* (turned-toward, cast to) the earth. This means that conscious awareness at the human level (Father/Fire), re-establishes contact (implying then, a participation in the Whole) with its more archetypal expressor (Father/Sun), when it is turned inward to the Self

clothed in densest matter (Earth).

This turning inward upon itself, is what initiates the cycle of return, and brings us to the next equation, that of Force arising from Form.

Whereas the ET's first equation was a downward one of the addition of Form onto Force, this new Father causes an opposite action, one of separation of Force from Form. The power of this introspection is two-fold: A) it will separate Earth from Fire; and B) it will separate the Subtle from the Gross.

With 'A', we see it separating the denser Earth (physical manifestation) from the initial inspiration of its subtler Fire.

This is the Quintessence working upon itself, from the ground up, so to speak. Its effectiveness begins from the starting point of its densest manifestation, separating itself from its Self. This is a very apt description of the process of human introspection, or of alchemical putrefaction and fermentation. Here the Fire acts upon the Whole, and separates the Earth from its Fire (itself), consciously shedding its clothing of matter.

With the Fire thus freed from its Earth, the ET leads us to the perspective of 'B', where there is a reaching down, and a separating of the Subtle, this time, from the Gross. 'A'(Fire-minus-Earth) and 'B'(Gross-minus-Subtle) are the same processes, but on different levels and as seen from different perspectives: 'A' from Below, and 'B' from Above. The action of the Father/Fire is one of separation throughout, but in 'A' that action is a movement from Below toward Above; and in 'B', it is an action from Above, reaching down into Below to raise it to Above.

This outlines a double process of separation. First the earth is removed from the Fire, which implies an ascent of conscious awareness, from Earth to that of Fire. This Fire then acts upon itself anew, separating its own essence from its Gross aspects. As a whole, it is a process of the Father/Fire self-consciously releasing its Self from Form -- almost a direct reversal of the initial creative process.

8) WITH GREAT CAPACITY (Wisdom) IT ASCENDS FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN. AGAIN IT DESCENDS TO EARTH, AND TAKES BACK THE POWER OF THE ABOVE AND THE BELOW.

Conscious awareness, now liberated from its clothing of Form, rises upward through the levels of vibration within the Continuum. It does so with **magno ingenio** according to the ET. This term translates roughly as "great (magno) natural ability or talent (ingenio)", and is often posited as Wisdom. It is a very subtle force, one which implies an inherent ability -- a natural aspect of the Self-realized awareness.

This ascent is from Earth, or the clothing of Form (the Below), to Heaven (the Above), or a state of no-Form, and completes the ET's second equation of 'Force from Form'.

The descent of Force into Form, and its subsequent ascent back to a Form-less state, is however a process of a Self-conscious awareness, an awareness that learns throughout the process. The Force that originally descended into Form, is no longer the same, now that it has ascended -- it has changed and been transformed by the experience of Form. It now has

the power, the Wisdom if you will, to descend anew into Form, bringing with it the increased awareness of its nature as a Force. Through its second descent into Form, Force integrates its Above aspects within its Below aspects, and becomes a clear expression of the whole Continuum of Above and Below (again we are brought back to the beginning of our equation,

illustrating that the Uroboros is not merely a circle, but a spiral). The result is a Self-aware Force, consciously clothed in Form, intentionally uniting the Above with the Below.

9) THUS YOU WILL RECEIVE THE GLORY OF THE DISTINCTIVENESS (light of Lights) OF THE WORLD. ALL OBSCURITY (darkness) WILL FLEE FROM YOU.

The ET presents a three-fold equation: 1) Force descends into Form in an act of creation (a four-fold process); 2) Force acts upon its in-Formed self, consciously ascending to a Form-less state (a three-fold process); and 3) Self-realized Force descends anew into Form, seeking to consciously express its Self therein (a one-step process).

Through this sequence, Force

acquires a degree of Self-realization, re-connects with the powers of its true source, and is transformed into a new Father which receives the glory of the world.

Another active Force is produced, this time with the symbols of "light" attributed to it (an important echoing of Father/Sun), and is clearly a higher octave of the Father of all works of wonder in the world (the Father/Fire). This new Father/Light, has the power of Understanding and Wisdom, which illumines all darkness. Notice the progressive shift from a physically active Force, to a mentally active one.

10) THIS IS THE WHOLE MOST STRONG STRENGTH OF ALL STRENGTH, FOR IT OVERCOMES ALL SUBTLE THINGS, AND PENETRATES ALL SOLID THINGS.

Here the ET describes this new Father/Light, the completely Self-realized awareness. It does so in three parts, echoing the three-fold pattern we see throughout.

Part 1: the whole most strong strength of all strength.

This is another triple-superlative, similar to the opening line of true, without falsehood, certain, most certain. Strength implies a usable storehouse of Force and here we see that this Force is applicable on all levels. It is even effective with all other levels of Force, as this Father/Light is the most strong of all the active Forces within the Continuum. Please note the similarity between this aspect of the Father/Light and the initial 4-fold process of creation -- both are downwardly active, initiated from Above upon Below.

Part 2: it overcomes all subtle things.

This is the Father/Light's upward power to surpass any upward-tending thing. The second part of the ET's 3- fold

equation, that of the upward movement of Force from Form, is echoed here and attributed as a power of the Father/Light.

Part 3: penetrates all solid things.

This is the Father/Light's downward power to inhabit (express itself through) any denser vibration of matter. The active Force represented here is equivalent to the third part of the ET's equation, that of the conscious re-descent of Force into Form.

Father/Light, the product of the ET's three-fold equation, mirrors the attributes of the One Thing, the whole of the Infinite Continuum. It appears capable of an equal creativity, but only *within* the Continuum -- an octave lower than the Miracle of the One Thing -- an expression of it.

This, of course, implies an infinite, cyclic process of continual re-creation, wherein this Father/Light becomes the Creatrix to a new generation of Father/Light, and so on.

11) **THUS WAS THE WORLD CREATED.**

This is a very deep statement. The Divine Pymander (Librum 1:Corpus Hermeticum) describes a similar sequential, cyclic process of Force descending into Form, becoming self-aware and then creative anew, followed by another descent further into Form. The eventual result is "the world". This is also seen in Qabalah as the Kethric Light descends into

Malkuth, and becomes creative anew at each step of the way.

This says something very important about the world around us. It says that everything is alive. Every thing, every person, animal, tree, rock, drop of water, pile of dung, everything, is alive and is the product of the One Thing. Each thing has the power of the Father/Light tucked away inside of it...no matter at what level of manifestation we look, this is true, without falsehood, certain, most certain.

12) **FROM THIS COMES MARVELOUS ADAPTATIONS OF WHICH THIS IS THE PROCEEDURE.**

The this from which come marvelous adaptations, is the world. Here we see into the heart of Alchemy as the ET states that every natural thing has the Father/Light within it, and each thing is therefore the seed of its future self. It is at the level of marvelous adaptations that we humans intervene, for we must, as physical beings, work with the substance of the

world. We work *within* the Continuum, mirroring the powers of the One Thing, performing marvelous adaptations as opposed to the miracle of the One Thing.

Conscious awareness within a physical body, is an example of Force within Form, of the Above inhabiting the Below. This is what we have to work with -- this is the world upon which we turn our Fire, our Father/Light, and self-craft our future selves. What has preceded this point in the ET, has been a description of the natural processes of the formation of our prima materia -- the world. Only now do we come to the procedure by which we create our marvelous adaptations (the Stone), and this is revealed in the two closing lines:

13) **THEREFORE I AM CALLED HERMES THRICE-CROWNED, BECAUSE I HAVE THREE PARTS OF THE WISDOM OF THE WHOLE WORLD.**

14) **AND COMPLETE IS WHAT I HAD TO SAY ABOUT THE WORK OF THE SUN.**

These lines break down to three sections in echo of the overall three-fold nature of the ET:

A) Therefore I am called Hermes Thrice-Crowned --

Therefore implies a sense of consequence, and I am called implies a second-hand knowing. This is the initial bringing of Force into Form...the novice studying, praying and experimenting...the Father/Light turning upon itself with its Fire, in cyclic adaptation of the process of the One Thing...the seed rotting in the earth, dynamizing the power which will inevitably spring forth.

Hermes Thrice-Crowned is a very potent and broad symbol; one which I cannot do justice in the space of this short commentary. Briefly, it is a symbol of the Three-In-One, an image of thesis, synthesis and antithesis combined. It is Sun and Moon, and every thing that lies between these two archetypes. More to the point in this context, is that it represents the power

that Center has within an Infinite Continuum -- it can occur any where and/or every where, and is in effect a mobile, self-directed agent of the Whole. That Hermes is Thrice-Crowned, is an indication that this power is active on the three levels of physical, astral and mental (Sal, Sulphur and Mercury).

Section 'A)' clearly mirrors the first part of the ET's basic equation: the creative descent of Force into Form, the inevitable, natural result of which is the Father/Fire who initiates the subsequent ascent:

B) because I have (the) three parts of the Wisdom of the Whole World. --

Here there is a sense of personal knowing, of I have, indicating individual experience. The actual possession of the three Fathers is implied by the term Wisdom, the Supernal Fire. And here we also see that they are powerful *within* the Whole Continuum. This represents the achievement of the second part of the ET's equation, that of the ascent of Force from Form. There is also an indication that this process is to be accomplished three times (mentally,

astrally and physically). Please note how this Wisdom of the Whole World is a slightly different expression of the Father of all works of wonder in the world (which I've designated with the term Father/Fire).

C) And complete is what I had to say about the Work of the Sun. --

As in part three of the ET's equation, the procedure of marvelous adaptations is made complete, whole, entire (an echo of "integra") by the conscious re-descent of Force into Form. Here this is symbolized by the phrase what I had to say, which implies a past-tense, intentional expression of an idea (Force) through words (Form -- remember now, this was supposedly inscribed upon green stone!).

Work of the Sun is another broad symbol. In short, it points here to the fact that this is an active process *within* the Continuum. The Sun-Tiphareth connection points to this being a Yetziratic, or creative, process, carried out by the Individual Self. In a Qabbalistic sense, this constitutes a metallic Work, specifically that of gold. It is furthermore Mercurial, in that it

is predominantly Fire mixed with Air (Helios). The Sun also implies a specific rhythm, symbolically uniting the 4-fold Elements and the 3-fold Principles in its journey through the 12-fold zodiac.

This 3-fold procedure of marvelous adaptations is very similar to the ET's archetypal equation; yet has distinct differences, occurring as it does, on a lower octave *within* the Continuum.

And so the Emerald Tablet of Hermes ends. "Integra" by virtue of its having finished with the descent of its essential Force into the Form of instructions for our enlightenment.

Epilogue

The ET outlines an essential three-part equation:

- 1) The creative descent of Force into Form (a 4-step process).
- 2) The ascent of Force from Form, in a conscious act of Self-realization (a 3-step process).
- 3) The re-descent of Self-aware Force into Form (a 1-step process).

In the first part of the equation, the Father/Sun acts as the initial agent of the One Thing, producing the Father of all works of wonder in the world, or the Father/Fire, as I have designated it here. The Father/Fire is the active agent of the second part of the equation, and produces the Father/Light who re-descends in the third and final part.

This equation cycles three times throughout the ET. In the first cycle, the One Thing produces the initial Father/Light; the second cycle is that of the Father/Light, acting upon itself, producing the world; and the third cycle is represented by human action, those marvelous adaptations performed upon the prima materia of the world.

These are just a few of my observations of the meaning contained within the Emerald Tablet. It is one of the "root texts" of humanity...a bit of archetypal poetic symbolism, which presents a different glimmer of Wisdom to each who approaches it, each time it is approached. Over the years that I've studied the ET, meditating upon it and experimenting with its precepts, I've come to see it as a brilliant beacon of Wisdom's light...so different from my first impression of it as something so dense I'd never penetrate its enigma.

I pray that my commentary inspires you to consider the ET in your own way, pulling from it your own portion of Wisdom.

Blessed Be!

Rawn Clark

8 Feb 96

Rosicrucian Thoughts on the Ever-Burning Lamps of the Ancients. By W. Wynn Westcott

Transcribed by Eric O'Dell.

Rosicrucian Thoughts on the Ever-Burning Lamps of the Ancients. By W. Wynn Westcott, VIII^o, Frater Roseae Crucis.

The ordinary Englishman of to-day considers the idea of a lamp which should be everburning only less absurd than the idea of perpetual motion. To the dabbler in modern science it is but little less absurd, but to the deepest thinkers, and to Rosicrucians, a scintillula of light appears on this mysterious subject. The true adept has discovered that

although Nature is bound in general laws which seem universal, yet in Nature herself evidence may be found, when properly searched for, that at certain times and seasons, and in certain modes, unknown to us, her laws are over-ridden and replaced by a power to which she, the mighty mother, has herself to bow. The pages of the history of the world present to us many instances of such events, which we generally class as miracles; some of them are as well authenticated as any points in ancient history. The Israelitic passage of the Red Sea, the swallowing of Jonah by a whale which brought him forth again alive, and the Ascension of Jesus, are examples. The power of prophesy is a contradiction of the ordinary powers of earthly beings, and is so far miraculous. Angel visitors come but rarely now from the realms of glory; is heaven more distant? Or have men grown cold? Rosicrucians are nothing if not Christians, and Christians have ever believed in miracle, or have ever acknowledged the existence of an Omnipotence who can act at times in such a manner as to leave the traces and steps of the process so hidden as to tempt scoffers to doubt, and doubters to scoff.

But although perpetual motion be but a dream to us earthbound mortals, we do not doubt a future perpetual existence, and it is as reasonable to picture to ourself a perpetual flame, as an Eternity of Life. The ancient Egyptian priests pictured life as a flame. The Great Master of the Temple of this world being omnipotent, and able to do all things, does not usually proceed by miracles, or they will not be prized as such; an essence of miracle is rarity, a miracle imitated is not a second miracle. Ordinary events, then, being the extreme of opposition to miracle, there are yet events of a third and intermediate type, marvels, which cannot be understood of the people, but which are yet the product of a special gift to certain men, their spirits, minds, and bodies, who by due, careful, and sufficient training, wisdom and experience, have earned such a reward.

Such should the typical Rosicrucian be, a terrestrial earthly Body, the Temple in which dwells a mind trained to understand the powers of Nature, and enshrined within this, as a canopy, should sit a Divine afflatus, a portion of the Spirit of God, an ala of the Celestial Dove who brooded over the chaos, and this spirit may by patent submission to Deity, and by active efforts at power, draw down to itself a commission to work wonders, and so do "not as other men do."

The great tendency of the modern times has been to reduce all men to a level, a dead level, of mediocrity, an effort fatal to the supremacy of individuals, and which has tended to discourage research into the Hidden Mysteries of Nature and Science, as opposed to the parrot-like study of what are known as modern sciences, a study of enormous value to mankind, but yet not the stepping stones on the direct road to Deity. History then narrates the lives of many men, who, from the exhibition of uncommon powers and transcendent abilities and wisdom, are pointed out as the possessors of what we may fairly call occult Inspiration, "Poeta nascitur non fit;" but I should add "Magus nascitur non solum fit." No accident of birth alone can make a Magician, but intensity of duly directed effort may do so in a certain number of persons with specially favourable mental powers. We may be all born with an equal right to existence; but it is absurd to say we are all to be chiefs or Magi, for, as we are told in the Master's Degree, "some must rule, and some obey."

In 1484 died Christian Rosenkreuz, our great prototype; he was such a man; by the dispositions he made, and the Society he designed, he shook the whole Christian world for a century of years, and laid the first stones of the edifice we are still building to-day. In his tomb, when it was opened by the Fratres, in 1604, or 120 years after his decease, were found, besides other mysterious articles, lamps of a special and peculiar construction; hence the study of Sepulchral Lamps is one particularly germane to us. The discovery of lamps in ancient sepulchres, in some cases extinguished, in others burning with brilliance, was no rarity in the middle ages; but the destroying hands of the Goth and the Vandal have left few ancient tombs for modern research to explore. We have to content ourselves with the observations and reports of our forefathers, the narratives of Arabian, Roman, and mediaeval authors. No fewer than 170 such authorities have written on this subject. Many of these references, in Greek and Latin literature, to lucent bodies, phosphorescence, and "mystic lamps found in tombs," deserve study, and will repay perusal.

The Darkness of Death and the Darkness of the Tomb are, and have ever been, common phrases; no wonder, then, that the ancients sought to minimise it. Hence we find that the relatives of a deceased person were desirous of relieving the gloom hanging over the grave of a beloved wife, kind parent, or respected brother, by any means in their power.

To include in the tomb a lamp and leave it burning was a kindly attention, even if it burned but one short hour; it was an offering to Pluto, to the Manes; it kept away spirits of evil, and preserved peace to the dead man: this knowledge of the limited time such a lamp could possibly remain alight acted, doubtless, as a stimulus to the discovery of a means of prolonging the burning power of a lamp indefinitely, and if I read history aright, in at least a few instances, the problem has been solved; so far at any rate as the manufacture of a lamp which should burn until deranged by the barbarian invader of its precincts. I shall narrate a few examples, premising that these are instances of different modes of obtaining the desired effect; besides these instances the ancient Latin authors speak of the use as illuminants, not alone of lamps, but of natural lucent bodies, which would suffice to dispel the gloom to some

slight extent. Such were the diamond, the carbuncle, the glow-worm, the exposure of phosphorus to the air, the ignition of certain substances which burn alone without any wick or arrangement, such as camphor, which will burn even floating on water. The presence of a combustible gas, which issues from clefts in the rock in some mines and caverns, seems to have been known, and was probably taken advantage of by the ancient sages to enhance the mystery and majesty of their secret rites. It is very possible that some of the priests of old were aware of the lucent property of some forms of sulphide of calcium, which have attracted much attention the last few years, in the shape of luminous paint.

I will submit also that references exist in the history of remote ages to suggest the mysterious light now so freely handled and produced by electricity was not unknown to the ancient sages. Numa, King of Rome, studied electricity, and left pupils of his art, of whom we are told was his successor Tullus Hostilius, who was destroyed whilst endeavouring to draw down from heaven and coerce the electric fluid from thunder clouds, or, as they said, from Jupiter Tonans. Eliphaz Levi remarks-"It is certain that the Zoroastrian Magi had means of producing and directing electric power unknown to us."-"Historie de la Magie," p. 57. Mediaeval scholars have fully debated several points in regard to ever-burning lamps, but in all cases without arriving at any definite result; much erudition has been expended on the question whether a lamp found burning on breaking open a tomb was not ignited by the admission of air, and had not been actually burning until it was disturbed; there is modern evidence in favor of this view, from the analogy of some chemical experiments, as, for example, phosphorised oil is invisible in the dark when enclosed in a sealed vial, when this is opened a light pours forth. On the other hand, evidence exists that some of the lamps actually paled and went out when the cavern in which they were found was opened, as a fine metal wire made white-hot by electricity in a sealed glass vacuumed ceases to shine when the glass is broken; others again burned on and could hardly be extinguished by water or other means, until the arrangement of the lamp was broken.

Other authors, taking for granted that some of these lamps had burned for hundreds of years, have discussed the necessary relation between oil or liquid consumed and wick. With regard to wick, there are several names of substances proposed as incombustible; but they are probably only synonyms of one body, namely, asbestos, which is even now used in our gas fires. It does not consume, although kept constantly red hot with flames flickering over it.

Other names for it were-

Asbestinum-Plutarch uses this term, Pliny, and Solinus, and Baptista Porta; Linum Asbestinum by Albertus Magnus. Amiantus-By Pancirollus, and by Lucius Vives.

Plume Alum-See Cyclopaedia by E. Chambers, 1741, art. "Allum," and so called by Wecker, De Secretis, lib. 3, cap. 2, and Agricola.

Earth Flax-Dr. Plot uses this name.

Linum Vivum-Mentioned by Plutarch, also as Linum Carpasium and Lapis Carystius-see De Defectu Oraculorum, and Pausanias in his Atticus.

Salamander's Wool-So called by Friar Bacon and Joachimus Fortius.

The ancients, we know, did try incombustible metal wires as wicks; but found that oil would not pass up them, as it does up fibres of cotton or wool.-See "Philos. Transactions," No. 166, p. 806, of the year 1684.

In respect to the oil for the lamp, there is no consensus of opinion as to the nature of it; neither of the authorities who narrate the finding of the lamps describe it in any way, yet many Latin authors discuss it. Some speak of it as bituminous oil, derived from the earth, thus forecasting the recent extensive use of petroleum. None of them definitely associate it with any known animal or vegetable oil. Many mystic references are, however, made to the labours of the Alchemists, who thought it must be of the nature of an essential oil of Sol, the metal gold, to be derived from it by alchemic processes. Sol, they say, must be dissolved into an unctuous humour, or the radical moisture of Sol must be separated.-See "Wolfhang Lazius," lib. III., c. 8, and "Camden Britannia," p. 572. For, say they, inasmuch as gold is so pure that it bears repeated meltings without wasting, so if it be dissolved into an oily residuum, such should support fire without being consumed.

It may suitably be explained in this place that the oldest Alchemists held peculiar views on flame and fire. Fire was to them an element-one of four; there were two contraries in nature, three principles, and four elements. Fire, as such, should not need what we call fuel to consume; but only as a means of detaining it in a certain place.-See "Licetus, De Lucernis," cap. 20-21 and "Theophrastus." They said there may be a relation between fire and fuel of three sorts-if the strength of the fire exceed that of the humour, it presently burns out; if the humour be too strong for the fire, the fire departs; but if the radical strength of the humour and of the fire be co-equal, then, caeteris paribus, that fire would burn continually, until the surrounding states of radical moisture or natural heat should be altered by external circumstances, as if a flame be made to burn in a closed vault, it would depart when such was opened.

Rosicrucian and Alchemical doctrines, especially their views on the connection between Fire and Water, are brought into close apposition to the dogmas of the religion of the Hebrews in some portions, at least, of the sacred writings, notably in the volume of the "Maccabees," Book II., cap. I., where we are told that when the Jews were led captive

into Persia, the priest took the Sacred Fire from the Altar, and hid it in a dry, hollow place. Many years after, in more favourable times, Nehemiah sent priests to fetch this fire, nothing doubting its existence; they found water only in its stead. Nehemiah caused an altar of sacrifice to be made of wood and other materials, and this water was poured upon them, before all the people; when the clouds of the sky passed away, and the sun appeared; then the water that had been poured over the sacrifice burst into flame. The connection between Fire and Water again becomes prominent when we note the miracle of Elijah, who made a sacrificial altar, poured water on it, and fire from heaven burned up the water, on the occasion when he condemned the priests of Baal who could not do likewise.-See Kings I., cap. xviii. Blavatsky claims that at the present time the priests of the secret temples of the Buddhists in Tibet, India, and Japan, use asbestos as a wick in lamps, which burn continuously without replenishing. Trithemius, Libavius, his commentator, and Korndorf, about the year 1500, each composed a material, by chemical processes, which they professed would burn for ever. Mateer, a reverend missionary, states that he knew of a great golden lamp in a hollow place inside a temple at Trevandrum, kingdom of Travancore, which he had the best authority for believing had burned continuously for 120 years. The Abbe Huc, a great traveller, states that he has seen and examined an Everburning Lamp.

By the Levitical Law-Lev. vi., v. 13-the fire on the altar of Jehovah was never to be allowed to go out; but we are not told that it was ever burning without supply. It has been suggested that if everburning lamps were ever known, they would have been found in this application; but we know that the sacred flame was allowed to go out, and was renewed from heaven on several occasions.-Lev. ix., 24; 2 Chron. vii., 1; 1 Kings xviii., 38. Other writers have taken the other side of the argument, viz., that the gift of a flame that would need no attention would have tended to idolatry, to which the Israelites were ever prone. The Chaldeans and Persians used to maintain a perpetual fire in the temples.

Certain scholars have considered that the "window" mentioned as placed in the Ark of Noah was not such, as during a period of prolonged cloud and storm a window should not light such a chamber. In the Hebrew version of Genesis, cap. 6, v. 16, the word is tzer, which means "something transparent," and is to be compared with the similar word zer, always translated "splendour" or "light," hence they suggest that this tzer, or zer, was some form of ever burning light, or "the universal spirit fixed in a transparent body," similar to the Mysterious Urim and Thummim.

Alchemy and its successor, Chemistry, are said to have originated in Egypt, that land of ancient marvels, and, indeed, these names are intimately related, the ancient name of Egypt being Chm or Land of Ham, from which the title Chymia, in Greek Chemi and Ges Cham is derived. The learned Kircher writes in A.D. 1650 that several travellers in Egypt found in his time Burning Lamps in the Tombs at Memphis.

Numa Pompilius, King of Rome, who certainly experimented with the natural electricity of the clouds, built a Temple to the Nymph Egeria, and made in it a spherical dome, in which he caused to burn a Perpetual Flame of Fire in her honour; but in what manner this flame was produced we have no knowledge. Nathan Bailey, in his "Brittanic Dictionary," 1736, remarks that in the Museum of Rarities at Leyden, in Holland, there were two of these lamps, only partially destroyed.

A lamp still burning was found during the Papacy of Paul III., about 1540, in a tomb in the Appian Way at Rome, supposed to be that of Tulliola, the daughter of Cicero. The tomb was inscribed: "Tulliolae Filiae Meae;" she died B.C. 44; it had burned over 1550 years, and became extinguished as soon as exposed to the air; the whole body was in perfect preservation, and was found floating in a vessel of oil. See "Pancirollus, Rerum Memorabilium Deperditarum," vol. I., p. 115, Franciscus Maturantius, Hermolaus, and Scardeonius.

Such a lamp is stated to have been found in 1401, in the reign of Hen. III., King of Castile, not far from Rome, on the Tiber, in the stone tomb of Pallas, the Arcadian, son of Evander, slain by "Turnus Rex Rotulorum" in the wars at the time of the building of Rome; nothing could extinguish the flame of this lamp until it was broken. On the tomb were the words: "Filius Evandri Pallas, quem lancea Turni militis occidit, mole sua jacet hic."-See "Martianus, Liber Chronicorum," lib. xii., cap. 67.

Two miles from Rome an inundation broke down a wall, and disclosed an ancient tomb; on the cover stone were the letters "P.M. R.C. cum Uxore;" in it an earthen urn was found; when fractured, a bituminous smoke issued; in the bottom was a lamp, which went out; the fragments were still oily; this became dry after exposure.-See "Lowthorp, Abridgment of Philos. Trans.," vol. III., sec. xxxv., also No. 185, p. 227.

In a certain temple of Venus in Egypt there hanged a lamp which neither rain nor wind could put out, says, St. Augustine, in his work "De Civitate Dei," lib. xxi., cap. 6, and he associates its make with Magic, and the Devil, as indeed do all Roman Catholic authorities whenever they mention any of these lamps. Fortunius Licetus describes this lamp in his work "De Reconditis Lucernis Antiquorum," cap. vi., and see "Isidorus, De Gemmis."

Ludovicus Vives, 1610, in his notes to St. Augustine, says that in his father's time, A.D. 1580, a lamp was found in a tomb, which from the inscription was 1500 years old; it fell to pieces when touched. This Commentator does not

follow his master in his denunciation of these lamps, but says they must have been made by men of the greatest skill and wisdom.- See also "Maiolus, Episcopus, Colloquies."

At Edessa, or Antioch, in a recess over a gateway a burning lamp was found by the soldiers of Chosroes, King of Persia, elaborately closed in from the air. From a date inscribed it was known to have been placed there soon after the time of Christ, or 500 years before. Beside this lamp a crucifix was found fixed.-See "Fortunius Licetus," cap. vii., and Citesius in his "Abstinens Consolentanea." In the volcanic island of Nesis, near Naples, in the year 600 a marble tomb was found, and when opened it contained a vase in which was a lamp still alight; the light paled and soon was extinguished when the vase was broken. See "Licetus," cap. x. See "Baptista Porta, Magia Naturalis," lib. xii. cap. ult., A.D. 1658.

A very notable example occurred in the discovery of lamps buried in urns about A.D. 1500; they were taken possession of by Franciscus Maturantius, and described by him in a letter to Alphenus, his friend; they had been buried 1500 years. A labourer at Ateste, near Padua, in Italy, found a sepulchre, in which was a fictile urn, and within it there stood another urn, and in this smaller one a lamp burning brightly; and on each side of it there was a vessel, or ampulla, each of them full of pure fluid oil; one was made of gold, and the other one of silver. On the outer urn were these words engraved:-

Plutoni sacrum munus ne attingite fures, Ignotum est vobis hoc quod in urna latet Namque elementa gravi clausit digesta labore, Vase sub hoc modico Maximus Olybius. Adsit secundo custos sibi copia cornu Ne tanti pretium depereat laticis.

Thieves! Grasp not this gift sacred to Pluto, Ye are ignorant of what it contains hidden, For Maximus Olybius has enclosed in This small urn, elements digested with heavy toil, Let abundance be present in a second vase as a guardian to it, Lest the value of so much oil should perish.

On the smaller one were these words:-

Abite hinc pessimi Fures Vos quid vultis, vestris cum oculis emisitiis. Abite hinc, vestro cum Mercurio Petasato caduceato que Donum hoc Maximum, Maximus Olybius Plutoni sacrum facit.

Get ye hence, most wicked thieves, What do you desire with your rolling eyes? Get ye hence with your broad hatted Mercury Carrying a wand with twisted snakes. Maximus Olybius makes this, His greatest offering, sacred to Pluto. See "F. Licetus," cap. ix., and "Scardeonius, De Antiq. Urbis Patavinae; Rubeus, De Destillatione," and "Lazius, Wolfhang," lib. iii., cap.18.

Hermolaus Barbarus, in his Corollary to Dioscorides, speaks of a wondrous liquor to sustain combustion, known to Democritus and Trismegistus.

Jacobus Mancinus wrote to Licetus that he knew of a burning lamp dug up from the Monte Cavallo at Rome; it was still burning when found, and within it was a bituminous substance.

Plutarch in his work "De Defectu Oraculorum," states that in a Temple to Jupiter Ammon a lamp stood in the open air, and neither wind nor rain put it out, and the priests told him it had burned continually for years.- See also "Licetus," cap. v. Herodotus tells us that the Egyptians made a special and extensive use of lamps in the religious festivals, and that the Temples of King Mycerinus had many mysterious ones. Strabo, and Pausanias in his Atticus, narrate that in the temple of Minerva Polias, at Athens, there was a mysterious lamp of gold always burning; it was made by Callimachus. The altar of the Temple of Apollo Carneus, at Cyrene, was similarly furnished. A like account is given of the great Temple of Aderbain, in Armenia, by Said Ebn Batric.

Kenealy in his "Book of God" calls attention to the name Carystios applied to the asbestine wicks of the lamps in ancient Greek temples, and draws attention to its relations to Chr. of Christos and to Eucharist, anointed with oil, as to everburning lamps before the throne, as in the Apocalypse.

Chrs.=[Hebrew: ChRSh]=solar fire.

Chre.=[Hebrew: ChRH]=sun=he burned.

Krs.=[Hebrew: KRSh]=sun=(Greek?-EO)Kupios= Cyrus.

Ceres=was called Taedifera=torch bearing.

Chrs., from this also comes Eros in Greek, material light coming from ineffable light.

There is a curious reference of asbestos to fire, and the heat of the sun, in "The Ecstatic Journey to Heaven" of Kircher, where Casmiel, the genius of this world, gives Theodidaktos a boat of asbestos to embark in for his travels to and on the sun, the centre of heat. See "Itinerar 1, Dialogue 1," cap. 5.

Irish lore recounts a mysterious everburning flame in the Temple at Kildare, sacred to St. Bridget-Daughter of Fire.- See Giraldus Cambrensis, De Mirab. Hibern. 2, xxxiv.

Khunrath, in his "Amphitheatrum Sapientiae Aeternae," cites the ancient author of "The Apocalypse of the Sweet Spirit of Nature," as speaking of a liquid which burneth with a bright light and wastes not.

At the dissolution of the Monasteries in Britain, by order of Henry VIII., a tomb, in Yorkshire, purporting to be that of Constantius Chlorus, father of the Great Constantine, was opened and ransacked, and a lamp burning was found in it: he died 300 A.D.-See Camden "Brittania" (Gough's edition, III. p. 572.)

Lazius, in his "Comment. Reipub. Romae," writes that the Romans under the Empire possessed the secret of preserving lights in tombs by means of the oiliness of gold, resolved by their art into a fluid.-See lib. III., cap. 18. An ancient Roman tomb was discovered in Spain, near Cordova, near the site of the ancient Castellum priscum; in this tomb was found a lamp. This lamp is described by Mr. Wetherell, of Seville. See an essay by Wray, "Athenaeum," Aug. 8th, 1846.

The last relation which I propose to cite to you is from Dr. Robert Plot, the Archaeologist, written in the time of Charles the Second, as follows:-

A certain man, engaged in digging, having at a particular spot turned up the earth deeper than usual, came upon a door, which he subsequently was able to open, and found beneath it a descending passage with steps; these he descended, and ultimately, with much trepidation and many delays, he arrived at the entrance of a vault.

This underground chamber was lighted up by a lamp, which was placed in front of a statue of a man in armour sitting at a table, leaning on his left arm; in his right hand was a sceptre or weapon.

When the intruder advanced, a portion of the floor moved with his weight, and the figure became raised up, at the next step the arm was elevated, and as the man took the third step the arm descended, shattering the lamp and extinguishing it. The man was terrified, and made a hasty retreat as soon as he recovered possession of his senses sufficiently to find his way out of the vault.

The place became famous for some time as the sepulchre of a Rosicrucian, and was regarded as a triumph of mystic skill and knowledge, which at once proved the possession of undreamed of powers in the designer, and yet provided the means of as certainly keeping his secret. See also "Spectator," No. 379, of 1712.

This essay has already extended beyond the contemplated limits, so I refrain from a long resume. These pages provide much food for thought. That lamps have burned for long periods of time untended is testified to by more than 150 authorities, and some dozen instances of this marvel are borne witness to by a large proportion of these authors

From the time that has elapsed since everburning lamps were found, and from the comparative ignorance of the world at that period of the distant past, comes to our minds some hesitation and doubt as to accuracy of detail, and this is unavoidable.

But the consensus of ancient opinion must point to the broad conclusion that there formerly existed an art that has been lost in the dim light of the dark ages of the world. Pancirollus catalogues many other such lost arts, and modern science is flung back baffled from the performance of many a deed which could have been freely done by the ancient sages.

Several of our most modern discoveries have been shown to have been anticipated by men who are contemptuously regarded by modern scientists. So it has ever been. Earth knows but little of its greatest men; its greatest men are but pigmies in the presence of time, antiquity, and futurity. "Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers," said the poet laureate. The Christian Rosicrucian can only exclaim-

"Lead, kindly Light, lead thou me on; The night is dark, and I am far from home."

Games with alchemical content

At a time when game designers, like film makers, are exhorted to read their Joseph Campbell and their Jung, it is only to be expected that Dame Alchemy will make her presence known in the realm of games.

What follows is a very preliminary listing of games with notable alchemical content: games discussed here presently include the role-playing games **Ars Magica** and **Mage: the Ascension**, the computer games **Zork Nemesis** and **Christminster**, and Hermann Hesse's **Glass Bead Game**, together with some playable variants. Suggestions for suitable additions to this page are welcome.

this page submitted by Charles Cameron of [HipBone Games](#)

Role-Playing Games:

The publishers of Role Playing Games (RPGs) provide materials on which their players can base their "campaigns", but the players themselves often write up more detailed variant scenarios. There is apparently an alchemical sourcebook designed for use with a variety of game systems: **The Compleat Alchemist**, by Pandevlopment.

Ars Magica (ArM)

The **Ars Magica** RPG, created by Jonathan Tweet and Mark Rein*Hagen and currently published by Atlas Games, is set in "Mythic Europe".

Mark Shirley's [alchemy rules](#) for an ArM campaign

Kenneth Hite on the [Hermetic Tradition](#) in ArM

Fourth edition of the [Ars Magica rule book](#)

Mage: the Ascension (M:tA)

Alchemists are a sub-group "somewhere between Order of Hermes and the Sons of Ether" in this White Wolf Games RPG according to Anders Sandberg, whose fabled [Mage page](#) is a veritable treasure trove of information about the game.

Anders Sandberg's M:tA page devoted to [Alchemy](#)

White Wolf's [Mage: the Ascension](#) homepage

Computer Games

Two recent computer games incorporate a fair amount of alchemical scholarship, and may be of interest to the alchemical fraternity.

Zork Nemesis

Zork Nemesis from Activision, is a CD ROM game with a plot which revolves around alchemy and alchemists. Director Cecilia Barajas uses alchemical insights deriving from Jung in her plot line, and incorporates graphics from Fludd and Maier.

Activision's [Zork Nemesis](#) page

Christminster

Christminster by Gareth Rees, is an "interactive fiction" (ie text-adventure) game set in Biblioll College, Christminster, which opens with a quote from the **Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum** and makes references to "Lully", Eirenaeus Philalethes etc. along the way.

Description of Gareth Rees' [Christminster](#)

[Christminster](#) Z- code module download

[Christminster](#) download for Mac users

Glass Bead Games

Hermann Hesse

Hermann Hesse won the Nobel for his 1943 novel, **Magister Ludi**. The book describes a contemplative game called the "Glass Bead Game", played by the members of a future secular monastic order. The gameplay is based on the juxtaposition of analogically linked ideas.

In a private communication, the historian Christopher McIntosh has suggested to me that the book's overall sensibility is reminiscent of the Rosicrucians:

I have written, among other things, a book on Rosicrucianism in which I talk about the "Homo ludens" aspect of the Rosicrucian tradition. Curiously enough, it never struck me until now that the whole idea of Castalia and the Glass Bead Game is very Rosicrucian -- the idea of all-embracing system of knowledge combined with the "game" element.

Hesse himself describes the game as "an elite, symbolic form of seeking for perfection, **a sublime alchemy** [my emphasis], an approach to that Mind which beyond all images and multiplicities is one within itself" -- but perhaps the clearest indication of the Game's kinship with alchemy can be found in Hesse's presentation of the **coniunctio oppositorum** as the key to the Game's ultimate purpose:

never forget what I have told you so often: our mission is to recognize contraries for what they are: first of all as contraries, but then as opposite poles of a unity. Such is the nature of the Glass Bead Game.

Further materials on Hermann Hesse, his relationship with Carl Jung, and his novel **Magister Ludi** can be found at the following site, maintained by a Hesse scholar at the University of California, Santa Barbara:

Gunther Gottschalk's [Hermann Hesse](#) website

Playable variants on Hesse's Game

A number of people, myself among them, are now working on the design of "playable variants" on Hesse's Game.

A Washington Post article about online [GBG variants](#) with links

Some of these Glass Bead Game variants have been played in games on alchemical themes:

[The Phoenix and the Peacock](#)

Here George Hersh and myself play one of my own HipBone GBG variants: the topic for this particular game was "alchemy east and west", and gameplay revolves around the varieties of alchemical bird symbolism.

[A Glass Bead Game for Marie-Louise von Franz](#)

This game is an extended meditation on the lapis, with special reference to von Franz's edition of the **Aurora Consurgens** as -- in more than one sense -- a "stone that the builders rejected".

Rules of play for the [HipBone Games](#)

Science and magic in Ge Hong's "Baopu-zi nei pian"

A paper by Evgueni A. Tortchinov (St. Petersburg State University, Russia) from The 8th International Conference on the History of Science in China. Berlin, August 23 - 27, 1998.

Science and magic in Ge Hong's "Baopu-zi nei pian" by Evgueni A. Tortchinov St. Petersburg State University, Russia)

This paper is dedicated to the problem of the attitudes of the great Chinese alchemist Ge Hong (284-363 or 283-343 CE) towards science within the frame of his Daoist world view. It is well known that Ge Hong was a representative of the so called Southern branch of the tradition of the Chinese Daoist occultism (or the lineage of the Three August Ones - san huang wen). This lineage was closely related to the heritage of the Han Daoism with its beliefs in the immortals (xian) and corporeal immortality attainable through the esoteric practices of alchemy and magic. Ge Hong was well known not only as alchemist and the Daoist master or Confucian moralist and social thinker (see his "Baopu-zi wai pian") but as physician and pharmacist as well. It is quite understandable because the Chinese Daoist alchemy with its iatrochemical character may be treated as a part of the Chinese medical tradition (see N. Sivin's works). So, in Ge Hong's works (and first of all, in his "Baopu-zi nei pian"; below -- BPZNP) we meet with rather strange mixture of the beliefs in physical immortality, magical rites and ceremonies, astrology, medicine and pharmacology. But even more interesting is the fact that these elements of alchemical occultism are combined in Ge Hong's writings with the strong and distinctively articulated inclinations to skepticism and free-thinking rationalism. He laughs at the folk beliefs and superstitions, he ardently criticizes the Confucian scholasticism and common people's prejudices, etc. Bellow I will give some examples of such skepticism with their brief analysis and some preliminary conclusions.

Firstly Ge Hong rejects the opinion that only herbal drugs are beneficial for health as well as for the prolongation of life.

In chapter 4th (Jin dan) of the BPZNP he states that drugs made from minerals and metallic substances are much more useful than the herbal ones. The herbal drugs are weak and the strong heat destroys them but minerals and metals are strong and stable: for example, the heat can not destroy cinnabar which changes itself into the "water silver", or mercury. After this statement, Ge Hong notes that ordinary people do not know even such simple things as the origin of the cinnabar (Hg S) in the mercury. They say that cinnabar is red and the mercury is white and so, it is impossible that the white substance produces the red one.

The second aspect of this passage is more interesting. Ge Hong declares that the common people ("worldly people", or shi ren) are ignorant even of such things as the nature of the cinnabar and so, it is not surprising that they do not believe in such subtle things as the way of immortality. I think that this Ge Hong's statement has crucial character for understanding of his attitude towards the connections between the Daoist "mystics" of immortality and the "positive" knowledge: for him the Daoist teachings about the immortals and the practices of the obtaining of immortality and supernatural powers have no mystical, or irrational characters at all. They have no less "positive" nature than medicine or chemical knowledge about the composition of cinnabar and other substances. And if it is true, this knowledge is very different (and even opposite in nature) from the superstitious beliefs in popular gods and spirits with their shamanistic bloody and expensive rites and the ways of worship. And Ge Hong can not do without laughing at these cults and beliefs, criticizing them with sharp humor and the real sarcasm (see chapter 9th Dao yi of the BPZNP).

The same idea can be found in the 5th (Zhi li) chapter of BPZNP. Here Ge Hong describes the healing qualities of different plants and herbs. But, as he states, the common people do not want to use them and prefer the superstitious religious methods of healing (such as prayers, sacrifices, fortune-telling, etc.). They do not believe in the art of the famous physicians but rely on shamans and sorcerers. And if it is so, it is very naturally that they do not believe that because of the eating of the golden and cinnabar elixirs immortality can be obtained. Moreover, they reject even the usefulness of mushrooms and flowers for the prolongation of life. How can we hope that they will recognize the truthfulness of the way of immortals?

It is significant that Ge Hong treats the Daoist alchemy with its super mundane aims in the same terms as the traditional medicine and pharmacology. Thus, alchemy and the "arts of immortals" for Ge Hong are not of supernatural, or religious nature; they are "positive" and "scientific" in the same way as medicine and pharmacology are. The rejection of these arts certifies the ignorance of the common people preferring the "superstitious" religious ways to the means of medicine and the Daoist arts which have the same character as medicine. And this character is quite opposed to the superstitious nature of purely religious practices. One of the arguments of Ge Hong in defense of the Daoist alchemical methods is the principle of the verification of the relevant precepts of the Daoist writings:

"Their teachings can be called the highest words but the common people do not believe them treating them as the empty writings. But if they were only the empty writings, how was it possible to fulfill nine transformations and nine changes just for that numbers of days which is given in the precepts? The truths which were obtained by the perfect persons is not understandable for the primitive thinking of the common people" (BPZNP, chapter 4).

And here again Ge Hong not only demonstrates the contrast between the "scientific" knowledge of the sages and the ignorance of the ordinary people but uses the "positive", or "experimental" contents of the Daoist texts for support of his Daoist approaches. And here once again the critical approach of the ordinary people to the Daoist aims becomes the testimony of their ignorance, and Ge Hong's beliefs in immortality and alchemy obtain their "scientific" ground in the empirical and positive sides of the Daoist classics (jing) becoming the proven results of the real verified knowledge. Thus, knowledge and experience (not faith, or intuition) were the basis of Ge Hong's beliefs in the immortals and in the Daoist methods of the attainment of their exalted state.

Nevertheless, it is obvious that BPZNP is full of the information about magical and supernatural events which are for the external observer quite identical with the contents of the beliefs of the Ge Hong's opponents. But for Ge Hong himself they are very different: for him the Daoist beliefs, the ardent proponent of which he was, had a scientific and positive nature based on the experimental data and positive knowledge of the sages (being of the same kind as the data of medicine, etc.), and the beliefs of his opponents were devoid of such basis, being superstitious and ignorant. It is possible to note that there were two kinds of Ge Hong's opponents and interlocutors: the representatives of the so called Confucian rationalism and the "superstitious" followers of the folk religious cults. Certainly, Confucians were rationalistic, but their rationalism was limited with the scholastic analysis of their scriptural authorities and the field of the investigations of nature was absolutely alien to them. In this field their rationalism represented only manifestation of the common sense without any special approach. They were ignorant of the significance of experience and the Daoist alchemy and another "arts" of those kind were for them only the

examples of the empty and useless practices. Therefore, it can be said that the experiential skepticism of Ge Hong was of another nature than the so called Confucian rationalism. The beliefs of the common people were also alien to his approach as fruits of faith and ignorance. In this case there appears a problem of the criteria used by Ge Hong for the distinguishing of the real knowledge from the superstitious beliefs of the profanes.

It is substantial for Ge Hong to have authoritative sources of information recognized by the Daoist tradition (the knowledge of the lineage of the holders of the text is also important). Such sources are called by Ge Hong "The classics of immortals" (xian jing). From the autobiography of Ge Hong and the 19th chapter of BPZNP it is known that such texts were rarities and the Daoists spent much time and energy to obtain them. Ge Hong himself traveled to the North to seek these classics but failed. It is known that sometimes he protested against the high authority of one or another classic on the basis of its non authenticity. Thus, in chapter 4th of BPZNP he speaks about the popularity of "The classic of the mechanism of Dao" (Dao ji jing) which was considered by many Daoist to be the work of the legendary disciple of Lao-zi, Yin Xi. It was dedicated to the practice of the "regulation of the pneumata" (xing qi) and had no information about the great elixirs of the Daoist alchemy. Ge Hong rejected this text as the contemporary book written by general Wang Tu and only falsely attributed to the sage of antiquity.

Not only the origin in the Daoist classics was the testimony of the validity of the information about the immortals and immortality for Ge Hong. He also evaluated greatly the witnesses of the Chinese authoritative texts of the Confucian and historiographical tradition. The notes of such great historians as Ban Gu and Sima Qian about the techniques of immortality and the magical activities of the Daoist sages were of the great importance for Ge Hong. He definitely prefers Sima Qian to Ban Gu because of his Daoist sympathies completely alien to the author of "Han shu". He even severely criticizes Ban Gu for his orthodox Confucian approach to the Daoist doctrine in which Ge Hong recognizes the ignorance of the "common people" (su ren; shi ren). Nevertheless he does not lose the opportunity to cite "The Han History" if its materials support Ge Hong's point of view.

It can be said that Ge Hong recognizes the following criteria of the validity of the beliefs and different kinds of opinions related to the subjects of science and religion: 1. The experience; 2. The testimonies of the Daoist classics and of the well known and highly estimated by the Chinese tradition non-Daoist texts. The practices and beliefs which had no such scriptural support (as in the case of the folk beliefs and cults) were rejected by Ge Hong as superstitious and excessive. Thus, Ge Hong tries to represent his techniques of immortality and his alchemical and occult ideas as an integral part of the "great tradition" of the Chinese culture. For him they are not only equal to the ideas of the Confucian sages but even higher and more exalted than the Confucian doctrines (according to Ge Hong's position Confucianism is the branch and Daoism is its root).

It is rather clear that Ge Hong greatly evaluates experience and laboratory alchemical operations. But these operations as such have direct relations to magic and ritual behaviour. It is impossible to divide technical, magical and ritualistic aspects of the scientific approaches of Ge Hong. He denies the idea of the automatic, or mechanical effect of the elixirs, combining the technical and chemical procedures with fasting, prayers and purification. The passages from the 4th chapter of BPZNP are extremely eloquent on this point:

"First of all, it is impossible to permit the unbelieving ordinary people to laugh at the elixirs and blaspheme them. Otherwise there will be no success. Master Zheng (i.e. Zheng Yin) told that the preparation of this great elixir must be followed by the sacrifices. The sacrifices must be served to the Great Unity, to Primordial Lady - Yuan-jun, to Lao-jun and the Mysterious Maiden. These divinities will come to observe the activities of the adept. If the person who prepares the drugs did not leave the mundane life for hermitage and solicitude giving an opportunity for the profanes to obtain the Daoist classics or to observe the process of the alchemical work then the spirits execute the alchemist. If he does not follow the restrictions of the Daoist classics permitting the evil doers to blaspheme the Dao, then the spirits can not help such a person. Then the malevolent pneuma will enter the substance of the drug and it can not be completed".

Thus, it can be said that practical character of Ge Hong's alchemy does not prevent him from the declaration of highly ritualized nature of the alchemical doings. Therefore, it bears remarkable (to the mind of a contemporary Westerner, of course) contradiction between science and magic. And this magic permeates the very core of Ge Hong's understanding of alchemy and medicine. But this magic is of quite another nature than the superstitious beliefs of the common people: it has its roots in the Daoist stratum of the great tradition of the Chinese culture being to Ge Hong's mind supported by the experience of the sages of old who transmitted their knowledge and methods to the contemporary Daoists through the unbreakable lineage from one master to another. Moreover, this experience of the ancient sages must not be only a subject of the so called "blind faith": it can be verified by the alchemist through his own laboratory doings. Ge Hong does not admire the antiquity as such. Like ancient Legalists and his predecessor in the field of skepticism and empiricism Wang Chong, Ge Hong looks at the antiquity like on the trace of a giant: the giant has gone away and his trace is not he himself. Therefore, the ancient witnesses for Ge Hong have their value only within the frame of the Daoist experimental approach. If Ge Hong was only a mystic it could

be waited for his interest in the intuitive insights into the hidden nature of the reality underlying the transitory phenomena. But we can not find such an interest. The passages dedicated to the meditative practices for metaphysical understanding are very rare in BPZNP. The only exception is the beginning of the 18th chapter of this work (*Di zhen*) dedicated to the contemplation of the True One (*zhen yi*) which is the manifestation of the Mysterious Dao (*xuan*) in the things and in the physiological structures of the Daoist "subtle body" ("the fields of cinnabar", *dantian*). But even this passage relates mostly to the practices of the "preservation of the One" (*shou yi*) and not to the insight type meditations. The aids of these kind of contemplation are protection from the enemies and illness, the obtaining of super powers throw multiplication of the body, etc.

The metaphysical side of the work of Ge Hong is rather weak. The first chapter of BPZNP (*Chang xuan*) represents by itself a replica to the opening chapter of "Huainan-zi" ; its stylistics, vocabulary and images have their origin just in that great compendium of Liu An and his clients (*ke*). The first passages in the 9th chapter (*Dao yi*) also are not the fruits of independent metaphysical thinking being the poetical reproduction of the common places of the Daoist descriptions of the highest principle of the Way. The practical sides of Daoism (the preparation of the great elixir of immortality and supporting methods) and corresponding to them the doctrines of the immortals - *xian* are the principle subjects of Ge Hong's interests which directly correlate to his scientific and experiential approaches. To my mind, Ge Hong was not a mystic or a seeker of intuitive insights but an investigator, researcher of nature with pragmatic attitude (the obtaining of physical immortality), and experimental and skeptical thinker. The abundance of magic in his writings was a result of an essential character of the traditional science which included in itself magic and magical attitudes (e.g. the idea of the universal sympathies, Chinese "tong lei") not only in China but throughout the world until the time of Newton, Galileo Galilei and Descartes.

External and Internal in Ge Hong's Alchemy

by Evgueni A. Tortchinov - St. Petersburg State University, Russia

External and Internal in Ge Hong's Alchemy

by Evgueni A. Tortchinov

St. Petersburg State University, Russia)

The problem of shift from external alchemy (*wai dan*) to internal alchemy (*nei dan*) is one of the most important for understanding of the history of Daoism as well as for elucidation of some crucial questions of the history of science in China. Briefly speaking it can be summarized that the practices of the inner alchemy (such as visualization, breathing control, different types of contemplation, etc.) much older than the techniques of the laboratory alchemy (and moreover, they compose the very core of the mainstream of the Daoist practical methods and techniques). Nevertheless, those techniques and methods obtained their systematic unity of a coherent whole only borrowing the technical language, terminology and theoretical background of the external alchemy.

The Six Dynasties (*Liu chao*) period is of extreme importance here. First of all, it was a time of the maturity of the external alchemy when it flourished among the Daoists of all branches and trends. Secondly, in this epoch there appeared the first signs of the beginning of the formation of the inner alchemical tradition in the midst of the laboratory alchemy of *wai dan*.

This aim of this paper is to present some evidences of the process of transition from the external to internal alchemy on the materials of *Ge Hong's "Baopuzi nei pian"*. It is interesting that this classical and well known work is mostly treated as purely dedicated to the external alchemy. It is certainly true but only to some extent. And it is moreover interesting and demonstrative that even in such practical and experience oriented work as *Baopuzi nei pian* (henceforth, BPZNP) the sprouts of the inner alchemical attitudes and approaches found their way of expression. The most interesting for our purpose part of BPZNP is, certainly, its Chapter 18 *Di zhen*, or "Earthly Truth". The contents of this chapter may be summarized as following.

1. Metaphysics of the *Dao*. *Dao* (the Way as the first cosmological and / or ontological principle) was described here not only as *Xuan yi*, the hidden and unrevealed substance (analogical functionally to *Deus Absconditus* of the theistic apophatic mysticism) but also as the self revealing principle of *Zhen yi*, immanent to the very nature of the given empirically existing things. If the Hidden Mysterious Dao has no form, or image, the manifested Dao of the True One has image of its own. It can be supposed (though Ge Hong does not write it implicitly) that signs of the presence of the True One can be found in every thing and being as "signatures" of Dao (probably, the specific presence of the True One in some substances making them to be spiritualized, *ling*, or *shen*; this spirituality in its

turn makes such substances to be suitable for the preparing of different elixirs. Briefly speaking, it is but a kind of especially subtle *pneuma*, *qi*.

2. Paraphysiology. Nevertheless, Ge Hong speaks in details about the manifestation of the True One within the human body where the mystical signatures of *Dao* are cinnabar fields (*dan tian*). Probably, Ge Hong is the first writer speaking about three cinnabar fields (earlier texts mentioned only one *dan tian*, the centre in the lowest part of abdomen, beneath the navel). Ge Hong describes cinnabar fields in metaphoric language. Here Ge Hong uses the term *shou yi* (literally: "preservation of the One") which was the earliest designation of different Daoist meditative and contemplative practices directly connected with the background of the inner alchemy (the practices of *shou yi* are rather well known from such comparatively early texts as the Classic of the Great Equanimity *Taipingjing*).

3. Ge Hong enumerates the following aims of the *shou yi* practices: protection from demoniac attacks and influences, protection from armed enemies, protection from illness and infections. Therefore, it can be supposed that the function of these practices is purely protective. But some passages from chapter 18 of BPZNP relate the contemplative techniques of the Preservation of the One to the leading theme of Ge Hong's discourse (i.e., obtaining of longevity and immortality). For example:

"The only method of the prolongation of life and attainment of the state of immortal is but the way of Gold and Cinnabar; the only method to preserve one's body and to cut off the evil influences is [contemplation] of the True One. Therefore the ancients extremely seriously treated such affairs."

This passage describes the *shou yi* practices as complimentary to the "Great Work" of the way of the external alchemy.

Some fragments of the second part of this chapter are even more interesting not only by their contents but by their composition and structure as well.

Semantical beginning of this part of the examined chapter is Ge Hong's statement regarding the metaphysical relations between the manifested *Dao* of the True One and the hidden *Dao* of the Mysterious, or the Mysterious One (*xuan yi*). Ge Hong proclaims the equal importance of purely meditative practices connected with the realization of the Mysterious One (described in the opening chapter of BPZNP) and inner magic of the True One. Nevertheless, he states that the True One practices are simpler than the Mysterious One practices. Moreover, the preservation of the True One (*shou zhen yi*) is the most simple way to preserve, or keep the Mysterious One as well because of their ontological unity (the manifested *Dao* is an "eye" through which the hidden *Dao* "contemplates" the Universe). The practices of the preservation of the One are the methods of obtaining different supernatural powers (such as multiplication of the bodily form or contemplation of the *hun-po* souls within one's body).

The following passage seems as being irrelevant to the themes of the preceding section. Here Ge Hong in rather eloquent manner speaks about the art of alchemy (making the Great Medicine *da yao* or Golden Cinnabar *jin dan*) as hard work demanding great efforts and laborious behaviour. But in reality it is but introduction to a new evaluation of the practices of preservation of the One: the alchemical work leading to immortality is hard, it takes plenty of time to fulfil it. Therefore the adept must do his best to keep his body in a good health being protected against sickness as well as against demoniac attacks and malevolent influences of the evil spirits and ghosts. Here Ge Hong mentions the *shou yi* practices together with the contemplation of the inner spirits of the body (*si shen*) which also must protect body against all destructive forces.

Next theme of chapter 18 is the parallel between human body and state. In the first part of the chapter Ge Hong already gave a highly symbolical description of the human body with its subtle energetic centres (here the body obtained an image of the sacred mount of Kunlun with its palaces and chambers of immortals; astral imaginary of constellations was also important for this passage). At the concluding part of the chapter Ge Hong simply in a rather traditional way gives analogies between parts of the body and functions of the state. His conclusion: to master one's own body is the same as to master the state; *pneumata* (*qi*) of the body is the same as common people (*min*) in the state. The Daoist practitioner must nourish the *pneumata* like lord of the state who must take care of his subjects.

Here Ge Hong states that the presence of the True One in the body as a result of the cultivation of *pneuma* gives piece and stability to "three and seven", that is souls of *hun* and *po*. It will lead to the prolongation of life (*nian ming yan*) and the elimination of all evil (*bai hai que*). The *shou yi* practices are extremely helpful (even in a greater degree than the amulets and charms described in chapter 17 of BPZNP) for exorcisms in the wilderness of remote mountains and forests where the Daoists prefer to cultivate their alchemical skill.

Therefore, it can be said that Ge Hong evaluates the inner practices of *shou yi* as having only subsidiary character. They are necessary for providing the practitioner of external alchemy (the principal method) with safety and ease. Nevertheless, they are necessary for the alchemical adept, and only fools are able to ignore them: "If only three gates of four are locked, the robbers can enter the building. And what can be done if all four gates are opened!" It is substantial that Ge Hong looks for a kind of harmony between external and internal methods of the Daoist

cultivation. The leading role of the external methods still exists but the function of the inner cultivation becomes a very important, too.

Here it looks reasonable to examine the elements of the inner cultivation within the frames of the external laboratory alchemy as such.

It is impossible to divide technical, magical and ritualistic aspects of the alchemical approaches of Ge Hong. He denies the idea of the automatic, or mechanical effect of the elixirs, combining the technical and chemical procedures with fasting, prayers and purification (chapter 4 *jin dan pian*). Everywhere in BPZNP Ge Hong stresses the importance of such practices as gymnastics (*dao yin*), control over pneumata (*xing qi*) and sexual techniques (*fang zhong zhi shu*) all of which were closely related to the formation of the system of inner alchemy. Certainly, Ge Hong was sure that all those methods could not lead the adept to his final goal, that is, immortality but nevertheless, he believed that all of them were extremely valuable, helpful and even necessary as subsidiary and additional means to prolong adept's life or to protect him from evil and harmful influences.

In another words, Ge Hong was a master of external alchemy which was thought of him to be the highest way to immortality but 1) this external alchemy included in itself some elements of the inner doing (purifications, sacral bathing, fasting, prayer, meditation, etc.) and 2) he believed in the great efficacy of the inner practices as subsidiary means of macrobiotic and protective character.

Besides chapter 18 the term *shou yi* is occurred two times in chapters 3 and 5 of BPZNP.

The first case (chapter 3) is a verse from unknown classic of immortals (*xian jing*): "Those who eat medicines and keep / preserve the One (*shou yi*) can obtain the longevity of Heaven; those who practice 'returning of semen' (*huan jing*) and 'embryonic breath' (*tai xi*) can prolong their life making it unlimited (*wu ji*)."

The second case (chapter 5) is the following: "The cause of death is a deficiency: old age, harm derived from illness or inner venoms or the influences of the bad pneuma or cold and wind. Because of this there exist means and methods of gymnastics, control over pneumata, returning of semen to nourish the brain, diet regulations as well as principles of rest and action, eating of the medicines, contemplation of spirits (*si shen*) and preservation of the One..."

It is obvious that here *shou yi* is mentioned in the list of other inner practices of subsidiary kind and palliative importance however useful and effective they are. Therefore, it can be said that BPZNP has a room for the inner practices but all of them are allowed to play only secondary roles.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that Ge Hong's treatise is one of the earliest examples of the beginning of the shift from purely external to combined and even purely internal alchemy. In more radical terms, it is possible to suppose that the element of the inner practices was included in the laboratory alchemy from its very beginning but the religious and cultural situation of the Six Dynasties period produced some important conditions for actualization of the hidden internal elements, their development and gradual formation of the system known to us as the "inner alchemy" (*nei dan*). And Ge Hong's classic stands at the beginning of this process which became of crucial importance for the subsequent history of the Daoist religion.

Alchemy in Finland

by Heikki Lehtosaari

Some kings of Sweden (Gustaf III in particular) had their own alchemists, or at least they supported people like Palmstruch and Gumpertz to find the stone. Also we had our only known alchemists during the Swedish regime.

I. Nordenberg

The first of our two was Magnus Otto Nordenberg (1705-1756), who went to Europe for three years to study the sawmill industry in the mid 1720's. During his visit to Leyden he had Boerhaave teach him some of his *Arcana Chemica*.

After he returned, Nordenberg started (at least from 1735 on) to investigate the origin of the materia. There are some rare manuscripts which state this fact.

One of them is called: "The road to Urim and Thummin, rediscovered on the basis of certain testimony from the Holy Bible of true natural science, happily rediscovered in the land of Finland, or: How the road to Urim was happily rediscovered, and how the light from gold, in gold and through gold, is gained, in short as possible told by a friend of truth".

Nordenberg's Urim seems to be a form of the Lapis Philosophorum, purified and refined essence of gold, that has the power to reproduce gold and to give health and strength of living and so forth.

The work itself, he explains more or less in this manner:

With tender fire drive the coarsest membranes to the outer circle of gold, where they first appear in black, then in snow white form, finally transferring into transparent glass. With the influence of fire, the gold delivers more and more "terrestricteet", the earthly darkness, that settles on the inside of the shell of glass and increases the strength of this transparent substance.

The gold itself becomes purer and purer, undergoing several shades of colours, from black to white and from there to red.

But the work is not finished by one cooking; it needs several evolutions, until there finally remains "a grease that continuously glows in the dark, shaped like a round swelling, called Urim".

The procedure also needs an understanding enlightened by God "for the oneness of the trinity, that is met in a perfect form in all the sunlike substance and in every earthly one more or less fulfilled".

This Urim is the first seed of the material light, but its final conclusion is Thummin, "In gloriousness much more prominent than the sun itself".

The making of Thummin seems to be made of a diamond - according to Nordenberg - but even he himself admits that he hasn't quite discovered how it is done for sure.

It appears that none of Nordenberg's works were ever published.

II. Nordenskiöld.

August Nordenskiöld was born in the estate of Eriknaes in Sipoo, near Helsinki the 6th of February 1754. He studied in the capitol city of those days, Turku. He majored in chemistry and mineralogy. Professor P. A. Gadd was his tutor, and the young student was strongly defending his professorial thesis "Om tennets och dess malmers beskaffenhet", (that involves tin and pewter and making of ores).

After that he studied in Stockholm, Sweden and worked, for example, in the mountain college there. But already his main interest had turned to alchemy, which led him to join the Swedenborg Society. This was no surprise to the family, because his brother, Kaarle Fredrik Jr. was also interested in mystical studies, as was their father, Colonel Kaarle Fredrik Nordenskiöld to some degree. In fact his uncle was none other than M. O. Nordenberg, who encouraged him in his alchemical examinations (and this uncle also links him to Boerhaavian tradition!).

August had a dream of finding the way to make as much gold as one wished and, by finding the Lapis, to end the slavery of money and end poverty and evil, perhaps even disease and death and "the Congregation of New Jerusalem" would come true in its purity.

In 1779 the King Gustaf III granted a scholarship for him to travel to London in order to study alchemy. There he was said to have published a work called: "A plain system of Alchemy", but it is not to be found in Finland today. Perhaps the Swedenborgians in London have a hint of the whereabouts of the manuscript.

After his returning to Stockholm he formed an alchemical laboratory in Drottningholm with the greatest secrecy. In 1782 he was appointed to be the director of the mining industry ("Bergshauptman") in Finland, but I have found no proof of him working as such. On the contrary; he was even in 1784 writing a lot to a Swedenborgian "Aftonbladet"- paper in Stockholm.

Yet in 1785 we find him back in Finland - establishing a laboratory in Uusikaupunki. By that time there is a lot of evidence of him working with alchemy day and night. And from that period are also my favourite pieces of his works (never officially published).

In a letter dated the 11th of January 1787 he actually uses the terminology of the Finnish sauna, when he describes the work:

"...At eleven a clock we warmed the bathhouse (stove) and at one the children will start bathing, all eight of them ... the proportion is six hours in the bath and eighteen in sweating..."

By that time he was also writing publications on alchemy, like "Aldeles Fullständigt Begrep om den Enda och Sanna Alchemiska Processen" (The very true process of alchemy), in which he explains a work of 10-15 months - by solution and coagulation - to obtain the all powerful, curing and goldmaking Stone of the Wise (old Swedish: de Vises Sten, Finnish: Viisasten Kivi); Lapis Philosophorum.

After some misfortunes and accidents he returned to Drottningholm in 1787, this time under the supervision of Count Munck. Count Munck was not very happy with Nordenskiöld, who was already in great debt, so he left Stockholm in 1789 to travel to England, France and Denmark. To my knowledge he was still paid by the kingdom.

During these travels he became interested in forming a sort of "Utopia" in Africa. His marriage to Anna Charlotta Ekholm in 1779 was never a great success; on top of the financial conditions - his wife never shared his keen love of alchemy.

August died the 10th of December in 1792 in Freetown in Sierra Leone, Africa.

There is a statue by Jussi Vikanen in the park of Vallimaeki in Uusikaupunki, showing the approximate location of the workshop of "August Nordenskiöld, the Finnish maker of gold".

'Ethereal Chemicals': Alchemy and the Romantic Imagination

Maureen B. Roberts

The introspective, radically symbolic and mythic language of hermetic philosophy of all ages, as well as its affirmation of a meaningful correspondence between mind and Nature, puts it - alongside Romanticism and the Platonic tradition - within a mode of thought and perception which draws its creative inspiration from a perennial substratum of innate archetypal ideas. Western alchemy, which flourished in Europe through to the end of the Renaissance, gradually faded into obscurity during the eighteenth century as a result of its incompatibility with the hypostasis of reason that characterised the spirit of "enlightenment." Romanticism, then, as a metarational reaction to empiricism, entails a reconnection to the archetypal realm and a corresponding reactivation of alchemical themes and symbols.

It was through understanding the significance of alchemical symbolism that Jung came to formulate his central concept of individuation. In two of his most important works, *Psychology and Alchemy* and *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, Jung turned his attention almost exclusively to the study of the psychology of alchemy. In the alchemical search for the Philosophers' Stone Jung saw a direct parallel to the quest for the divine inner centre of the self. As base metals are gradually transmuted into gold, the ultimate unity and perfection, so unconscious processes manifesting themselves as archetypal images and symbols are transformed into the psychological equivalent of gold or the Stone, the undivided self. Thus the symbolism of the alchemical process represents a centralising and unifying instinct which culminates in the production of the self as a new centre of totality. (1)

There is certainly evidence in alchemical literature that the alchemists were aware of the ultimately psychic nature of their procedures, as is evidenced by the sixteenth century Paracelsist Gerhard Dorn's injunction to: "Transform yourselves into living philosophical Stones!" (2) Hermes Trismegistus, the semi-mythical founder of Near-Eastern and Western alchemy, proclaims from the start that the alchemical "work is with you and amongst you; in that it is to be found within you and is enduring." (3) Mircea Eliade similarly agrees that the alchemists were seeking their own transmutation through the perfection of their materials. (4)

The union of self and Nature is fundamental to both the alchemical and Romantic imaginative quests. The Renaissance alchemist Paracelsus - one of

Blake's mentors - anticipated the Romantic correspondence between objective and subjective reality: "Everything external in nature points to something internal," (5) he writes, therein encapsulating the philosophical basis of alchemical practice - the essential correspondence between the synthetic principles of Nature and the inner impulse toward integration and wholeness. Alchemy is grounded in Nature such that Nature and human nature are to be "conjoined, brought together, and estimated one by the other." (6) The alchemist "brings forth what is latent in Nature" such that alchemy is "the true and sublime Art of Nature herself." (7) The ultimate goal of the alchemical process, the Philosophers' Stone, as an anticipated totality represents the paradoxical harmony of contradictory forces resolved into the uniting symbol.

The quest for unity or wholeness central to both alchemy and Romanticism thus replaces the moralism of a redemption grounded in reasoned theological belief systems. In Romanticism and alchemy redemption is, in other words, displaced from the rational by a reassertion of an innate capacity to redeem oneself through the attainment of wholeness. This averment of self-perfection is, then, an instance of the "de-moralisation" of the religious quest, which characterises the subjection of the self to the morally neutral archetypal realm.

The goal of the alchemical procedure is healing self-knowledge; (8) the extracted quintessence, equated with gold and the Stone as the final principle of truth, is a panacea. (9) Through the therapeutic power of alchemy wholeness is attained, the dissociation between the opposites healed, and the integration of the personality correspondingly achieved. (10) This redemptive aspect of alchemy is stressed by Paracelsus, who as a physician recognises the basic cause of disease to be a disturbance in the equilibrium of forces which exist as pairs of opposites. (11) One is reminded here of the medieval designation of "dis-ease" or imbalance as "passion" - an apt term in consideration of the Romantic, sometimes anguished self-awareness of the tension between the opposites. The origin of the word "spagyric," referring to the medicine derived from alchemy, appropriately derives from the Greek words for "divide" and "unite," reflecting the basic alchemical function of the imaginative self. (12)

Since the internal is reflected in the external of Nature, the alchemists' modification of matter is the attempted perfecting of Nature as well as the self. As it is for the Romantic poets, Nature to the alchemists is hierophantic, being not merely "alive," but also possessing a sacred dimension extractable as the "subtle" aspect of its material reality. The redemptive process as a perfecting power thus operates in Romanticism on two levels: as the

imaginative extraction of the divine dimension of the self and Nature, and through the cathartic potential of suffering, which moves passionately away from dis-ease toward a state of harmony in which individual and universal wholeness is realised.

In accord with the phylogenic law of consciousness through which unconscious projections are progressively withdrawn, Romanticism represents an evolutionary advance in that the projective aspect of alchemy is relatively absent. Instead of being outwardly projected onto matter, the alchemical archetypes are experienced in Romanticism *within the imagination*. Thus although the associated patterns and symbols remain similar, they are experienced with an alteration of consciousness by being more consciously related to the individual self.

Of primary significance in medieval alchemical philosophy is the imagination, which is understood as the "real and literal power to create images," as opposed to "phantasia," which merely plays with its objects. The imagination, in contrast, is to "be guided wholly by nature," and as an "authentic feat of . . . ideation," aims not to spin "groundless fantasies," but rather to "grasp the inner facts and portray them in images true to their nature." Furthermore, the imagination is integral to the formation of the Philosophers' Stone. (13)

If we compare Coleridge's view of the imagination with its original alchemical function the correspondence is striking. In *Biographia Literaria* Coleridge distinguishes between the passively perceptive "primary" imagination, and the creatively active, or "secondary" poetic imagination, which: "dissolves, diffuses, and dissipates, in order to recreate; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify." (14) The distinction which Coleridge goes on to make between the creative imagination and "fancy," which "has no other counters to play with, but fixities and definitives," is similar to that made between the imagination and "phantasia" of the medieval alchemists. Clearly "fancy," in that it is "modified by that empirical phenomenon of the will," operates solely within the realm of consciousness, which is free only to select, but cannot know the paradoxical *invenire* - the creative discovery of the transformation archetypes which are activated through the confrontation of conscious and unconscious. Coleridge therefore describes the secondary imagination as "co-existing with the conscious will"; clearly he does not equate it with consciousness. In the unconscious, opposites exist in an identified state. The imagination symbolically images the contents of the unconscious in that, as Coleridge puts it: "Symbols give rise to forgotten truths about my inner nature." (15) The symbolic language of the

imagination thus arises from its transconscious basis which gives rise to an image as a concretely perceptible expression of an inner experience. The alchemical procedure as symbolic of the process of psychic integration is neatly summed up by the phrase which echoes Coleridge's definition: *solve et coagula*, "dissolve and coagulate." (16) Through the ongoing process of the separation and synthesis of opposites the imagination idealises and unifies the opposites into the ultimate symbol of the self, the Stone, which surfaces in Romantic poetry in numerous guises, including the phoenix, gold, diamond orb, square stone and various four-fold symbols of unity. The alchemical procedure was therefore in Jung's words "a work of reconciliation between apparently incompatible opposites," (17) a statement which complements Coleridge's definition of the poetic imagination. Here the role of the alchemist as mediator of the transformation of matter is transposed into that of the poet, who:

diffuses a tone, and spirit of unity, that blends, and (as it were) *fuses*, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power, to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination. This power, first put in action by the will and understanding . . . reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant properties. . . . (18)

Note again how Coleridge stresses the relative autonomy of the synthetic process which, though integrated into consciousness through the will, remains ultimately self-moved through the innate drive toward wholeness. The union of opposites is, as Jung never tires of stressing, a process transcending consciousness, (19) the pairs of opposites constituting the phenomenology of the self, the paradoxical totality of the psyche. The imagination in both Romanticism and alchemy represents transformation processes symbolically: just as the Stone unites the opposites, so through the imagination the self assimilates the conceptual dualities of experience. Alchemy is thus, in Yeats' words, "the gradual distillation of the contents of the soul. . . ." (20)

In the same way as the alchemists understood the imagination to be "guided wholly by nature," so the Romantic poet "subordinates art to nature" in that the archetypes activated through the creative imagination embody instincts common to both Nature and mind. With this basic intuition Keats declares, therefore, that "if Poetry comes not as naturally as the Leaves to a tree it had better not come at all." (21) Significantly, Coleridge follows his last mentioned definition of the imagination with the overtly alchemical poem of John Davies, quoted (in part) earlier. The opening stanza, appropriated by Coleridge to the poetic imagination, stresses a transforming "sublimation,"

which as an integral aspect of synthesis is necessary in order to achieve the paradoxical union of irreconcilables:

Doubtless this could not be, but that she turns
Bodies to spirit by sublimation strange,
As fire converts to fire the things it burns,
As we our food into our nature change.

Transformation into spirit, the "sublimation" of the body, chemically corresponds to evaporation, which psychologically corresponds to the integration of an unconscious content, (22) a principle which sheds some light on the alchemical significance of Keats' emphasis upon the intensity of the creative process. In a letter written in December, 1817, shortly after the completion of *Endymion*, Keats declares that the "excellence of every Art is its intensity, capable of making all disagreeables evaporate, from their being in close relationship with Beauty & Truth." (23) "Disagreeables," then, correspond to unpleasant, dark, or impure alchemical states which through the unifying perception generated by the holism of great art are reconciled in a unity that to Keats is synonymous with Beauty and Truth.

It is noteworthy that during the writing of *Endymion* Keats makes his most alchemistic statements concerning the metamorphic potential of the imagination. In a letter of May, 1817, while Keats was working on Book One, he writes to his friend Benjamin Haydon concerning "looking upon the Sun the Moon the Stars, the Earth and its contents as materials to form greater things - that is to say ethereal things. . . ." (24) Nature thus becomes - as for the alchemists - the raw material or primal substance from which the ethereal, or quintessential, is extracted. Indeed, symbolic synonyms for the alchemical primal substance or *materia prima* include the moon, the earth, and its elemental constituents. (25)

In a letter of November, 1817, before completing the first draft of *Endymion*, Keats displays a remarkably intuitive understanding of the equivalence of the creative self to its symbolic parallel, the Philosophers' Stone. He writes to Benjamin Bailey "of one thing that has pressed upon me lately . . . and that is this truth - Men of Genius are great as certain ethereal Chemicals operating on the Mass of neutral Intellect - but they have not any individuality, any determined Character." (26) Here Keats' understanding extends beyond the identity of the creative genius with the "ethereal Chemical" of the Stone, for he also acknowledges the transforming ability of the ethereal, that is, the notion that it is, as is the paradoxical self, both the goal and mediator of the alchemical process. (27) If we combine the significance of this passage with that of the former letter this insight

becomes clearer: the "ethereal Chemical" of the self creates the "ethereal things" which arise from the transformation of both self and Nature. The primal alchemical substance accordingly becomes in the second letter the "Mass of neutral Intellect" in place of natural phenomena. Furthermore, Keats' understanding of the "poetical Character" as having no individuality or determined character corresponds to the Stone as unable to be limited to any one form or substance. (28) Since as the self it is the union of opposites *par excellence*, it can only be described in paradoxical terms. It is thus - as is the Neoplatonic One - everything and nothing; it has no stable identity, it is the Stone of "invisibility" as well as the ultimate identity - the Stone "that is no stone" in the same way as Keats' self is simultaneously no self. (29) Keats' alchemical intuitions persist in the following year. In the midst of a walking tour in June, a few months after his final revision of *Endymion*, the poet, inspired by magnificent scenery writes to his brother Tom: "I shall learn poetry here . . . for the abstract endeavour of being able to add a mite to that mass of beauty which is harvested from these grand materials by the finest spirits, and put into ethereal existence for the relish of one's fellows." (30) Here the etherealising ability of the poet resides in the imaginative transmutation of temporal beauty into the quintessential nature of perfected art.

Parallel alchemistic insights occur through Shelley and Wordsworth. Wordsworth affirms the autonomous instinct to unify and harmonise when in *The Prelude* he states:

Dust as we are, the immortal spirit grows
Like harmony in music; there is a dark
Inscrutable workmanship that reconciles
Discordant elements, makes them cling together
In one society. (31)

This spontaneous tendency is in principle an introjection of the alchemical process, through which the *prima materia* is metaphorically identified with the "dust" of human selfhood and the final unity of the Stone becomes the reconciliation of the discordant diversity of human experience. Here, too, the elemental synthesis into unity is implied.

Shelley, like Coleridge, sees the imagination as a harmonising power distinct from reason, operative within, and alchemical in its functional mode. In *A Defence of Poetry* Shelley describes the imagination as "mind acting upon . . . thoughts so as to colour them with its own light, and composing them, *as from elements*, other thoughts. . . . The one is . . . the principle of synthesis, and has for its objects those *forms which are common to universal nature*

and existence itself." (32) In Shelley's complex metaphor the entire imaginative process is internalised such that the mind acts alchemically not upon externals, but upon thoughts. Shelley connects through analogy the alchemical synthesis of the elements with its archetypal foundation in the universal "forms" of mind and Nature.

The Romantic correlation between "beauty" and "harmony," which parallels the relationship between the self as both a unity and synthesis of opposites, simultaneously corresponds with the Neoplatonic equating of the One with Beauty. The seemingly contradictory views that symmetry is the cause of Beauty - which Plato repeatedly infers in *The Republic* - and Plotinus' view that Beauty brings about symmetry are in fact complementary. (33) The self as process both brings about harmony and is, as hypothetical ideal, its ultimate goal since it is both the means and the end of the synthetic ascent to the One of Beauty. Beauty is therefore a Romantic ideal of unity in so far as it incorporates a teleological view of the imagination and the self. (34)

The central maxim of the alchemists is that art is "the imitation of nature in her mode of operation." (35) To Coleridge, *polarity* as a dynamic synthesis of opposites is a basic natural law. For while logical opposites are contradictory, polar opposites generate each other since, as Owen Barfield notes, each pole is imaginatively implied in the other. (36) The dynamic polarity of mind and Nature as the essence of the ascent to unity in alchemy, Romanticism, and individuation was probably first formulated as a reconciliation theory by Heraclitus. His poetical affirmation of unity ("all things are one") mirrors Coleridge's view wherein the opposites coexist as a unity and the self is coextensive with Nature in general. (37) Heraclitus' vision of unity in which all opposing principles are reconciled, portrays human experience as the interaction between such opposites as life and death, sleep and waking, mortality and immortality, a dialectic which unfolds the "hidden harmony" that reconciles opposed states within the self and in Nature. (38) This "hidden harmony" is the equivalent of Wordsworth's "dark/Inscrutable workmanship" and Coleridge's synthetic imagination, which direct the immanent sense of movement in Romantic poetry. The Romantic visionary dream, always in the future, is Beauty - the ultimate unity which is sporadically anticipated through holistic symbols of the ideal One.

In Plato's *Dialogues* Truth as Beauty is likewise a *coincidentia oppositorum*, which as the God archetype is symbolically identical to the archetype of the self. For as the self is the "centre and circumference" of the psyche, so, according to St Bonaventure, is God, whose "centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere." (39) Coleridge intuitively recognises the

experiential equivalence of God and self through writing in his marginalia to Boehme's *Aurora* that "in the Deity is an absolute Synthesis of opposites."

(40)

Shelley connects the "beautiful and the good" as the poetical principle of order with poetry itself as the "centre and circumference" of knowledge. (41)

The self, in other words, can be distinguished conceptually but not experientially from God. (42) Symbolically it represents the alchemical ideal and the Romantic quest for unity. Furthermore, Shelley goes on to claim that poetry

subdues to union . . . all irreconcilable things. It transmutes all that it touches, and every form . . . is changed by wondrous sympathy to an incarnation of the spirit which it breathes; its secret alchemy turns to potable gold the poisonous waters which flow from death through life; it . . . lays bare the naked and sleeping beauty, which is the spirit of its forms. (43)

This "sleeping beauty," the latent quintessential, is the artistic equivalent of Wordsworth's "life" of things, and Keats' "ethereal" or "essence," which to Shelley is imaginatively extracted as "spirit." (44)

The contrast between the dynamic polarities of Romanticism and Heraclitus and the static conceptions characteristic of eighteenth-century empiricism underlies the distinction made by Blake and Coleridge between two kinds of opposites. Coleridge distinguishes between "contraries," which are irreconcilable, logical contradictions and "opposites" that are complementary poles tending toward union. (45) Confusingly, Blake employs the term "contraries" as similar to Coleridge's opposites, while his "negations" parallel Coleridge's contraries. Blake's understanding of the complementarity of dynamic poles underscores the amorality of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

At the opening of Book Two of *Milton* Blake announces: "Contraries are Positives: A Negation is not a Contrary." Blake's "Beulah," which represents preconscious innocence, is therefore "a place where Contrarities are equally True," (46) for this is the essential condition of the unconscious. It is only when the contraries emerge into consciousness that they present themselves as an opposed dualism. (47) In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* Blake states:

Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence.

From these contraries spring what the religious call Good and Evil.
Good is the passive that obeys Reason[.] Evil is the active springing
from Energy.

Good is Heaven. Evil is Hell. (48)

Further on "Reason" is equated with the "outward circumference of Energy."
By replacing a vertical perspective of the psyche in which consciousness is
"uppermost" with a concentric perspective in which it is outermost,
"Reason" corresponds to the realm of the conscious ego from which operates
what Shelley calls in his *Defence of Poetry* the "calculating principle." (49)
The latter is an attitude of willed control of the creative process, whence
derive all rational, moral and theological ideologies. Energy, on the other
hand, is the psychic energy or "libido," whose "active" nature is grounded in
the morally neutral dynamism of the archetypes.

When the ego is severed from the energy of the unconscious, it becomes the
passive servant of reason which, as Blake points out in *The Marriage of
Heaven and Hell*, then "usurps its place & governs the unwilling." (50)

When, however, the instinctive demands of both conscious and unconscious
are given equal recognition the centre point of the personality shifts from the
ego to the self, the hypothetical midpoint between conscious and
unconscious. (51) As a result the self displaces the ego to become the centre
of consciousness and the ego is then free to function in its proper role as the
integrator of unconscious contents.

The fact that polar opposites not only interact but also generate each other is
the basis of the reversals of attitude which are conspicuous in Romantic
poetry. The catalytic potential of excess is inherent in the process of polarity,
as Jung clarifies in *Alchemical Studies* :

In accordance with the principle of compensation which runs through
the whole of nature, every psychic development, whether individual
or collective, possesses an optimum which, when exceeded, produces
an enantiadromia, that is, turns into its opposite. (52)

In manifesting this principle of enantiadromia, psychic ontogeny thus
recapitulates phylogeny, while its relation to personal intensity of feeling is
summed up in Blake's Proverb of Hell: "Excess of sorrow laughs. Excess of
joy weeps." (53)

That the entelechy of self and the teleology of process are given due regard
by the Romantic poets illustrates an aspect of Romantic balance in that the
unifying ideal is seen as immanent in the real. Alchemy itself conceals a
Platonic bias since its focus of concern is toward the production of a unity;

rather than seeking the Many in the One, the alchemical goal is the One underlying the Many. Its affinities with Romanticism and Platonism are therefore founded upon the imagination's power to unfold the vision of the One. Coleridge coined the term "esemplastic," meaning "to shape into one" to denote this property of the imagination. (54)

Western alchemy's use of the language and symbolism of Platonism renders the rhizomic connection between the two fairly obvious. Undoubtedly the most important symbol connecting alchemy, Platonism and Romanticism is the sphere. In Platonic ontology the ultimate principle of unity, the One of Beauty, is a sphere. The One corresponds to the Jungian self in that as the central principle of unity it is immanent in the archetypes yet cannot be equated with them, just as the One is immanent in the Platonic Forms yet is itself a supraordinate Form. (55) The complex of Forms or archetypes, in other words, exists in an all-pervading archetype, that of the self. The Forms in totality are thus a many in one and one in many, just as the diversity of the psyche is individuated into the One of the self. Empedocles thus affirms that everything in the state of reconciled unity "is held fast in the close obscurity of Harmonia, a rounded Sphere rejoicing in its circular stillness." (56)

The derivation of alchemy from Platonism is grounded in the idea of the soul's return to its precarnate state of wholeness. In the same way as the soul descends from Being then rises through the dialectical ascent of becoming into a reclaimed unity, so the Stone through the alchemical ascent emerges from its "imprisonment" in matter as a reconstituted One. Plotinus implies the equivalence of alchemy and Neoplatonism as recollected self-knowledge through the analogy that as gold is degraded by its immersion in the earth, so the immanent beauty of the soul is obscured through its imprisonment in matter. (57) The immanence of the Stone in the *prima materia* at the beginning of the alchemical procedure symbolises the latency of the self within the unconscious. The conscious realisation of the self as anamnesis is therefore the recovery of a knowledge that is antecedent rather than cumulative; as Plato puts it, we can learn only what we already know, but do not yet know we know. (58) Jung restates the idea in his *Letters*:

Originally we were all born out of a world of wholeness and in the first years of life are still completely contained in it. There we have all knowledge without knowing it. Later we lose it, and call it progress when we remember it again. (59)

The doctrine of anamnesis thus forms the basis of the Romantic tension between the real (as transformation) and the ideal (as unity), the eternal and the temporal. While the descent from the ideal is analytic and is expressed as

the tension of the opposites, the ascent to unity is the integration of the opposites in the uniting idea or symbol.

Yeats apprehends the symbolic significance of the sphere as a reconciliation of opposites through stating that "the ultimate reality, symbolised by the Sphere, falls into human consciousness into a series of antinomies." (60) The recurrence of spherical and its derivative domal symbolism in the poetry of Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats and Coleridge has been amply discussed in G. Wilson Knight's *The Starlit Dome* (1941). Perhaps the most memorable Romantic dome is the "pleasure-dome" of Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* - a symbol which, as Coleridge relates in the poem's preface - arose spontaneously from the unconscious in the context of a holistic vision. Significantly, Coleridge's dome is connected with "the sacred river" which runs through "caves measureless to man/Down to a sunless sea," all symbols of the collective unconscious. Furthermore the dome is associated with the synthesis of opposites:

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice! (61)

Here the dualities of above and below, light and dark, movement and stillness, heat and cold, coexist in the unity generated by the dome. The alchemical Stone, then, is predictably a sphere: the aim of alchemical individuation is the reproduction of a unity, the Original Being, who in Platonic thought was a sphere. (62) Thus the concept of the Original Being represents the goal and anticipation of wholeness. (63)

Further elucidation of the nature of the Stone is necessary to an appreciation of the significance of the quest for the feminine, which in Romantic poetry is repeatedly associated or identified with the Moon, silver, water and the emotional state of melancholia. The Stone, like the Original Sphere, is androgynous in that the masculine-feminine duality as the primary pair of opposites symbolises the union of conscious and unconscious. (64) The unconscious of the masculine psyche is feminine and is represented by the archetype of the *anima*. Masculine consciousness is alchemically equivalent to the Sun or gold, while the unconscious depicts itself as the Moon or silver. (65) The union of masculine (gold) and feminine (silver) in the production of the Stone accordingly symbolises the individuation process. Since in alchemy an initial hermaphroditic state is sublimated until it attains

the recollected hermaphroditism of the Stone, so the path of individuation leads to a higher synthesis of conscious and unconscious in the self. The Romantic quest for the feminine - predictably integral to Coleridge's hope for a "re-collection" of the dome in *Kubla Khan* - is directed toward the archetypal "sacred marriage," or *hierosgamos*, the central conjunction of the alchemical process.

The alchemical marriage spontaneously amplifies into other symbolic dualities. The Romantic alchemical imagination interconnects many dualities which, apart from gold and silver, Sun and Moon, include the alchemical poles of light and dark, heaven and earth, above and below, spirit and matter, cold and hot, active and passive, life and death, mortal and immortal. (66) The hermetic "doctrine of correspondences," in which what is "above" is equivalent to what is "below," is intuitively understood by Keats as equivalent to the human psychic condition. In the same letter in which he allegorises those of "genius" as transforming "ethereal Chemicals" he compares the imagination to "Adam's Dream - he awoke and found it truth." (67) The imagination, in other words, as the archetypal fusion of opposites, transcends both conscious and unconscious, and the dualism of waking and dreaming is accordingly one of the alchemical synonyms of the marriage of conscious and unconscious. (68) Keats goes on to express "a conviction that Imagination and its empyreal reflection is the same as human Life and its spiritual repetition," whereby "the simple imaginative Mind may have its rewards in the repetition of its own silent Working. . . ." (69) The "empyreal reflection" and the imagination, in other words, form a heaven-earth duality corresponding to the "repetition" of psychic life, which in turn is equivalent to the synthesis of opposites through the alchemical process of *circulation*. The cyclic transformation of the elements leading to the production of the quintessence as synonymous with the Original Being, corresponds to "spiritual repetition" which is the circumambulation of the self enacted by the tension of opposites. In this respect the unconscious moves in a metaphoric spiral round a centre and so achieves a gradual approximation to the self, whose central point is a hypothetical ideal which, like the Stone, is never actually attained. (70) An equivalent idea to that of the self-circling energies of individuation occurs in Plotinus. In the *Enneads* he claims:

Every soul that knows its history is aware, also, that its movement, unthwarted, is not that of an outgoing line; its natural course may be likened to that in which a circle turns not upon some external but on its own centre, the point to which it owes its rise. The soul's

movement will be about its source; to this it will hold, poised intent towards that unity to which all souls should move. . . . [\(71\)](#)

This self-circling process is often depicted as a spider in its web, [\(72\)](#) recalling Keats' analogy of the imagination's self-creation as being like a spider's weaving of its own "beautiful circuiting," [\(73\)](#) which produces uniting symbols.

It is toward the experience of a oneness transcending all opposites - within the self, socially, and as the harmony of Nature - that the Romantic quest for unity moves. The elusiveness of the uniting ideal implies on a personal level the longing for the individuated self, as the correspondence between Neoplatonism, alchemy, Romanticism and Jungian individuation suggests. Since the ultimate union of opposites is never arrived at but is nonetheless anticipated through its totality symbolism, the archetypal inner marriage is never fully consummated. This deferral of wholeness surfaces in Romantic poetry as the elusiveness of a perfected union with the feminine. As well it underlies the self-betrayal of idealistic dreaming, such as occurs in Keats' *Ode to a Nightingale* and *The Fall of Hyperion*, the inability of the Romantic dream to be "earthed" into reality, and the sense of deception, loss, and disappointment that accompanies the perpetual elusiveness of the ideal.

Maureen B. Roberts
University of Adelaide

Notes

- (1) C. G. Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, 2nd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1970) p. 115. [\(back\)](#)
- (2) Gerhard Dorn, quoted in Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy* p. 222. [\(back\)](#)
- (3) Hermes Trismegistus, quoted in Titus Burckhardt, *Alchemy*, trans. William Stoddart (London: Vincent Stuart and John M. Watkins, 1967) p. 23. [\(back\)](#)
- (4) Mircea Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible: The Origins and Structure of Alchemy*, trans. Stephen Corrin (London: U of Chicago Press, 1962) p. 8. [\(back\)](#)
- (5) P. A. T. Paracelsus, *Selected Writings*, trans. Norman Guterman, ed. Jolande Jacobi (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951) p. 165. [\(back\)](#)
- (6) P. A. T. Paracelsus, *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Paracelsus*, ed. Arthur Edward Waite, 2 vols. (London: James Elliott, 1894) vol. II, p. 151. [\(back\)](#)
- (7) Paracelsus, *The Hermetic* vol. II, pp. 156-157. [\(back\)](#)

- (8) C. G. Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis: An Inquiry into the Separation and Synthesis of Psychic Opposites in Alchemy*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, 2nd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1970) p. 90. [\(back\)](#)
- (9) Jung, *Mysterium* pp. 477-488. [\(back\)](#)
- (10) Jung, *Mysterium* p. 546. [\(back\)](#)
- (11) Paracelsus, *Selected* p. 323. [\(back\)](#)
- (12) Burckhardt p. 20. [\(back\)](#)
- (13) Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy* p. 241. [\(back\)](#)
- (14) Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983) vol. I, p. 304. [\(back\)](#)
- (15) Coleridge, quoted in Tom Chetwynd, *A Dictionary of Symbols* (London: Granada, 1982) p. 390. [\(back\)](#)
- (16) Jung, editorial, *Mysterium* p. 5. [\(back\)](#)
- (17) Jung, *Mysterium* p. 554. [\(back\)](#)
- (18) Coleridge, *Biographia* vol. II, p. 16. [\(back\)](#)
- (19) Jung, *Mysterium* pp. 6, 381. [\(back\)](#)
- (20) W. B. Yeats, *Memoirs*, ed. Denis Donoghue (London: Macmillan, 1972) p. 283. [\(back\)](#)
- (21) John Keats, *The Collected Letters of John Keats, 1814-21*, ed. H. E. Rollins, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1958) vol. I, pp. 238-239; hereafter referred to as *Letters*. [\(back\)](#)
- (22) Jung, *Mysterium* p. 238. [\(back\)](#)
- (23) *Letters* 1:192. Keats sees *King Lear* as exemplary in this respect and contextually is commenting on a painting by the American painter, Benjamin West. Significantly, Keats' (1818) sonnet "On Sitting Down to Read *King Lear* Once Again" discusses his reading of the play in implicit alchemical terms, that is, as the "fierce dispute" which is finally resolved in the "phoenix" as a symbol of the Philosophers' Stone. William Hazlitt similarly speaks of *Macbeth* as "a huddling together of fierce extremes." [See *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. P. P. Howe, 21 vols. (London: J. M. Dent, 1932) vol. IV, p. 191]. [\(back\)](#)
- (24) *Letters* 1:143. [\(back\)](#)
- (25) Jung, *The Integration of the Personality*, trans. Stanley M. Dell (London: Kegan Paul, 1940) p. 239. [\(back\)](#)
- (26) *Letters* 1:184. [\(back\)](#)
- (27) Jung, *Mysterium* p. 240. [\(back\)](#)
- (28) *Letters* 1:386-387. [\(back\)](#)
- (29) Jung, *Mysterium* vol. VI, p. 436. [\(back\)](#)
- (30) *Letters* 1:301. [\(back\)](#)

(31) *The Prelude* 1850 I, 340-44 [William Wordsworth, *The Prelude: The Four Texts (1798, 1799, 1805, 1850)*, ed. Jonathan Wordsworth (London: Penguin, 1995) p. 55]. [\(back\)](#)

(32) Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, ed. Donald H. Reiman and Sharon B. Powers (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1977) p. 501. [\(back\)](#)

(33) Plotinus, *The Enneads*, trans. Stephen MacKenna, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1969) 6.7.22. [\(back\)](#)

(34) Coleridge is the most philosophically articulate of the Romantic poets concerning the relation of the One to the Many. In *Biographia Literaria* vol. II, p. 232 he defines "the Beautiful" as the harmonising principle of Nature which reflects the synthetic power of the imagination. The Beautiful is accordingly

that in which the many, still seen as the many, becomes one. Take a familiar instance . . . the frost on a window-pane has by accident crystallised into a striking resemblance of a tree or a seaweed. With what pleasure we trace the parts, and their relations to each other, and to the whole. [\(back\)](#)

(35) Burckhardt p. 115. [\(back\)](#)

(36) Owen Barfield, *What Coleridge Thought* (Connecticut: Wesleyan UP, 1971) p. 35. [\(back\)](#)

(37) Charles H. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1979) p. 14. [\(back\)](#)

(38) Kahn pp. 21, 23. [\(back\)](#)

(39) Quoted in Jung, *Mysterium* p. 47. [\(back\)](#)

(40) Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Marginalia*, ed. George Whalley and H. J. Jackson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980-) vol. I, p. 568. [\(back\)](#)

(41) Shelley p. 503. [\(back\)](#)

(42) Jung, *Mysterium* p. 546. [\(back\)](#)

(43) Shelley p. 503. [\(back\)](#)

(44) For Paracelsus' equating of spirit, life and essence, which corresponds to the terminology used by all three poets, see Paracelsus, *Selected* p. 241. [\(back\)](#)

(45) David Newsome, *Two Classes of Men: Platonism and English Romantic Thought* (London: John Murray, 1974) p. 45. [\(back\)](#)

(46) William Blake, *The Complete Poems*, ed. Alicia Ostriker (London: Penguin, 1977) p. 580. [\(back\)](#)

(47) Jung, *Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, 2nd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1968) p. 193. [\(back\)](#)

- (48) Blake p. 181. [\(back\)](#)
- (49) Shelley p. 502. [\(back\)](#)
- (50) Blake p. 182. [\(back\)](#)
- (51) C. G. Jung, commentary, *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, trans. Richard Wilhelm (London: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1962) p. 124. [\(back\)](#)
- (52) C. G. Jung, *Alchemical Studies*, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1967) p. 245. [\(back\)](#)
- (53) Blake p. 184. [\(back\)](#)
- (54) Coleridge, *Biographia* vol. I, p. 158. [\(back\)](#)
- (55) Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy: Volume 1, Greece and Rome: Part 1*, 2nd ed., 2 vols (New York: Image Books, 1962) pp. 194, 203. [\(back\)](#)
- (56) W. K. C. Guthrie, *The History of Greek Philosophy*, 6 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1964) vol. II, p. 169. [\(back\)](#)
- (57) Plotinus 1.6.5. [\(back\)](#)
- (58) Plato, quoted in Kathleen Raine, *The Inner Journey of the Poet* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982) p. 24. [\(back\)](#)
- (59) C. G. Jung, quoted in James Olney, "The Esoteric Flower: Yeats and Jung," *Yeats and the Occult*, ed. G. M. Harper (London: Macmillan, 1976) pp. 45-46. [\(back\)](#)
- (60) W. B. Yeats, *A Vision* (New York: Macmillan, 1961) p. 187. [\(back\)](#)
- (61) Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Poetical Works*, ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1912) pp. 297-98. [\(back\)](#)
- (62) Jung, *Mysterium* p. 3. [\(back\)](#)
- (63) Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy* p. 236. [\(back\)](#)
- (64) Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy* p. 235. [\(back\)](#)
- (65) C. G. Jung, *The Symbolic Life: Miscellaneous Writings*, trans. R. F. C. Hull (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977) p. 180. [\(back\)](#)
- (66) Jung, *Mysterium* p. 3. [\(back\)](#)
- (67) *Letters* 1:143. [\(back\)](#)
- (68) Jung, *Mysterium* p. 42. [\(back\)](#)
- (69) *Letters* 1:185. [\(back\)](#)
- (70) Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy* p. 291. [\(back\)](#)
- (71) Plotinus 6.9.8. [\(back\)](#)
- (72) Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy* p. 291. [\(back\)](#)
- (73) *Letters* 1:231-232. [\(back\)](#)

The Rotation of the Elements

(c) 1995, John Opsopaus

When thou hast made the quadrangle round,
Then is all the secret found.
-- George Ripley (d. 1490)

The rotation of the elements is a key alchemical procedure, the principal means by which the purified essence of a substance is extracted and raised to its most sublime state. Indeed, the rotation symbolizes an important transformative process, which manifests throughout the spiritual and material worlds, but to understand it we must review the symbolic structure of the four elements.

The elements have been rich symbols for at least 2500 years, for they resonate with our deepest experience of the world. Empedocles, who first identified the four elements, compared them with gods:

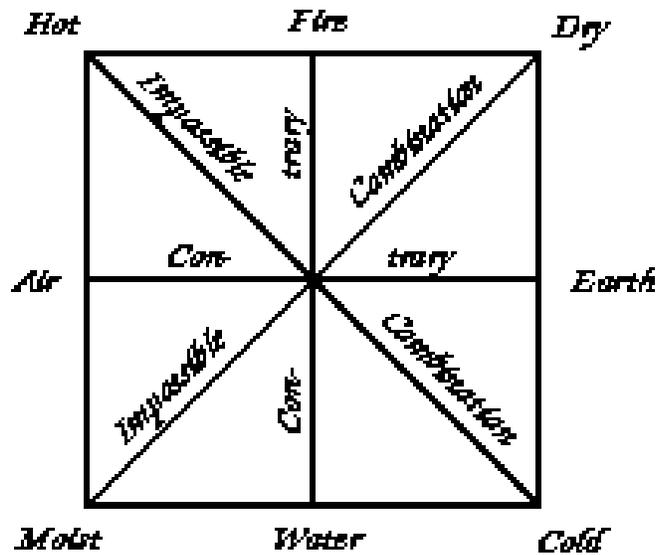
Now hear the fourfold roots of everything:
Enlivening Hera, Hades, shining Zeus
And Nestis, moistening mortal springs with tears.

Hera rules the fruitful earth, Hades the central fire, Zeus the luminescent air, and Nestis the mollifying water.* Through the ensuing millennia the familiar structure of the elements has enriched our understanding of many quaternities, but the correspondences have usually been established intuitively, and differences in emphasis have led to differing assignments. However, a structural understanding of the *qualities* of the elements facilitates moving beyond superficial analogies to the systematic application of these symbols. Such an analysis should not be confused with a scientific theory; rather, by exposing the symbolic structure of the elements, the analysis extends their applicability and creates symbolic links across many domains, a deeper insight essential for understanding the alchemical rotation of the elements.

The rotation of the elements depends on two interrelated structures, one linear and the other cyclic. The linear structure is the increasing subtlety apparent in the series Earth, Water, Air, Fire. (I capitalize the names of these "philosophical," or alchemical, elements to distinguish them from ordinary earth, water, air and fire.) The cyclic structure results from the elements' definition in terms of two pairs of opposed qualities, Hot/Cold and Dry/Moist. These had already been identified by Anaximander in the sixth century BCE, one hundred years before Empedocles introduced the four elements, but it was another hundred years before Aristotle's systematic analysis of the elements in terms of the qualities.** He explains that Earth is Dry and Cold, Water is Cold and Moist, Air is Moist and Hot, and Fire is Hot and Dry.

The order in which the qualities are listed is significant, since, as Aristotle explains, Earth is predominantly Dry, Water is predominantly Cold, Air is predominantly Moist, and Fire is predominantly Hot; the resulting cycle of qualities is relevant to the rotation. Nevertheless, each element comprises two qualities, one from each opposition. The relationship between the elements and qualities is shown in the familiar "square of opposition," in which each

element follows, in a clockwise direction, its dominant quality.



Square of Opposition

The four qualities are the key to understanding the rotation of the elements and many other applications of the symbology of the four elements. Since the elements are such rich symbols, one expects there must be more to the qualities than mundane heat, cold, moistness and dryness, and in fact Aristotle explains them quite abstractly.

The Hot, he says, is the power of separation, for it causes each substance to cling to its own kind, as occurs in distillation; that is, it dissociates a compound by associating things of the same kind. Conversely, the Cold associates things of different kinds, and allows substances to mix together. As a consequence, the Hot makes things subtle, light, rising and centrifugal, since substances must move away from the center to separate from each other. Conversely, the Cold makes things gross, heavy, falling and centripetal, since substances mix when forced to the center.

Aristotle explains that Moistness is the quality of fluidity or flexibility, which allows a thing to adapt to its external conditions, whereas Dryness is the quality of rigidity, which allows a thing to define its own shape and bounds. As a consequence Moist things tend to be volatile and expansive, since they can fill spaces in their surroundings, whereas Dry things are fixed and structured, since they define their own form.

The abstract character of the qualities also determines the relative subtlety of the elements. Since Dryness is self-determining, Fire and Earth have an absolute impulse to go in their own direction (centrifugal or up for Fire, centripetal or down for Earth). This is especially the case for Earth, which is predominantly Dry and self-determining, and so defines a basis for the other elements. The Hot quality dominates Fire, which explains why Fire and Heat have practically the same effect, for Heat expresses itself fully in Fire.

Since Moistness is sensitive to external conditions, Air and Water are not unswerving in their motion; their upward and downward tendencies are moderated by the expansive, spreading character of Moistness. Thus, while Fire and Earth are *absolutely* Light and Heavy, respectively, Air and Water are only *relatively* Light and Heavy. Centripetal Coldness dominates Water, which therefore tends to relax or sink into its surroundings. Moistness, which is expansive, dominates Air, which therefore tends to spread actively.

Therefore, in addition to their oppositional structure, the elements fall in a series of increasing subtlety: Earth, Water, Air, Fire. Systematic application of the elements should take account of both structures, oppositional and graded, or circular and linear.

Of course, any pair of opposed qualities can be associated with Hot/Cold and Moist/Dry, just as any series of four can be identified with the elements, but the result may have little similarity to earth, water, air and fire. If, however, the qualities are assigned in accord with Aristotle's abstract definitions, then the elements will be earthy, watery, airy and fiery, and their character and behavior will correspond to our intuitions.

Although the four elements are ubiquitous symbols, I will emphasize psychological examples, since they better illustrate the spiritual use of the alchemical rotation. The psychologist Max Lüscher, in his theory of the "four-color personality," shows how four categories of psychological structure, which correspond to the elements, can be analyzed into a pair of opposed qualities.***

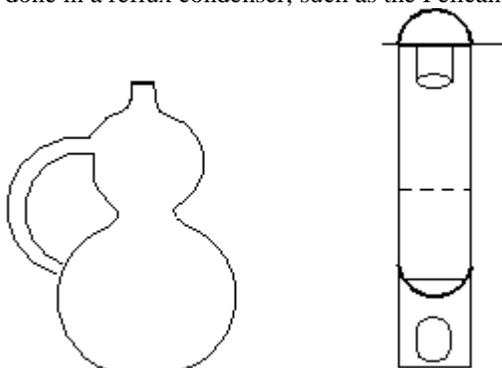
On one axis the (Dry) self-determination by which a subject impresses its form on the world is opposed to the (Moist) tendency of the subject to be externally determined, to conform to its environment. On the other axis the (Hot) centrifugal character, directed from a single center to many objects or flying from one object to another, is opposed to the (Cold) centripetal quality, focused on a single object and seeking the center.

This double opposition generates four categories of psychological structure, each with a characteristic sensation, behavior and sense of self, and in Lüscher's theory each combination has a corresponding color, which characteristically excites that sensation. In short: Earth (green) is associated with solidity, persistence and self-respect; Water (blue) with relaxation, satisfaction and self-moderation; Air (yellow) with loosening, change and self-development; and Fire (red) with excitement, activity and self-confidence.

Jung's analysis of the four functions of consciousness corresponds closely to Lüscher's in structure and color: sensation (green) = Earth, thinking (blue) = Water, intuition (yellow) = Air and feeling (red) = Fire. The Cold functions (sensation, thinking) are centripetal: seeking the factual center; whereas the Hot functions (intuition, feeling) are centrifugal, seeking relationships beyond the central fact. The Dry functions (sensation, feeling) are self-determining because they are not under conscious control; whereas the Wet functions (thinking, intuition) are flexible because we may consciously direct their course.

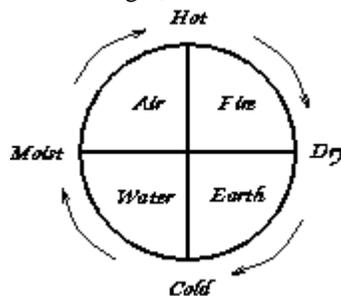
According to both analyses psychological health requires a balance of the functions (Lüscher's four-color person, Jung's individuated Self), an idea which is not new. In the fifth century BCE Alcmaon argued that "the bond of health is the equal rights of the powers" (the opposed qualities), and Empedocles wrote, "Those in whom the elements are mingled in equal or almost equal proportions ... are the most intelligent and have the most exact perceptions." The alchemical rotation of the elements is a procedure for achieving this balance, since it helps the chronic thinker, for example, ensure that feeling, sensation and intuition get equal time.

In the most common rotation Earth becomes Water, Water becomes Air, Air becomes Fire, and Fire becomes Earth again. In terms of alchemical procedure, Earth becomes Water by melting a solid substance or by dissolving it in some solvent. Water becomes Air (a moist vapor) by boiling, which further heating turns into Fire (a dry vapor). Finally Fire becomes Earth by allowing the vapors to condense on a solid material. The circulation may repeat if it is done in a reflux condenser, such as the Pelican or *kerotakis*.



Pelican or Kerotakis

Aristotle says, "It is clear that generation of the elements will be circular, and this mode of change is very easy because corresponding qualities are present in adjacent elements." In abstract terms the application of Heat causes Earth to lose its rigidity (Dryness) and become more flexible (Moist), which makes it Water. Further Heat decreases the Cold of the Water and increases its Heat, which makes it Air. When Air is Heated, its fluidity dries out, and it becomes rigid, which makes it Fire. When the Fire becomes Cold, it loses its Heat and becomes Earth again.



Rotation of Elements

Heat is the primary agent of rotation. Aristotle explains that the qualities Hot and Cold are active, whereas Moist and Dry are passive. Indeed, as the principles of separation and union, Hot and Cold are identical to Strife and Love (Eris and Eros), which Empedocles had identified as the forces that cause the elements to separate and mix. Aristotle further observes that Cold is just the absence of Heat, so in the end Heat (or Strife) is the motive force for change; as Heraclitus said, "all things come to be through Strife." In practical terms, as the alchemist Olympiodorus said in the 5th or 6th century CE, "Fire is the primary agent, that of the whole art. It is the first of the four elements." The rotation can also be described by two "laws of motion" relating any two adjacent qualities, Moist and Hot for example. The first law says that the higher the degree of the earlier quality (in the direction of rotation), the greater the rate of increase of the later quality. In this case we could say, "Moisture nourishes Heat." The second law says that the higher the degree of the later quality, the greater the rate of decrease of the earlier quality. In this case, "Heat dries up Moisture." The two laws combine to cause oscillations in each pair of opposites, which are so coordinated as to cause a rotation. As Heraclitus said, "The cold become hot, the hot becomes cold, the moist becomes dry, the dry becomes moist"; this "strife between opposites" is the motor of the rotation.



The Wheel of Fortune

In the Renaissance the Wheel of Fortune was a common symbol for the folly of pride and the insecurity of position. Typically the ascending side of the wheel showed a young figure rising in power, announcing "I shall reign" -- and sprouting ass's ears. On the top of the wheel sat the triumphant king, proclaiming "I reign," with full-grown ass's ears. On the descending side, an older figure with an ass's tail, exclaims "I have reigned." At the bottom a tattered figure, crushed beneath the wheel, laments "I am without reign."

The turning wheel is an elemental rotation driven by the qualities, Moist on the rising side, Hot on the top, Dry on the descending side, and Cold on the bottom. The young upstart is powerless (Cold), but by adapting to circumstances and playing the game, that is, by becoming more flexible (Moist), he is able to increase his power and success (Heat). However, as he reaches the pinnacle of his success, he becomes more rigid and inflexible, which sows the seeds of his decline. Rigidity undermines his power, and he falls back to a powerless state. Thus the "laws of motion" of the Wheel of Fortune are: Flexibility enhances power, but power discourages flexibility.

The first quarter of the king's ascent corresponds to Water, for he must adapt passively. In the second quarter, governed by Air, he becomes actively flexible, seeking new opportunities. The third quarter belongs to Fire, and here he has the greatest power to set the terms to which others must conform, but this Fire must burn itself out. Therefore the final quarter corresponds to Earth, the deposed king, inflexible and powerless in bitter old age.

The rotation need not stop, however, if the fallen king, reduced to a humble state, abandons past rigidity and submits to current circumstances. Then the Earth can be transformed to Water and a new ascent can begin. Though the possibility of a new ascent brings some consolation in our reversals, life on the wheel is not a happy prospect; I'll explain later how the alchemists turned the rotation into a spiral of progressive refinement.

The same pattern of adaptation (Water), expansion (Air), production (Fire) and retraction (Earth) occurs in many elemental rotations, including the seasons (winter, spring, summer, fall), the ages (childhood, youth, maturity, old age), and the cyclic rise and fall of species, nations, institutions and ideas.

Although elemental rotations are usually toward greater subtlety, Earth to Water to Air to Fire, a reverse (counterclockwise) rotation is also possible; in Heraclitus' words, "Fire lives the death of earth, and air lives the death of fire; water lives the death of air, earth that of water." We find such a reverse rotation in Empedocles'

Purifications, where he explains that an immortal spirit must cleanse himself of broken oaths and other crimes by repeated rebirth in mortal form for thrice ten thousand years:

The mighty air propels him to the sea,
The water throws him to the earth, and earth
To sunlight's fire, who yields to whirling air.

This expiatory ordeal brings us to the purpose of the alchemical rotation: refinement and purification.

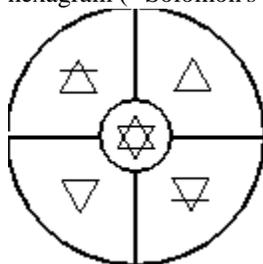
There would be no point to the alchemical rotation if it didn't bring one closer to the goal of the Great Work, the Elixir or Philosopher's Stone. By understanding how it does this, we can see how to turn elemental rotations into progressive spirals of transformation.

The goal of the alchemist's circulation is a "Sublimation or Exaltation of the Matter of the Work," which is "a process by which substances become more precious, splendid, and excellent," as we read in the 1612 *Lexicon of Alchemy* by Michael Ruland the Elder. This sublimation is aimed at extracting the Quintessence of gold, its spirit in the purest possible state, its Platonic form, because, Paracelsus explained, an object can be separated from its matter and continue to exist as a pure form, which is transferable to other matter.

The oft-repeated "Enigma of Hermes" says, "Unless you disembody the bodies and embody the disembodied, that which is expected will not take place." Therefore sublimation, which is an ascent of the spirit from matter, must be followed by condensation, a descent in which the spirit is imposed on purified neutral matter; the product is a "permanent ferment," which has excess spirit and thus can transfer its form to other matter; it is the Philosopher's Stone, the Elixir that is able to perfect imperfect metals, renew youth and cure any illness.

But what is the spirit to be extracted and embodied in the Stone? It has the qualities of the philosopher's gold, the most noble metal, and therefore the most perfect combination of fusibility, the generic characteristic of all metals, and fiery color, the specific characteristic of gold. These two characteristics are represented by alchemical Mercury and alchemical Sulphur, respectively, the spirits of Water and Fire. That is, gold is a perfect combination of the fusibility of Water and the color of Fire. This explains the common alchemical descriptions of the Quintessence of gold as "the watery fire and the fiery water." Since Mercury is the volatile spirit and Sulphur is the fixed spirit, the goal is to volatilize the fixed and to fix the volatile.

The volatilization of the fixed and the fixation of the volatile together achieve a unification of the four elements, for Fire (in the form of Sulphur) makes Water stable by making it Dry and more like Earth, while Water (in the form of Mercury) makes the Fire volatile by making it Moist and more like Air. *Solve et coagula*, the famous motto of the alchemists, represents this synthesis of the elements by means of Mercury and Sulphur, the principles of dissolution and coagulation. A sixteenth century alchemical text says, "Our stone is from the four elements," and adds, "In the gold the four elements are contained in equal proportions." Thus the Quintessence was often symbolized by the hexagram ("Solomon's Seal") because it unites the signs of the elements.

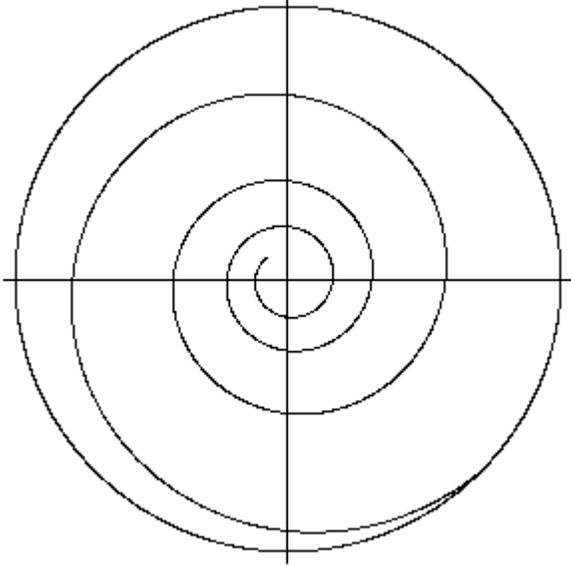


The Quintessence

The four elements must be combined in a special way, for the Quintessence is not simply a chaotic mixture of the elements. Nor is it prime matter, a featureless substrate in which the Hot neutralizes the Cold and the Moist the Dry. The Quintessence must embody *simultaneously* the contradictory pairs, Hot and Cold, Moist and Dry. The scholiast to an alchemical manuscript explains how this is possible:

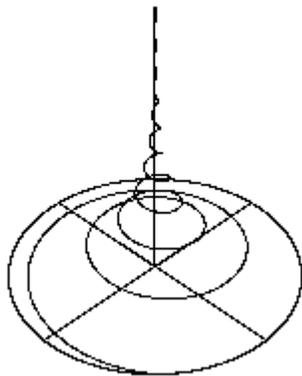
Reduce your stone to the four elements, rectify and combine them into one, and you will have the whole magistry. This One, to which the elements must be reduced, is that little circle in the center of the squared figure. It is the mediator, making peace between the enemies or elements.****

Matter cannot have contradictory qualities, so the Quintessence must be immaterial, pure spirit. The figure shows that no point on the circumference can be simultaneously Hot and Cold or Moist and Dry. If, however, the circle shrinks to the point at the center, it will have all qualities at once. This is where the immaterial Quintessence resides, and it is the goal towards which the rotation is directed.



Refinement Toward the Quintessence

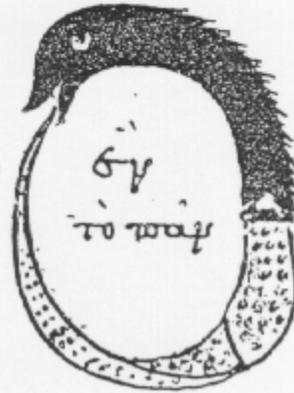
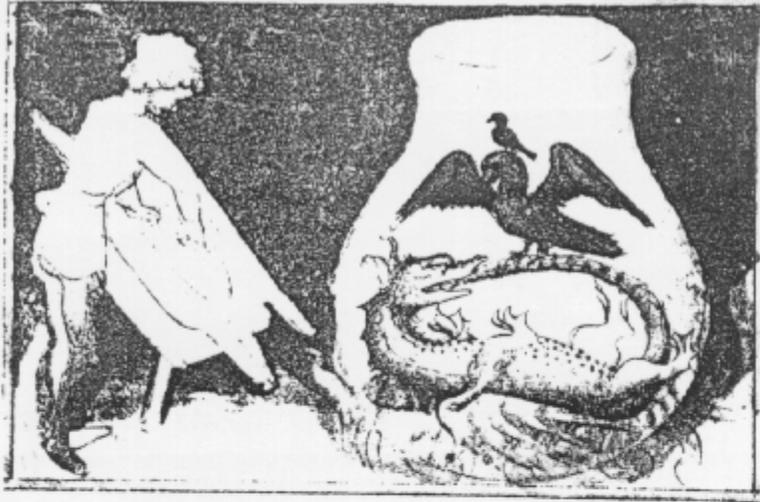
To "have the whole magistry" each step in the rotation must move closer to the central Quintessence, which contains the Platonic form of the qualities divorced from gross matter. This is achieved at each phase of the rotation by refining the element, preserving its own qualities while eliminating contaminating qualities. Thus, the first phase dissolves some of the Earth, converting it to Water, and leaves the rest as dregs. The result is that the Coldness of the Earth is preserved in the Water, but some of the Dry matter is lost, so the rotation spirals a little closer to the immaterial center. The second phase Warms the Water, converting some of it to Air, but preserves its Moisture, leaving some Water as a residue. The third stage converts some Air to Fire and releases the remainder as humid vapors. These first three stages "volatilize the fixed" by spiritualizing the matter. The final phase Cools the Hot vapors, and transforms some of the Fire back into Earth, thus "fixing the volatile" by materializing the spirit. This completes one cycle of refinement and moves closer to the Quintessence.



Sublimation Toward Quintessence

The "laws of motion" for the spiral rotation are: Moisture nourishes Heat and yields some of its substance; Heat dries up Moisture and yields some of its substance. Each quality becomes more sublime by yielding some of its material embodiment.

Technically, the spiral will never reach the exact center, but it will come close enough to serve as a "permanent ferment." Most alchemists say seven circulations are necessary to ascend through the planetary spheres.



The Ouroboros Serpent

The endless spiral rotation of the elements is symbolized by the *ouroboros serpent* or dragon swallowing its own tail. The Byzantine "Poem of Theophrastus" describes the rotation under the action of a gentle, moist heat:

A dragon springs therefrom which, when exposed
In horse's excrement for twenty days,
Devours his tail till naught thereof remains.

A Moist Heat (Air-like) is required to unite or marry the opposites, Water (Cold, Moist) and Fire (Hot, Dry); Earth (Dry and Cold) also aids the union.

The dragon's tail is phallic and its head is vaginal, so the dragon impregnates itself. Since the tail is male, it corresponds to the Sulphur and represents the solar Heat of the firmament, whereas the head is Mercury and represents lunar Moisture. Thus the serpent symbolizes the elemental circle, with the self-impregnation taking place in the Air element (Moist and Hot). The offspring of this marriage is described in Isaac Newton's translation of the Emerald Tablet: "The Sun is its father, the moon its mother, the wind hath carried it in its belly, the earth is its nurse." The Quintessence is reached when the Ouroboros has consumed itself and collapsed into an embodied monad. As Heinrich Khunrath wrote in 1597,

Through circumrotation, or a circular philosophical revolving of the quaternity, it is brought back to the highest and purest simplicity of the monad. Out of the gross and impure One there cometh an exceeding pure and subtile Monad.

The circulation is also symbolized by the Orphic egg, around which a serpent is wrapped three and one-half times, that is, midway through the sevenfold circulation that completes the transformation. (Similarly, in the mandala of the Muladhara chakra, the Kundalini serpent is coiled three and one-half times around the *linga*.)

Jung explains that the serpent and spiral are symbols of psychological growth, the unconscious mind circling and drawn ever closer to the integrated Self, which is the monad at the center of the quaternity. The serpent circles the egg, because the center will become the seed of rebirth. As Jung says, "Out of the egg -- symbolized by the round cooking-vessel -- will rise the eagle or phoenix, the liberated soul." The liberated Self is often symbolized by an hermaphroditic amalgam of the Sun and Moon, that is, a synthesis of the most exalted states of Fire and Water. In some Orphic myths the cosmic egg produces Phanes, who is winged, bisexual and self-fertilizing, a symbol of the liberated, balanced, self-regenerating psyche.



Phanes

In psychological terms, the elemental spiral leads to Lüscher's "four-color person," or to a psyche that manifests simultaneously Jung's four functions: thinking, feeling, intuition and sensation. By spiritualization, the Quintessence comes to have the virtues of all the elements simultaneously; it transcends their opposition and contradiction. In the shadow of Jung's epoch-making study of alchemy and psychology, it is difficult to see the Great Work as anything but a symbol for the process of Individuation, but that is only part of the truth. Alchemy is a symbolic framework for understanding certain abstract structures; practical alchemists saw them in matter, Jung found them in the psyche. In fact, wherever we find a twofold opposition of qualities that are separating/joining and flexible/inflexible, there the Great Work may succeed.

Notes

* Beginning in ancient times and continuing to the present, various correspondences between these gods and the elements have been defended. This correspondence is argued persuasively by Peter Kingsley (*Ancient Philosophy, Mystery and Magic: Empedocles and Pythagorean Tradition*, Oxford Univ. Press, 1995, Part I). ** The main discussion of the four qualities is in Chapters 2 and 3 of Book II of *De Generatione et Corruptione (On Coming-to-Be and Passing-Away)*, lines 329b7-331a6.

*** Max Lüscher, *The 4-Color Person*, transl. Joachim Neugroschel, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979.
**** The "Tractatus aureus," in the *Theatrum Chemicum*, Vol IV, p. 691, quoted in Jung, *Aion* (CW 9, Part II), par. 377.

Christ as the philosopher's stone in George Herbert's 'The Elixir.'

Miller, Clarence H. *Notes and Queries* 45:1. 39-41. 19.03.1998.

Herbert's ['The Elixir'](#) has long been recognized as the most remarkable example of his successful revision.(1) The principal change was the added alchemical figure of the elixir or philosopher's stone as a metaphor illuminating how a religious motive transforms a mundane action. Of the last three stanzas of the poem, the first two were significantly revised and the last stanza was a new addition:

All may of thee partake:
Nothing can be so mean,
Which with his tincture (for thy sake)
Will not grow bright and clean.

A servant with this clause
Makes Drudgerie divine:
Who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,
Makes that and th' action fine.

This is that famous stone
That turneth all to gold:
For that which God doth touch and own
Cannot for lesse be told.

Before 1996 no one had thoroughly demonstrated that the philosopher's stone was a well-known symbol of Christ in Herbert's time, but in that year Stanton J. Linden published *Darke Hieroglyphicks: Alchemy in English Literature, from Chaucer to the Restoration* (University of Kentucky Press); he gave ample and widespread evidence of the analogy between Christ and the stone and pointed out that Donne and Herbert took a new direction by abandoning satire of alchemy (as in Chaucer and Ben Jonson) and exploiting the Christological significance of the stone.(2) Nevertheless, in his interpretation of 'The Elixir' he equates the stone not with Christ but with God: 'God is seen as the "famous stone", his will is the "tincture", man is the "mean" substance upon which the tincture is projected' (191). But since the poem is addressed to God ('my God and King,' line 1), the 'thy' of 'for thy sake' must refer to God; and the 'tincture', the phrase 'for thy sake', is not God's will but is addressed to him, in one sense by the doer of the mean deed and in another by Christ, whose obedience to the Father is the tincture, elixir, and stone which transforms actions that seem lowly and wretched into the gold of glorious and meritorious deeds.(3) It is also noteworthy that Herbert takes a new line, different even from Donne's, in applying the metaphor not to Christ's role in creation, resurrection, or the transformation of the world at the end of time (the usual analogies in the seventeenth century), but to the psychological dimension of Christian motivation.

In a theologically complex analysis of the revisions of 'The Elixir', Janis Lull had already corrected Linden's slip: '. . . Christ is necessarily the real speaker of "for thy sake"'.(4) She skillfully traces the resonances of the paradoxical combination of faith and works, nature and grace in the poem, so that 'for thy sake' is spoken both by the doer of the deed himself and by Christ in him or with him (100).(5) Several of Donne's Holy Sonnets also turn on the paradox that Christ does all, though man does something.(6) But Professor Lull misses the extraordinary pun on 'his' in the lines:

Nothing can be so mean,
Which with his tincture (for thy sake)
Will not grow bright and clean.

According to Professor Lull, 'merely desiring to act "for thy sake" is enough, not because of any power or merit in human will, but because "his tincture" (this tincture, but also his tincture, Christ's own attitude - his own speech infused into the speaker) has already transformed the unworthy to "gold"' (99). But the other meaning of 'his' is not 'this' (the *facilior lectio* of the editions between 1656 and 1674) but rather 'its'.⁽⁷⁾ In other words the tincture 'for thy sake' belongs not merely to Christ but also to the action; the motive of the doer is also 'for thy sake'. The ambiguous 'his' attributes the transformation of the deed to both grace and good will.

Herbert had a precedent for a pun turning on the vexed paradox of free will co-operating with grace in Spenser's [Faerie Queene](#). After the Red Cross Knight has defeated the dragon, Una thanks him:

Then God she prayd, and thank't her faithful knight,
That had atchieu'd so great a conquest by his might.
(I.xi.55.8-9)

As A. C. Hamilton remarks in his edition of [The Faerie Queene](#) (London and New York, 1977), 'There is a deliberate ambiguity in his: it refers to both God and the Knight. Man's might and God's grace merge as the Knight is revealed in the lineaments of Christ...'

CLARENCE H. MILLER
St Louis University

(1) F. E. Hutchinson, for example, in his edition of [The Works of George Herbert](#) (Oxford, 1941) remarks that 'no poem of Herbert's better shows his skill in revision' (541). Quotations from the poem are from this edition. The revisions have been discussed by Charles Molesworth, 'Herbert's "The Elixir": Revision Towards Action', [Concerning Poetry](#), V (1972), 12-20.

(2) pp. 35, 154-5, 189-92, 210-11, 214-20.

(3) Some of the principal scriptural texts which show Christ's mission as acting for the Father's sake in obedience to the Father's will are: 'thy will be done' in the Lord's prayer (Matt. 6:10) and in the Garden of Olives (Matt. 26); 'my aim is not my own will, but the will of him who sent me' (John 5:30); 'I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me' (John 6:38). (See also Rom. 5:19 and Phil. 2:8.)

(4) [The Poem in Time: Reading George Herbert's Revisions of The Church](#) (Newark: University of Delaware Press; London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1990), 98.

5 In a few places, however, the argument is quite tenuous. The phrase 'for thy sake' cannot be taken as spoken by God the father (100), for the reason I have already given. It is also argued that 'action' and 'fine' in line 20 have legal overtones so that 'makes . . . the action fine' means 'puts fine' to the legal action for the debt man owes because of original sin. But under 'fine' sb.(1) 8 OED does give the phrase 'to make fine' meaning 'to settle a matter', but it is never used with a double object such as 'make the action fine'.

6 Nos. 2, 4, 10, 12 of 'Divine Meditations' and No. 1 in 'Divine Meditations (added in 1635)' in [The Divine Poems](#), ed. Helen Gardner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952).

7 According to OED, the modern form 'its' was beginning to replace 'his' in the beginning of the seventeenth century.

COPYRIGHT 1998 Oxford University Press (UK)

Terence McKenna--Lectures on Alchemy

Terence McKenna died on April 3, 2000.

In a [talk](#) that Terence gave at Wetlands Preserve in 1998, he said:

"The other night I searched (the Web) for 'self-transforming elf machines.' There were 36 hits! It surprised me. I sort of use the search engine like an oracle. I've used the phrase for DMT, 'Arabian hyperspace.' So I thought of this, and then I *searched* it, 'Arabian hyperspace,' in quotes. And it took me right to a transcript of the talk in which I'd said

the thing! You can find your own mind on the Internet. *I'm very grateful to the people who type up my talks and then post them at their websites.*"

In the spirit of that last sentence, I decided to post here the transcriptions, given to me by a friend, of a lecture series that Terence presented on alchemy. I do not know where or when the lectures were given. **Note:** I have not edited the transcriptions at all-- they are exactly as I received them.

As you read these lectures, please [send prayers for Terence's safe passage to the other shore](#). For some of Terence's thoughts on death, click [here](#) and [here](#).

[Lecture 1](#)

[Lecture 2, part 1](#)

[Lecture 2, part 2](#)

[Lecture 2, part 3](#)

[Lecture 3, part 1](#)

[Lecture 3, part 2](#)

[Lecture 3, part 3](#)

[Lecture 3, part 4](#)

Lecture 1

well, it is a small group and this was my intent by focusing on the Hermetic Corpus and alchemy. I've just gotten tired of talking about psychedelic drugs and always saying the same things over and over again, nevertheless it's a challenge to go outside my own ballywick. I mean I've had an interest in hermeticism and alchemy since I was about 14 and read Jung's psychology and (of) alchemy and it opened for me the fact of the existence of this vast literature, a literature that is very little read or understood in the modern context. The Jungians have made much of it, but to their own purposes and perhaps not always with complete fidelity to the intent of the tradition. We'll talk a lot about the Jungian approach but there are other approaches even within the 20th century. I believe, since I don't have the catalog I'm not absolutely certain, but I believe the catalog urged you to read Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition by Dame Frances Yates and this is, though Frances Yates scholarship is very controversial, I think that to get an overview of the landscape her book is probably the best single book between covers. It's not pleasing to some factions and we can talk about that, I mean, we will probably discover within the group all strains of alchemical illusions and delusions that have always driven this particular engine, but I thought to get one book that sort of covered the territory that was a good one to start with. Well then I found out that it's very hard to get this book. I didn't realize that because it's been sitting on my shelf for years. Richard Bird found a reprint at the Bodhi Tree. I wasn't aware of this particular edition so, though probably none of you brought it with you in heavily underlined form, if after this weekend you want to try and get it, it is available and if you can't get that edition, why, a good book service can probably come up with the first edition which is Routledge Kegan Paul.

I wouldn't hold a weekend like this simply to go over a body of ancient literature if I didn't think it had some efficacy or import for the modern dilemma and some of you may know the song by the Grateful Dead in which the refrain is "I need a miracle every day." I think any reasonable person can conclude that the redemption of the world, if it's to be achieved, can only be achieved through magic. It's too late for science. It's too late for hortatory politics. Well, it's very interesting - every ancient literature has its apocalypses and in the hermetic literature there is a prophecy, I think it's in book two but that really doesn't matter, and the prophecy is that a day will come when men no longer care for the earth and at that day the gods will depart and everything will be thrown into primal chaos and this prophecy was very strongly in the minds of the strains of non-Christian thought that evolved at the close-at the centuries of closure-of the Roman Empire. When you look back into historical time it's when you reach the first and second centuries after Christ that you reach a world whose psychology was very much like the psychology of our

own time. It was a psychology of despair and exhaustion. This is because Greek science which had evolved under the aegis of democratic atomism and Platonic metaphysics had essentially come to a dead end in those centuries. We can debate the reasons why this happened. An obvious suggestion would be that they failed to develop an experimental method and so everything just dissolved into competing schools of philosophical speculation and a profound pessimism spread through the Hellenistic world and out of that pessimism and in the context of that kind of universal despair which attends the dissolution of great empires a literature was created from the first to the fourth centuries after Christ which we call the Hermetic Corpus or in some cases the Trismegistic Hymns. Now this body of literature was misunderstood by later centuries, especially the Renaissance, because it was taken at face value and assumed to be at least contemporary with Moses if not much older. So the Renaissance view of Hermeticism was based on a tragic misunderstanding of the true antiquity of this material and there are people, hopefully none in this room, who still would have us believe that this literature antedates the Mosaic Law, that it is as old as Dynastic Egypt. But this is an indefensible position from my point of view. In the early 16th century two men, a father and son, Issac and Marik Casaubon, showed through the new science of philology, that this material was in fact late Hellenistic. Now, I've always said that I am not a Classicist in the Viconian sense, in the sense that there is a certain strain of thought that always wants to believe that the oldest stuff is the best stuff. This is not the case to my mind. To my mind what is amazing is how recent everything is. So I have no sympathy with the fans of lost Atlantis or any of that kind of malarkey because to me what is amazing is how it all is less than 10,000 years old. Anything older than 10,000 years puts us into the realm of an aceramic society relying on chipped flint for its primary technology. What the Hermetic Corpus is is the most poetic and cleanly expressed outpouring of ancient knowledge that we possess. But it was reworked in the hands of these late Hellenistic peoples and it is essentially a religion of the redemption of the earth through magic. It has great debt to a tradition called Sevillian which means to mean Mandeism and Mandeism was a kind of proto-Hellenistic gnosis that laid great stress on the power of life, Zoa, Bios, and in that sense it has a tremendously contemporary ring to it.

We also are living in the twilight of a great empire, and I don't particularly mean the American empire, I mean the empire of European thinking created in the wake of the Protestant Reformation and the rise of modern industrialism, the empire, in short of science. Science has exhausted itself and become mere techné. It's still able to perform its magical tricks, but it has no claim on a metaphysic with any meaning because the program of rational understanding that was pursued by science has pushed so deeply into the phenomenon of nature that the internal contradictions of the method are now exposed for all to see. In discussing alchemy especially we will meet with the concept of the *coincidentia oppositorum*-the union of opposites. This is an idea that is completely alien to science. It's the idea that nothing can be understood unless it is simultaneously viewed as both being what it is and what it is not and in alchemical symbolism we will meet again and again symbolical expression of the *coincidentia oppositorum*. It may be in the form of a hermaphrodite, it may be in the form of the union of soul and Luna, it may be in the form of the union of Mercury with lead, or with sulphur, in other words alchemical thinking is thinking that is always antithetical, always holds the possibility of by a mere shift of perspective its opposite premise will gain power and come into focus.

I think it was John, when we went around the circle, who mentioned his interest in shamanism. There's a wonderful book called *The Forge and the Crucible* by Mircea Eliade in which he shows that the shaman is the brother of the smith, the smith is the metallurgist, the worker in metals, and this is where alchemy has its roots. In a sense, alchemy is older than the Trismegistic Corpus and then it is also given a new lease on life by the philosophical underpinnings which the Corpus Hermeticum provides it. Alchemy, the word alchemy, can be traced back to mean Egypt or a blackening and in its earliest strata it probably refers to techniques referring to dying, meaning the coloring of cloth, and gilding of metals, and the forging and working of metal. I mean, we who take this for granted have no idea how mysterious and powerful this seemed to ancient people and in fact it would seem so to us if we had anything to do with it. I mean how many of us are welders or casters of metal. It's a magical process to take for instance cinnibar, a red, soft ore and by the mere act of heating it in a furnace it will sweat liquid Mercury onto its surface. Well, we have unconsciously imbibed the ontology of science where we have mind firmly separated out from the world. We take this for granted, it's effortless, because it's the ambience of the civilization we've been born into but in an earlier age, and some writers would say a more naive age, but I wonder about that, but in an earlier age mind and matter were seen to be alloyed together throughout nature so that the sweating of mercury out of cinnibar is not a material process, it's a process in which the mind and the observations of the metalworker maintain an important role, and let's talk for a moment about mercury because the spirit Mercurius is almost the patron deity of alchemy.

You all know what mercury looks like-at room temperature it's a silvery liquid that flows, it's like a mirror. For the alchemists, and this is just a very short exercise in alchemical thinking, for the alchemists mercury was mind itself, in a sense, and by tracing through the steps by which they reached that conclusion you can have a taste of what alchemical thinking was about. Mercury takes the form of its container. If I pour mercury into a cup, it takes the

shape of the cup, if I pour it into a test tube, it takes the shape of the test tube. This taking the shape of its container is a quality of mind and yet here it is present in a flowing, silvery metal. The other thing is, mercury is a reflecting surface. You never see mercury, what you see is the world which surrounds it, which is perfectly reflected in its surface like a moving mirror, you see. And then if you've ever, as a child, I mean I have no idea how toxic this process is, but I spent a lot of time as a child hounding my grandfather for his hearing aid batteries which I would then smash with a hammer and get the mercury out and collect it in little bottles and carry it around with me. Well, the wonderful thing about mercury is when you pour it out on a surface and it beads up, then each bead of mercury becomes a little microcosm of the world. And yet the mercury flows back together into a unity. Well, as a child I had not yet imbibed the assumptions and the ontology of science. I was functioning as an alchemist. For me, mercury was this fascinating magical substance onto which I could project the contents of my mind. And a child playing with mercury is an alchemist hard at work, no doubt about it.

Well, so then, this is a phenomenon in the physical world and then mind is a phenomenon in the Cartesian distinction, which is between the Res Extensa and the Res Verins. This is the great splitting of the world into two parts. I remember Al Wong once said to me, we were talking about the yin yang symbol, and he said you know the interesting thing is not the yin or the yang, the interesting thing is the s shaped surface that runs between them. And that s shaped surface is a river of alchemical mercury. Now, where the alchemists saw this river of alchemical mercury is in the boundary between waking and sleeping. There is a place, not quite sleeping, not quite waking, and there there flows this river of alchemical mercury where you can project the contents of the unconscious and you can read it back to yourself. This kind of thinking is confounding to scientific thought where the effort is always to fix everything to a given identity and a given set of behaviors.

Now, the other hermetic perception that is well illustrated by just thinking for a moment about mercury is the notion, and this is central to all hermetic thinking, of the microcosm and the macrocosm. That somehow the great world, the whole of the cosmos is reflected in the mystery of man, meaning men and women, it's reflected in the mystery of the human mind/body interface. So, for an alchemist, it makes perfect sense to extrapolate from this internal, what we call internal psychological processes, to external processes in the world. That distinction doesn't exist for the alchemist, and let me tell you, the longer I live the more I am convinced that this is absolutely the truth.

The myth of our society is the existential myth that we are cast into matter, that we are lost in a universe that has no meaning for us, that we must make our meaning. This is what Sartre, Kierkegaard, all those people are saying, that we must make our meaning. It reaches its most absurd expression in Sartre's statement that nature is mute. I mean, this is as far from alchemical thinking as you can possibly get because for the alchemist nature was a great book, an open book to be read by putting nature through processes that revealed not only its inner mechanics, but the inner mechanics of the artifex (person performing experiment)-the person working upon the material, in other words, the alchemist.

Well, in other contexts I've talked about the importance of language and how our world is made of language and part of the problem in understanding alchemy is that the language is slipping out of our reach. We are so completely imbued with the Cartesian categories of the Res Verins, the world of thought, and the Res Extensia, the world of three dimensional space, and causality, and the conservation of matter and energy, and so forth that in order to do more than carry out a kind of scholarship of alchemy we have to create an alchemical language, or a field in which alchemical language can take place. Some of you may have been with me a couple of weeks ago in Malibu when Joan Halifax and I debated the roots of Buddhism and I think Joan deserves great credit for saying that Buddhism would never have taken root in America were it not for the psychedelic phenomenon. Not that Buddhism is psychedelic, it in fact is fairly touchy about that, but Buddhism would have gotten nowhere in America had not psychedelics created a context for Buddhist language to take root, And I wager that I would never have gotten to first base with proposing a weekend on alchemy at Esalen were it not understood that psychedelics have prepared people for the notion that mind and world can be pureed together like mercury and sulphur, like the Sophic waters, to create a new kind of understanding because otherwise modernity has fixed our minds in the category of Cartesian rationalism and so I will not claim, and do not in fact think it's so, that there was anything overtly psychedelic in the sense of pharmacologically-based about alchemy. When we look back through the alchemical literature there's very little evidence that it was pharmacologically driven. Only when you get to the very last ademptions of the alchemical impulse in someone like Paracelsus do you get the use of opium. But it is interesting that the great drugs of modern society were accidentally discovered by alchemists in their researches; distilled alcohol is a product of alchemical work and then, as I mentioned, opium was very heavily used by the Peracelsian school. But what they possessed was an ability to liquify their mental categories and then to project the contents of the mind onto these processes and read them back.

Now this is what made alchemy so fascinating to the Jungian school because the Jungians were discovering the unconscious and they realized, before Jung's involvement with alchemy, that the best material for psychotherapy to

work upon was dreams and mythology and these were the two poles of the data field that the discovery of the unconscious was working on. Well then Jung had the prescience to realize that alchemy, which to that point, as the gentleman over here said, had been dismissed as a naive effort to turn base metals into gold-this is the first fiction that you have to absolutely purge from your mind, the only alchemists who ever tried to turn base metals into gold were charlatans, the so-called puffers. They were called that not only for their exaggerated speech but for their use of bellows to drive their fires. Alchemy has always had a core of true adepts and then a surround of misguided souls and outright con artists who were trying to change base metals into gold. Now, it's interesting that science, in its naivety, in the 20th century has actually completed the program of psuedo-alchemy. You can, if you have a sufficiently powerful nuclear reactor, change lead into gold. I mean, the cost is staggering. It has no economic importance whatsoever but it can be done by bombarding gold with a sufficient amount of heavy particles. Lead, you can change it into gold, but this is not what the original intent was. In fact, when we look at the history of 20th century science we will see that, in a way, it's a misunderstanding of what the alchemical goals were to be and, one by one, it has done these things that were stated goals of the alchemists except that the alchemists always spoke in similies and in a secret control language that was symbolic.

O.k., now, another point that was brought up in going around the circle was the externalization of the soul and what we're trying to do in this weekend is study and talk about the idea of redeeming the world through magic. And how is this to be done? Well, the philosopher's stone is a complex of ideas that, no matter how you divide it, no matter how you slice it, it's very difficult to hold the pith essence of this concept, but what it really comes down to is the idea that spirit is somehow resident in matter in a very diffuse form. The goal of hermetic thinking and later alchemy is the concentration and redemption of this spirit, a focusing of it, a bringing of it together. This is an idea that was common in the Hellenistic world not only to hermetic thinking but also to Gnosticism.

Gnosticism is the idea that somehow the pure, holy, real light of being was scattered through a universe of darkness and of Saturnine power and that the goal is that by a process which we can call yogic or alchemical or meditative or moral/ethical, the light must be gathered and concentrated in the body and then somehow released and redeemed.

All esoteric traditions, East and West, talk about the creation of this body of light and we will not, in this weekend, talk very much about alchemy, non-western alchemy, Taoist and Vedic alchemy, but in those systems too the notion is about the creation of this vehicle of light. This is one metaphor for the externalization of the soul.

The philosopher's stone is another and I will challenge you to try and imagine what the achievement of the philosopher's stone would be like because it's in trying to think that way that you begin to dissolve the categories of the Cartesian trap. So, image for a moment an object, a material, which can literally do anything. It can move across categorical boundaries with no difficulty whatsoever. So what do I mean? I mean that if you possess the philosopher's stone and you were hungry, you could eat it. If you needed to go somewhere you could spread it out and sit on it and it would take you there. If you needed a piece of information, it would become the equivalent of a computer screen and it would tell you things. If you needed a companion, it would talk to you. If you needed to take a shower you could hold it over your head and water would pour out. Now, you see, this is an impossibility. That's right, it's a coincencia apositorum. It is something that behaves like imagination and matter without ever doing damage to the ontological status of one or the other. This sounds like pure pathology in the context of modern thinking because we expect things to stay still and be what they are and undergo the growth and degradation that is inimical to them, but no, the redemption of spirit and matter means the exteriorization of the human soul and the interiorization of the human body so that it is an image freely commanded in the imagination.

Imagination. I think this is the first time I've used this word this evening. The imagination is central to the alchemical opus because it is literally a process that goes on the realm of the imagination taken to be a physical dimension. And I think that we cannot understand the history that lies ahead of us unless we think in terms of a journey into the imagination. We have exhausted the world of three dimensional space. We are polluting it. We are overpopulating it. We are using it up. Somehow the redemption of the human enterprise lies in the dimension of the imagination. And to do that we have to transcend the categories that we inherit from a thousand years of science and Christianity and rationalism and we have to re-empower and re-encounter the mind and we can do this psychedelically, we can do this yogically, or we can do it alchemically and hermetically.

Now there is present in the world at the moment, or at least I like to think so, an impulse which I have named the archaic revival. What happens is that whenever a society really gets in trouble, and you can use this in your own life-when you really get in trouble-what you should do is say "what did I believe in the last sane moments that I experienced" and then go back to that moment and act from it even if you no longer believe it. Now in the Renaissance this happened. The scholastic universe dissolved. New classes, new forms of wealth, new systems of navigation, new scientific tools, made it impossible to maintain the fiction of the Medieval cosmology and there was a sense that the world was dissolving. Good alchemical word-dissolving. And in that moment the movers and shakers of that civilization reached backwards in time to the last sane moment they had ever known and they

discovered that it was Classical Greece and they invented classicism. In the 15th and 16th century the texts which had lain in monasteries in Syria and Asia Minor forgotten and untranslated for centuries were brought to the Florentine council by people like Gemistos Placosp and others and translated and classicism was born-its laws, its philosophy, its aesthetics. We are the inheritors of that tradition but it is now, once again, exhausted and our cultural crisis is much greater. It is global. It is total. It involves every man, woman and child on this planet, every bug, bird and tree is caught up in the cultural crisis that we have engendered. Our ideas are exhausted-the ideas that we inherit out of Christianity and its half-brother science, or its bastard child science. So, what I'm suggesting is that an archaic revival needs to take place and it seems to be well in hand in the revival of Goddess worship and shamanism and partnership but notice that these things are old-10,000 years or more old-but there was an unbroken thread that, however thinly drawn, persists right up to the present.

So the idea of this weekend is to show the way back to the high magic of the late Paleolithic, to show that there were intellectual traditions, there were minority points of view that kept the faith, that never allowed it to die. And, to my mind, this alchemical, hermetic, Gnostic, Egyptian, Caldean thread is the thread and if we unravel it with sufficient care and attention then we can build a bridge from the otherwise nearly incomprehensible high magic of the late Paleolithic. We can get it as near to ourselves as John Dee, who died in 1604. We can discover that it's no further away from us than the beginning of the 30 years war and, for my money, after that, it gets pretty mucked up. I mean, after Ulias Levy, who's already waffling, I'm not very interested in the occultism of the 17th, 18th and 19th century but it's not necessary because scholarship gives us the Caldean oracles, the Trismegistic Hymns, the library at Nag Hammadi, and so forth and so on. So my impulse is to, in the most austere sense, repopularize, reintroduce this kind of thinking so that people can live it out. Then, step, by step, we can evolve our language and evolve our understanding to make our way back to the garden, back to Eden.

It's occurred to me recently, you know it's said that Christ opened the doors to paradise, yes, but he closed the doors to Eden and paradise is a very airy place where everybody sits around on clouds strumming their lyres. I think that what we want to do is make our way back to the alchemical garden. That's where our roots are. That's where meaning is. Meaning lies in the confrontation of contradiction-the coincidentia oppositorum. That's what we really feel, not these rational schemas that are constantly beating us over the head with the "thou shalt" and "thou should." but rather a recovery of the real ambiguity of being and an ability to see ourselves as at once powerful and weak, noble and ignoble, future-oriented, past-facing. We each need to become Janus-based(?) and to incorporate into ourselves the banished contradictions of being that so haunt the enterprise of science. We can leave that behind and when we do we reclaim authentic being. And authentic being, make no mistake about it, is what alchemical gold really is. That's what they're talking about-authentic being.

(question from the group): So right now we're lead?

That's right, we're Saturnine and we'll talk about Saturn and Pluto and all of that. Yes, tomorrow we'll talk about the stages of the alchemical opus and though the stages are many and multifarious, it all begins in what is called the negro, the blackening, the depths of the leaded, Saturnine, chaotic, fixed place. And that's where we have been left by science and modernity and so forth and so on. That's where the alchemist loves to begin. That's where he or she stokes the fire and begins the dissolutio et coagulatio that leads to the appearance of the stone.

I'll show you some books and this is by no means exhaustive. The literature on hermeticism and alchemy is vast and I could have brought 5 or 6 boxes of this size from my own library. This a smattering. It doesn't mean that what I show you is the best. It simply tries to spread over a large area. Oh, someone put this here. This is a new novel that's just been published by Lindsay Clark called *The Chemical Wedding* and I see last week it was number 10 on the New York Times's best sellers list which is astonishing for such an obscure subject. It's a retelling of a famous incident in alchemy in the 19th century when a woman named Mary Alice Datwood, who had a very, very close relationship to her father, Dr. South, and the two of them worked together, she on a text, he on a long poem and to make a long story short, eventually they decided to destroy both the poem and the book feeling that they had said too much and given the secret away-at least that's one version. So this is fictionalized retelling of that incident intercut with a modern cast of characters very clearly modelled on the poet Robert Graves. So if you like to absorb your information in a fictionalized form, this is a wonderful book. John Borman the movie director recently optioned this book-the guy who made *"The Emerald Forest"* and *"Excalibur"* so we may have an alchemical movie downstream, a year or two.

A number of compendiums of alchemical texts have been published over the centuries and if you wish to study alchemy you have to obtain these. If you're fortunate enough to read French you should read Vesputiare and Berthelo. They collected alchemical texts into encyclopedic-sized volumes but unfortunately these have never really come into English. One that did come into English is the *Museum Hermeticum Amplificarum et Theatrum*, I think, which A.E. Waite, who some of you may know for his role in the Golden Dawn, collected. There are about 40

alchemical texts and all the greats are in here: Lull, Vilanova, Michael Maier, Basil Valentine, Kramer, Edward Kelly and so on and so forth.

Lecture 2, part 1

The place to begin, I think, is obviously with the question "Who is Hermes Trismegistus?" What are we talking about here? I mean, this sounds so incredibly exotic to people. The Renaissance had the concept of what it called the Presqui Poaloque (sp?) and if my Latin and Greek irritates you, you have to understand you're dealing with a boy from a coal mining town in Colorado, so I do mangle these things. The Presqui Paoloque were Orpheus, Moses, and primarily Hermes Trismegistus. Hermes Trismegistus was the primary source, from the point of view of the Renaissance, of this whole mysterious tradition and, you recall from last night's lecture, this is based on a misunderstanding. The Renaissance believed that Hermes Trismegistus was older than Moses. We know now, thanks to Issac and Marik Casaubon, two philologists of the early 17th century, that definitely the Hermetic corpus was composed between the first and second centuries after Christ. The method of the Casaubons was to examine the philosophical language of the Corpus Hermeticum and show that there were words and phrases there that were post-Platonic and derivative of philosophers whose dates we have fully in hand.

Now, if you go to an occult bookstore you will find that, to this date, this error persists. There are people who still want to claim that this stuff is older than dyanstic Egypt. There are even books, I was in Shambala weeks ago, claiming to teach you how to change lead into gold. Well, from my point of view this just evokes a small smile. The old errors persist. The Puffers are still at it. But what Hermes Trismegistus is is a character who appears in many guises in these hermetic dialogs. The hermetic hymns are usually couched in the form of dialogs between Hermes and his son Thoth and Thoth takes the position of the uninitiated ingenue who is sitting at the feet of the master. Thoth asks questions: what is the true nature of the world, what is the true nature of man, and Hermes answers and the general form of these texts, with exceptions, because there are 20 of them, is an intellectual dialog which builds to an ecstatic revelation and then in the wake of the ecstatic revelation there is a hymn of praise to Hermes Trismegistus. Trismegistus means thrice-blessed and is sometimes called Hermes Triplex to distinguish this Hermes from all the other Hermes of early, middle and late Greek thinking. Hermes is of course the messenger god, the god of scribes. The reason this Ibis-headed being holding a staff is embossed on the cover of each of these books is because this is how Hermes Trismegistus, Thoth Hermes was imagined. He was associated with the scribe god of the Egyptian pantheon.

The two distinguishing factors that stand out, at least for me, that I think you need to incorporate into your thinking about hermeticism, two very important concepts. The first is the divinity of human beings-an extraordinarily radical idea in the context of late Hellenistic thinking. We all operate under the spell of the concept of the fall of man. Man is an inferior being, errors were made in the Garden of Eden and that we are far, far from the nature of divinity. All magic, and all magic in the West is derivative from this tradition, takes the position that man is a divine being, men and women are divine beings. The Corpus Hermeticum actually refers to man as God's brother and this is a double-edged perception. It gives tremendous dignity to the human enterprise but it also raises the possibility of the error of pride and hubris.

In the Renaissance, Marcello Ficino boiled this notion down to the aphorism "man is the measure of all things." And you may notice that this is the position of science, that man is the measure of all things, that it is up to us, we can decide the course of the cosmos. All magic stems from this position. This is why the church was so concerned to stamp out magic-because it assigns man an importance that the church would rather reserve for deity. So that's the first great division between Christian thinking and hermetic thinking. An entirely different conception of what human beings are and when we get into the text, I'll read you some of these passages.

Now, the second distinguishing factor, and notice that position on man empowers tremendous freedom, man is the measure of all things, the second distinguishing factor in hermeticism is the belief that we can control fate, that we can escape from cosmic fate. The late Hellenistic mindset, and what you get in the Gnostics, is the belief that because of astrology, because of the stars, we are subject to control from these exterior forces. In most Gnostic thinking the whole concern is to somehow evade what is called the hemarmeny (sp?), cosmic fate. And in the Gnostic systems, the only way it can be done is by ascending through the shells of cosmic, ordering forces-the archons, the planets, the planetary demons, and so forth and so on, and then beyond the hemarmeny, which is actually thought of as a place in space that you burst through when you transcend fate. What the hermetic thought is is that these fates become personified as the decans, as stellar demons, and then it is held that there is a magic, a magical system, which is possible where you can call these archangels to your side and work with them and not be subject to the inevitable working of the cosmic machinery and this burst like a revelation over the late Hellenistic

world because there was such philosophical and emotional and political exhaustion that this comes, this is a counterpoint to the message of the New Testament, which is a similar message, that you can be saved in the body, that you can escape the inevitable dissolution and degradation laid upon us by time. So, these are the two distinguishing factors: the divinity of man and the possibility of using magic to evade the machinery of fate. So, I want to read some of the Corpus Hermeticum to you to give you the flavor of it, but before I do, I want to say something about the history of these texts. You're all familiar, more or less I'm sure, with Apuleius' The Golden Ass, which is a novel of initiation which is late Roman. Apuleius also put together what is called the Asclepius and the Asclepius is true hermetic literature that was not lost. It was the only one that was available throughout the Dark and Middle ages. All the rest was lying untranslated in Syrian Monasteries until Gemistus Plethon in 1490 brought these manuscripts to Florence, to the court of the Di Medicis and then the translation project began. The only other hermetic material that was accessible throughout the high Gothic period was a book of magic called the Picatrix. And the Picatrix was probably written in the 1200's although this elicits screams of dissent from the burning-eyed faction. But reason dictates that we consider Picatrix 12th century so only the Asclepius and the Picatrix represented this strain of thought before the 1460's. And the importance of hermetic thinking can be seen by the fact that Gemistus Platho brought Plato to the Florentine council as well as Hermes Trismegistus. And when Marcello Ficino sat down to do this translation work Cosumo Di Medici said "Plato can wait, I'm getting old. You do the Hermetic Corpus first. That's much more important. We'll sort out this Plato business in a few years." And so it was done. It was completed in 1493 and in 1494 Cosumo died so he never saw the translations of Plato but felt that the Corpus Hermeticum was more important. I mention this to show you the importance that was attached to this stuff.

Here is one of the key passages on man's nature. This is from Book one of the Corpus Hermeticum: "But mind the father of all, he who is life and light gave birth to man, a being like to himself and he took delight in man as being his own offspring for man was very goodly to look on, bearing the likeness of his father. With good reason then did God take delight in man for it was God's own form that God took delight in and God delivered over to man all things that had been made." This is the basis of the Ficinian statement man is the measure of things. "And man took station in the Maker's sphere and observed the things made by his brother who was set over the region of fire. And having observed the Maker's creation in the region of fire he willed to make things for his own part also. And his father gave permission having in himself all the workings of the administrators." This is a reference to the angel hierarchy "And the administrators took delight in him and each of them gave him a share of his own nature." So man is the brother of God and a creature at home with the angels. This idea is echoed in the Asclepius which you'll recall was available throughout the Middle Ages. "The range of man is yet wider than that of the demons" meaning the angels - this term is transposable in its hermetic thought "The individuals of the human kind are diverse and of many characters. They, like the demons, come from above and, entering into fellowship with other individuals they make for themselves many and intimate connections with all other kinds" and then the famous passage "man is an honor then, Asclepius, honor and reverence to such a being. Man takes on him the attributes of a god as though he were himself a god. And he is familiar with the demonkind for he comes to know that he is sprung from the same source as they. And strong in the assurance of that in him which is divine, he scorns the merely human part of his own nature. How far more happily blended are the properties of man than those of other beings. He is linked to the gods inasmuch as there is in him a divinity akin to theirs. He scorns that part of his own being which makes him a thing of earth and all else with which he finds himself connected to by heaven's ordering he binds to himself with the tie of his affection."

So this is an incredibly radical conception of what it means to be human. So radical that it is unwelcome even in the present context. Notice the modern feeling of this stuff. This is not biblical rhetoric. This is philosophical discourse as we know it and carry it out ourselves. This is a passage on the adept and initiation. Let me see who's speaking here, Thoth speaks to Pimondres, this is book one, "But tell me this too, said I, God said 'let the man who has mind in him recognize himself' but have not all men mind?" And then Pimondres replies "Oh man, said mind to me speak not so, I even mind come to those men who are holy and good and pure and merciful and my coming is a succor to them and forthwith they recognize all things and win the father's grace by loving worship and give thanks to him praising and hymning him with hearts uplifted to him in filial affection." Again the reference to being God's brother in filial affection. "And before they give up the body to death which is proper to it they loathe the bodily senses knowing what manner of work the senses do." This introduces the theme of asceticism.

Like the Gnostics, there is in much of hermetic literature a kind of horror of the earth, a desire to ascend and to get away from it. Scott makes the distinction between what he calls pessimistic Gnosis and optimistic Gnosis. And within the 20 texts of the Corpus Hermeticum you get vacillation on this point. In some cases the Mandaean, the Cebian(?) tendency is there and the world soul is invoked and the whole of creation is seen as a living being involved in this soteriological process, this process of salvational mechanics through magic. In other texts this Gnostic horror of matter is strongly stressed. It's very clear that the Hellenistic mind was ambivalent on this point.

Even as we are ambivalent on this point. It's a real question, are we here to be the caretakers of the earth or are we strangers in the universe and is our task to return to a forgotten and hidden home no trace of which can be found in the Saturnine world of matter. It's very hard to have it both ways. You're going to have to take a position on that and these people were forced into the same dilemma. There's no middle ground between those two positions and so that dichotomy, that conundrum, haunted a lot of hermetic thinking.

Here is the hermetic creation myth. This is book three, paragraphs one through a few, and you'll see the comparison and similarities with the Christian creation myth but with extraordinary differences. "There was darkness in the deep and water without form and there was a subtle breath, intelligent, which permeated the things in chaos with divine power. Then, when all was yet undistinguished and unwrought, there was shed forth holy light and the elements came into being. All things were divided one from another and the lighter things were parted off on high, the fire being suspended aloft so that it rose unto the air and the heavier things sank down and sand was deposited beneath the watery substance and the dry land was separated out from the watery substance and became solid. And the fiery substance was articulated with the gods therein and heaven appeared with its seven spheres and the gods, visible in starry forms, with all their constellations and heaven revolved and began to run its circling course riding upon the divine air. And each god by his several powers set forth that which he was bidden to put forth. And there came forth four-footed beasts and creeping things and fishes and winged birds and grass and every flowering herb, all having seed in them according to their diverse natures for they generated within themselves the seed by which their races should be renewed." And then it goes on to describe the birth of man.

This kind of thinking is what alchemy seized upon in its ambitions. One way of thinking of what alchemy came to attempt is, the thinking went like this - since man is God's brother, the purpose of man is to intercede in time and it was believed that ores, precious metals and things like this grew in the earth. It was a thorough going theory of evolution that reached right down into the organic realm. It was thought that gold deposits in the earth would actually replenish themselves over time. It's passages like this that give permission for that kind of thinking. In line with that, we're now in book four and remember the tone changes slightly from book to book, they were, after all, written over a 300 year period by various people.

"You must understand that God is pre-existent, ever existent, and that he alone made all things and created by his will the things that are. And when the creator had made the ordered universe, he willed to set and order the earth also and so he sent down man, a mortal creature made in the image of an immortal being, to be an embellishment of the divine body for it is man's function" - here it comes, the purpose of man according to book four - "for it is man's function to contemplate the works of god and for this purpose he was made, that he might view the universe with wondering awe and come to know its maker. Man has this advantage over all other living beings, that he possess mind and speech. Now speech, my son, God imparted to all men but mind he did not impart to all. Not that he grudged it to any, for the grudging temper does not start from heaven above, but comes from being here below in the souls of those men who are devoid of mind." This introduces the concept of an elect, or a perfectee, a hierarchy of human accomplishment and understanding and this is also basic to Gnosticism. It's not for everyone, they're saying, it's for the pure of heart and what pure of heart means depends on the school you're looking at. For some, it was mathematical accomplishment. For others, it was contact with the logos, for others it was the ability to resist the temptations of the senses. But there was always the sense of the higher and lower possibilities within the human experience. Questions?

I'm still back in the last lecture we shared on plant intelligence. So I'm listening to all this divinity of man and wondering where the position of the plant realm or the planning(?) was. There was one section where you read that, so...

Yes. This is the opening of book 12 and this is a heavy Mandaean sensitivity, this sensitivity to life. This whole cosmos, and notice how this transcends even the Buddhist point of view because in Buddhism plants have no soul, this is a tremendous failure in the Buddhist perception as far as I'm concerned, o.k., this is book 12 - "Now this whole cosmos, which is a great god and an image of he who is greater and is united with him and maintains its order in accordance with that will, is one mass of life and there is not anything in the cosmos, nor has been through all time, from the first foundation of the universe, neither in the whole, nor among the several things contained within it that is not alive. There is not, and has never been, and never will be in the cosmos, anything that is dead. For it was the father's will that the cosmos, as long as it exists, should be a living being and therefore it must needs be a God also. How then, my son, could there be dead things in that which is a God, in that which is an image of the father, in that which is one mass of life. Deathness is corruption and corruption is destruction. How then can any part of that which is incorruptible be corrupted or any part of that which is a God be destroyed." And there are other passages. Ah, this is a good one. This is book 18, "For as the sun, who nurtures all vegetation also gathers the first fruits of the produce with his rays as it were with mighty hands, plucking the sweetest odors of the plants, even so we too,

having received into our own souls, which are plants of heavenly origin, the efflux of God's wisdom must in return use his service for all which springs up in us."

Now, this conception that the human soul is a plant is a unique idea. I don't know of another tradition, Those of us who were in Ojai heard Johannes Wilbur(sp?) talk about how, among the Amazon Indians, the wural(sp?), men actually marry trees. They actually take trees as their wives, a tree, and it is a man's job throughout his life to take care of this tree with the same tenderness and affection which he lavishes on a living wife. This is a more radical conception than that. This is the conception that the most important part of us is a plant. It reminds me of the joke that I occasionally make in these groups, the notion that animals are something invented by plants to carry them from place to place. Well, according to this, that's right on. So, the sensitivity to the vegetative nature is so great that it raises the plant to be the pith essence, the soul of man, the brother of God! So you see the valuation of the vegetative universe is of an extremely radical type.

The upper echelon of humanity that was given the mind, was that predetermined at birth or can someone develop a mind?

No, it is not predetermined. It is something that is acquired through cultivation of a relationship to, in the hermetic language, nous, the higher mind, and in the Gnostic language logos, the informing spirit. Nothing is predetermined in the hermetic system because through magic we can overcome the energies of cosmic fate. This is the great good news of hermeticism, that we are not subject to fate. We should probably talk a little about this logos concept. This is something which seems very alien to modern people unless they are psychedelically sophisticated. The logos was the sine qua non of Hellenistic religion and what it was was an informing voice that spoke in your head or heart, wherever you want to put it, and it told you the right way to live. You get this idea even in the later Old Testament where it's said that the truth of the heart can be known. It's no great dilemma to know good from evil, you simply inquire of your heart, "is it good or evil?" and you will discover a voice which will tell you and all the great thinkers of this Greco-Hellenistic period sought and cultivated the logos. Plato had his demon. Everyone sought the informing voice of the nous, that's what it's called in Neo-Platonism and then in hermeticism and then in Gnosticism, the logos.

For modern people, well no, for me, the only way I've ever had this experience is through the presence of psychedelic substances and then it is just crystal clear, there's just no ambiguity about it. Somehow, it's possible for an informing voice to come into cognition that knows more than you do. It is a connection with the collective unconscious, I suppose, that is convivial, conversational, that just talks to you about the nature of being in the world and the nature of your being in the world. It's puzzling to us because it seems so remote, for us a voice in the head or the heart is pathology and you may know the famous story of, in the first century, some fishermen were off the shore of the island of Argos in the Mediterranean Sea and they heard a great voice from the sky and the voice said, "great Pan is dead." Well, people like Lactantius and Eusebius, these patristic fathers, the people who built Christianity, who took the Gospels and turned them into a world religion, they took this annunciation from the sky of the death of Pan as the annunciation of the change of the Aeon.

By the Aeon, I mean these roughly 2,000 year periods that are associated with the equinoctial procession. Do you all understand how this works? That over 26,000 years, the helical rising of the solstitial sun slips slowly from one house to another and around AD100, there's argument because these things are never precise, the age of Pisces began and the previous Aeon ceased and the cosmic machinery, the great gears of the largest scale of the cosmic machinery, clicked past a certain point and into the age of Pisces and this was then taken as very fortuitous for Christianity because Christ was associated with the sign of the fish and it was seen as a Piscean movement. I believe that it's entirely possible that the logos in that rough moment in time fell silent and it has been silent for 2,000 years so what we have is the exegesis of text and Noetic archeology of the sort we're carrying on here. Now, a phenomenon as trivial and hyped on(?) as channeling can be seen as the reawakening of the logos. The long night of Piscean silence is ending and the spirit of nous is again moving in the world, speaking in the minds of the adepts and the hierophants who have the techniques and the will to connect with this stuff. I don't know how I got off on that. But obviously this kind of literature can be seen as the last message from the fading logos. The last statements before the change of the Aeons rendered this control language very difficult and non-intuitive and somewhat incomprehensible.

Reading...you broke off, and I had a puzzlement about the use of the word mind. What, in this context, does this refer to?

It's Scott's translation of this word nous. It simply means this universal, permeating intelligence.

The statement there is that it is only available to an elite through...

Through asceticism and desire, intent. There are proscriptions, they lived a life of purity, although their definitions of purity varied widely.

Man is brother of God and yet we have to earn it. This seems kind of a denial of that.

That's right. This persists right up to this moment. The quote I always love is from Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*. Hobbes was the great theoretician of modern government and social systems and he was basically a paranoid S.O.B. and he says in the *Leviathan* "man to man is likened to an errant beast and man to man is likened to a god." It's absolutely true, you know, our noblest aspirations and our most hideously dehumanizing activities take place in the context of our relationship to other people. This is what the alchemists were trying to do - separate the gold from the dross. They were trying to take the errant beast, and when we look at alchemical art we will see dragons, dogs, pigs, we will see the errant beast and we will see the angelic beings that are trying to be separated out of our nature. This is within each and every one of us. Man to man is likened to a god and man to man is likened to an errant beast. This question has to do with mind. According to my understanding of some of the Platonic tradition and Neo-Platonic thought, this has to do with the divided line in Plato. You can divide that line...into five stages of knowing. You start with the senses as being agency or avenue, knowing something about something like contact...most external form of knowledge...the level above the senses is designated as the instincts, it's an inactive knowing, in that sense a biologically active knowing that we have. The third stage is described as sometimes estimation, this is, an approximation(?), yes, this characterized mainly sort of logical activity and then the next level of cognitive activity is reason and this reason is not the type of reason we normally engage in, it's a very different, a very creative type of activity. Above the reason is what they call intuition or intellect or nous and that's put in as the fifth... And would that be revelation?

Reason is a creative activity and one can generate and think things through with creative ability. One goes through activity and stages of the activity and things(?) transpire over time and one comes to complete understanding of the thing one is trying to grasp and sometimes that's described as discursive activity although the logical activity is discursive. So you're moving through a process...pieces, the nous or the intellect of the higher mind grasp things in totality. It doesn't engage in...

In reseasonation(?). You raise an important point which further complicates the picture, but it's how it was, folks. The reference here is to Neo-Platonism which is a kind of parallel tradition to what we're talking about. Plato had at least a couple of phases in the evolution of his thinking. The young Plato is a rational thinker but the later Plato, apparently after he fell under the influence of Pythagorean schools, becomes a full-blown mystic and then in the late Roman empire, almost a thousand years after Plato, we have to remember, in our minds these people get squeezed together like they could all have dinner together, but Plotinus is as far from Plato as we are from King Connaught so you have to bear in mind the scale of history. But, so 900 - 1,000 years after Plato a Byzantine school of philosophy arose around Porphyry, Plotinus and Proclus as the major exponents and they worked with the late Plato and elaborated a beautiful mystical cosmology. This is what I did a workshop on here a year ago and many of those ideas and terms parallel conceptually the stuff in the *Corpus Hermeticum* and if you're of a certain intellectual bent you may find yourself more comfortable with the Neo-Platonists than this. This tends to be emotional, evocative, poetic and while there's great poetry in Plotinus there's also very tight thinking that goes along with it. And there are other traditions, I'm making it simple for you, there was a whole tradition called the *Caldean oracles* and this was a collection of 100 or more fragments all of which were the great commentaries of Eusebius in 30 volumes. The *Amblicus*(?) is one of them. That's all lost, we don't have that material and it is in a way the most mysterious of these traditions because it just didn't survive and it may be that that, the *Caldean Oracles* is the missing link to push this stuff several centuries back into time because the *Caldean Oracles* may actually be pre-Platonic. There's considerable evidence of that. But these are very arcane matters. You have to give yourself over to a lifetime of learning these languages and the philology of these languages to penetrate this stuff.

Lecture 2, part 2

Neo Platonism was Byzantine, basically Constantinople. The *Hermetic Corpus* was largely Alexandrian. There were also Christian Platonists in Alexandria. There were certain centers: Rome, Alexandria, Byzantium, Heliopolis in Egypt was a cult site that was maintained for a very long time. If you're interested in this stuff but don't like to absorb it this way, Flaubert, of all people, the Flaubert of *Madame Bovary*, wrote an incredible novel called *The Temptation of St. Anthony* in which he describes second century Alexandria in a fictionalized form and gives you a real flavor for the intellectual complexity of the Alexandrian world. Christianity had not yet gelled, it was many things, so you not only have Gnostics of five or six schools: Simonists, Valentinians, Basilideans and so forth, but you also have Christians, a numbers of cults calling themselves Christians, who were in fierce competition. Docetists, Montanists, and later Nestorians. There were Gymnosophists from India, people who were actually carrying yogic doctrines into the Mediterranean world, plus you then have all the surviving cults of the older

Egyptian strata, the Cults of Isis, and Seville, and Dionysus, and Adonis, it just goes on and on. The richness of this intellectual world is very, there's nothing comparable in our experience and it shows the passion with which people were trying to understand the dilemma of a dying world because this is what they were confronted with. The intellectuals of the empire could feel it all slipping through their hands. Flaubert gives a wonderful picture of this. Flaubert has a very romantic streak. It's like smoking hashish, reading this book - the attention to fabrics, architecture, food and odor. And because the subject matter is the temptation of St. Anthony, it's an excuse to describe these temptations in all their sensual richness and erotic kinkiness. It's a wonderful way to absorb this material.

Somebody else raised the point of the elitism, of an elite group of people. And if one considers a society like the one you had in Alexandria, or some of the other centers, the only people who really had access to this were first of all people who had money and who were well educated and could read so already you had an elite group...

Yes, definitely. What survives from a civilization is its literatures and these literatures are usually the production of an elite. We have to remember, don't have any illusions about the Roman Empire. I always think of the wonderful description, I don't even know why it's there, Boris Pasternak, in *Doctor Zhivago*, goes off on a riff about Rome and he describes it as a bargain basement on three floors. This was an empire that lived by human cruelty. It was on the backs of slaves that this airy, intellectual speculation was based. It was a tremendously pluralistic society but that pluralism was maintained by standing armies of enormous size and policies of occupation of enormous cruelty. Because of our relationship to the Christian tradition we're aware of such things as the Zealot revolt of 69 and the reign of Herod Antiochus in Jerusalem, but that was just one little corner of the empire and in Armenia, in Gaul, in Spain, in North Africa, military governments were carrying out outrageous suppressions of native populations, it was not a pretty time to be alive. And what comes down to us then is the yearning to escape. No wonder these people saw the earth as a cesspool and a trap because that's what it was for them. Our own age is very similar. We do not have slavery but we suffer under propaganda - mass manipulation of ideas and the degradation of exploitation of the third world on a scale the Roman Empire couldn't even dream of. So, there is a great affinity.

If any of you are interested in this kind of thing, I highly recommend a book by Hans Jonas called *The Phenomenon of Life*. It's a book of philosophical essays but there's one essay called "Gnosticism and the Modern Temper" in which he shows that once you take Gnosticism and dump all the angels and all the star demons and all the colorful bricabrac of late Roman thinking what you have is a thorough going existentialism completely compatible with Jean Paul Sartre, Jean Genet, and the kind of intellectual despair that characterized the post WWII generation in Europe. Heidegger is thorough going Gnostic in his intentionality, it's just that the language is modern and stripped of this magical thinking and by being stripped of this magical thinking in a way modern, the modern resentment(?) of that state of mind is even more hopeless and disempowering.

Fortunately, I think we're moving out of the shadow of that, but I'm 44 years old, I grew up reading those people and it made my adolescence much harder than it needed to be. I mean, my god, there wasn't an iota of hope to be found anywhere. That's why, for me, psychedelics broke over that intellectual world like a tidal wave of revelation. I quoted to you last night Jean Paul Sartre's statement that nature is mute. Now I see this as an obscenity almost, an intellectual crime against reason and intuition. It's the absolute antithesis of the logos and much of our world is ruled by men, older than I am, who are fully connected into that without any question and they just think that the rest of this is just namby pamby ecological softheartedness of some sort. There is no openness to the power of Bios, to the fact of a living cosmos. This is what Rupert Sheldrake is always trying to say. The reinvestiture of spirit into matter, the rebirth of the world soul is a necessary concomitant to what we understand about the real nature of the world. In a way, the theory of evolution, which was born in the 1850s, was the beginning of the turning of the tide because even though the first 100 years of evolutionary theory was fantastically concerned to eliminate teleology, eliminate purpose, nevertheless nobody ever understood that except the hardcore evolutionists. To everyone else, evolution meant ascent to higher form. I once heard someone say "if it doesn't have to do with genes, it ain't evolution." Well, that's a tremendously limited view of what evolution is. The inorganic world is evolving, the organic world is evolving and there the currency is genes but also the social and intellectual world of human beings is evolving and there the currency is not genes but means so that idea carries with it the implication of ascent to higher form and correctly broadened and understood becomes permission to optimism and to the kind of hope that these folks were trying to articulate.

...the concept of mind as something that is attainable and not necessary is a separation and therefore for me it's a lie and so I want ...I don't know, I assume there are many different definitions of mind, I don't mean functions of mind, I mean definitions of mind, and I'm toying now with the notion of meshing of the notion of mind and the notion of logos. For logos is, and it seems to me that mind is, if it is available through trial then we're back in a separation...and this is to me a false separation

Yes, you're right, but it's a separation necessary for philosophical discourse, that's why philosophical discourse is not the top of the mountain. Language itself is the process of making distinctions that are false. This is why all language is a lie. This is why the ultimate truth lies in something unspeakable but the ascent to the philosophical is through this kind of philosophical analysis.

Language is only the vehicle...

Well it's the vehicle but eventually there's no road and you have to park the vehicle and get out and walk, and that's the journey. Plotinus, the great Neo Platonist has this wonderful phrase. He calls the mystical experience "the flight of the alone to the alone." I love this image. It's so uncompromising and it's about as true as something can be and still move in the realm of language, because it's saying: finally words fall away and finally there is only that which cannot be said. Many of you who've stuck with me know that I love to quote this poem by this obscure poet who died in the trenches in France in the first World War, Trumble Stickney, and he wrote a poem called "Meaning's Edge" and the punch line goes like this "I look over meaning's edge and feel the dizziness of the things you have not said," and I think that every one of these weekends, this is the effort - to carry you to the edge of an abyss and then push you over into the dizziness of the things unsaid and they will always be unsaid.

Wittgenstein, God bless him, had the concept of the unspeakable. He said "philosophy operates in the realm of the unspeakable but eventually we must confront that which cannot be said." The dizziness of things unsaid, and there's where real authenticity then flows back into the world of community and speech but it comes from a place of utter silence and unsayability. How could it be otherwise? What hubris would it be to expect that the small-mouthed noises of English could encompass being. That's a primary error that all philosophy chooses to make at the beginning of it's enterprise in order to set up shop at all. No, these are lower-dimensional slices of a reality that is ultimately unitary, ineffable, unspeakable, and dazzling.

Philosophical discourse is verbal and mental masturbation?

Absolutely. Masturbation, because it's, there's a pun here, it's autopoetic, it is completely out of yourself, there is no union with the other and the other is what you're always trying to get to. The other is a common term in these literatures. The other is that which cannot be fully known. I always like to quote the British enzymologist JBS Haldane, who made a wonderful statement. He said, "the universe is not only stranger than we suppose, it is stranger than we can suppose." That's a dizzying perception. It's one thing to think it's very strange. It's another thing to think it's stranger than you can suppose. You may suppose and suppose and suppose and you'll fall so short of the mark that it's absurd. That's what it means to be in the presence of a mystery. The modern word mystery translates out to unsolved problem. That's not what a mystery is. A mystery is not an unsolved problem. A mystery is a mystery and ratiocination(?) can exhaust itself and make no progress with it and that's what's at the core of our being and that was what was at the core of this ancient perception. These were thoroughly modern people. They were shoved up against the same things that tug at our hearts and our minds and our souls and beyond that there's not a whole hell of a lot that you can say about it.

I just wanted to add that the idea of the earth as a living organism makes an appearance in psychology at the end of the last century with Gustave Fechner who survives in footnotes of textbooks as the father of experimental psychology. I read a book about the soul life of plants also and that whole part of his work is utterly ignored...influenced anybody but William Jameson

This is an idea that will not die but it's practitioners end up in footnotes. They do not have a happy fate. Certainly Henri Birkson, with his idea of the *elan vitale*, this is an effort to preserve the idea of a world soul and yet the fate of Birkson, his influence on modern philosophy is certainly minimal. Alfred North Whitehead is my great favorite. I think that he's the cat's pajamas and he has this idea of the living cosmos - that life and vitality extend right down to the electron yet in spite of his mathematical contributions, the fact that he wrote *Principia Mathematica* with Bertrand Russell, Whitehead is not taught. I think there's one university in this country where they take him seriously. Modern philosophy is a desert for my money. Who cares about it? Nobody cares about it. Who's living their life according to the perceptions of modern philosophy. Nobody, as far as I can see. But yes, vitalism was this impulse in biology that persisted right up to the 1920s with embryologists like Dreche and his school and mechanical biology has been at great pains to suppress that. That's why Rupert Sheldrake is such a breath of fresh air, because he can be seen as a person carrying the vitalist message back into science. His new book on the greening of science and nature is nothing more than a manifesto for the re-recognition of the presence of the world soul.

What about the Native Americans, their philosophy?

Yes, well, Aboriginal people, not only the Native Americans but the tribes of the Amazon, if you live next to nature this is such an overwhelming perception that it's never called into question. But you see we, most of us, trace our civilization to desert dwellers who invented agriculture which lead to surpluses so then we had to build walled enclosures to defend our surpluses from starving neighbors and we're talking 6,000 BC at Jericho for this kind of stuff. So, we have been cut off from the natural mind longer than any other group of people on earth. This is how

we're able to carry out the demonic, in the negative sense, reconstruction of the world that we have. If there is a sin then we have sinned. Robert Oppenheimer said beyond all rational argument the physicists have known sin and it's because they reached into the heart of matter without reverence and their greatest trick was to call down the light that burns at the center of stars and they call it down to the test centers of the deserts and onto the heads of our enemies, if necessary. But this is a cosmic sin, it's an abomination. It's the story of Western Civilization.

The first great error was the urbanization, well, I don't know, the first great error, the invention of agriculture was a pretty staggering bad turn, then urbanization and then a piece of bad luck which we didn't need to befall us was the invention of the phonetic alphabet. And with the invention of the phonetic alphabet we moved away from symbolism and lost even the symbolic connection to the world and that happened with the evolution of Demotic Greek and even earlier languages - linear A and B and that kind of stuff. McLuhan talks a lot about this. We live in a universe so alienated that we can barely conceive of the way back but hopefully. Archeology is a wonderful thing. We are actually digging into the stratigraphic layers of our past and reconstructing these ancient intellectual machines and setting their gears going and seeing how it works and hopefully when we recover, we're like amnesiacs, people who don't remember who they are or where they came from, we just wander mumbling through the streets of our cities foraging through garbage cans and frightening other people and yet if we could wake up, and archeology and the rebirth of an awareness of the Goddess and the pushing of science to the point where it's irrational foundations become clear - this is all part of an awakening, an archaic revival which will then make us part of the living world and not a disease, a parasitic force upon it.

It struck me that one comment you read there talked about the creation of the world. It said the elements were brought forth and at first I was thinking earth, air, fire, and water but I was thinking in relationship to some other...of life that...being, life, and intellect and being, life, and intellect are what that come into manifestation from the one who pours forth the world and creates the world and those are the first elements that come into existence - being, life, and intellect. Life itself is an element of the cosmos as it were. It's an irreducible aspect of things and you're paying respect to the fact that life is an omnipresent thing in the foundation of things. It's one of the elements. I think that in one of the other things I read it said that everything that exists, that ever has been, that ever will be, is alive.

I'll read a bit more of this. This refers to the theme I touched on a little bit last night of the importance of the imagination and how I think that our destiny lies in the imagination. "God is ever existent and makes manifest all else. But he himself is hidden because he is ever existent. He manifests all things but is not manifested. He is not himself brought into being in images presented through our senses but he presents all things to us in such images. It is only things which are brought into being that are presented through sense. Coming into being is nothing else than presentation through sense." This is so thoroughly modern, it's staggering. For 1,500 years people couldn't say anything that clearly. "It is evident then that he who alone has not come into being cannot be presented through sense and that being so he is hidden from our sight. But he presents all things to us through our senses and thereby manifests himself through all things and in all things and especially to those to whom he wills to manifest himself. For though thought alone can see that which is hidden inasmuch as thought itself is hidden from sight and if even the thought which is within you is hidden from your sight, how can he, being in himself, be manifested to you through your bodily eyes. But if you have power to see with the eyes of the mind then, my son, he will manifest himself to you, for the Lord manifests himself ungrudgingly throughout all the universe and you can behold God's image with your eyes and lay hold on it with your hands."

To my mind, this is permission for the psychedelic experience. We lay hold of the ineffable through the eyes. "If you wish to see him, think on the sun, think on the course of the moon, think on the order of the stars. The sun is the greatest of the gods in heaven. To him as to their king and overlord, all the gods in heaven yield place and yet this mighty god, greater than earth and sea, submits to have smaller stars circling above him. Who is it then, my son, that he obeys with reverence and awe. Each of these stars too is confined by measured limits and has an appointed space to range in. Why do not all the stars in heaven run like and equal courses? Who is it that has assigned to each its place and marked out each for the extent of its course." And then it goes on and on. And then here is an amazing modern anticipation of modernity. "Would that it were possible for you to grow wings and soar into the air. Poised between earth and heaven you might see the solid earth and the fluid sea and the streaming rivers, the wandering air, the penetrating fire, the courses of the stars and the swiftness of the movement with which heaven encompasses all. What happiness were that, my son, to see all these borne along with one impulse and to behold Him who is unmoved moving all that moves and Him who is hidden made manifest through his works." This is an image of the planets seen from space. It's absolutely the unified image of our planet. It is, I think, the central image in this early hermetic thing. This is the unifying, this is as close to an image of what godhead is that they were able to reach.

Lecture 2, part 3

This is a shamanic flight that delivers a scientific description of the earth moving in space. This is written AD150. This is book five. Nobody had that in sight until we reach Giordano Bruno and if you read Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition you know that Bruno was burned at the stake and the reason that he was burned at the stake is because he looked up at the sky and did not see the stellar shells and the angelic hierarchies. Bruno had a mystical experience and when it was over he said, "the universe is infinite. The stars go on forever." That single statement was the intellectual dynamite that destroyed the whole Medieval, Hellenistic, the entire previous cosmological vision was left behind with that single statement. It was such a powerful statement that he had to go to the stake for that. And we have never recovered from that perception. It was a fundamental perception and it occurred because he looked without preconception into the night sky and did not see wheels and demons and angels and shells of cosmic fate and necessity and he just said, that's bullshit, what is there is infinite space, infinite time, the stars are hung like lamps onto the utmost regions of infinity. This, then, inaugurates the beginning of modernity and it's a perception that arose on the foundation of all this earlier thinking.

Here's another passage on the imagination. Yes?

Is the implication that there's a meditation that one does where one tries to go inside and see this universe on a cosmic scale. Is the implication that their practice was somehow...

Well, the practice, we know a lot less about that because there was much secrecy around this. What we have is the philosophical discourses. When we talk about alchemy this afternoon you'll see that there the technique becomes projection onto matter. That you enter into a kind of self hypnosis where, by having what we call naive ontological categories, in other words, not being sure exactly how much of mind is in matter or how much matter is in mind, you can erase the boundary between self and world and project the contents of the unconscious onto chemical processes. What went on in the early stages we don't know. The Trismegistic Hymns are largely as you see them here, philosophical discourses. There was stress on diet and purity. Asceticism was typical of the hermetic approach. In Gnosticism it went one of several ways. There were schools of Gnosticism which were vegetarian and puristic and then, because they felt that man was no part of the universe, that man was somehow hermetically sealed, if you will, hermetically sealed against contamination from the universe, some Gnostic schools said you can do anything you want. You can have any kind of sexual arrangement you want, you can do anything you want. Do not think that you are part of the universe. And so you had Gnostic schools side by side, some orgiastic and quasi-tantric and some ascetic. There were Gnostic sects that, you see because the idea was that light was trapped in matter by the act of procreation, there were Gnostic sects that only practiced forms of sexual union that couldn't lead to union. So there were presumably exclusively homosexual sects. There were sects that only practiced anal intercourse. For them, that was the same as celibacy because the real concern was not to trap any of the light. And I don't seriously advocate this but I think that in our current situation of overpopulation a little dose of this kind of thinking wouldn't be a bad thing. Too much light is trapped in the organic matrix.

And so these Gnostic sects that were, for instance, exclusively homosexual or exclusively practiced anal intercourse, of course they were suicide sects. They disappeared very quickly because they could only make converts by a missionary conversion. You didn't have children, you couldn't hand it off. It shows how thorough going their rejection of the world was, how contaminated they felt themselves to be by the material world. But you also had, as I mentioned, optimistic schools that saw nature as something to be perfected and said, "man has been set on the earth not to reject it but to perfect it" and utopianism, the belief that one can create a perfect society, it goes back into these hermetic ideals. Because the idea was that a perfect society could be the goal of the alchemical work.

Let me read you a passage from Giordano Bruno. This is a wonderful passage from the Picatrix. This was the book of 12th century magical texts that began to introduce these hermetic ideas and this passage is the core passage that inspired the Rosacrucians and numerous other utopian movements. Here is Frances Yeats, "Hermes Trismegistus is often mentioned as the source for some talismanic images and in other connections but there is in particular one very striking passage in the fourth book of Picatrix in which Hermes is stated to have been the first to use magical images and is credited with having founded a marvelous city in Egypt." And here is the passage from the Picatrix, "There are among the Caldeans very perfect masters in this art and they affirm that Hermes was the first to construct images by means of which he knew how to regulate the Nile against the motion of the moon. This man also built a temple to the sun and he knew how to hide himself from all so that no one could see him although he was within it." Those of you who are scholars in Rosicrucianism know that one of the things that was always said of Rosicrucians was that they were invisible. This was how Robert Fludd proved to people he wasn't a Rosicrucian, he'd say "you're looking at me so how could I be one?" So, he's in the temple but he could not be seen within it. "It was he, Hermes Trismegistus, too, who, in the East of Egypt constructed a city, 12 miles long, within which he constructed a castle which had four gates within each of its four parts. On the Eastern gate he placed the form of an eagle. On the

Western gate, the form of a bull, on the Southern gate, the form of a lion, and on the Northern gate he constructed the form of a dog. Into these images he introduced spirits which spoke with voices. Nor could anyone enter the gates of the city except by their permission. There he planted trees in the midst of which was a great tree which bore the fruits of all generations. On the summit of the castle he caused to be raised a tower 30 cubits high on the top of which he ordered to be put a lighthouse the color of which changed every day until the seventh day, after which it returned to the first color. And so the city was illuminated with these colors. Near the city there was abundance of waters in which dwelt many kinds of fish. Around the circumference of the city he placed engraved images and ordered them in such a manner that by their virtue, the inhabitants were made virtuous and withdrawn from all wickedness and harm. The name of the city was Adocetine(sp?)."

Now, what we're familiar with from the Platonic literature is a quasi-rational, largely rational approach to utopian thinking that you get in the Republic. However, the students of the Republic will recall that, in the fifth or tenth book (it's the tenth), contains the myth of Er, which we went over in detail in the section I did on Neo Platonism. The myth of Er is one of the most bizarre and puzzling passages in the entire ancient literature. You remember Er was a soldier who died, he was killed in battle but after eight days he returned to life and then he told a story that is the absolute puzzlement of ancient scholars. It's highly mathematical, it has to do with the spindle of necessity and the description of some kind of cosmic machine and all the ratios of the gears of this machine are given and nobody knows what is being talked about. But here we have a different thrust. A magical utopianism and the idea of a perfected human society using magic because these engraved images that he ordered in such a manner that by their virtue the inhabitants were made virtuous, that means he was able to deflect the energies of cosmic fate. The city was immune to astrological, malefic influence. It was protected and when we talk later about the alchemical aspirations of the Rosicrucians and John Dee and Frederick the Elector Palatine of Bohemia, we'll see that this impulse toward an alchemical kingdom returns again and again. In a way, utopianism is, the four-gated city of utopian magical dreaming is one version of the philosopher's magical stone. It's a kind of diffuse idea of the philosopher's stone, but it's a society in perfect harmony with fully realized beings living within it practicing a cosmic religion that frees them from the impulses of cosmic fate. The other thing that is going on in some of this alchemical imagery is a kind of subtext of late alchemy, is what's called the *Ars Memoria*, the art of memory, and in fact, Frances Yates has a book called *The Art of Memory* and this is a lost art, literally.

It begins with the Roman orator Cicero and was practiced up until the early 17th century and what it consisted of was people, orators, it was considered very bad form to read your speech if you were an orator and so you had to memorize your speech and there were tricks of memory. The commonest mnemonic trick was to think of a building, it was called the memory palace, a building that is familiar to you, I've done this myself with the University of California because it's an area that I'm very familiar with because I was a student there, there are many buildings and many hallways and many floors and what you do is when you make your speech in your mind you are moving through the memory palace and at various points you construct what are called emblemata and the idea of these emblemata is that they be as unusual, shocking, and unexpected as possible in order to be memorable to you. So, say you're giving a speech about the seven deadly sins. So then luxuria might be for you a nun copulating with a dog and you'll set the nun and the dog in a little niche in the hallway of the memory palace. When you reach that place in your imaginary journey all these associations will spring to mind and you'll be able to give your speech flawlessly. To us, this sounds tortured and particular but it works quite well. One of the practitioners of the *Ars Memoria* was Giordano Bruno and he wrote a book called *Spaccio Della Bestia Trionfante*, the expulsion of the triumphant beast, and my god, Max Ernst, eat your heart out, this is a surreal epic read as straight plain text because that's not how it's supposed to be read. It's a conglomeration of these mnemonic emblemata that led him on to probably give a fairly conventional disputation on one subject or another but there are even old books of these emblemata that are before surrealism. These were some of the wildest images that the Western mind would tolerate.

The one thing that we didn't get into this morning was talking about the astrological side of it. The role of the Decans. The Decans are these demons, three to a sign, so there are 36 of them, and this was thought to be an astrological conceit that went back to Egypt as opposed to the ordinary zodiacal signifiers which go back to Huran(?) in what is now modern Iraq. These Decans were the demons that were summoned by these Renaissance Magi in an effort to control and manipulate fate. You may, if you were paying attention this morning, have noticed that in all the reading I did from the *Corpus Hermeticum*, there was really nothing explicitly magical about it. It was philosophical. There was one mention, I think, of animating statues in the description of the four-gated city. But it was those magical animation passages that really captured the imagination of the Renaissance and they built on that and the idea, simply put, is that these Decans and zodiacal signs are at the center of associative schemata which include plants, minerals, odors, certain flowers, certain animals, everything had its Decanic assignation and so if you were involved with promoting an affair with a woman or something like that then you would do an invocation to Venus and you would gather the associated minerals and stones and animals and you would put them in a room and

then certain tonal modes were also associated with these things and so you would play the music, have the flowers present, the minerals present, the invocations and what you were trying to do was create a microcosm of the macrocosm to draw down this stellar energy. It wasn't about the classical Hollywood appearance of demons in a circle, that's the stuff of Picatrix, the earlier somewhat less refined style of magic.

I wanted to read you one passage from Frances Yates' Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition because this describes this change of status of the magician that we're interested in. And also what we didn't talk about this morning was the importance of the Kabbalah, which came in quite late, that was then worked out in great detail. This was originally the idea, it was the Jewish contribution to this kind of magic, it was, the idea was that since the world had been made by Jehovah, by the speaking of words, In Prigipio et verbum et verbo corufactum est (?), in other words the speaking of Hebrew was thought to be a primary linguistic tool for the purposes of creation. The problem for these Italians was that very few of them spoke Hebrew so it was sometimes practiced silently, the mere constructing of these Hebrew letters and the setting out of messages in Hebrew was deemed efficacious as well. And then a further declenched(?) for people who were even frustrated with that was to channel magical languages which were pseudo-Hebraic in structure. This is a whole branch of research, much too arcane for us to go into here. The only non-Hebraic magical language that I may mention here will be Enochian and Enochian was an angelic language channeled by John Dee and used by him in his magical evocations and later it was taken up by Aleister Crowley and the folks of the Golden Dawn. But there were many, many of these magical languages. The Voynitch(sp?) manuscript is written in one of them.

But I want to read you this passage about how the Renaissance changed the status of the magician. "We begin to perceive here an extraordinary change in the status of the magician. The necromancer concocting his filthy mixtures, the conjurer making his frightening invocations were both outcasts from society, regarded as dangers to religion and forced into plying their trades in secrecy. These old-fashioned characters are hardly recognizable in the philosophical and pious magi of the Renaissance. There is a change in status almost comparable to the change of status of the artist from the mere mechanic of the Middle Ages to the refined companion of princes of the Renaissance. And the magics themselves are changed almost out of recognition. Who could recognize the necromancer studying his Picatrix in secret in the elegant Ficino, in his infinitely refined use of sympathies, his classical incantations, his elaborately Neo Platonized talismans. Who could recognize the conjurer using the barbarous techniques of some Clavis Solomonus in the mystical Pico lost in the religious ecstasies of Kabbalah drawing archangels to his side. And yet there is a kind of continuity because the techniques are at bottom based on the same principles. Ficino's magic is an infinitely refined and reformed version of neumatic necromancy. Pico's practical Kabbalah is an intensely religious and mystical version of conjuring."

So now we move in this realm, these were the companions of princes and there was in that 120 years, from about 1500 to the beginning of the 30 year's war, a constant effort in various parts of Europe to try and turn parts of European society toward a kind of magical revolution. The Europe of the 11th and 12th century was entirely ruled by scholastic rationalism. Witchcraft was virtually unknown and very curious. It's the 15th and 16th centuries where you get this tremendous proliferation of magical systems, magical ideas and social hysterias related to witchcraft, alchemy, conjuring and magic. Those are the centuries when these things really broke out into the open. And alchemy in that period is basically a story of personalities, wonderful personalities, too many for us to really talk about in detail. We have Nicholas and Pernelle Flamel who sought and found the philosopher's stone, according to legend and according to legend are living to this day somewhere in central Asia in perfect happiness having achieved not only the chemical wedding but the water stone of the wise. And then we have Basil Valentine who refined red wine and distilled it in distillation apparati until he got essentially pure alcohol and upon drinking this was so sure that he had found the philosopher's stone that he announced the eminent approach of the end of the world based on his discovery and he was not secretive at all. He propagated his recipes and in fact sampled the distillates of some of his brother alchemists and popularized this very widely. To this day the reason certain cognacs are in the hands of monastic orders and no one else can make these things is because they were originally alchemical secrets and many of these early alchemists were men of the cloth, quite a number of them.

Lecture 3, part 1

So what I thought I would do is, in a highly chaotic fashion, read you some of this alchemical literature. The big bring down about alchemical literature is that apparently the muse didn't always smile on the alchemist and some of this poetry is pretty tormented stuff. Why this is, who can say, but let's try one here and see if you can bear with it. Also, my Middle English is not as good as it might be. This is a short one, and typical, and you will see why the

alchemists were charged with unbearable obscurity and prolix prose. This poem is called "A Description of the Stone:"

Though Daphne fly from Phobeus bright yet shall they both be one
And if you understand this rite you have our hidden stone
For Daphne is fair and white but volatile is she
Phobeus a fixed god of might and red as blood is he
Daphne is a water nymph and hath of moisture store
Which Phobeus doth confine and heat and dries her very shore
They being dried into one a crystal flood must drink
Till they be brought to a white stone which washed with with virgin's milk
So long until they flow as wax and no fume you can see

then have you all you need to ask. Praise God and thankful be.

This is a recipe for the production of the philosopher's stone and the author, I'm sure, felt that he'd spoken as clearly as he dare speak. And yet making something of this is no easy task. This is from the *Teatrium Chemicum Britannicum* and the late phase of alchemy. Here's another one:

The world is a maze and what you why
For sooth of late a great man did die
And as he lay a-dying in his bed
These words in secret to his son he said
'My son' quoth he, 'tis good for thee
I die for thou shall much the better be
Thereby and when thou seest that life hath me bereft
Take what thou findest and where I have it left
Thou dost not know, nor what my riches be
All which I will declare give ear to me
An earth I had all venum(?) to expel
And that I cast into a mighty well
A water ick(?) to cleanse what was amiss
I threw into the earth, and there it is
My silver all into the sea I cast
My gold into the air and, at the last
Into the fire, for fear it should be found
I threw a stone worth forty thousand pound
Which stone was given me by a mighty king
Who bade me wear it in a fourfold ring.'
Quoth he, ' this stone is by that ring found out
If wisely thou cans't turn this ring about
For every hope contrary is to other
Yet all agree and of the stone is mother
So now, my son, I will declare a wonder
That when I die this ring must break asunder
The king said so, but when he said with all
Although the ring be broke in pieces small
An easy fire shall soon it close again
Who this can do he need not work in vain
Till this my hidden treasure be found out
When I am dead, my spirit shall walk about
Make him to bring your fire from the grave
And stay with him till you my riches have.'
These words a worldly man did chance to hear
Who daily watched the spirit but nay though near
And yet it meets with him and everyone
Yet tells him not where is the hidden stone.

This stuff is obscure, it's deliberately obscure, it was obscure to its contemporaries and the whole effort became one of collecting this kind of material and finding it out. And you have to understand this was all circulating in manuscript, very little of this was printed. The *Teatrium Chemicum Britannicum* was not printed until 1652 so this

was a world without vehicular transportation other than the horse and carriage and these people were paranoid of being discovered and persecuted for wizardry and witchcraft by the church. So, each alchemist working in secret, with a limited number of texts, with a local control language, created this vast conceptual patchwork of ideas and this is in large measure responsible for the obscurity of what is said.

Then another factor which impinges on this and further complicates the matter is that the name of the game was projection of the contents of the imagination onto physical processes, so taking red cinnabar and heating it in a furnace until it sweats mercury, for one alchemist this is the incineration of the red salamander and the collection of aurmercurius in the great pelican. They named their chemical apparatus after animals and gods and so the pelican is a standard distillation apparatus, basically a condenser on top of something which is boiled and then these materials would be collected, ground, powdered, refired, mixed with other materials, refired again and in the process these people were, we call it, and it's such a weak term, the projection of the intellect into this dimension, they were living in a waking dream and many of the recipes are designed to wipe out the boundaries between waking and sleeping. Remember I talked about the river of mercury that runs between the yin and yang? Many of the alchemical processes were of 40 days duration. Well you can imagine a hermit fearing discovery by the church, trying to keep his fires not too hot, not too cold, working day after day, night after night, eventually all boundaries dissolve and you're just living in a pure world of intellectual projection and then in the swirling of the alembic, in the chemical processes going on in the retort, you begin to be able to project your consciousness onto this. It's what we call visualization but for us it's a kind of a weak term because we are never really able to accept in the psychedelic state to transcend the belief in the inner world and the outer world being somehow separate so for us it's always separate. But they were able to wipe out that boundary. Well then, what they saw in their swirling retorts and alembics was not carbonization, calcination, condensation of various molecular weights of liquids and oils out, but rather the birth of the red lion, the coming of the eagle, the appearance of the smagdarian (can't quite make out this word) stone. They had hundreds and hundreds of these words. I didn't bring any with me, but much alchemical literature is dictionaries. Martinus Rulando's Alchemical Dictionary is a huge book of words with special meanings in the alchemical context.

So, why, why do this and what happens when you do it. Well, no matter what alchemist you're reading, there's always an agreement that there are stages in the great work. Stages in the opus, as they called it. You can't get any agreement on in what order these stages come, but roughly it's something like this: most agree that it begins in the nigredo, the blackening, Arcro(?), the Saturnine world of what we would call manic depression, despair, and that Aurchaos(?), a chaotic near psychotic state of unbounded hopelessness and that is the precondition, then, for the alchemical work though the stages of the opus never occur in order.

I had a dream last night that was, I think, triggered by an illustration in Fabricious(?) that I'll show you tonight but it was a classical alchemical dream. It was that I was at a country fair and its antiquity was indicated by the fact that it was happening in the school yard of my childhood and as I moved among the participants of this country fair I began to notice that they were freaky. There were people with withered arms and one side of their face slid down and so forth and so on. The whole thing began to drift toward nightmare and Richard Hermes Bird appeared in my dream as my alchemical compadre and at one point a black woman, perfect symbolism for the nigredo, a black woman with three withered arms and six or seven breasts, slid herself sideways in front of me and it was at that point that I went and found Richard and said, "I think we'd better get out of here."

Now, an alchemist would greet a dream like this with great anticipation and joy and would understand that this sets the stage now for the next movement forward. Well, then accounts differ. Those of you who really want to get into this, I recommend you read *Mysterium Conjunctiones* by Jung, the Mysterious Conjunction. He discusses the nigredo in great detail. Another symbol for the nigredo is the Senax(?), the old man, because the old man is just short of death and that's the state that the nigredo makes you feel. Then you must take this raw, chaotic, unformed material, often compared to feces, compared to corruption, compared to the contents of an opened grave, and you must cook it in the alchemical fires of contemplation, prayer, and ascetic self control and then you will move through a series of stages that are associated with colors. There is the rubado, the reddening, there is the citronitas, the yellowing, there is the veriditas, the greening, and the order in which this occurs differs according to who you follow but then there is closure at the end of the process. Most alchemists, although certainly not all, agreed that the higher state is the albedo, the whitening, the purificacio. At each stage there are substages of dissolution, *dissolutio et coagulacio*. There's one alchemical aphorism that says "*dissolutio et coagulacio*, know this and this is all you need to know." And so it's a melting and a recasting and a purifying of psychic content. So finally you reach the albedo, the whitening, the highest stage, the stage of great purity.

But remember how I said last night that mercury was always the metaphor for mind in alchemy, or one of the metaphors for mind in alchemy, and I talked about its mutability and its ability to take the shape of its container and when you shatter it it then splits into many reflections. So, once you move into the domain of the albedo, the

whitening, then a whole new problem arises for the alchemist. This is the problem of the fixing of the stone. Somehow the mutability of mercury must be overcome and it must be crystalized, it must be fixed so that it doesn't get away from you, so that it doesn't slip through your fingers. To achieve aurum is nothing unless you have the secret of the coagulatio. So then, there is a huge amount of effort devoted to this.

What is being described is what Jungians call the individuation process. A dissolving of the boundaries of the ego, an allowing of the chaotic material of the unconscious to pour forth where it can be inspected by consciousness, and we'll see tonight when we look at this art, these images are full of ravening beasts, incestuous mother/son pairs, incestuous brother/sister pairs, hermaphrodites, all taboos are broken, this stuff just boils up from the unconscious then is sublimed through these processes and then is somehow fixed and this fixing is the culmination of alchemy and if you can bring off this trick then you possess our stone, the philosopher's stone, the lapis, the Sophic Hydrolith of the Wise, Aranius Philolithes(sp?) calls it. There were hundreds of control words for naming the secret difficult to attain.

Alchemical gold, in short, this is what we're after. If you possess it, nothing else is worth anything because it is psychic completion, peace of mind, Jung called it the self. It's the self that we are trying to recover and remember we talked about the Gnostic myth of the light trapped in matter. Well this is the *luminae de luminae*, the light of light, the *lux natura*, the light drawn out of nature and condensed into a fixed form which then becomes the universal panacea. And I'm using as many of these alchemical terms as I can draw out of my memory to give you a feeling for it. This is the universal medicine. It cures all ills, you know, it brings you riches, fame, wealth, self-respect. It's the answer, it's what everyone is looking for and no one can find.

So this just became a consuming passion of the 15th and 16th century mind. They thought they were on the brink of it. Along the way they were discovering stuff like distilled alcohol, phosphorous, gun powder, all of these things were coming out of the alchemical laboratories but that was not it. They kept driving themselves onward because they knew that this was not the real thing and they were pursuing the real thing. Then for some people it became reassociated with this notion of the utopia that I mentioned this morning in the passage that I read about the city of Hermes Trismegistus, they began to see, it's almost like the crisis which overcame Buddhism, it must be an archetypal, and notice how rarely we've used that word here, it must be almost an archetypal stage in human thought. Theravadin Buddhism stressed individual thought, and individual redemption through meditation on emptiness, and then with the great reforms of Nagurdjuda(sp?), the idea of Bodhisattvic compassion was introduced and there carries with it political freight. An obligation to society and mankind.

So, as the 15th and 16th century progressed there began to be this awareness that what was wanted was not for an alchemist to break through, to his own personal salvation, but somehow to create an alchemical world. You get then the notion of the *multiplacio*, the idea that the stone, once created, will replicate itself and be able to change base matter into itself almost like a virus spreading through the ontological structure of matter itself and the world will be reborn and this idea then, what was happening was that these alchemists were getting bolder and printing was invented in Meins, near Frankfurt, in 1540, the distribution of alchemical books was changing the character of alchemy, it was no more the solitary hermit working away in his cave or mountaintop, far away from the minions of the church. These alchemists began to dream of banding together, of forming societies, of creating brotherhoods that were united in the sharing of their knowledge and their purpose.

This brings us to the curious episode in history called the Rosicrucian enlightenment. Dame Frances Yates, once again, got there first and she wrote a book called the Rosicrucian Enlightenment which traces the history of these alchemical brotherhoods and reveals to us what they were really about and what they were about was this dream of somehow taking the philosopher's stone, and the power, the immortality, the insight that it would bring and making it a general utility of mankind and in the, one way of looking at modernity, I have one friend who claims that the summoning of the Holy Spirit into matter can be seen as the creation of the modern world of electricity. That people like Helmholtz(sp?) and Farraday were completing the alchemical work. It's very hard for us to realize how mysterious the electromagnetic field seemed to the 19th century. The 19th century had entirely imbued itself with the spirit of democratic atomism translated through Newtonian physics and they believed that everything was little balls of hard matter winging through space. When Helmholtz and Farraday and these people began to talk about action at a distance and generating the electromagnetic field and trapping lightning and light in jars and running it through wires, what could this be but the trapping of spiritus. What could it be but the literal descent of the Holy Ghost into history and, you know, give it a moment's thought. For thousands of years, electricity was something that you saw when you took an amber rod and a piece of cat fur and went into a darkened room and stroked the cat fur and then when you would bring the amber rod close to the cat fur you would see the crackle of static electricity through the cat fur. For thousands of years that's what electricity was. Who would dream that you could light cities, that you could smelt metals, that you could illuminate the earth with this energy and yet from the 1850s to the present, this was done. It's almost the final literalizing of the alchemical dream.

But to go back now, I digress, I fear, let's go back to the climate of the 1580s and the central culprit here, and to my mind a giant figure casting an enormous shadow over the landscape of alchemy and of modern science, is the Englishman John Dee. John Dee united in himself the complete spirit of the Medieval Magus and the complete spirit of the modern scientist. He invented the navigational instruments that allowed the conquest of the round earth. When Frances Drake sailed up the coast of California he had navigational instruments that were top secret. The French, the Spanish, must be kept away from this stuff and these were navigational instruments created by John Dee that allowed him to locate himself anywhere on the globe. But John Dee was a man who, on a late summer evening in Mortlag, his house in Mortlag outside of London, the angel Gabriel descended into his garden and gave him what he called the shewstone, shew being show in Old English, and the shewstone exists to this day, you can see it in the British Museum and what's amazing about it is it's a piece of polished obsidian, it's an Aztec mirror, is what it is. There was a ruler of the Aztecs called smoky mirror. How John Dee got this thing, we cannot even imagine. He says he got it from an angel, nobody can really say that, however I suspect that Cortez, on his first return to Spain from the new world, he brought a number of objects with him that he had collected in Central Mexico and somehow John Dee got his hands on this thing and it was for him a television screen into the logos and he used it over a number of years to direct the foreign policy of England.

He was the confidante of Queen Elizabeth the First and he also was the most accomplished astrologer in Europe and he used his ability to cast horoscopes as an entre into all the great houses of Europe, the kings and nobles of Europe. He was functioning as an intelligence agent, he was a spy for the British crown insinuating himself into these various courtly scenes and then writing back to Elizabeth in cyphers, cyphers that had previously only been used for magical purposes. He was sending back data on the strengths of military garrisons and the placement of fortifications and this sort of thing. This is what he was doing in the 1580s, he kept the shewstone for a number of years and he didn't seem to be able to make much progress with it. He had other methods too, he had wax tables and sigils but finally into his life came a very mysterious character named Edward Kelly and some accounts say that Edward Kelly had no ears. That indicates that he had had his ears removed for being a charlatan and a montebank. This was a common punishment in the provinces of England. So Edward Kelly was a very dubious character, I think. One strong piece of evidence that he was a shady character was, John Dee was married to a much younger woman named Ann Dee who by all accounts was quite a beauty and after gaining Dee's confidence as a scriber, the person who could look into the shewstone and lay out these scenarios that the angels and the entities coming and going in the shewstone were putting forth, Kelly revealed to Dee that the angels had instructed him to hit the hay with Ann. This was a great crisis in their relationship. However, according to Dee's diary "and so it was done," we read. So, hanky panky didn't begin with the Golden Dawn, believe me. In 1582 Ann Dee, John Dee, and Edward Kelly set out for Bohemia and Rudolph, the mad king of Bohemia held sway at that time. This is another one of those bizarre figures in the whole story of this...(tape cuts off a bit here)

Lecture 3, part 2

...a wonder cabinet, you see, before Linnaeus, before modern scientific classification these great patrons of the arts and natural sciences, they would just collect weird stuff. And that was all you could say about it. I mean, it was rhinoceros horns, fossil amenities, broken pieces of statues from antiquity, giant insects from Southern India, seashells, all this stuff would just be thrown together in these wundercabina, these wonder cabinets. Rudolph was a great patron of the arts. Well, Kelly sent the word that he and Dee had perfected the alchemical process and Rudolph immediately paid their way to Prague and patronized them very lavishly over a number of months but then they didn't seem to be coming through and he rented, he ordered a castle put to their disposal, in Bohemia and they still weren't able to come through. The Voynitch manuscript figures in here too because Kelly's entre to Dee was that he had a manuscript in an unknown language and I believe that this probably was the Voynitch manuscript. The Voynitch manuscript turns up in the estate of Rudolph and the very month that he paid 14,000 gold ducats for it to persons unknown, Dee, who was always writing back to the Elizabethan court hounding them to send money, entered into his account book that they received 14,000 ducats from an unknown source.

Dee was able to talk himself out of this alchemical imprisonment but not before he had written a book called the Hieroglyphic Monad. You have to understand the importance of this. As late as the 1920s in England in the better schools of England, like Eton, when you studied geometry, you studied Euclid's works and Euclid's geometry was always preceded by Dee's preface to Euclid. Until the 1920s every English school child studied this. He was a master mathematician as well as these other things. This was how he was able to produce these navigation instruments. So Dee, while imprisoned in Bohemia, wrote a book called the Hieroglyphic Monad in which he

proposed to prove, through a series of occult theorems, that a certain diagram, unfortunately I didn't bring the hieroglyphic monad, but it's basically the symbol of, you know the symbol for mercury which looks like the symbol for female but you put horns on it and then there were some adumbrations to that. By a series of theorems he worked up this hieroglyphic monad and he initiated a couple of young men named Johan Anreae and Michael Maier into the mysteries of the hieroglyphic monad. Then he was able to get out of Bohemia and he went back to England.

Kelly, who had made much more extravagant claims, Rudolph kept at work on the alchemical opus and Kelly became more and more desperate to escape and one night in 1587 he crept out on the parapet of this Bohemian castle and a roof tile slipped beneath his feet and he fell to his death and became, as far as I can tell, alchemy's only true martyr. Dee returned to England, he was now very old, he died at Mortlake in 1606. Elizabeth died in 1604, Shakespeare was happening, Sir Philip Sidney was happening through this period. John Dee reputedly had over 6,000 books in his library. He had more books than any man in England. He had books, we have a partial catalog of his library, he had books that do not exist now. He had Roger Bacon manuscripts because when Henry the eighth kicked the Catholic Church out of England, the Northumberian monasteries were looted by the Earl of Northumberland and basically Dee was allowed to pick over the loot from these monasteries and there were Roger Bacon manuscripts which perished when Dee's library was burned by an angry mob while he was on the continent because he was suspected of being a wizard. He was the model for Faust in the later resurgence of Faust and whenever you see an old man with a white beard and a pointed cap, this image is a referent to Dee.

Well, Elizabeth died in 1604, I believe, and James the first became king of England. James was a peculiar character. The wags of the time liked to say "Elizabeth was king and now James is queen!" Not only that, he hated occultism, he had no patience with the whole magical court that Elizabeth had assembled around herself. Meanwhile, in 1606, a very mysterious document began to circulate in Europe and in England called the Fama, this is the first word in a string of Latin words, Fama, and two years later the confessio. What these were were announcements that an alchemical brotherhood was seeking recruits. These are the primary documents of Rosicrucianism.

Rosicrucianism was based on a fiction and a fictional person, Christian Rosencreutz, who was imagined to have lived almost 200 years earlier, in the 1540s, and to have been a great alchemist. It was claimed that his tomb had been recently opened and that there were books inside it which set the stage for the alchemical revolution of the world. Notice how this occult world always tries to reach back in time to give itself validity. Christian Rosencreutz was claimed to be the author of a series of books, the chief of which is called The Chemical Wedding. What this was all about, I believe, and the Rosacrucian enlightenment makes it fairly clear, was that Dee, during the period that he had been in Bohemia, had set out to lay the groundwork for an alchemical revolution in Central Europe and he had made Johan Andreae and Michael Maier his agents in this plot. And it was a plot, a plot to meddle in European history and to turn the Protestant reformation toward an alchemical completion. They felt that Luther and Has(sp?) and these people had only gone so far and that the culmination of throwing off the yoke of the church would be the establishment of an alchemical kingdom in central Europe.

The target, then, of the attention of Michael Maier and Johan Andreae and a number of these alchemists became the young Frederick, he's called Frederick the Elector Palatine. He was a prince of the Northern League in Germany, he ruled in Heidleberg, and Heidleberg, as you know, is a thousand-year-old university city and I believe I mentioned that the alchemical press of Theodore Debry(sp?) was operating out of Heidleberg. Heidleberg became a magnet for all the occult thinking going on in Europe and all the Puffers and alchemists, the gold-makers, the philosophers, the charlatans, they all converged on Heidleberg and Andreae and Maier were advisors of the young Frederick and they steered him, by a series of political manipulations too complex to tell, toward a marriage with the daughter of James the first of England, who was named Elizabeth, interestingly enough. So, Frederick the Elector made Elizabeth, the daughter of James of England, his wife. Frederick here made a serious miscalculation because he thought that if James would give the hand of his daughter in marriage that this was his way of blessing this alchemical conspiracy. Actually, what was on James' mind is that he was about to give his son, in marriage, to a Spanish princess of the Hapsburg line, a Catholic. In other words he was playing both sides against each other. He was not giving the green light to an alchemical revolution at all. But, it was assumed so.

Then, in 1617, 1618, Rudolph, remember Rudolph, the emperor, he finally dies at a very ripe old age. And at that time, the Protestant league, which was made up of these princes of these small principalities scattered across Germany and Poland, they actually elected the emperor, it was not by right of primogenitor, but by election by what was called the Northern League, this league of princes. Frederick and his alchemical cohorts had done their alchemical groundwork very skillfully and they were able to engineer the election of Frederick to emperor of the empire and he became Frederick the Elector Palatine of Bohemia and this set the stage for an episode called the episode of the Winter King and Queen.

One of the great, after Nicholas and Pernelle Flamel, this is one of the great romantic stories of alchemy. They moved their court from Heidleberg to Prague and all the alchemists went with and they assumed that English armies

would support them if there was any squak from the Hapsburgs and in the Winter of 1618 they ruled there and began to lay the groundwork for the transformation of Northern Europe into an alchemical kingdom. The problem was, as I said, the faithlessness and duplicity of James the first of England. He did not support them, in spite of the fact that the fate of his daughter hung in the balance and by May of 1619 the local Bishop of the Catholic church was fully aroused and word had been sent to Madrid and the Hapsburgs raised an army and laid siege to Prague. In the late Summer, the Mid Summer of 1619, the Winter King and Queen were driven from Prague, the city fell to Catholic forces, the alchemical presses were smashed and Michael Maier, who was like the prime minister of this scene, was murdered in an alley in Prague and the entire alchemical dream went down the drain. Frederick was killed in the siege of the city and Elizabeth escaped to the Hague where she lived in exile for many years.

Till recently, I thought that that was the end of the story but there is a coda that is very amusing, if nothing else. In that Hapsburgian army, there was a young soldier of fortune, only 19 years old, still wet behind the ears, knowing nothing, happily soldiering and wenching his way around Europe while he decided what to do with himself and his name was Rene Descartes, a Frenchman. Descartes, in his later years, reminisced about his period as a soldier in this army and I like to think that it was Descartes who actually murdered Maier. One of my ambitions is to write a play or a novel in which these two confront each other in a back alley of burning Prague and carry on a debate about the future of Europe before Michael Maier falls to the sword of Descartes. That may be apocryphal, but what is not apocryphal is that this Hapsburgian army, having laid siege and destroyed the alchemical kingdom, began to retreat across Europe that Fall and by Mid-September was camped near the town of Uolm in Southern Germany. By a strange coincidence, Uolm is the birthplace of Einstein some hundreds of years later. But on the night of September 16th, Descartes had a dream and in this dream an angel appeared to him, this is documented by his own hand, and the angel said to Descartes, "The conquest of nature is to be achieved through measure and number." And that revelation lay the basis for modern science. Rene Descartes is the founder of the distinction between the *res verins* and the *res extensia*, the founder of modern science, the founder of the scientific method that created the philosophical engines that created the modern world. How many scientists, working at their workbenches, understand that an angel chartered modern science. It's the alchemical angel which will not die. It returns again and again to guide the destinies of nations and peoples toward an unimaginable conclusion.

That's not the last time that this angelic intervention in the history of science has occurred. Some of you may know the story in the 19th century of Cuclai(sp?), the German chemist who was struggling with the molecular structure of Benzene, couldn't get it straight, and then he had a dream in which he saw the ouroboric snake take its tail in its mouth and he awoke from that dream with the carbon ring burning in his mind. Well, the carbon ring, the six sided heptadle(?) state of the form of the carbon ring is the basis of all organic chemistry. And I mentioned earlier Farraday and Helmholtz and the rise of the electro magnetic field. The point I'm trying to make is that, however rational we may assume ourselves to be, however rational we may assume modern science to be, it is all really founded on angelic revelation, demonic intercession, and an extremely mysterious relationship between the human mind and the world of what science calls inert matter which, from this point of view, is revealed to be not inert at all but alive and pregnant with purpose for mankind.

The alchemical kingdom of Frederick the Elector, and then there were a series of adumbrations, of this kind of thinking, many of you may know about freemasonry and the many freemason revolts in Bohemia and Bavaria throughout the 16th and 17th century. Adam Weishaupt and the illuminati is another effort to do this and even the royal society founded by Newton and Hook and those people was still an effort to redeem science for the spirit. So, the alchemical spirit lives on, it never really died, it's just that it has taken peculiar forms in our own day. I mentioned, I believe, last night that when you enter into nuclear chemistry the most literal dreams of the profane side of alchemy, the transformation of lead into gold, Has actually been achieved. It has no economic significance because the instrumentality to do it costs tens of millions of dollars but nevertheless, yes, in our time, lead had been changed into gold. So, that's basically what I wanted to say about this. I hope that there are questions and stuff that we can say about it.

To take you back to the Voynitch manuscript for a minute. There was something about it being a liturgical manual of some sort, is that your opinion?

Yes. This is kind of a footnote on all of this. Remember I said that Kelly's entre to Dee was that he had a mysterious book and you can tell from what I've said already, Dee was as big a sucker for books as I am. So this book, Kelly's story was that he had gone to sleep in the ruins of a Northumbrian monastery and slept in an open sepulch, a crypt of some sort, and when he awoke he found beneath him two things, a vial of red powder which he said was the transmitting powder, a necessary part of the alchemical process, and a book in an unknown language which he called the Gospel of Saint Dunstable, possibly because this monastery had been dedicated to Saint Dunstable. Now, Arthur Dee was John Dee's son and he said that, he became an alchemist in his own right, and he said when he was growing up he remembers that his father spent many hours puzzling over a book, as he put it, "all covered with

hieroglyphics." But Dee, who elaborated the angelologic language called Enochian, never actually wrote or discussed the book that he had received from Kelly. It is definitely not written in Enochian. Enochian, when grammatically analyzed by computers, has a curious relationship to 16th century English. But when Dee and Kelly traveled to Europe they were talking up Roger Bacon, who was a 14th century English monk who had dabbled in alchemy, and they claimed to have Bacon manuscripts and Rudolph became very interested in this and wanted to obtain some of these Baconian manuscripts. I suspect that what happened is that Dee, by this point, had given up on deciphering the Gospel of Saint Dunstable and decided that he would palm it off on the emperor as a Bacon manuscript because he didn't want to give up a real Bacon manuscript because they were too valuable to him. So for 14,000 gold ducats this thing changed hands and Kelly and Dee and Ann were able to pay their bills and Rudolph had immense resources because of his position as emperor and he brought his cryptographers and decipherers on to work on this Gospel of Saint Dunstable and got nowhere.

Then, when Rudolph died, a mysterious book was numbered among the artifacts of his estate and I think we can assume that it's this book and one of the interesting things about this book is it has pages and pages of plant drawings. Over a 150 watercolors of plants, each carefully labeled, captioned in this unknown language. If you know anything about decipherment, this is what a decipherer dreams of because if you have a picture of the thing and a caption it doesn't take too much smarts to figure out what's going on. Nevertheless, this was completely unhelpful. A third of the manuscript has pseudo astrological material, in other words what looked like drawings of stars and stellar shells but when carefully analyzed dissolve into meaninglessness, cannot be associated with anything, and then a third of the manuscript shows little naked ladies in what can only be described as elaborate plumbing systems and it was thought at one time that these must be drawings of the humors of the body in the liver, that these little naked women represented spirits moving inside the human body and then somebody else's guess was it must show an obscure form of German hydro therapy because, you know, the Germans, if you've ever been to Baden Baden or Marianbad or these places where people take the waters, well those places are old, old. And all this stuff is captioned and there are even tables of contents which again you would think would yield to decipherment and so when Rudolph died, because of the botanical material in this book, it passed to the court botanist, a man named Marici and he got nowhere with it.

Then in the early 16th century a great alchemist and polymath, some of whose art we'll see this evening, was Heinrich Kunderath(sp?), and Heinrich Kunderath was fascinated by artificial languages and he heard about the Voynitch manuscript and we have a whole batch of letters from Kunderath to the keepers of the estate of the emperor trying to obtain this manuscript, which he finally did obtain and then at that point he makes no further mention of it in his diaries the conclusion being that he, too, could get nowhere with this thing, it just defied decipherment. Well, in 1619, at the outbreak of the 30 year's war, and this is what I forgot to mention in my earlier discussion, this episode of the Winter King and Queen is one way of debating the 30 year's war. It's usually considered to be the moment when a certain personage was hurled from a third story window in Prague and then fighting broke out in the streets but really the episode of the Winter King and Queen brought the thing to a head. Well, in 1619, to avoid being caught up in the 30 year's war, Kunderath decided to take holy orders and become a Jesuit and so he gave his library, which was compendious, to the monastery he joined which was a monastery in Southern Italy and there this thing sat until 1906 when a New York rare book dealer named Alfred Voynitch bought the entire contents of this monastic library and when he got it all back to New York and cataloged it, it was all very predictable 16th century theological and alchemical speculation except here was this book in an unknown language and Voynitch kept it throughout his life and then when he died he gave it to Yale and it is to this day at the Benikee rare book room at Yale.

In the 1960s the CIA became interested in it because the CIA is in the business of code making and breaking, a huge amount of energy goes into this. If you know anything about the enigma project in WWII you know that vast energies go into the making of unbreakable codes and so they very systematically sought out all examples of encrypted material throughout history and just lickety-split deciphered it, one after another. All occult and magical codes known to exist in Europe can be traced back to one person, virtually to one person, to Trithemius, Bishop of Spawenheim who was the great teacher of Henry Cornelius Agrippa.

Lecture 3, part 3

All magical codes, if you know the Trithemian method, within a few hours you can get plain text. The Voynitch manuscript did not yield at all to this method and the CIA formed a working group that for over ten years would invite scholars in to have a look at this and if you're interested in this, Marie D'Amperio, who was a great

Renaissance scholar, wrote a book called *The Voynitch Manuscript, an Elegant Enigma* in which she traces the efforts of the CIA to figure this thing out and to figure out what it could be.

There the matter rested until about three years ago when, I think his name is Leo Levartov, some kind of military historian, one of these peculiar people who live for this stuff, he got a hold of it and he said, and deimlperia(?) goes through all the decipherment and there were many efforts at decipherment, there was a scholar at Yale in the twenties named Brumbra who was a very respected man who ruined himself by claiming a complete decipherment of the Voynitch manuscript and, the way the game is played is that you say what your rules for the decipherment were, you give the rules to a colleague and you give your colleague a page of text. If he can't translate it with your rules then you are viewed as a deluded and misguided person and your career goes up in flames. Well, the Brumbraian method for deciphering the manuscript had to do with confined pools of letters where, it would get you to a pool of five or six letters but then you could freely choose which one you used and critics of Brumbra demonstrated that you could make this thing say anything you wanted it to. Brumbra supported Dee's claim, he claimed that it deciphered out into a Roger Bacon manuscript that described a series of riots between the students and the black friars in 1385 at Oxford. But nobody else could make it say that or make it say anything so Brumbra disgraced himself and ruined his career.

Then there were other efforts at decipherment which I won't bore you with but along comes Leo Levartov just four years ago and he wrote a book called *The Voynitch Manuscript: A Liturgical Manual for the Catherites* and his great breakthrough, if you accept his translation, and I do, I know people who don't but they don't seem to have read him as carefully as I have, I think the dude pretty well has it nailed to the barn door. His great breakthrough was to realize that it's not in code. It is not an encrypted manuscript at all. What it is is it's a synthetic alphabet, yes, it's an alphabet that, and one of the things that baffled the CIA is was they looted the libraries of Europe and they could never find another example of what is called Voynitch script and this is just baffling. How could there be no other example of this script. It appears that what happened was someone created a synthetic alphabet and then in a mixture of Medieval, polyglot Flemish with a huge number of loan words from Old French, Middle High German, and Swedish, wrote down a sacramental manual for the dying in the Catherite sect.

Now, what is the Catherite sect? You're probably familiar with something called the Albajensian(?) crusade. This was not a crusade carried on against the infidel for the recovery of Jerusalem but rather a series of military actions carried out by the pope against communities in Southern France in the early 1200s. These people were Catherites. As far as we can tell, and we can't tell much because we only have descriptions of Catherites by people who were burning them at the stake, in other words no original Catherite documents survive, we just have what they screamed out on the rack as they were being put to death by the bishops of the church and this was a horrific incident in European history. To give you the flavor of it, the second Albajensian crusade was prosecuted by a general of the pope named Simone De Monforte and his lieutenants came to him, at a point, and some of you might have visited the city of Carceson in Southern France which is a walled Medieval city in Southern France, very beautiful, Simone De Monforte's lieutenants came to him and they said "We have cornered the Catherites at Carceson but the problem is that there are 6,000 Catholics within the city walls." And he said "kill everybody, God will recognize his own." So that was the spirit in which this thing went forth, and they did, they did.

So, what we do know about the Catherites is that they had a sacrament, the holiest my...well, first let me tell you a little bit more about them. At first it was thought that they were pretty much heterodox Christians. They were into nudity and vegetarianism and they sound like early hippies, as far as we can tell. They got together men and women, they took off their clothes, they bathed, whether there were orgies or not we don't know, they were vegetarians, and the one thing that we do know is that they had a sacrament called the consolamentum and the consolamentum was ritualized vivisection, no, that's not the word, the term escapes me, but anyway, when you were dying, a fellow Cather would cut your wrists and open your veins in a warm bath of water and you would die in that state, you did not die a natural death. This was called the consolamentum. What Leo Levartov is claiming is that the Voynitch manuscript is a description, a manual, for the prefects of the Catherite sect telling how to properly carry out the consolamentum. I see no reason to challenge it. Even with my limited knowledge of German, once you get the vowel and letter assignments right into this weird manuscript into this weird language and change it into English alphabetic text you can see that there's enough German there and then these lone words in Flemish and so forth, it looks to be true.

And what emerges from this, if we accept the Voynitch manuscript as the only primary document on the Catherite faith, is that this was not a form of heterodox Christianity at all, it is much more radical than that and this may explain the church's fury with this group of people. It was a cult of Isis. It can be traced straight back into the mystery religions of Eo(?) Isis in Egypt and I have not seen any critical commentary on Levartov's book. His book was published by this weird press in Rodondo Beach that specializes only in books on military encryption. Their catalog is a revelation to see, it's amazing, and the book on the Voynitch manuscript stands out like a sore thumb

because most of it is like dictionaries of three letter words in Swahili and their numerical transforms and stuff like that. So that's the history to date of the Voynitch manuscript and it's not that askew of our subject because all of this heterodoxy in Europe blends together.

The presence of Theodore DeBrie as an alchemical printer in Heidleberg may be a clue because there were survivals of this Catherite faith in the form of a heresy called the brotherhood of the free spirit. If any of you are familiar with the altarpiece called "The Garden of Earthly Delights" by Hieronymus Bosch, it's thought that this was created by commission for a brotherhood, a congregation of the brotherhood of the free spirit and the brotherhood of the free spirit was always associated with some reason, we don't know why, with printers. Printers seem to be the profession that the brotherhood favored and, like the Catherites, they practiced vegetarianism, nudism and gathering together in a ritual bath. So, there is much still to be learned and to be teased apart in the art history and the history of heterodox thinking in Europe of which alchemy is seen to be one facet of a faceted gem that includes the brotherhood of the free spirit, early Freemasonry, Catherites, survivals of Manicheism, Voagamils(sp?) in Yugoslavia, there are Vogamils Vostrian(?) graves on the Southern coast of Thessalonica and just a whole zoo of intellectual systems that have been forgotten and overlooked. This what I meant when I said we will explore the statigraphy of lost thought systems. In some cases we possess quite complete skeletons, in the case of alchemy, what we possess in the cases of the Vogamils and the Catherites is almost a foot bone or a tooth or a footprint but someday, with luck, new textual material will emerge and a new understanding of the role of heterodoxy in the formation of modern thought will emerge. Questions?

The Borne and Clark(?) book on Freemasonry that's just recently been published..I've just about finished it and this person is a Medieval English historian from Kentucky and I think he's finally solved...the Freemason history which is a very interesting history because the Masonic historians themselves have been arguing for a couple hundred years so it's strange that this Voynitch manuscript should be all of the sudden in the last couple of years resolved because it seems that this Freemason thing is also resolved

Yes, you make an interesting point. John Glavis brought me an article yesterday. We're all tied up now in this Pluto return. I'm not an astrologer but John brought me an article that's talking about how, I don't know if it's the last time or the time before last, that the Pluto return occurred is precisely the 1490s, the period that we're talking about when the Corpus Hermeticum was translated and we are now in a period that is astrologically exactly equivalent to that period and the Voynitch manuscript appears to have been accepted, I mean I'm willing to accept it, you mentioned this revelation about the true nature of Freemasonry, and of course what is going on at the moment that is askew of our subject but tremendously exciting and relevant to the idea of lost knowledge coming to light, is that this is the golden moment in Mayan studies.

It is happening right now, day by day, minute by minute, the log jam has been broken. The Mayan glyphs are being deciphered, no shit, and it has to do with an entirely new approach that some Russian linguists have taken and if any of you are interested, it will never happen again so far as I know, there are now, with the Mayan decipherment, no real undeciphered languages left. The Harapan(sp?) was deciphered a few years ago but really it wasn't that interesting because we only possess about 6,000 characters in Harapan. But the literature of the Mayan, when you take not only the hieroglyphic, the stone texts, but when you add in the ceramic texts, why we have a lot of Mayan material and it is being deciphered at a furious rate. If you're interested in this, Linda Sheil has written a book called A Forest of Kings and how I do envy this woman because what she is doing is writing the first history of the Maya in a thousand years. We're not now dealing in the realm of gods and myths, we're dealing with stuff like "on the 14th of May, 642, an army from El Charico met an army from Tikal and triumphed and deposed three flint and placed on the throne..."it's this kind of stuff, real history. The conceits of Mayan religion and Mayan courtly life are all coming into focus and it's very exciting. All the people who have tried to make the Maya into some kind of Atlantean civilization should be running for cover at this point, because the picture that emerges is not as pretty as we might wish, but, hey, know the truth and the truth will set you free, I would choose truth over illusion anytime, no matter how damaging it might be to somebody's conceptions of these things.

And if any of you are interested in these subjects, another area where this has occurred is, some of you may know the book by Michael Chadwick called The Decipherment of Linear Be, Linear Be is a proto-Minoan language and a linguist at Cambridge named Michael Ventris, a genius, in the fifties took this language, there was no Rosetta Stone, this is the amazing thing. You know what I mean by a Rosetta Stone? You see, in the 19th century the great mystery was how to read the Egyptian hieroglyphs and before they were deciphered the Egyptians were treated like the Maya and people thought that the secrets of the universe were chiseled on those obelisks and tombs. Well then a scholar in the grand army of Napoleon Champion, a soldier found a tablet which had a column of Demotic Greek, a column of another language, I forget which one, and a column of Egyptian hieroglyphs and they were able to realize that it was saying the same thing three times and that opened it up for them. But that's like a crib sheet, it's easy if you have the same text in a known language. But in the case of the Maya and in the case of Linear Be and in the case of Harapan,

there was no Rosetta Stone, well then you talk about an excruciatingly difficult problem to solve and I'll explain how it was done with the Maya because it's so neat.

It turns out that Mayan is a rebus language, what does this mean? Do you remember when we were kids and in comic books there would be these things where it would show a picture of an eye and then it would show a picture of a saw going through a piece of wood and then it would show a picture of an ant and then it would show a picture of a red rose. This is a sentence which says "I saw aunt Rose." But now notice what's going on here. It all depends on puns that depend on a knowledge of the spoken language. If you lose the sounds of the spoken language how the hell could you ever tell that a picture of an eye, a saw, an insect and a rose says "I saw my maternal relative on my mother's side." I mean, it just is impossible, it's absolutely impossible in that situation to reconstruct meaning unless you have sounds. Well, how do you recover the sounds of a language dead a thousand years. Well, these Soviet linguists had the good sense to go and look at living Mayan languages, of which there are 15, living Mayan languages in the Americas and they discovered one of these dialects where, when you set Mayan hieroglyphs in front of these people and they named what they saw, meaning came out of their mouths and that broke the log jam and then you just rev up your computers and use all the standard tools of modern linguistics and philology and the stuff begins to just pour out, clear as day, no problem.

So they asked the Mayans?

Yes, they had to go to a Mayan, you're right, good point, it had never occurred to them. Because always before when showing it to Mayans they would say "what does it mean?" instead of "what do you see here?" and then what they said what they saw there meaning came out of their mouths. It was very, very neat. It shows once again the hubris of modern scientific methods, we tend to dismiss the aboriginal and the primitive. To turn it toward my own favorite subject, this was the state of modern medicine, nobody would ask the native in the Amazon basin "what plants do you use for malaria, brain tumors, shrinkage and so on and so forth, because they were just dismissed as superstitious primitives. It was thought that the doctrine of signatures was operating. They didn't realize how subtle and how complete human knowledge systems grow under the care of those to whom it really matters. Is there anything that needs to be said about this?

The project of the redemption of spirit from matter turned into the project of redeeming the general society of the time toward a utopian vision. This is working right up to the present. Millenarianism is still with us, Marxism is the last great Millenarian faith, the belief in the worker's state. It occupies the same relationship to these alchemical utopias as Heideggerian existentialism has to second century Gnosticism. The poetry has gone, the baroque imagery has been stripped away, but the impulse is still toward a perfect society where each from his ability according to his needs and means. It lives on. Democracy is also an effort, let us not forget, an attempt to recapture the style of 5th century Athens and we forget that this was a citystate half of whose inhabitants were slaves and yet we are so under the spell of the utopian dream that we continue, and not without important reason, I think, to try to labor toward a just and decent world where the lion lies down with the lamb and that was, and it remains, the alchemical dream. ...flashbacks of my life...I majored in history in college and the first history teacher that I had was a wonderful old man who really, now that I look back on it, taught the history of ideas. My major was involved with politics and all of this kind of thing and it's such a wonderful experience to suddenly get back to what turned me on to history, it gets me turned on and opens my mind again, looking at some of these thoughts that I'd just forgotten or suppressed, put down and said that's bullshit as a traditionally trained scientist and so on...opened my eyes to the fact that we can learn from what's gone on before, the ideas are out there, we just have to grasp them...and apply them and I, too, am interested in how we make this more meaningful for the future.

One thing that occurs to me to say, I once, in one of these revelatory dialogs with the logos, asked the question, "why me, why are you telling me this?" because my, I mean, I was a poor hippie, I was penniless, I was a traveler, and the answer was instantaneous and it was, "because you don't believe in anything, because you don't believe in anything" and I think that that's a very pure position to hold. We're not trying to ensnare you to abandon your Jewishness or your Presbyterianism or belief, if you believe in something then you have precluded the possibility of believing in its opposite and you have hence limited your freedom. Everything is to be judged by its efficacy, by its effectiveness in the real world and I think that I have a horror in all belief systems, I just don't like them. If somebody tells you he has the answer, flee from this person, they are obviously some sort of low being who has not recognized the true size and dimension of the cosmos that we're living in and if you can keep yourself free of encumbering beliefs then your dialog with the logos can go forward unhindered.

Sometimes when I'm in the trance of psilocybin I will say to the entity, "begin to show me yourself as you are for yourself, don't give me the scaled down, humanized version, show me your true nature" and after a few moments of this then I have to raise my hand and say enough, I can't handle more than that. This goes back to the statement made yesterday or the day before about that the universe is not only stranger than we suppose, it's stranger than we can suppose. Therefore, we are given tremendous latitude in what we can think and what we conceive but if you

begin to believe in something then you are pulled down because everything that you believe has consequences. A perfect example, as some of you may know, when Mohammed ascended into heaven from the site of what was to become the Mosque of Omar, from the site of the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, he happened to be on horseback. Now if you believe that Mohammed ascended to heaven, imagine the theological and hermenutic problems posed by the horse he was riding. Because it went with him. This is a perfect example of how intellectual baggage drags us down because belief always contains absurdity. The ontological status of this horse has troubled Islamic theologians for centuries...

Lecture 3, part 4

If they would just let go of the whole idea complex they would be liberated from this kind of minutia. Belief kills the spirit, spirit transcends belief. I wanted to say that.

Then somebody mentioned Bruno and Dee. Since I suggested that you read Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition it's ironic that so little time was spent on Bruno, on the other hand, I recommended that you read the book so you should be well informed about Bruno. For me, Bruno, we just didn't get into that particular historical episode because I wanted to tell you about the Rosicrucian enlightenment, but the thing to remember about Bruno was his discovery about the infinitude of the cosmos and that by an act of unencumbered observation, I mean how many people had looked at the night sky before Bruno and they had not seen what he saw, which was infinite space and suns hung like lamps unto the uttermost extremes of infinity. By an act of pure cognition, he was able to destroy an entire cosmological vision that had limited and confined the human soul for millennia. That's half of his story. The other half is that he was burned at the stake for refusing to back down from this. It's a model for us all: trust your perceptions trust your intuition and then accept the consequences because this is what existential validity must be. As far as the relationship between Dee and Bruno, the relationship is that they were both derivative of the school of magic that can be traced back to Henry Cornelius Agrippa Von Nettleshine who was another model for Faust. Agrippa wrote *De Libro Quatro De Occulta Philosophia*, four books of occult philosophy, and that was the core work for European magic. All European magic can be traced back to the Agrippan system and Agrippa was the direct student of the Abbot Trithemius of Spawenheim that we mentioned yesterday as the source of all the magical codes of the middle ages. If you're interested in a brilliant but fictional treatment of John Dee and Giordano Bruno, I'd like to recommend a novel to you. It's called *Aegypt*, it's by John Crowley, the same gentleman who wrote *Little Big* which is a wonderful novel about the magical interface between two worlds. But his book *Aegypt*, fully half of the book is given over to a wonderfully rich retelling of the relationship between Bruno and Dee. Some people have wanted to say that Dee and Bruno actually crossed physical paths in London but I've looked into it and they missed each other by about two weeks. Bruno was setting sail for England as Dee was setting sail for France and the Rosacrucian enlightenment episode that I talked about.

Then someone asked about tantra and the contrast between the imaginative internalized invocation of the anima or the animus, depending on your own sexuality, and that contrasted with something that actually happens between two people. We didn't talk that much about the concept of the alchemical wedding, or the chemical marriage is another way of putting it, but this is the Western resonance to the Eastern idea of tantra and it is the idea that sexual energy, being the rawest and most accessible energy to the organism, can be channeled into a higher spirituality. It's entirely so, the problem is that of all paths this is probably fraught with the greatest difficulty because sexuality is such a debased coinage in the modern world. In other words, you have to make your way with great care and great purity of intent into this. In Eastern tantra that is actually practiced in this physical manner there is usually the admonition is that you should have no attachment to your tantrica, that the relationship should be entirely given over to the technical details of this union and of course it has to do with the forestalling of orgasm and the raising of energy within the organism.

In the chemical marriage, in the alchemical marriage, due honor is given to the importance and uniqueness of the other person, in other words it isn't the idea of the temple prostitute who serves as the vessel for this process but there's actually an effort to keep individual identities and individual dignity, in some sense, together and this is, the higher up the mountain you go, the steeper it becomes and when you begin to scale the heights of alchemical or tantric sexuality the fall back into the nigredo can be shocking indeed so that's just an admonition, it's not designed to scare you off, it's just to say that in an age as sexually obsessed as our own, you have to do as the I Ching says, "inquire of the oracle once again if you have purity of intent."

Isn't there also a healing between the two?

Yes, it's a complete alchemical system and the energy is passed between. This is probably the highest completion that is possible. The ideal of romantic love, and I don't want to digress too much into this, but the ideal of romantic

love was introduced into Europe in the 1400s and earlier at the Anjovan(sp?) court of Eleanor of Aquitaine by troubadours and this troubadour tradition can, scholarship now reveals pretty convincingly that this is an esoteric Sufi system. It also occurs in Indian teachers such as Chitania(sp?), who is the guy that the Hare Krishnas go back to. The radical teaching of Chitania was that you could achieve ecstasy not by sitting in yoga, but by dancing and singing on street corners. It's now pretty clearly shown that Sufi, the penetration of Sufi ideas into Bengal was happening at the same time that these Sufi ideas were coming across from North Africa and into Spain and Southern France. So, it's a tremendously old and vital tradition but you have to be careful - the romantic impulse is a real double-edged sword. It has been ever since the early 19th century because, you know, the rise of romanticism, as that term is normally understood, meaning those movements in art and literature of the early 19th century, the rise of romanticism was a response to the dehumanization that was going on at that time. The rise of industrialism and the retreat into cities more massive than any that had ever been built, did you want to say something?

I wanted to add, the question was about healing, and I think there's a tremendous difference between Indian and Tibetan tantric systems. You ought to practice in Taoism in terms of single copulation and dual copulation, in the Taoist system self-healing is of paramount importance before you can even consider dual copulation. Dual copulation is then begun, then again other considerations come in, but the Tibetan and Indian systems where Dakinis and various deities are invoked in the process of their alchemical union, it's really quite different from the Taoist system which is devoid of beliefs in gods.

That's a good point. You know, yesterday I talked about the alchemical stages. When you have reached the albedo, the final whitening of these processes, that final whitening is, from a higher prospective, a new nigredo and you must always build and build again. So you have to be fairly confident that you have already realized a certain portion of yourself before you embark upon these tantric double experiments. Because a lot of tantric text reads very vampirical, I mean, it's all about expelling the semen and then sucking it back in and it's like an energy war. It turns into black magic. The losing partners in this deal are just left a withered husk and this is not a higher completion to be sought for.

You're correct, there are supposedly, whether they're myths or documented stories, about a Chinese Empress who caused the deaths of more than a thousand men because of her vampirism.

And it was sexual in nature?

It was sexual in nature.

Just a couple of other points here. The gentleman here who had nothing to comment or wanted to sit it out reminded me, since we were talking about the Valentinian system this morning, my favorite archon, besides Sophia who's so interesting because of the little story about how she made the universe, but the 12th archon in the Gnostic system is a unique entity, I don't know of another religious system that has this notion. The 12th archon in the Valentinian system is called The Watcher. That's all he does. He does not put into the system at all but is the witness and somehow this creates a validating dimension that is very important. I just want to affirm that the watcher is a very strong platform on which to stand. I mean, would that I could learn to keep my mouth shut. Would that we all could. So, the watcher is a good archon to keep active on your inner altar.

So, then, the future occurs three times on the list. We don't have a lot of time, but what I would like to say about it this morning is, if you extrapolate all that has been said here then you should see that, remember how I said that one view of alchemy is that the alchemist intervened in natural process in the role of a catalyst. For those of you who aren't chemists, a catalyst is something that causes a chemical reaction that is going on anyway to precede at a faster rate but the catalyst is not consumed in this process, it simply accelerates it. And if we think of nature as a great alchemical furnace that continuously reproduces and brings forth wonders, then must it not be that humanity is the yeast of the gain alchemical rarefaction and that human history is the process of catalyzing the alchemical condensation. If we look back into nature, before the advent of speaking and writing human beings in the last 15,000 years, what we see are very leisurely processes. The speciation of a single plant from another can occupy 50 or 60 thousand years, it never happens more quickly than that. And the grinding down of glaciers from the poles, these are processes that take hundreds and thousands of years.

With the advent of human beings, an entirely new ontos of being, an entirely new category of becoming is introduced into the entire cosmos, as far as we know, because we cannot verify that there are other self-reflecting beings in the universe and this new ontos of becoming is what I call epigenetic, as opposed to genetic. All other change in the living world, in the world of bios, of zoa, occurs through genetic change, random modification of the genome which is then subject to random selection. But with the advent of speech and writing, epigenetic, means outside of genetics, epigenetic processes become possible and time accelerates. One way of thinking about what is happening in this cosmos is that it is a gradual conquest of dimensionality by becoming, or process, we hardly have a word inclusive enough.

The earliest forms of life were probably slimes on certain kinds of clays, self-replicating molecular systems and then certain portions of this chemistry became light sensitive and then there was the sense of the division of light and darkness which generated the notion of here and there on some tremendously basic level within these early organisms. Once you have the concept of here and there, motility, the ability to move, the cilia that dot the surface of protozoans and stuff like this are elaborated and a new dimension enters the picture, the dimension of time, because notice that a journey from here to there is a journey from now to then. And then, as more refined perceptual apparatus arose, and more refined systems of moving animal bodies arose, a steady conquest of dimensionality occurred. The movement of animals onto the land and so forth.

Well then, at the advent of memory, and memory must be mediated by language except at a very crude, instinctual level, memory is a time binding function. It's a way of somehow taking the past and calling up it's essential properties so that they are co-present with the given moment of experience. It's one thing at the level of the song and dance of pre-literate peoples but once you begin to chisel stone and write books then you're into the epigenetic domain in a big way. And once you cross the threshold into the world of electronic media and that sort of thing, once you achieve powered flight, once you can hurl instruments outside of the solar system, these are time binding functions and the alchemical intent, recall, was to accelerate nature's intent toward perfection and the alchemists all believed that nature was growing toward a state of unity and perfection, that given millions and millions of years, everything would turn to gold, everything would find its way toward the Platonian one.

So, now we live in a world that appears to be on the brink of its own death or extinction and the reason we make that assumption is that our bridges are burning behind us. We see no way back to the world of the hunting and gathering pastoralists of the high Paleolithic of the Saharan grasslands. We see no way back to the Gothic piety of Europe with over 30 million people in it. Our bridges are burning and our religions, Islam, Judaism, Christianity, the major Western religions persistently insist that we are caught in a tightening spiral of ever increasing speed that is carrying us toward an unimaginable confrontation with something which they call God, the second coming, the messiah, you name it. As cool-headed a rationalist as Albert Toynbee, when he sat down to write a study of history, he finally had to face the question, "what is history for?" And the best he could come up with is "history must be about the entry of God into the domain of three-dimensional space."

Well, we don't know what God is, let's not call it God, let's call it the philosopher's stone, let's call it the Sophic Hydrolith, and I believe that the chaos of our world, the apocalyptic intuition that informs our religions and our dreams is because ahead of us in time, and now not that far ahead of us in time, is something, taking a page from the mathematical concern called dynamics, we can call an attractor. The attractor lies ahead of us in time. The universal process is not driven by a downward cascade of Cartesian causistry(?) that's the scientific notion and it leads to a universe of entropy and heat death millions of years in the future but what we see around us is a continuing and accelerating complexification as human beings, machines, eco systems, the solar system itself is beginning to knit itself into a tighter and tighter organization. I believe that alchemy provides the best metaphors for understanding this. Nature is the great alchemist par excellence and we, as its minions through history, are accelerating the condensation of being toward the unimaginable so that in my system, my way of thinking, there's ultimately a seminary(?) break with ordinary history and I call it all kinds of different things, but here this morning, the transcendent other.

The transcendent other casts an enormous shadow across the lower dimensional landscape of time. The stirring of the earliest life forms in the Devonian seas caught the call and every step that has been taken since then has been ever quicker, ever quicker toward the transcendental other, it beckons us and history is haunted by this thing. History is the shock wave of eschatology. History is a process that lasts, let's be generous, 25,000 years, the wink of an eye in geological time, and in that 25,000 years religious rise and fall, governmental systems, teachers come and go and there is a sense of being caught in a whirlpool that is spinning us toward fusion with the unimaginable. This is why the skies of Earth are haunted by flying saucers, they aren't coming from other solar systems, they are sintillas, remember this alchemical term - sparks - they are sintillas being thrown off the alchemical quintessence which lies like a great attractor at the end of time and the purpose of science and techni and electronic media and information transfer and all of this stuff is to knit us together, to dissolve our boundaries and to bring us to a point of singularity where language fails, where we lean over meanings' edge and feel the dizziness of things unsaid.

And this lies now, I believe, within our lifetimes, within the lifetimes of most of us, this is actually going to break through. I'm like one of those people carrying a sign that says "repent for the end is near." It's as nutty a position as you can possibly hold. That's why I suspect it has a reasonable chance of being dead on. So, that is the point of talking about alchemy and this melding, the production of the quintessent and all that. It is because we are a gnat's eyelash away from a full confrontation with the transcendent other. Our dreams are haunted by it, our reveries are filled with it. If we take a psychedelic drug, it's revealed before us in all its splendor. This is the force that is pulling us inexorably toward completion.

I remember once in a psilocybin trance I expressed concern about the state of the world and the nous spoke, the logos spoke, and it said "no big deal, this is what it's like when a species prepares to depart for the stars." This is the, we are in the birth canal of a planetary birthing. And as you know, if you come upon a birth in progress, you would never dream that this is the culmination of a natural process. It looks like a catastrophe of some sort. There is moaning and groaning and screaming and thrashing and blood is being shed and there is a feeling that the walls are closing in and yet it is inscribed into each of us as a microcosmic reflection of the completion of human history. And not only human history, because we are simply the hands and eyes of all life, all process on this planet. The Gnostics believe that the Earth is like an egg and that a moment will come in which the egg must be split asunder. I love to quote the Grateful Dead, "you can't go back and you can't stand still. If the thunder don't get you then the lightning will." That is what we are being funnelled toward, that is the message of alchemy. That is the quintessence of the human enterprise, the biological enterprise. I like to recall the Irish toast "may you be alive at the end of the world." And we have a real crack at it. It's not a pessimistic vision. It's the most optimistic vision that one can suppose and I think that's where I'd like to leave it this morning.