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Editor : Adam McLean

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Editorial

Over the past few months I have been literally agonising over the decision whether of not to purchase a computer driven word-processing and filing system. Apart from having to weigh the benefits of such equipment against the financial drain on the business, this has involved me in a confrontation with and deeper evaluation of the role of present day technology. Those of us who are involved in the esoteric, trying to work with the spiritual forces in human evolution, often have an instinctive abreaction to such technology, feeling it to be 'soul-less', perhaps even dangerously leading us into error and a distorted materialistic view of the world. We are obviously right to fear certain developments in technology - Nuclear Power, weaponry, personal surveillance by the State, vast anonymous beurocracy run by large computers, the '1984 syndrome', but sometimes our instinctive negative response to all technology is perhaps founded upon superatitious fear rather than any real difficulties such technology might impose upon us.

The ancient alchemist were in the forefront of the new technologies of their times, as we note, say, in Robert Fludd's scientific writings, or the technological achiev-



ments, the automata created by the Rosicrucian Solomon de Caus in the Heidelberg Gardens.

A naive romanticism for the ancient ways, however, can still work within us and lead us to feel that the old ways are best, and even that the old crafts are valuable in themselves as activities for the Soul. Indeed, there is often an instinctive feeling that by working in the ways of the old crafts one is brought closer to the spiritual.

In my agonising over the computer decision I have had to recognise all these elements in myself, and see where they are founded upon real problems or merely on a prejudiced romanticism. In the preparation of books one has to set text. To go back to the medieval craft approach of hermetic publishers like Jennis and de Bry, text in the form of moveable lead type would be set one letter at a time. I have, in fact, such a printing press in my possession, which I used once to produce a book. It took me about 4 month to set and print (inking each page by hand) a book of only some 40 pages. This experience was not for me one of the simple pleasure of a craftsman but of considerable annoyance at the amount of my

time it was consuming.

I am beginning to recognise that, in a strange way, the new technology in the form of computer, electronic typewriter and photoprinter, could give me a freedom and complete control over the whole process of book production that was formerly achieved in the workshops of medieval craftsmen. Those who have visited me and seen the piles of unanswered correspondence, the half completed book projects, pieces of research having to be left in abeyance because I have not the time to devote to it, will perhaps point out that there is little virtue or efficiency in traditional methods. If I were to go back to traditional typesetting and printing, I could possibly produce, say, one limited edition of a hundred page book per year, and my project would collapse financially almost immediately.

But it still remains for me a difficult dilemma to embrace a computer technology that I see used so often in our society to restrict human freedom and personal evolution.

Adam McLean

THE TEACHING OF GURDJIEFF

NICOLAS N TERESHCHENKO ©

We are living in a new world, and to find our way in this new and still developing world we need new maps. The Ideas brought to the West from an unknown source by George Ivanovich GURDJIEFF and taught by him are such maps, as well as a practical method to explore this new world and master our life in it.

In the old world, the world before Gurdjieff, the principle was that of absolutism. Man believed that Good and Evil, Right and Wrong were words with an unmistakable meaning and that this meaning is the same for all. They believed, too, that final and complete solutions to all problems are possible, and that social justice and human welfare can be based on rules and formulae understood and accepted by all, and that such rules could and should be enforced by decrees, beneficially.

In the new world we find that the two twin principles of relativity and scale are necessary for understanding life and the universe, and that there are no absolutes without a specific and conscious goal to be attained. Thus, the first thing that must be understood is that an aimless life leads nowhere. If one wishes to become a full-rights citizen and master in the life of the new world, that is, a successful follower of an Esoteric Teaching such as Gurdjieff's, then the first essential is to have an AIM and to be determined to follow it to its bitter end.

And the first unavoidable aim, the same for everyone, the "must", is the aim to know oneself. But before I can truly know myself, not just say that I do, I must first see myself as I really am now. Unless a man is prepared to work on this - really Work, not just dabble - he cannot follow the Ideas with which this article is dealing, nor indeed can he follow any genuine school or way leading to Higher Consciousness. And after all, growing more and more Conscious is, or should be, the purpose of human life and the Highest Consciousness attainable is the ultimate goal of human development.

Gurdjieff in his Teaching puts away all absolutes and set formulae, and shows us how to form our impartial judgement and how to find in ourselves the strength to follow its guidance. But of course in a short exposition such as this, dogmatic language cannot be avoided, for the sake of both brevity and clarity.

Gurdjieff is not concerned with telling people what they should think or do, but with helping them to discover for themselves how to think and how to do. For this to become possible, he presents two sets of provisional hypotheses to examine and verify for oneself : a psychological hypothesis on what man is like now (with an indication of what he could and should be), and a cosmological hypothesis on what the world in which we live is, why and how it was created and by what means it is maintained.

Only when the Laws of man's inner life and the life of the world outside man are fully understood, can they then be applied to change what it is desirable to change and to preserve, to make stronger and permanent what it is desirable to keep.

All understanding must begin at the level of "mere information", leading to real knowledge when it has been checked and re-checked, discarding what has been found to be not true. This unceasing process of verification has the effect of building within the one genuinely engaged in it, a new state of Consciousness and something additional to the ordinary functioning of the body. This something in this system is called Being, which at its lowest level is indistinguishable from what we call Attention ; and it is only continued growth of Being and increase of Knowledge that lead to Understanding.

Without this, man cannot attain the maximum inner development possible to him, nor a permanent elevation of Consciousness to a higher level.

PSYCHOLOGY

"Man" as he is now is a malfunctioning "machine", living essentially in a dream state, only partly waking up during what he calls his "waking life", but rarely - if ever - and for very brief instants only coming fully awake.

At the same time "man" is in "prison", but does not even realise it and therefore makes no effort to escape. Even if he does for a moment become aware of his horrible situation and begins to wish and tries to escape, he soon falls asleep again and only dreams that he is making the necessary efforts.

Being a "machine", "man" is motivated by and responds only to outer stimuli : someone or something presses a button, so to say, and at once a set re-action is carried out, without consciousness and without volition. Even when at times "man" realises that what he is doing is wrong, he cannot stop himself and at once begins to find reasons to explain his behaviour, that is, he justifies himself. Even a "man" at the level of a "saint" is not exempt : "For the good that I would do I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do" (St Paul's Epistle to the Romans 7 : 19).

This state of a dreaming, imprisoned and mad machine, is one of identification with everything that is happening. In this state "man" does not "remember" himself, and such powers of attention that he has are captive or dispersed, thus useless. Any effort he tries to make leads nowhere, as he cannot in this state distinguish dream from reality even if he does try in his more lucid intervals. And even when an effort accidentally and by sheer luck does start in the right direction, it soon becomes mechanical and returns to the same old rut which leads nowhere.

This dreadful picture of man's predicament must not be simply accepted on Gurdjieff's authority, but must be really seen in one's own body and life by the technique called "self-observation with self-remembering". It can only be learnt by trial and error, by experience together with a group of people engaged in the same Work, and under the supervision of someone who has himself been taught by someone who knows and has himself learnt and practiced it for a long time.

Nothing much more than this can be usefully detailed and explained in an elementary article such as this.

THE FOUR WAYS

Is there a way of escaping and becoming a real Man, without quotation marks ?

There are said to be in fact four such ways. The one followed by Gurdjieff's pupils is the Fourth Way or "Way of the Sly Man".

1 The first way is the ascetic or disciplinary path of the "Fakir" and concentrates on the physical body. In this path the aim is to subjugate the body and its functions by great privations amounting to self-torture, and thus develop and unbreakable Will. Unfortunately, by the time such a will is forged, the body and mind are often too old, worn out and undeveloped to allow sequential work on the emotional and intellectual sides of the man.

2 The second way concentrates on the emotional make up and has two branches : the Mystic or Devotional way of the "Monk" and the Orphic or Inspirational way of the "Artist". In the mystic branch the aim is complete union with "God" as understood by the particular religion in which the aspirant believes and whose teachings he accepts. Thus, what is learned on this path will give an interpretation of theology, the actual symbols and allegories varying with the temperament of the particular religious sect. The training given in this way aims at the perfection by constant practice of the states of meditation, contemplation and the higher states of prayer. In the Orphic branch the aim is the realisation of the immanence of the deity by harmonisation of feeling and emotions. It is the racial memory in the shape of fairy tales, myths and folklore, which supplies the follower with ideas and symbolism. The terminology is that of the poet in search of beauty and truth, and the training is designed with the view of bringing consciousness into complete harmony with all parts of Nature. Both branches on the second path lead to the production of inner Power through growth of Being. Unfortunately, by the time Being has fully developed, the

intellect is completely rusty and does not know what to do with the power available. Also the body is often adversely affected by self-denial or abuses of one kind or another.

3 The third way is the Magic or Enlightened way of the "Scientist", "Yogi" or "Magus" and concentrates on the intellectual functions. This is the path of acquiring all knowledge, with the aim of perfecting one's mind and character through study and research, thus increasing the capacity and range of one's intellect. The training is designed to give the neophyte's mind complete mastery over itself primarily, and thus ultimately over everything in the Universe. Unfortunately, though this way does lead to great Knowledge and even Understanding, the lack of Being and Will makes it impossible to always act becomingly, through some inner weakness, even though what should be done and how to do it is known.

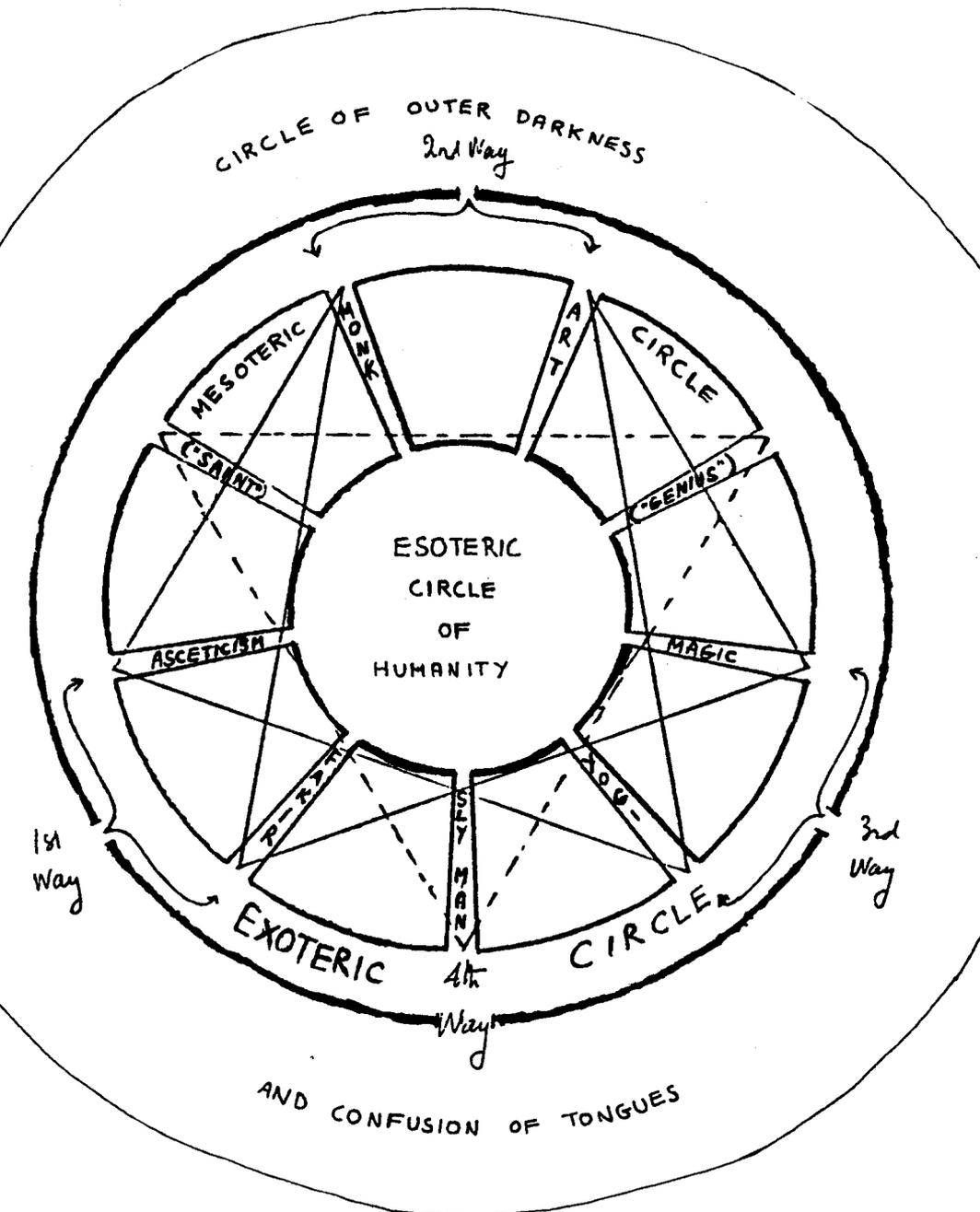
4 The Fourth way is the Synthetic or Balanced middle way of the "Sly Man". It can be a short-cut to inner freedom and full Consciousness through the even and simultaneous development of Will, Being and Knowledge, leading to Perfect Understanding, provided it is undertaken and carried-out under the guidance of a competent Master-Teacher. It demands great perseverance. The training is designed to develop equally, congruously and in a balanced manner the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual parts of the follower.

It must be emphasised unequivocally that all these ways do not lead to separate goals, but all unite in the end, as the spokes of a wheel unite at the axis in the centre ; and when he has trodden the path to the end, the successful Adept of every path enters the "One Temple in the Highest, not made with hands, Eternal in the Heavens".

OCCULT EMBRYOLOGY, ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY OF MAN

The Universe in which we live is made up of a number of "cosmoses", all interpenetrating and interrelated, obeying the same laws and serving ultimately the same purpose. Man is one such cosmos.

Everything that exists must serve and maintain the existence of something else. Everything "eats" some other part of the world lower than itself, and is in turn "eaten" by something higher than itself. But certain so-called "relatively independent formations" have the possibility of growing and transforming themselves into a formation on a higher level of existence. Man is one of these fortunate creatures, endowed with this possibility. If he does nothing to bring about an inner transformation, he remains on the same level of existence as any other animal and maintains his life on the same level of being as do mere beasts : only, that is, as a mechanism for the transformation of energy. But he has it in his power to choose whether to remain as he is born, an unconscious energy transformer and transmitter, or to work towards being able to serve a higher purpose. The core of Gurdjieff's teaching is that Man must serve a purpose, but there is a purpose he can serve by following the mechanical way that leads to death only, and another



purpose by way of conscious life, leading to Immortality.

At birth man has an "essence" which embodies his heredity, both the physical one of his planetary body and the one of his "psyche", that is, all that part of him which is not the body. This essence grows automatically only for a short time and is the seed for the possible development of a "higher-being-body" or "Soul". Right from the moment of birth all the factors impinging from outside on the new man begin to build what is called his "personality" and it is the rapid growth of this that stops the growth of the essence. When the personality is fully developed, it can then be used as the "soil" within which the "seed" (which is essence) can again begin to grow. The richer and the more multi-sided the personality, the better the soil. This, however, does not happen by itself, but only as the result of conscious inner Work on himself (technically known as "conscious labour and intentional suffering") by a man who experiences the need for such Work.

Within the essence are seven centres, two of which are fully developed (and called Higher Centres), but are not now connected to the five lower centres, which in the majority of men are not functioning correctly, due, amongst other things, to the defective education to which we are all subjected from birth.

The most important centres are the Instinctive centre (which regulates the working of the body and its functions), the Moving centre (which deals with the voluntary movements of the body), the Feeling centre (which has to do with our everyday "emotions") and the Thinking centre (which is what we call our mind or intellect). For all practical purposes, the Instinctive and Moving centres can be considered as one single Instinctive-Moving or Action centre, and thus man is a "three-centred being". Each of these three centres acts through a particular part of our nervous system, and thus may be said to have its own "brain" ; so that man is also a "three-brained-being", as distinguished from an animal such as a sheep (which is a "two-brained-being") or a worm (which is a "one-brained-being").

Every man is born with one or the other of these centres predominating, and for the sake of accuracy of description and terminology, a man in whom the body functions predominate (such as soldiers or sportsmen) is called Man No.1 ; a man in whom the feeling functions predominate (such as an artist or a monk) is called Man No.2 ; and a man in whom the thinking faculties predominate (such as scholars or scientists) is called Man No. 3. Every man is born as one of these, and they are all on the same level, though they manifest themselves differently in everything they do, as they see life from different points of view and thus often cannot understand each other. Hence there are so many quarrels and other unhappy and negative situations between individuals and between national groups.

By means of special efforts at inner Work, the three centres can become equally developed and equilibrated, so that they can function at all times correctly and without one of them predominating. Such a man does not occur naturally, is called Man No.4 and is the goal at which Gurdjieff's system (and indeed all gen-

vine Esoteric schools) aims in the first instance. Continued development in this direction allows the connection between the Higher and the Lower centres to be re-established.

COSMOLOGY

The whole Universe is built and maintained on the basis of two fundamental primordial cosmic laws, called the Laws of Seven Steps or of the Octave and the Law of Three Forces or of Triads.

Our planet Earth, and we with it, is situated in a particular well defined part of the Universe and serves a specific purpose. This can best be illustrated by the following diagram called the Ray of Creation or Megalocosmos :

SUN ABSOLUTE	1	That is, the origin of all and everything	DO	Proto- cosmos
ALL WORLDS	3	That is, all the existing galaxies	SI	Hagio- cosmos
ALL SUNS	6	That is, our own Milky Way	LA	Macro- cosmos
SUN	12	That is, our own Sun	SOL	Deutero- cosmos
ALL PLANETS	24	That is, the planets of our solar system	FA	Meso- cosmos
EARTH	48	That is, the planet we live on	MI	Trito- cosmos
MOON	96	That is, our Earth's "satellite"	RE	Tessara- cosmos

As each succeeding "cosmos" is "denser" and at a "lower" level than the preceding one, it is subject to more laws than the cosmos above it. This is the meaning of the figures within the small circles in the diagram. We can see therefore that Earth and its Organic Life or Biosphere are subject to 48 laws, and so is "man". But if a man succeeds in building within himself a "higher-being-body", he becomes subject to fewer laws.

Potentially a man can have four bodies : his physical or planetary body (including what some occult schools call the "etheric" body), a body Kessdjan or "Astral" body, a Causal or Logobody, and finally a body of Will or "Soul". A man with only a planetary body is subject to all the 48 laws of the Tritocosmos (and most often even to the 96 laws of the Moon) ; a man with a fully developed and functioning (Astral) body Kessadjan is subject to the 24 laws of the Mesocosmos ; a man with a fully grown Logobody is subject to the 12 laws of the Deuteroscosmos (that is, our Sun) ; and a man with all four bodies is subject only to the 6 laws of the Macrocosmos. In this case he is said to have "returned to the Stars" and to be Immortal within the Solar System in which he was born. In the classification of man by numbers, he is Man No. 7.

In order to become more than man Nos. 1,2 & 3, first of all the inner functioning of one's own body must be studied, fully understood and experienced. The body is a factory for the manufacture of energies from the three types of food available to man.

These are :

- 1 First, food as ordinarily understood ;
- 2 Secondly, the air we breathe (which is the "food" from which certain elements necessary to build the body Kessdjan are extracted) ;
- 3 And Thirdly, the "food of impressions" from which are built the Causal body and later the "Soul" itself.

Some of the special substances needed to build the three "higher-being-bodies" are not normally manufactured by the body-factory (except perhaps in very minute and insufficient amounts), but it can be made to produce them as the result of special techniques and exercises, one of which is the "self-remembering" already mentioned.

It is not possible to cover in one short article all aspects of the knowledge required for full development to become a possibility, but it includes the study, first theoretically and then practically, of the Law of Seven Steps or of the Octave and the Law of Three Forces or of Triads, and of the various "Ideas" expressed in special concepts, three of which are embodied in the diagrams reproduced as figures 1,2 and 3 accompanying this paper.

PRACTICAL WORK

This can only be indicated in the most general terms and includes a number of exercises (some to be carried out at set times of the day for a specific purpose, others whenever possible), special movements to music (sometimes called "dances"), sharing one's inner experiences and observations with others at regular weekly group meetings, and "activities" under direction at week-ends (for example, learning new crafts or teaching others your own, and observing one's reactions and response to this and the people around).

From time to time a special "task" is given either to an individual or to all members of a group, maybe even to a group as a whole to be carried out as a "group task". These are usually designed to show where there is a weakness and indicates the area of extra Work needed.

MUSIC

Some parts of man's psyche do not speak in words - notably our emotions - and yet they must be integrated with the body and the mind, for only then can man become whole.

For this, sound is used : a special, selective, constructive, liberating, objective music. Not the harmful destructive and restricting subjective noise nowadays indiscriminately blaring out of every available loudspeaker and usually extolling "love" - that curse of mankind and its greatest enemy. This cacophony, accepted and passing as "music", is one of the causes of present day world degeneration. But Gurdjieff gave us the music which touches not only the superficial, shallow moods and feelings, but stirs up and wakes the real emotions in us, our innermost sacred impulses. A

music whose language the body also understands and obeys.

Ordinary music can be taught, talked about, played by anyone. Professional musicians are identified with and shackled by so many "musical" theories, forms, comparisons, shobboleths, all sorts of musical "sacred cows" and technicalities, that they never really hear the music as it is. Gurdjieff's music must be listened to, not analysed, not dissected, nor "explained". If really heard, if we just let ourselves open to it, it can ease our inner knots and tensions, free our emotions, retrain our centres. It also helps man to become more conscious - if he can abstain from thinking about it, forming opinions about it, and just allows himself to listen to it, thus really hears it with his whole Being.

The aim of the Work is an overall increase in Consciousness - not of thoughts only, but of sensations and feelings too. And conscious objective music helps to do just this.

MOVEMENTS AND DANCES

An integral part of the Work is special "movements", the original basis of various Eastern "Sacred Dances".

These movements are not easily mastered, least of all by professional dancers, for they are so designed that the various parts of the body do not move as expected, taking the line of least resistance, but all move to different rhythms and in an unusual sequence, difficult and demanding all one's attention. Their practice shows the way to, and permits, perfect control of all unwanted emotions and thoughts, as well as of the body.

In conjunction with the other parts of the Work, the final effect is to train the human Central Nervous System in the ability to turn on fully those specific areas of the brain necessary for the task in hand, while leaving at rest the areas of the brain not currently needed. The human body and nervous system are designed to perform best when only those areas that are essential to the performance of the particular activity are not only actually and fully activated, but are also the only ones thus activated. This is the way our brain works when we are really at our best, at our most efficient and alert. But "normally" we are always too tense and many unnecessary nerve cells, muscles and organs are on the alert and needlessly involved in the simplest movement, with consequent great loss of energy.

The training in the system of Gurdjieff teaches the body and its nervous system to work in the manner it was meant to work. And this result has been confirmed by independent researches by means of Electro-Encephalography. Only Gurdjieffian training develops this ability, all other forms of "meditation" which have been tested do not.

CONCLUSION

The final state obtained through Work is Freedom from all laws and becoming at One with the Sun Absolute whose only law is its own Will. This does not mean a loss of Individuality or Self, for once this "Real I" is contacted and takes over the direction of

one's life and consequent mastery of it, it can no longer be affected by any condition of any cosmos.

But it is unfortunately only too true that the majority of men let others do their thinking for them, are satisfied with the security of being a prisoner slave, with no other responsibility than to obey, and would not know what to do with real Freedom if they got it.

The Work is not for such "men" - it is suitable only for the Warrior who is willing to fight his own battles and fears no one.

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II By G.I. GURDJIEFF

1. "ALL AND EVERYTHING" - First Series TALES OF BEELZEBUB TO HIS GRANDSON
- Second " MEETINGS WITH REMARKABLE MEN
- Third " LIFE IS REAL ONLY THEN WHEN I AM.
2. VIEWS FROM THE REAL WORLD : EARLY TALKS OF GURDJIEFF



This mandala appears as one of the figures in the famous Altona Manuscript published in 1788 under the title Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians. In this work it is described as 'the Mountain of the Philosophers' and has the following description appended.

"The soul of men everywhere was lost through a fall, and the health of the body suffered through a fall, Salvation came to the human soul through IEHOVA, Jesus Christ. The bodily health is brought back through a thing not good to look at. It is hidden in this painting, the highest treasure in this world, in which is the highest medicine and the greatest parts of the riches of nature, given to us by the Lord IEHOVA. It is called Pater Metallorum, well known to the philosopher sitting in front of the mountain cave, easy to obtain for anybody. But the sophists in their sophistic garb, tapping on the walls, recognise him not. At the right is to be seen Lepus, representing the art of chemistry, marvellously white, the secret's of which with fire's heat are being explored. To the left one can see freely what the right Clavis Artis is ; one cannot be too subtle with it, like a hen hatching a chicken. In the midst of the mountain, before the door, stands a courageous Lion in all its pride, whose noble blood the monster-dragon is going to shed ; throwing him into a deep grave, out of it comes forth a black raven, then called Ianua Artis, out of that comes Aquila Alba. Even the crystal refined in the furnace will quickly show you on inspection Servum Fugitivum, a wonder-child to many artists. The one effecting all this is Principium Laboris. On the right in the barrel are Sol and Luna, the intelligence of the firmament. The Senior plants in it Rad. Rubeam and Albam. Now you proceed with constancy and Arbor Artis appears to you, with its blossoms it announces now Lapidem Philosophorum. Over all, the crown of the glory, ruling over all treasures."

This mandala is in the form of a Mountain of Initiation, which the initiate has to ascend through various stages. The mountain itself is walled around by a stout brickwork wall having one arched over entrance, within which is seen a naked old man who is a Guardian of the Threshold. Three figures approach the entrance seeking initiation. The one on the left is blindfolded and awkwardly feels his or her way forward. Besides this person is another figure (possibly a woman) wearing a hat, with a large ostentatious feather plume, which seems to have fallen over her eyes, and she rests on one knee, being weighed down by a heavy purse. On the right, a third figure gestures seemingly in amazement at having found the entrance way. In the centre foreground a hare or rabbit bolts into a burrow, and we are reminded of the Rosicrucian Steffan Michel-spacher's Engraving of the Mountain of Initiation (see Alchemical Mandala number 6, plate 3, in the Hermetic Journal No 6, p 34-35) where a rabbit or hare similarly appears. The date 1604 appearing on the right is the symbolic date of the opening of the Tomb of Christian Rosenkreuz in the Rosicrucian legend. The Old Man looks towards the figure on the right. The two blindfolded travellers will probably not find their way to the Portal of Initiation. The Guardian of the Threshold sits upon a dead tree trunk and bars the way. If one satisfies this first guardian, then one passes through the gate down a passage leading into the mountain. This is the

first test of the initiate. This Portal of the Guardian is flanked by the symbol of a hare on the left and a hen sitting upon eggs on the right. There are two ways of proceeding in the alchemical process of inner transformation - by the nimble active energies pictured as the hare or through the slow steady patient brooding of the hen. Both facets must be cultivated in alchemy.

Having been made aware of these aspects of the work, the initiate can pass by the gatekeeper and follow the passage leading in and round to the left, where it emerges above, within piled up rocks guarded by a fiery dragon. Having passed the first Guardian and survived the passage through the inner darkness of the Mountain, we have to encounter the dragon, a picture of the primal unresolved energies of our unconscious. If we have the inner strength to pass by the dragon, then we are able to stand upon a plateau in the centre of the Mountain and peruse its mysteries.

At the centre of this space, upon a large rock stands a great Lion, barring our way to the next stage. At this point the initiate has gained a knowledge of the primal energies of his being, but has not yet integrated these. He must have the courage to face up to the Lion, which is a manifestation of the human soul. In a sense, this is the reflection of egotism that can easily arise at this point, a false spiritual pride that is unwarranted and as yet unearned. But if we can conquer this tendency in us then we pass our third guardian, the Lion, and come to the door of tower or inner citadel. There we will meet two soul birds, the Black Crow and the White Eagle. These soul birds enable us to experience different realms of our being. The Crow takes one down into the dark depths of the unconscious, while the White Eagle soars high into the spirit and flashes down with an essence of spiritual wisdom. To the left of the Tower, we see a wooden basin or tub with the Sun and Moon within it. This is a purification through washing of the solar and lunar facets of our nature. To the right a purification through distillation in a flask set in a furnace is shown. Washing symbolises purification from outer dross or accretions upon the soul, while distillation symbolises an inner purification of the soul. We pass then through the inner portal and stand within the inner castellated sanctuary. On the right the figure of an old man is planting a tree in the tub below. This living tree thus extracts through its roots an essence of the sun and moon forces from below and bears these as fruits in the seven pointed star (planetary forces) and the flask. On the left, above the furnace a tree bare of foliage has upon it three stars (Salt-Sulphur-Mercury) and it seems to lean over and absorb the smoke or essence rising from the distillation in the furnace.

On the heights of the inner sanctuary is the house of the holy spirit where the soul of the inner initiate might dwell and gaze down upon the world out of an awareness of the spiritual. On the peak of this inner realm is an orb with the sign of vitriol ☉. This is also seen in another figure from the same manuscript, described in Alchemical Mandala No 7, where it advises the seeker to "visit the interior of the earth and by purifying, there discover the hidden stone". This orb can only be achieved as we have seen, by the initiate who has undertaken this inner journey, and it has a crown above it signifying the spiritual rulership attained by those who reach this state.

AN HERMETIC INTERPRETATION OF THE TAROT

ADAM MCLEAN ©

It is an indication of the esoteric strength and integrity of the Tarot system that, although seemingly being merely a set of archetypal images in the form of a pack of cards, the Tarot has given rise to a vast body of literature and inspired nearly a thousand designs for this set of symbols. The Tarot has thus a powerful inner energy worked into its archetypal symbols that continues to inspire those who inwardly encounter its strange images. It must be seen as one of the great mystery documents of Western Esotericism.

Any attempt to reduce the breadth of its symbols into a rigid intellectual system is bound to fail, and it is instructive to read those authors who have offered us an 'explanation' of the Tarot. There are always facets that do not fit into such grand schemes of explanation. The Tarot is a mystery document of the Soul and not a puzzle for the mind. Any understanding of its profundities will arise out of inner contemplation of the symbols rather than through surface intellectualising.

The Tarot cards with their archetypal symbols, particularly the Major Arcana, remind us of the various sets of enigmatic alchemical emblems, such as the Rosarium series of woodcuts, the Pandora series, the Engravings of Mylius' *Philosophia Reformata*, Michael Maier's *Atalanta Fugiens*, Stolcius' *Hermetic Garden* and many others. I have found that in working with such emblems inwardly, they often seem to arrange themselves in various groupings which reveal special relationships between different emblems. Such geometrical arrangements of these emblems can provide useful frameworks that enable one to gain insights into the esoteric substance of their symbolism. In working with the Tarot images over the past years and applying the same methods I have used in investigating series of alchemical emblems, I have found a particular arrangement of the cards to arise that I believe might throw some light on the Tarot as a path of inner transformation. As I have not found this particular envisaging of the Tarot in any other writing on the subject, I would like to offer here this hermetic interpretation of the Tarot.

I have worked primarily with the Waite deck, designed by Pamela Colman Smith to the directions of A.E. Waite, and published in 1910 by Rider and Co. I find this deck particularly valuable as it bears a definite relationship in its Major Arcana to the earlier traditional tarot decks, though its symbolism has been worked upon

and esoterically corrected. No one seems entirely sure as to the origins of this deck, whether it was entirely the work of A.E. Waite or if it perhaps existed in some form in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, the responsibility for an offshoot of which Waite took upon himself in 1903. The Golden Dawn Tarot which Dr Regardie and Robert Wang issued recently, redrawn from Golden Dawn manuscript sources, is in certain particulars very different from the Waite deck. One wonders if they might have been the decks of the outer and inner orders respectively. Whatever the history of the Waite deck might be, there is no doubt of its esoteric significance and the formative influence its designs have had upon later interpreters of the Tarot. I will here only be considering the Waite deck.

An important facet of this deck that distinguishes it from many other Tarots is the placing of the card Justice at number 11 and Strength at number 8, with the Fool numbered as 0. When one places the cards in this order, then the symbols seem to cohere and a definite pattern emerges from their 22 images.

The 22 cards of the Major Arcana of the Tarot are often associated with the Hebrew letters (following Golden Dawn - Kabbalistic tradition) and can be seen as being subdivided into 12 (signs of the Zodiac - single Hebrew letters) + 7 (Planets - double letters) + 3 (Elements of Water, Air, Fire - Mother letters of Hebrew alphabet). Thus $22 = 12+7+3$. However, I will instead subdivide the 22 into its proper and only factors $22 = 2 \times 11$. Thus we can look at the Tarot as being composed of 11 pairs of cards (the Evens and the Odds) :-

JUDGEMENT	THE WORLD
THE MOON	THE SUN
THE TOWER	THE STAR
TEMPERANCE	THE DEVIL
THE HANGED MAN	DEATH
WHEEL OF FORTUNE	JUSTICE
STRENGTH	THE HERMIT
THE LOVERS	THE CHARIOT
THE EMPEROR	THE HIEROPHANT
THE HIGH PRIESTESS	THE EMPRESS
THE FOOL	THE MAGICIAN

If these are laid out in the form of an ascending series, then we have two chains, one leading from the FOOL to JUDGEMENT and the other from THE MAGICIAN to THE WORLD. If we examine the cards which fall into each of these groups, we feel a different quality to each of these paths through the symbols. The path of the Fool to Judgement will be recognised as being very different in our inner feelings to the path of the Magician to the World. I believe we can identify these as being the Path of the Mystic (Fool) and the Path of the Occultist (Magician). These are two archetypal inner journeys of the soul to the spirit, which we see externalised in different biographies. The Path of the Mystic involves an inner opening of ones Soul to the promptings of the spirit, an innocent acceptance of spiritual guidance, trying not to allow abstract thinking to intrude into the soul. We recognise this in the inner gesture of the Fool. On this side of the we move through the High Priestess

and the Emperor facets, inner feminine and outer male archetypes, to their integration in the Lovers and the development of inner Strength. The mystical Fool remains open to events, not trying to control them through his intellect. Thus it is important that the Wheel of Fortune lies on the mystic's path. The mystic accepts the promptings of destiny or karma as guides to his direction. As he moves on upwards, the mystic has to go through the experience of the Hanged Man (the dark night of the Soul) to an inner balancing in Temperance. He remains open to sudden flashes of fate (thus the lightning struck Tower lies on the mystic side of the sequence) and through the Moon (the intuitive quality important to mystical consciousness) to the final goal in Judgement where his inner development will be assessed, and if he has at this point worked sufficiently upon his inner development then he will be spiritually reborn.

The Occultist on the other, right hand, side of our column, is characterised by the Magician card number 1, where we see the Magus seeking to control the elements. Rather than passively opening himself to inspiration from without, he actively seeks to master the forces of his being and raise his consciousness through active work. He moves through the realm of the Empress and the Hierophant archetypes, and achieves a balancing of their forces in the Chariot. Unlike the Mystic who unites these two facets in the experience of the Lovers, the occultist actively harnesses these forces for his inner growth and development. The occultist now requires to experience his inner being in the archetype of the Hermit. The occultist needs to develop the inner strength through a sense of standing alone in his soul. Thus he moves to the central card Justice. Unlike the mystic who is open to destiny and fate, the occultist has to obey Cosmic Law. If he can pass through this state he enters a kind of inner Death, corresponding to the experience of the mystic in the Hanged Man. Then through the Devil, where the occultist must master within himself certain temptations to misuse the occult understanding he has gained. Then onwards through the Star, awareness of the Cosmic Science, and the gate of the Sun, the occultist here uses the Solar side of his being as opposed to the mystic's lunar side. Finally, he ascends to the World, where he attains mastery through comprehension of Cosmic Law. The occultist learns now the mysteries woven into the world.

Of course, these two paths of the mystic and the occultist are not exclusive but complimentary. They are not pursued as two separate realms of human aspiration, but are tied together in the Tarot symbolism as complementaries. Indeed, they are the opposites in the psyche. Thus the outward occultist pursuing his path, inwardly in his unconscious is encountering the path of the Mystic and vice versa. Indeed, often at times of stress these inner psychic forces can shift and the occultist or mystic can find himself encountering consciously the opposite path which was formerly buried in his unconscious.

If we look at the whole sequence as a totality, then we arrive at a balanced spiritual path in which the outer activity and inner preparation are brought into harmony and aid each other in the process of development. Let us now examine the sequence in this way.



This process begins with the pair FOOL-MAGICIAN and ends with JUDGEMENT-THE WORLD. The number 11 has an exact centre at step 6 (there being five other steps on either side of this) which is WHEEL OF FORTUNE - JUSTICE. So we see a framework forming itself - a beginning, middle and end.



The pair Fool-Magician are complementary ways of seeking the spiritual. The Fool archetype or mystic aspect of our consciousness involves letting our inner realm become still, uncluttered by outer impressions and thoughts, thus enabling the soul to become a vehicle for spiritual impulses. Thus this Fool aspect is depicted innocently unaware of outer impressions, and the dangers of this path are graphically shown by the cliff he might just stumble over. The Magician on the other hand is that facet of our consciousness that works to understand and grasp the fundamentals of the world through thought. Thus he works with the symbols of the Four Elements. These two also correspond to the pillars of Art and Science. The artist facet being open to mystic inspiration, the scientist in the hermetic sense seeking the laws of the Cosmos.



This archetypal pair of ways for seeking the spiritual, leads on through various stages to a turning point in the Wheel of Fortune - Justice. The mystical side of our soul will be able to proceed deeper on this path if our Karma, our destiny, inclines us in such a direction. Thus the Wheel of Fortune stands at the centre of our journey. We will be able to proceed through the Magician facet of our souls if we have gained enough understanding of Cosmic Law, in a sense our own inner development will be here weighed in the balance before we can continue on our journey. These two different visions of the same gate, lead the questing soul on to the goal of the work. This appears as Judgement to the Mystic side and is seen as The World to the Magician within us. The Mystic-Fool experiences the goal as a kind of rebirth, a resurrection in the Spirit, while the Magician-Occultist sees this same goal as his entry into cosmic consciousness, an experience of standing within the Archetypes.

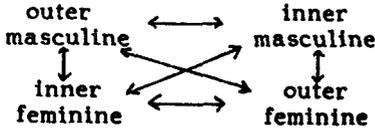


Having seen the beginning middle and end of the work, let us now look at the intermediate stages.

We see that immediately following the first two cards 0 and 1, we have a quaternity II, III, IV and V : HIGH PRIESTESS-EMPRESS-EMPEROR-HIEROPHANT, united through forming complex syzygys of

of the masculine and feminine, inner and outer archetypes. The High Priestess is the inner mystic feminine, that facet of the feminine that turning in upon itself touches the realm of initiation and inner experience. The Empress, on the right hand side, is the active outer power of the feminine—the feminine in action — the Goddess energies in Nature, the Aphrodite power of the feminine ruling in the world.

The Emperor is the outer power of the masculine pole, the authority of the masculine will in the world. He is balanced by the Hierophant, the inner priestly side of the masculine, the keeper of the mysteries.



These form a definite and balanced group. The individuals working through this Tarot process must experience the facets of their being, becoming aware themselves in their consciousness. We MICROCOSMIC ARCHETYPES.

Corresponding to this grouping which immediately follows the beginning, we have another quaternity which precedes the end of the process. These are arcana XVI, XVII, XVIII and XIX, THE TOWER — THE STAR — THE MOON — THE SUN. These we will recognise as the MACROCOSMIC ARCHETYPES.

The first card is the Tower, a symbol of human aspiration to build up towards the Cosmic. In this rising away from the earth to a Cosmic consciousness a danger can arise, which is incorporated into the symbolism of this emblem. A male and a female figure are seen falling from the tower.

The next card is the Star, showing a female figure pouring out a cosmic libation onto the water and the earth. This essence of the seven stars above (which are probably to be seen as the planetary forces rather than the fixed stars) descends into the elements.



interplay of these different which facets are expressing might call this group the

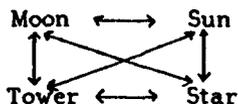


Thus the Tower seems to be concerned with the fire-lightning and air element while the Star, its active partner, involves the water and earth elements. Both show a descent of forces from above. In the Star this seems gentle and positively beneficial, while in the Tower the descent seems negative and destructive. For the growth of spiritual perception, both these inner experiences must be encountered.

These two stages are completed in the Moon on the passive side and the Sun on the active. In the Moon card the lunar forces descend from above as drops of fire, and a river flows down the centre of the emblem, separating the landscape into two realms. On the left stands a dog, on the right a jackal. The dog is a tame, passive, trained animal, while the jackal is a wild, active creature. Both are baying at the Moon.

The last Macrocosmic Archetype is that of the Sun, and we see its strong rays descending from on high. The space of the picture is divided by a wall into an upper and lower region, in the foreground of which is a horse being ridden by a child, showing the meeting and cooperation of the wild creature with the human sphere. Thus we see a correlation with the Moon card. When the human being rides the horse, they form a vertical relationship, the rider mastering the horse from above, the horse providing the animal energy below. This vertical relationship of horse and rider contrasts with the horizontal polarity of tame dog - wild jackal on the Moon card.

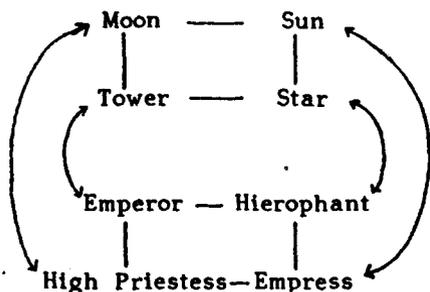
These four form the group.



The Moon and the Tower cards both bear towers and thus they are connected by this form. The Tower and the Sun both have brickwork within them and a

certain vertical polarity in their symbolism. The Moon and the Star both focus upon the water element. Thus we note a complex inter-relationship of all the symbols of this group which are dominated by the common element of a force descending from the Cosmos above.

The Macrocosmic and Microcosmic groups relate together, the innermost connecting with the innermost, the outermost with the outermost.



The Moon relates to the High Priestess and we note the parallels in the symbolism, particularly the two towers of the Moon the two pillars behind the Priestess, who works with the lunar forces, as is shown by the sickle Moon at her feet. The Sun and the Empress relate together. As the Sun is the outer cosmic energy behind the growth of vegetation (seen behind the wall) so also is the Empress the earthly force behind the growth of vegetation also seen on her card.

The Emperor relates to the Tower, as he is the elevated Patriarchal authority raised above ordinary humanity on his throne, and the Tower is the symbol of the attempt by mankind to grasp the cosmic through building up from the earth. The Hierophant relates to the Star, as he is the inner turning of the masculine forces into that of priestly religion. The hierophant-priest gives his blessing and purifies and exalts those who stand before him. In a similar way the Star shows the descent of cosmic grace and purification from above. The Hierophant demonstrates an earthly ritual, while in the Star a cosmic ritual is enacted.

Surrounding the central point of the Tarot process are a further two quaternities that crosswise interrelate the above and below, the Macrocosmic and Microcosmic. These two quaternities linking together the beginning and end of the process outlined in the Tarot sequence, correspond to work upon the Soul and in the Spirit. The outer group around the centre are THE LOVER - THE CHARIOT - TEMPERANCE - THE DEVIL. These reflect a process of integration of the soul's polarities. The inner group STRENGTH - THE HERMIT - THE HANGED MAN - DEATH, picture archetypal experiences that the individual Spirit must undergo in order to achieve an inner development.

We will look first at the INTEGRATION OF THE SOUL.

The four cards of this group all incorporate a balancing of polarities within their individual forms and the group seen as a whole also reveals a further integration of opposites in the psyche.

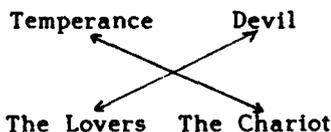
The Lovers shows an angel figure bringing together a woman and a man against the background of the Paradisiacal Garden of Eden with the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life on opposite sides. This card is complemented by the Devil card, in which a devil is shown chaining together the woman and the man. The light shining in the Lovers contrasts with the darkness that forms the background to the Devil card. This pair show how the experience of polarity in the Soul can either lead to freedom or to imprisonment - the freedom arising from the inner integration of the masculine and feminine within the Soul, while, on the other hand, the Soul can be shackled by constantly flowing from one polarity to the other.



The Chariot shows a man controlling the opposite energies of the black and white sphinxes that draw the chariot. By this inward mastery of the polarities he can control the progress of his soul. Temperance, complementary to this,

shows an angelic (possibly female) figure balancing the Soul energies in two cups. She stands with a foot in the water and a foot

on the earth. This group link together crosswise, and we note a definite division in the Lover and the Devil into an upper and lower. There is further a certain raising up aspect in the Lover and a pressing down facet to the Devil. The other two cards have a left and right division, in the two sphinxes of the Chariot and the two cups



of Temperance.

The inner group THE TRIALS OF THE SPIRIT describe archetypal experiences which those who undertake the path of inner growth must encounter in various forms.

Strength is our first trial, the development of inner courage and strengthening of the will that arises from facing up to, and encountering, inner difficulties and opposing forces here pictured by the lion.

The next trial is that of the Hermit, of developing the ability to be alone inwardly with oneself. Those who experience themselves working through this archetype are rewarded with an existential security, a sense of being happy with one's own inner self.

The next trial is that of the Hanged Man. This card is one of the most obscure in the Tarot. It gives us a picture that has been compared with a Christian crucifixion, or to Odin hanging upon the World Tree in Norse mythology. It shows the initiate maintaining an inner balance even though his inner world has been turned upside down. Those who work through the Hanged Man experience, develop an inner balance that can face up to the sudden reversals of fortune or soul energies that arise in those who consciously seek inner development. The Hanged Man accepts his suffering, and indeed, is illumined and purified through it. We can see that this card complements the Hermit experience.

The following card, so often misunderstood, is Death. The being who encounters this archetype develops the ability to face up to 'death' processes in the Soul. We often find that a particular mood, or creative impulse within us, seems to die and leave us. When we have worked through this experience we come to realise that these soul qualities do not die but dissolve into a more inward state, to be reborn again in a transmuted form. Those who become aware of of the necessity for this death or dissolving process going on in the soul, are able to face the experiences of emptiness and inner dissolution that must come to us all sometimes, knowing that within this process positive soul forces are being inwardly transmuted and



THE HANGED MAN.



DEATH.



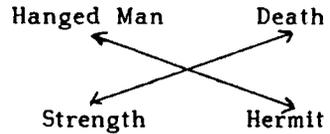
STRENGTH.



THE HERMIT.

and will arise again in their being.

The Death card corresponds to the card of Strength, in that they both necessitate the development through spiritual trails of an inner will to face up to problems and difficulties arising out of the flowing energies in the soul.



These four archetypal cards of the Trials of the Spirit thus form a crosswise interconnected group. The Hanged Man and Death are further linked by being seemingly negative experiences, a kind of dark night of the Soul and the negativity of Death. However, we have noted the more positive qualities these trials develop. Similarly, Strength and the Hermit are linked as having a more obvious positive quality of experience described in their emblems, however, both require a degree of inner courage and belief and certainty in ones own inner integrity.

There are many further interconnections between these various groupings of cards that we could explore, as essentially they work on different levels in our beings and have reflections and resonances on these different levels. However, there is not space here to point out all the ramifications of the Tarot symbols. Perhaps if time and opportunity permits I may endeavour to develop this picture in a more expanded format.

I have sketched here the outline of an hermetic interpretation of the Tarot, which explores these archetypes as picturing a process of inner transformation. In this the Tarot operates in a similar way to the less well known series of alchemical emblems which contain as one dimension of their meaning a symbolic expression of processes for transmuting and spiritualising the soul.

Of course, this is not the only way of looking at the Tarot. The Tarot is, as I have stated in my opening remarks, much broader, and is founded upon such deep lying archetypes, to be capable of reduction to a single interpretation. But this view of the Tarot as a pictorial description of an hermetic alchemical process of inner transformation, should not be too surprising, as the Tarot is undoubtedly a system of great esoteric import and as such could not fail to have this aspect woven into its complex integration of symbols.

THE ALCHEMICAL TAROT

RAFAL PRINKE

The curious symbols of the Tarot cards, and especially of the twenty two cards known as the Major Arcana, have greatly influenced the occult thinkers since the late 18th century. However, they still remain an unsolved mystery as far as their origin and their true significance is concerned. It has to be admitted, in spite of what more occultly inspired authors maintain, that we cannot be sure whether the Tarot cards had ever been associated with any esoteric teachings prior to the appearance of Monde Primitif by Court de Gebelin (1781). Of course it is very easy to state that the deck was designed by ancient Egyptian priests or by initiates from all parts of the world who held a meeting after the destruction of the library in Alexandria. All such theories are very attractive as occult theories but they cannot be accepted by objective and sober scholarship.

On the other hand, this extraordinary series of twenty two pictures has been used by many authors to explain various esoteric doctrines. It is perhaps the most fascinating aspect of the Tarot that it is capable of being interpreted in many diverse ways. These interpretations gave rise to the great number of designs of the cards themselves, in accord with the philosophy of the designer. And so we have several Egyptian decks, Hindu, Mayan, Hermetic, Kabalistic, and other decks. This may be considered as an indirect proof of the archetypal nature of the Tarot, which has also been confirmed in Jungian terms by Sallie Nichols (see her Jung and Tarot).

While there is no tangible piece of evidence that anything like the Tarot existed before the 14th century, its appearance seems to coincide with the beginning and early development of the Hermetic philosophy and the symbolic Alchemy. Therefore it is not altogether impossible that the Tarot cards (and in particular the Major Arcana) contain the fundamental ideas of hermetic Alchemy. This statement has already been made by a number of writers on the subject but most of them have not gone so far as interpreting the whole deck in alchemical terms or designing alchemical Tarot cards.

Of the authors I know there are only two examples of such attempts. The first one is C.C. Zain (Elbert Benjamine), the author of the Church of Light lessons on various occult subjects. However, his understanding of Alchemy is very specific and quite different from the traditional, and also his correlation does not produce a series of successive stages with the same numbers as in the Tarot. (For example, Arcanum VIII is "weighing and seeking of ingredients", Arcanum XII is "choice of ingredients" and Arcanum XI is "energy liberated during transmutation").

The other of the attempts mentioned above is The Golden Cycle Tarot by Ron Ballard, Antoinette Sandbach and John Sandbach. I must admit that I do not know the theory behind this deck (i.e. the interpretation of the cards) but the designs themselves are not of the greatest quality nor creativity. They are mostly fragments of old alchemical illustrations put together, in some cases with geometrical shapes added, which produces an uneasy final result, as the styles of drawings from various centuries (ancient Egyptian is also present !) put side by side on one card somehow do not fit.

It is often stated that the beautiful illustrations from Solomon Trismosin's Splendor Solis have some relation to the Tarot Major Arcana. I thought such a relation was rather far-fetched, especially as the Tarot appears to represent a uniform cycle of transformation, while only some of the Splendor Solis illustrations show the stages of the Magnum Opus. However, after much meditation on the cards and their relation to Alchemy, I arrived at a similar scheme. It is not identical with Splendor Solis but also only in part shows the stages of the Great Work, the remaining part representing general fundamentals of the Alchemical philosophy.

After getting a general idea of what an Alchemical deck should look like, I worked out the designs of the Major Arcana. The criteria I followed were that each card should be based on an easily identified and well known (from the tradition) alchemical concept, and that there should be a recognisable similarity to both the traditional Tarot designs and some alchemical illustrations. To give the whole series a uniform appearance I decided to use the familiar shape of the retort as the border of every picture (though, as I have said, not every picture represents a stage of the actual Work), surrounded by the symbols of the four elements, symbolising Nature which is outside the retort and which the Alchemist should follow (as opposed to the Art inside the retort). Besides the basic picture of the card I have also added an animal (in most cases) symbol placed above, in the neck of the retort. I think there should not be any titles on the cards, just their numbers, since the former do not correspond to the Alchemical tradition.

I have not been able to have the cards drawn according to my designs (having no drawing skill and being unable to find an artist interested in undertaking this) and therefore can only describe them here, quoting the sources of my inspiration and explaining my ideas. I may only add that I see the cards in the style similar to that of the Rosarium Philosophorum. In the following description the traditional titles are given for easy reference.

0. THE FOOL A young black boy in armour standing on a green dragon. (The Ethiopian from Splendor Solis, an illustration from a work by Leonardt Thurneysser reproduced in The Alchemists by F. Sherwood Taylor). Above a snake biting its tail (ouroboros) around the neck of the dragon.

Meaning :- This Arcanum has several meanings. First of all it represents the neophyte alchemist beginning his journey towards the achievement of the Philosophers' Stone and the transmutation. It also signifies the Materia Prima of the alchemical work. The third important meaning of this card (especially in its relation to the next two cards) is the Philosophical Salt or, on another level, the Body (Corpus).



I. THE MAGICIAN A traditional representation of the God Mercury with the caduceus in his hand. Above : a dove.

Meaning : The obvious alchemical significance of this arcanum is the Mercury of the Philosophers or Spiritus (in the Body-Soul-Spirit trinity), or in Jungian terms, Animus.

II. THE HIGH PRIESTESS A representation of the archetypal womanhood motherhood - a naked, pregnant woman surrounded by a halo (from the work of Thurneysser quoted above). Above : a Unicorn.

Meaning :- The Philosophical Sulphur or Soul. Also Anima Mundi.

III. THE EMPRESS A conventional picture of a queen. Above : a lily.

Meaning :- All the alchemical connotations of this symbol (the passive, Lunar principle).

IV. THE EMPEROR A conventional picture of a king. Above : a rose.

Meaning :- All the alchemical connotations of this symbol (the active, Solar principle).



V. THE HIEROPHANT A king and a queen kneeling in front of a bishop, who is sitting on a throne (Mylius, Philosophia Reformata reproduced in Alchemy by Klossowski de Rola p 101) Above : a pelican feeding its young.

Meaning :- The alchemical trinity of Mercury, Sulphur and Salt or Spirit, Soul and Body ; also Mercury, Gold and Silver.

VI. THE LOVERS OR THE TWO PATHS The lower half of the retort is filled with water in which the royal couple is shown in the act of copulation (Copulation in Aqua) (Rosarium Philosophorum and various other works). In the upper half the royal couple is being married by a bishop (Mylius, op.cit. in Klossowski, p. 98). Above : a griffon.

Meaning :- The two ways of the alchemical tradition ; the wet way and the dry way. Each of them requires the union of the opposites.

VII. THE CHARIOT A chariot carrying a solar figure of a king, drawn by two peacocks (an old astrological woodcut). Above : a wolf.

Meaning :- The necessary requirements that the alchemist should possess in order to complete the Great Work : courage, perseverance, will to continue, focussing on the final goal (Philosophical Gold - hence the king).

VIII. JUSTICE A woman with a balance and a sword in her hands. A diagrammatic design of the alchemical vessel covers her body (Key 7 of Basil Valentine, see Powell, Alchemy, the Ancient Science. Above : a swan.

Meaning :- The second requirement - the knowledge of "weights and measures" or, in other words, of the technical side of alchemy. Also the knowledge of its underlying philosophy (as shown by the diagram).

IX. THE HERMIT The usual figure of a hermit carrying an hour-glass (as in the older versions of the Tarot).

Above : an owl.

Meaning :- The third requirement - wisdom and secrecy (i.e. intuitive wisdom, which cannot be learnt from books, but which is necessary). The figure may be that of St Jerome, who was sometimes used as an allegory of the Philosophers' Stone. The hour-glass denotes the time factor in the Work, which is all important.

X. THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE The Ninth Key of Basil Valentine (see Powell, op.cit.) Above : two dragons biting each other's tails, the upper one with wings.

Meaning :- The decision to "turn the wheel" or begin the Great Work. Turning the wheel three or four times is often referred to in alchemical texts (e.g. Ripley's Twelve Gates, see Lapidus, In Pursuit of Gold). Also repetition of the principles.

XI. STRENGTH A woman sitting on a lion, holding a heart in her hand, into which flow two streams from the Sun and the Moon (Key 11 of Basil Valentine). Above : a toad.

Meaning :- Placing the initial substances in the vessel.

XII. THE HANGED MAN A human figure with wings, head downwards, placing two sacks on the bottom of the retort. Above : a crucified snake.

Meaning :- Fixing of the volatile.



XIII. DEATH A skeleton with a scythe (from Mylius, op.cit.). At its feet a king's body cut into pieces (Trismosin : Splendor Solis). Above : a raven.

Meaning :- Putrefaction, Nigredo.

XIV. FORTITUDE A human figure with wings holding two retorts. It appears to be pouring a liquid from the retort it holds higher to the one which is below. Above : a peacock.

Meaning :- Distillation, Sublimation, Circulation.

XV. THE DEVIL Neptune with his trident in his hand, sitting on a throne. Beside him are figures of a male with the Sun above his head and a female with the Moon (Mutus Liber, p.2.). Above : a dolphin.

Meaning :- Solution. The formula of VITRIOL.

XVI. THE TOWER A brick wall fills three quarters of the retort. The neck of the retort is broken. Above : a salamander surrounded by fire.

Meaning :- Fixation. Also a warning against applying too great a heat, which is dangerous at this stage.

XVII. THE STAR A figure with wings pouring out the contents of a retort, a pool forming at its feet. Above : a rabbit.

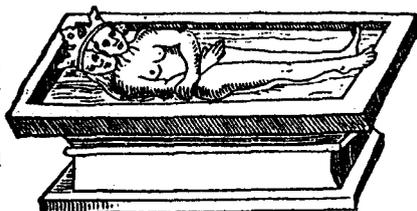
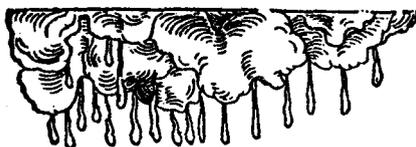
Meaning :- Multiplication.

XVIII. THE MOON A naked woman standing upon a crescent, a crown on her head and a sceptre in her hand. Above : an eagle.

Meaning :- The White Stone (White Tincture). Albedo.

XIX. THE SUN A naked man standing upon the Sun, a crown on his head and a sceptre in his hand. Above : a lion.

Meaning :- The Red Stone (Red Tincture). Rubedo.



XX. THE LAST JUDGEMENT Seven kings rising from their graves, dew descending from a cloud above (Rosarium Philosophorum, Bonus, The New Pearl of Great Price, see Powell op.cit., p 69). Above : the phoenix rising from the flames.

Meaning :- Projection. Also "the dark night of the soul".

XXI. THE WORLD The alchemical Rebis standing upon a dragon, (Rosarium Philosophorum).

Above : a double-headed eagle. Meaning :- Transmutation.

BACK DESIGN a picture of the Athanor in its simple form.



After describing the designs of my Alchemical Tarot, I would like to add a few words concerning its structure. It can be divided into three main groups : Theoretical (Arcana 0 - VI), Preparatory (Arcana VII - X) and Practical (Arcana XI - XXI). The first group shows the basic principles of the Alchemical Philosophy. A special position is held by the Arcanum 0 (the Fool), which has to be viewed from two standpoints : as one of the Three Principle (Corpus or Salt) together with Arcana I and II, or as Materia Prima which is to be brought to perfection by the Art. However, on the psychological level this apparent incoherence may be resolved : Materia Prima is the Alchemist himself, who is also the Corpus (Salt) and seeks the union with Anima (Sulphur) and Spiritus (Mercury).

The preparatory group describes the necessary requirements which the alchemist should possess or acquire before he attempts to start the practical work. These can be equated with the traditional four hermetic axioms : to Will, to Dare (both Arcanum VII), to Know (Arcanum VIII), to keep Silent (Arcanum IX). According to Crowley there is one more axiom : to Go, and this can be related to Arcanum X. The latter again is of special character and does not, in fact, belong to the preparatory group but forms a sort of passage between the theory and preparation on the one hand and the actual practice on the other (it is exactly in the middle of the series of Major Arcana). A comparison may be drawn between it and the Portal Grade of the Golden Dawn ; it recapitulates the theory and opens the way to the practice.

Finally, the second half of the series and the third group of cards, constitute a description of successive stages of the Great Work, from its beginning to the production of the two stones with the last two cards picturing projection and transmutation.

I hope that my thoughts on this fascinating subject will be of help to other students both of Alchemy and the Tarot, and may stimulate new ideas leading to new creative discoveries.

THE MYTH OF THE FALL AND GOETHE'S FAIRY TALE

ADAM MCLEAN

Through the Western tradition we have inherited a myth that cripples and wounds the soul - the Judeo-Christian myth of the Fall of Man. This myth perhaps had a relevance in earlier millennia when humanity was more polarised and the rigours of Patriarchy more acceptable during the time of the emergence of nations and their struggle for survival, but now most people with any esoteric or spiritual understanding that is not rigidly patristic are aware of the limitations and distortions it imposes upon the human soul. In a sense the myth of the Fall needs to be rewritten, or at least a bridge built within its mythic structure to lead us out of the inner contradictions and dualism it imposes upon the Soul.

Hermeticists have for many centuries been aware of the internal dualism and soul distortion this archetypal myth pressed into humanity, and sought many novel and interesting ways of restructuring the Myth of the Fall. In alchemy there is a vast literature devoted to interpreting the Adam and Eve elements in humanity and their proper relationship. Such ideas were, of course, extreme heresy to the medieval Church and in consequence the alchemists most often wove these ideas into intricate symbol structures that could be read in different ways and their meaning not immediately apparent. During the 16th and 17th centuries there was a degree more freedom at least as far as publishing was concerned, and in Rosicrucian works of this period we find particularly a concern for integrating the dualism inherent in the Myth of the Fall. There are, consequently, not a few extended works published during the Rosicrucian period providing a re-interpretation of this theme. The growth and dominance of a fundamentalist Protestantism that based its spiritual insight upon naive interpretations of such primal myths in the Bible, however, did not produce a climate in which a re-evaluation of the Myth of the Fall could be pursued. The social and psychological distortions of this myth were further consolidated during the period of 18th century Rationalism.

At the end of the 18th century a new social climate began to emerge in which the soul of western humanity needed a greater freedom and a release from the implications of dualism and the repression of the feminine element in the human soul. This impulse

gave rise to the Romantic Movement, at the forefront of which was J.W. von Goethe (1749 - 1832). While a young man Goethe spent a number of years intensively studying Rosicrucian and Alchemical ideas, and was particularly interested in symbolism and the elaborate alchemical allegories such as the Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz. Arising out of his contemplation of such hermetic ideas, Goethe became aware of the limitations and distortions the Patriarchal Judeo-Christian Myth of the Fall imposed upon the soul of his contemporaries. In working with these ideas, Goethe wrote his Fairy Tale (Märchen) of the Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily, in which he attempted a resolution in mythic terms of the contradictions and dualism of the original myth of the Fall. He did not, however, present this outwardly in his Fairy Tale, preferring not to 'explain' its allegical content, but rather to let the mysterious quality of its images work directly into people's souls. In this he was not being purposively obscure, but merely working in the spirit of Romanticism that sought other avenues into the human soul than the intellect. In my recently published Commentary on Goethe's Fairy Tale, I have felt it necessary to give some interpretation, as the Fairy Tale, being written nearly 200 years ago, consequently now requires some commentary to tease out its meaning. I have there been able to show that one aspect that lay behind Goethe's fashioning of his Fairy Tale, was to provide a mythic structure that 'redeemed' or remove the Myth of the Fall. There is not space here to describe the whole process in detail, but I would like just to sketch in a few points, as the implications of this myth are of profound significance and still resonate within the human soul. Indeed, humanity in general still needs to escape the rigidifying and life-suffocating dualism that the Myth of the Fall eternally weaves into the soul of humanity.

The Patriarchal Myth of the Fall is perhaps easiest to identify in the Judaic tradition from whence it was worked into Christianity and handed down to us today. This myth, which of course is found in its best known form in the Book of Genesis, was originally created within the Jewish tradition at a time when the Jewish peoples, in their nomadic period, needed the inner security of a stern Father God. Thus arose the Jewish Monotheism, in which the severe Patriarchal sky God, Jehovah, replaced an earlier pantheon. There was to be one and only one God to whom the Jews made their obeisances and sought to obey His will implicitly. This one God gathered to himself all the attributes of the pantheistic deities. He was Creator, Preserver, Destroyer all in one. He was the God of the Sky and of the Elements of Nature, who expected sacrifice if he was to be favourably inclined towards his chosen people, and he was definitely Male. One can see the necessity the Jewish peoples of that time had to identify with such a harsh Patriarchal God, arose from the insecurity of their nomadic existence.

This extreme Patriarchal nature of Jewish Religion also spilled over into their esotericism, which struggled often to preserve an awareness of the feminine amid the certainties of the masculine parameters of Jehovah. The Kabbalistic tradition, although esoteric, never entirely succeeded in developing an entirely balanced esotericism in which the masculine and feminine polarities had equal status (the feminine Shekinah in Kabbalism always remains a hidden

rather remote facet of the Spiritual). It should, therefore, come as no surprise that later Western occult systems derived from the Kabbalah, often lift or incorporate into themselves these undigested polarities, and many of the outer problems and internal contradictions of such esoteric systems and Orders arise out of this unbalanced esotericism. As an example, I believe we can recognise this as a factor in the failure of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn to fully sustain itself beyond an initial period in which the enthusiasm of its founders sufficiently countered its internal contradictions and polarity. (Interestingly, it seems to have been that many of the disputes and altercations were between women and men within the Order, or between men who wished to assume a Patriarchal role in the organisation of the Order.) So, esotericists should, in my opinion, be more aware of the distorting psychic energies bound up in Patriarchal esotericism, which will still manifest themselves today when people try to work such systems.

The Myth of the Fall lies at the root of this Patriarchy. In essence, it pictures a primal state of innocence in the Garden of Eden, in which Adam the first human, was created by the Father God. He makes Adam out of the red earth and breathes a soul into him. Although not included in the Biblical version, the Jewish Patriarchs pictured the creation of a female companion, Lilith, for Adam. She also was fashioned out of the earth. The tradition records how Lilith and Adam united sexually and spawned the race of incubi and succubi, the psychic beings inspiring erotic fantasy. Lilith, being the equal of Adam, was not prepared to act as his inferior as the Patriarchal God would have wished, and when she attempted to make love actively to Adam, i.e. lie on top of him, this was too much for God to endure. He banished Lilith and separated her from Adam. (One senses here the inner insecurity that the Jewish Patriarchs must have had in their own masculinity, that lead them to picture the banishment of Lilith for wishing merely to be the equal of Adam in lovemaking.)

At the same time as the banishment of Lilith, God has problems in his own heavenly sphere, and has to cast out Lucifer, a masculine rival who attempted to rise too high and had sought freedom for himself in the spiritual world. From this point on Lucifer and Lilith are seen as both being part of a demonic or dark realm, the antithesis of God's beautiful Heaven.

The Father God muses on the problem of a companion for Adam, and decides to make a new wife from the Body of Adam himself, thus ensuring that she could only be his inferior. Thus Eve is born from the side or rib of Adam. This Eve must not attempt to seduce Adam into the sexuality of Lilith, and all goes well in this Patriarchal idyll, until Eve meets with the serpent. This snake, which was often pictured in medieval paintings as a Lilith figure, suggests to Eve that as a human being, perhaps she should have the freedom and right to experience all aspects of the world, and not be restricted by the Father God's patriarchal ordinances and proscriptions. She eats of the forbidden fruit and encourages Adam to do likewise with the consequences we know all too well. Thus arises the idea of Sin, of going against the patriarchal God's

decrees. Moreover, this sin is seen as being rooted in woman through Eve and earlier in Lilith. This myth has structured the human psyche in the West for over two millenia, and almost everyone has in some way been affected by it. We recognise how Jesus Christ in his teachings tried to soften the rigidities of Patriarchal Judaism, but when these teachings became codified into Christianity, and particularly when this united with the Roman State, the old story of the Fall of Humanity through the feminine principle became strongly established. Later, during the Protestant period, there was a further return to the first principles of a primal patriarchal religion, and the doctrine of Original Sin was further consolidated.

Western humanity after Protestantism, became even more fearful of the feminine and the spirits of women were shackled by this myth. The only spiritual path open to women lay in the Christian Church and this imposed a severe penalty upon their souls, in that they were lead to feel themselves responsible in some way for the Fall, for taking from humankind its birthright of an idyllic existence in the Garden of Eden. The Church ruthlessly persecuted any non-Christian religion that gave women an equal place - thus the witchcraft persecutions which were pursued even more vigorously under Protestantism. The results of this polarised religion, uniting with and justifying in its philosophy outer social stratification, began to appear in the late 18th century as the rise of industrialisation. It would, I think, be fair to say that the descent into industrial materialism was socially eased and propelled forwards by the preparation of the Soul of Humanity to accept the polarisation and denial of the feminine principle (which would have safeguarded a more harmonious relationship to Nature) through the Myth of the Fall.

Goethe was aware of just this inner power of the Fall of Man Myth, and wove his Fairy Tale as a kind of antithesis. The Tale is set in a divided realm. A great river separates its two banks - the two sides of the human soul. The people of this inner land suffer by not being able to move from one side of the river to the other, i.e. are not able to experience their masculine and feminine facets in an integrated way. This situation is remedied by the self sacrifice of the Green Snake - just as it is through the Snake in the Myth of the Fall that humanity descended into polarity - here the Snake is the agent of transformation, of creating the inner relationship. At the centre of the Tale is the Beautiful Lily, a beautiful woman whose touch kills, and whose glance wounds the soul of all who gaze upon her. Here is the archetype of the Temptress-Eve seen through the eyes of an insecure patriarchy. Through the deed of the Snake her situation is redeemed and the Tale ends with her marriage to the young Prince. The Fairy Tale is, however, not simplistic and has many layers of meaning woven into its archetypal symbolism. Indeed, it is fashioned as an hermetic allegory and Goethe stated that he was inspired by the Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz to write his Fairy Tale. Thus it is an allegory of inner transformation, the transmutation of the Soul through an inner encounter with the archetypes, and the interweaving and relationship of these polarities.

Goethe's Fairy Tale is thus an important esoteric document recording the path of an inner journey towards the synthesis in the Soul of the primal polarities. As such it has many parallels and antecedents in traditional alchemical writings of centuries earlier, but is written closer to our time and thus can be more readily grasped by our present day consciousness. The Fairy Tale is itself beautifully written and shaped, and has only failed to receive recognition as being one of Goethe's major literary works through, I suspect, the inabilities of literary scholars, lacking any background in alchemical esotericism, to understand its significance.

WORKING WITH PRACTICAL ALCHEMY

NUMBER 5

For this and the following exercise (No 6) in our Practical Alchemy feature, I would like us to explore two ways in which metals can be precipitated out of a solution of their salts, as METALLIC TREES and METALLIC MIRRORS. Both of these phenomena were known to the ancient alchemists and their formation was observed with great interest. The Tree phenomenon is created by the deposition of metallic ions from the Mother Liquor of a solution of one of its soluble salts, through replacement by a more electropositive metal, which itself then enters into solution as a salt. The forms of the trees are many and various depending on the metal chosen, the concentration of its salt, the temperature of the solution, the particular metal chosen to replace the metal in solution and other more subtle factors.

Metallic Mirrors are formed in another way. Here the metal in the form of a soluble salt is reduced by an oxidation-reduction reaction to its metallic form as particles of a molecular size. These precipitate on the walls of the test tube or flask as a thin layer or metallic mirror. The trees are metals in a crystallised form, as we can see quite clearly the forms of the crystals, whereas the mirrors are amorphous thin layers only a few atoms thick deposited on a glass surface. Metallic trees can be readily made from Gold, Silver, Tin, Lead, and from some other metals with more difficulty. Metallic mirrors can be made from Gold, Silver, Copper, Lead Sulphide, and even from Arsenic and Antimony. For this first part we will consider the formation of metal Trees.

A Tree of Silver.

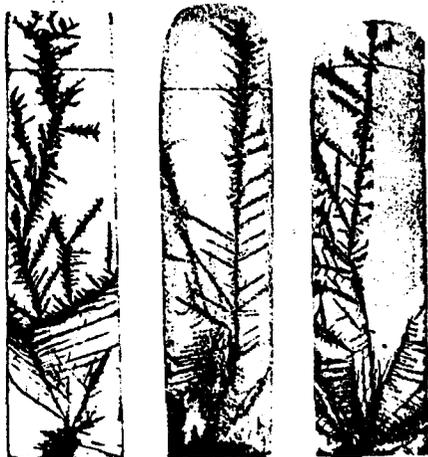
We should refer to an earlier article in the Hermetic Journal Number 9 - An Experiment to Grow a Tree of Silver. The formation of this silver tree is quite easy, requiring merely a flask, a solution of silver nitrate, and metallic Mercury. We can obtain a variety of results, in the sense of the form of the tree, by using different strengths of solution and different temperature. As silver nitrate, our fundamental reagent here, is rather expensive, it is as well to initially experiment with more dilute solutions say 5% i.e. 5 grams in 100 ml of water, and use small flasks, say 50ml or 100ml for the experiment. It will be useful for the experimenter to possess a balance. Of course, the traditional polished brass balance is ex-

cellent though expensive. Cheap simple balances used especially by photographers in preparing their stock solutions can be just as effective, if not so aesthetically pleasing, perhaps. Fill the flask about $\frac{1}{2}$ full of the Silver Nitrate solution and add a small quantity of liquid Mercury. This can be picked up in a dropper. (Note that Mercury is poisonous and readily absorbed through the skin - so avoid touching it.) One can see the process begin almost immediately if the solution is at room temperature or higher, small growths forming which in time become larger crystals of metallic silver pushing up from the bubble of Mercury. The reaction occurs quickly and it is possible to observe the process unfolding before ones eyes.

This experiment can be completed to grow a tree of tin - use Tin Chloride (Stannous Chloride) solution and granulated Zinc metal to displace the Tin. Similarly a Lead tree can easily be grown with Lead Acetate (Sugar of Lead) and again, Zinc metal. For those with bottomless bank accounts, Gold Chloride with Mercury will form an expensive but very beautiful Gold Tree.

Growing such a metal tree in a flask in this way so that it is exposed to convection currents, external vibration, etc., means that often, very delicate and fragile forms break off or are unable to develop, and only the more rigid and strong crystals eventually stand in the flask. An important method that allows these delicate forms to develop lies in performing the experiment in the medium of a gel. For this we need Silica gel - which is made from the easily obtained 'Water Glass' - Sodium Silicate, a syrupy substance sold in tins. Make up the waterglass with an equalvolume of water to give say 100 mls - add to this a quantity (about 50 mls or so dependent on strength) of dilute acid corresponding to the acid part of the metal salt to be added. i.e. Nitric acid for Silver nitrate, Hydrochloric acid for Stannous chloride, strong Acetic acid for Lead acetate. Immediately the reaction has begun add 100 mls of the solution of the metal salt you should have prepared in readiness, and stir. You may need to vary the quantities to avoid premature precipitation of the metal as its silicate. You need, ideally, an excess

of acid after the Silicate is turned to gel. (To get the quantities right do this first with Lead acetate, as this is not so expensive as Silver nitrate.) Pour the gel into test tubes or beakers in which pieces of Zinc have been placed. Alternatively you may add the Zinc later at the top and allow the tree to grow downwards. The gel supports even the finest fronds of the trees and this is an interesting and useful way of revealing these structures. In general, the reaction time is a bit slower, taking days rather than hours. Varying the concentrations of the metal salts will alter the forms that develop in the gels.



THE MAGICAL TAROT - Vehicle of Eternal Wisdom

by Frédéric Lionel RKP 1982 HB 184pp
 £8.95 including a pack of 22 Tarot cards.

This is a most interesting book on the Tarot accompanied by the strangest set of Tarot cards I have yet seen. The author Frederic Lionel is a teacher of the Western tradition and sets out here to show that underlying the Tarot symbolism is a coherent view of the esoteric teachings of the west. He explores the cards as hieroglyphs encoding this esoteric wisdom and we are quickly led onto a high archetypal level. The author seems to have penetrated through to the realm of the archetypes of the intellectual world. There is a purity and at times almost mathematical clarity to his picturing of the archetypes. This mathematical clarity in his thought also expresses itself in his envisaging in pictorial form the 22 keys of the Tarot. These are severely geometrical in character and symbolically coloured. When one reads Lionel's descriptions of the cards one is able to recognise the underlying forms and see in what way he has abstracted these from the more traditional pictures of the Tarot. These images seem intended to work upon our minds, our intellectual powers, rather than through the more emotionally charged psychic-soul energies that arise from contemplating the more traditional of the esoteric 20th century decks. He particularly explores the symbolism of colour and form, and in this sense he is using a 'magical' approach. Frederic Lionel obviously wishes us to work on this high level of our being and his work complements and expands the domain of Tarot studies. This is certainly not one of that spate of recently published Tarot books repeating in a trivial and boring way the same old ideas borrowed from earlier writers, but Frederic Lionel provides us with a fresh approach, viewing the Tarot images on a high mental level, challenging and stimulating our abstract thinking rather than pursuing the more usual course of describing these as Jungian archetypes and emotionally charged energies in the soul.

JUNO COVELLA - Perpetual Calendar of the Fellowship of Isis by Lawrence Durdin-Robertson Cesara Publications
 Clonegal Castle, Enniscorthy, Eire 1982.
 454pp HB £8.50

Those who like reference books, as I do, will not wish to be without this remarkable item. Lawrence Durdin-Robertson one of the Founders of the Fellowship of Isis, has written a number of reference books to the Goddesses of Chaldea, Egypt, India, Tibet, and Japan under the general title Idols, Images and Symbols of the Goddesses. Here he organises his material under the headings of the days of the year thus producing a Perpetual Calendar. Under each day he lists the Goddesses from a wide range of traditions associated with that day and provides a mass of background information. Thus it would be a valuable exercise to work through this day by

day, becoming conscious of the particular Goddesses and their attributes. Later sections of the book deal with the moveable calendar, that is, festival days fixed not by the rigid calendar but by some other factor, for example the phases of the moon. This book is an amazing collection of material and will prove useful to anyone interested in the ancient traditions of the Goddess. I can wholeheartedly recommend it.

RUNE GAMES by Marijane Osborn and Stella Longland
RKP 1982 300pp £5.95

A number of shorter introductory books have been published in the past few years on the eternally fascinating subject of the Runes, however, this work is of a degree more substantial and provides us with a mass of historical and interpretative material. Though the authors have an academic background, they have not produced a dry scholarly tome but have remained open and sensitive to the underlying esotericism and inner significance of the Runes. They have taken the forms of a number of 'Rune Games' i.e. layouts used in casting the oracles for individual divination, and use these forms as meditative structures, in a sense as mandalas for integrating the polarities in the psyche. The authors analyse a mass of correspondences for each rune thus providing an elaborate structure building up a range of symbols to be used in meditative exercises with the patterns of the runes. Although the authors bring in elements from other esoteric systems, especially the Kabbalah (the tree of life picture) they have allowed the system of the runes as found in traditional material (especially translating a valuable Old Norse Rune poem *Hávamál*) to unfold and reveal itself in a way relevant to our modern consciousness.

TANTRISM - Its Secret Principles and Practices

By Benjamin Walker Aquarian 1982

176pp HB £7.50, PB £3.95.

Tantrism is an important esoteric stream in Eastern Religion broadly corresponding to the place of hermeticism in the West. Tantrism is a broad based collection of esoteric practices rather than being a tight knit body of dogmas or a particular set of teachings. Within its wide compass there is an element in Tantrism that explored the darker side of sexuality, horror and the cult of the ugly. Although these are part of human experience on the Earth, such experiences are usually integrated into the wider tapestry of one's life. To focus exclusively on this realm will undoubtedly produce powerful though unbalanced experiences. Benjamin Walker plunges us into such an unbalanced focus upon the left-hand 'sinister' side of Tantra. Indeed, it would I think be fair to say that he seems obsessed in his text with the sexual element in Tantric ritual. This sexual element is not explored as an experience of beauty and harmony, as in Nik Douglas and Penny Slinger's *Sexual Secret's - the Alchemy of Ecstasy*, but in a gratuitous and rather ugly way. This focus of the book also means that the author neglects the profound metaphysical speculation, the Cosmology and Architecture of the Soul Chakras, which are an essential part of Tantra, as is seen in Ajit

Mookerjee and Madhu Khanna's excellent book *The Tantric Way*. I do not feel that Benjamin Walker's book throws much light upon the nature of Tantrism, but seems to cloud it in a further layer of darkness. I hope that people will not be put off investigating the profound esoterism of the Tantras which have many parallel's with the Western hermetic tradition.

JESUS CHRIST IS THE SUN OF GOD : An Introduction
to the Gnostic Origins of the Christian Mythos

by David R. Fideler PB 57pp from Philosophical
Book Service, P.O. Box 1181, Grand Rapids,
Michigan USA 49501 for \$6.00 postpaid ; or from
Pentacle Books, 6 Perry Rd, Bristol 1 for £3.50 postpaid

In this scholarly and profusely illustrated study are outlined some of the philosophical and cosmological ideas which heavily influenced the origin of the Christian religion. Special consideration is given to the history, symbolism, and development of the Hellenistic Solar Logos doctrine, which played an eminently central role in the development of the Christian system. The outcome is a symbolic phenomenology of the archaic solar pantheon, which conclusively demonstrates that Belinos, Abraxas, Mithras, and Jesus Christ were intentionally designed to represent various forms of solar energy. By drawing upon the concepts of Platonic philosophy, Alexandrian Hermeticism, the Pythagorean science of gematria, and other forms of traditional cosmology, the author illustrates how early Christianity emerged as a philosophical and mythic synthesis which sought to understand man's place and purpose in a hierarchy of universal ideas. Included is an extensive bibliography and 39 documentary illustrations, many of which are taken from rare and ancient sources.

- extracted from the cover notes