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Editor : Adam McLean

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Editorial

My particular approach to hermeticism might seem to involve me in a difficult balancing act. On the one hand, I am concerned that high standards of occult scholarship be applied to Hermetic studies, for often only exact scholarly analysis can tease out the distortions of history and lead us to the underlying facts. This is especially necessary in studying the western occult tradition, since esotericists throughout the ages have often blurred the boundaries between a mythic picture they are weaving for a particular allegorical purpose and the inner truth underlying this. Later commentators not understanding these subtle distinctions have often picked up on distorted images of esoteric facts because of their apparent simplicity or conformance to some archetypal myth. Thus, for example, Edward Kelley and John Dee have been badly served by later commentators, and it needs the work of exact scholarship to sort out the myth that has accreted around this pair from the historical reality. A similar thing applies to the reputation of such figures as Paracelsus, many other alchemists and magicians, and to Rosicrucianism.

So I wish people to develop and work through this faculty of discrimination in their pursuit of Hermetic Studies. However, I am not just a renegade or "alternative" academic, investigating an obscure realm of esotericism ignored by the establishment, for on the other hand, I am deeply involved in inner working with esotericism. To an outsider it might seem like an impossible balancing act, pursuing a seemingly objective detached scholarly approach while at the same time being subjectively involved in esoteric work. To me this is not really a schizophrenic state of being but rather one of polarity. For these two polarities produce the dynamic energy that fires my enthusiasm. To pursue merely an academic approach would be dismal and tedious indeed, while to give oneself entirely up to subjective immersion in inner work has its dangers too. For here we can lose touch with the solidity of our outer world and become lost in a misty nebulous realm, every bit as stagnant as that of the academic.

The present revival of hermeticism must be founded upon exact scholarship, otherwise it will founder against the ever-present pressure of external criticism from a cynical and anti-spiritual society. This was the task I set myself in the last five years, and I believe this aspect has been securely laid down through the approach presented in the Hermetic Journal and in the 17 volumes of the Magnum Opus project to date. Although, the foundation of a twentieth century hermeticism can be held secure by sound scholarship, such a renewal must be fired by the energies released in the souls of those inwardly working with the hermetic material. The dynamic energies that can help drive the renewal of an hermetic world view can only come from the inner work of its practitioners. This need for our inner work to re-enliven the hermetic tradition is the new

tone and direction I will attempt to sound in the pages of this Journal, in other publications and at meetings and conferences over the next few years.

I am at present struggling to create a new synthesis of hermetic and alchemical symbols that can be used in the present day. A number of my subscribers have pointed out that although they appreciate very much the focus on uncovering the mysteries of the ancient texts, often they cannot see any way of using them practically in their own inner work. So I have set the Hermetic Journal the task of trying to find ways of working hermetically today. We need to bring about a twentieth century hermeticism, in a sense carved out of the language of our own era, reflecting the artistic and scientific developments of our age. In this we need the help of many people with diverse talents. So I set this aim before my readers and hope for some positive response in the form of articles, larger manuscripts for publication, and suggestions for other forms of working.

I am not suggesting a complete change in the direction of the work of the Hermetic Journal but rather the setting of a new focus for the next stage of the unfolding of the energies behind this impulse. To stand still or rely on a set established successful formula can be a death process for the creative spirit.

It is vitally important if we are to meet the exacting challenge of our times that we should not bury ourselves in the past or attempt merely to return to a naive romanticism, but rather should steep ourselves in the wisdom of western hermeticism in order to touch through our inner life its ever renewing source of inspiration.

Ada M'Lea

A LOOK AT THE BAHIR

Paul Krzok ©

The Bahir is one of the most important and enigmatic books of the Kabbalah. It is the oldest extant book on the Kabbalah, if the Sepher Yetzirah is not included. (Not all scholars agree that the Sepher Yetzirah is a Kabbalistic work). Certainly, the Bahir does contain the oldest account of the ten Sephiroth interpreted kabbalistically, whereas in the Sepher Yetzirah the Sephiroth are said to be numbers or spheres, but are not explained. Although, it is interesting to note that in the Sepher Yetzirah, 'Sephiroth' is a new term for numbers (instead of the usual 'misparim') and therefore may be indicating the metaphysical nature of the Sephiroth.

The Bahir is traditionally attributed to Rabbi Nehuniah Be Ha Kanah of the first century, but there is no evidence for this. The Bahir was first published in manuscript form about 1176 A.D. in Provence, southern France, and was first printed at Amsterdam in 1651 by an anonymous Christian scholar. The name of the Bahir is taken from the first section of the book : "And now men see not the light which is bright (bahir) in the skies." (Job 37 : 21).

The Bahir can be considered to be a Midrash, as it appears to be a collection of sayings or statements from several different sources, which have then been commented upon. These statements and their commentary do not appear to have any organised sequence in their presentation, and in the main have only very loose connections. In fact, upon examining the contents of the Bahir it seems as though it is either a compilation of material from the twelfth century put together without much thought or editorial skill, or it is an older work which has been handed down and mutilated in the process. Aryeh Kaplan suggests it is an older work originating in the Holy Land and kept by a small school of kabbalists, although most scholars believe it to be a twelfth century work or compilation. In recent years, it was shown that part of the Bahir was a literary adaptation of an earlier work, the Sepher Raza Rabba ("The Book of the Great Secret" - on Merkabah mysticism). Even though the Raza Rabba is now lost, a few important fragments are to be found in a commentary on Sepher Shi'ur Komah (discovered and published by G. Scholem) written in the late thirteenth century by Moses ha-Darshan. Also, several Near Eastern, Palestinian, and Babylonian authors of the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries, who mention its existence, were discovered by Jacob Mann during the 1930's.

CONTENTS

The contents of the Bahir are expressed and explained by the use of several different techniques. Numerous parables are used, explanations of Biblical verses are given, some aggadic (unauthoritative narratives) sayings are explained, several quotations from the Sepher Yetzirah are used, and statements without any support at all are frequently given. As previously mentioned, the contents are not in a very methodically ordered sequence, and it is not unusual for quite unrelated material to be placed in the middle of an exposition.

The contents are mainly as follows :

- (a) Creation, beginning symbolically with "brilliant light", followed by the mention of Tohu (Chaos) and Bohu (Desolution). The letter Beth and the Torah. "The Filling" (with light) by God. This presumably follows the Tzimtzum (symbolically the withdrawal of God from an infinitely small part of Himself to create a void) which is hinted at in the text, but it is clearly defined as it is later in the Zohar.
- (b) The letters of the Hebrew alphabet are discussed, fifteen of which are mentioned.
- (c) The "Seven Voices" (found in Psalm 29) and "Three Sayings" (Kether, Chokmah, and Binah) which parallel the ten Sephiroth.
- (d) The Heart (Lev = 32) and the 32 paths or chambers of the King.
- (e) Man's parts are sevenfold, in the image of God.
- (f) The 72 names, the name of 12 letters, the Axis, Sphere, and Heart (mentioned in the Sepher Yetzirah), and the Lulav (palm frond) and Etrog (a citrus fruit).
- (g) The "Ten Sayings" relating to the ten Sephiroth.
- (h) Reincarnation or Gilgul. The Bahir is the first kabbalistic book to mention it.
- (i) Origin of the soul, male and female souls, Adam and Eve and the "Fall".

STRUCTURE

The Bahir, taken as a whole, does not have a clearly defined structure. Certainly it does have an intrinsic quality which is elaborated upon and more clearly defined in later works, but generally the structure is fragmentary.

The ten Sephiroth are well discussed in two separate places. The first is when they are referred to as the "Seven Voices" and the "Three Sayings". "What is the meaning of the verse, 'And all the people saw the voices' (Exodus 20 :15). These are the voices regarding which King David spoke."

The following "Seven Voices" are given in Psalm 29 in the same sequence as the Bahir, although the Bahir includes further quotations from other parts of the Old Testament.

- (1) "The voice of God is upon the waters, the God of glory thunders" (Psalm 29 : 3). Water symbolises Chesed.
- (2) "The voice of God comes in strength". (Psalm 29 : 4). "Regarding this it is written, 'By the strength of my hand have I done it.'" (Isaiah 10 : 13). "It is likewise written, 'Also My hand has founded the earth'."

(Isaiah 48 : 13). Strength symbolises Geburah.

- (3) "The voice of God is with majesty". (Psalm 29 :4). "It is also written, 'Splendour and majesty are His works, His righteousness stands forever'." (Psalm 111 : 3). Splendour and majesty symbolise Hod.
- (4) "God's voice breaks the cedars." (Psalm 29 :5). "This is the bow that breaks the cypress and cedar trees". The bow symbolises Yesod.
- (5) "God's voice draws out flames of fire" (Psalm 29 :7). "This is what makes peace between water and fire. It draws out the power of fire and prevents it from evaporating the water. It also prevents the water from extinguishing it". Tiphareth makes peace between water and fire
- (6) "God's voice shakes the desert" (Psalm 29 :8). "It is thus written, 'He does kindness to the Messiah, to David and his descendants until eternity' (Psalm 18 :51) - more than when Israel was in the desert". Eternity symbolises Netzach.
- (7) "God's voice makes hinds to calf, strips the forrests bare, and in His Temple, all say Glory" (Psalm 29:9). "It is written thus, 'I bind you with an oath, O daughters of Jerusalem, with the hosts, or with the hinds of the field" (Song of Songs 2 :7). Glory symbolises Malkuth.
" This teaches us that the Torah was given with seven voices. In each of them the Master of the universe revealed Himself to them, and they saw Him. It is thus written, 'And all the people saw the voices'. "

Shortly after some discussion, the Bahir says, "What are the ten kings? They are the seven voices and three sayings." It then explains that these three sayings are Wisdom, Understanding and the third (Kether) should not be sought without authority.

Later in the Bahir the ten Sefirot are again referred to, this time as the "Ten Sayings". (Only the basic details are quoted here).

The "Ten Sayings" are :

- (1) "The first is the Highest Crown."
Crown symbolises Kether.
- (2) "The second one is Wisdom."
Wisdom symbolises Chokmah.
- (3) "The third one is the quarry of the Torah, the treasury of Wisdom, the quarry of the spirit of God."
Spirit symbolises Binah.
- (4) "The fourth is, 'the charity of God', His merit, and His Kindness to all the world. This is the Right hand of the Blessed Holy One."
Charity, Kindness, and the Right Hand symbolise Chesed.
- (5) "The fifth is the great fire of the Blessed Holy One." "This is the Left Hand of the Blessed Holy One."
Fire and the Left Hand symbolise Geburah.
- (6) "The sixth one is the Throne of Glory, crowned, included, praised and hailed. It is the house of the World to Come, and its place is in 'Wisdom.'
The Throne of Glory symbolises Tiphareth.
- (7) "What is the seventh ? It is the heaven called Aravot." (This is usually the highest of the seven heavens - P.K.). Aryeh Kaplan says that in this case Aravot is the head of Malkuth.
- (8) "What is the eighth one ? The Blessed Holy One has a single Righteous one in His world, and it is dear to Him because it supports all the

world. It is the Foundation."

The Righteous One and Foundation symbolise Yesod.

(9 & 10) "What is the ninth ? He said to them : 'The ninth and tenth are together, one opposite the other. One is higher than the other by five hundred years. They are like two Wheels (Ofanim). One inclines towards the north, while the other inclines towards the west. They reach down to the lowest earth.

What is the lowest earth ? It is the last of the seven earths down below".

"The Victory of the world is there. It is thus written, 'For Victory of Victories (Netzach Netzachim)" (Isaiah 34:10).

The ninth saying is Netzach, and by elimination the tenth must be Hod.

The following table will help to sum up the unusual order and inconsistency of the Sephiroth in the Bahir :-

The Usual Order of the Sephiroth	Seven Voices and the Three Sayings	The Ten Sayings
Kether	Kether	Kether
Chokmah	Chokmah	Chokmah
Binah	Binah	Binah
Chesed	Chesed	Chesed
Geburah	Geburah	Geburah
Tiphareth	Hod	Tiphareth
Netzach	Yesod	Malkuth
Hod	Tiphareth	Yesod
Yesod	Netzach	Netzach
Malkuth	Malkuth	Hod

The usual order of the seven lower Sephiroth take their authority from the following quote in the Old Testament : "Thine, O Lord is the greatness (Chesed), and the power (Geburah), and the beauty (Tiphareth), and the victory (Netzach), and the majesty (Hod), for all (Yesod) that is in the heavens and in the earth is thine ; thine is the kingdom (Malkuth), O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all." (1 Chron. 29 :11).

Continuing the aspect on structure, the following extracts on the "Thirty Two Paths" should be of interest.

" The heart (lev) is thirty two. These are concealed, and with them the world was created.

What are these thirty two ?

He said : These are the thirty two paths.

This is like a king who was in the innermost of many chambers.

The number of such chambers was thirty two, and to each one there was a path. Should the king then bring everyone to his chamber through these paths ? You will agree that he should not.

Should he reveal his jewels, his tapestries, his hidden and concealed secrets ? You will again agree that he should not.

What then should he do ? He touches the Daughter and includes all the paths in her and in her garments. "

This statement on the surface seems to be indicating that the King is Zer Anpin (the six Sephiroth above Malkuth) and the Daughter is Malkuth.

But how would thirty two chambers or paths relate to both the King and Malkuth ? Quite often in Kabbalah terms are inexchangeable. In this case it could be that the King is the Ain Soph (The Limitless) and the Daughter is all creation which is based on the pattern of the thirty two chambers or paths.

To reinforce the idea that the Daughter is all of creation, the following evidence is quite clear.

" It is also written, 'All that is called by My name, for My glory (Atziluth - sometimes Malkuth of Atziluth) I created (Beriah) it, I formed (Yetzirah) it, also I made (Assiah) it.' (Isaiah 43 :7).

Was this blessing his daughter, or was it not ?

Yes, it was his daughter. "

This structure of thirty two is further explained and enlarged in the following.

" The date palm is surrounded by its branches all around it and has its sprout (Lulav = palm frond) in the centre. Similarly, Israel takes the body of this Tree which is its Heart (Lev). (i.e. Israel in the heart of the Tree).

And paralleling the body is the spinal cord, which the is main part of the body.

What is the Lulav ? Lo - Lev - 'It has a heart'. The heart is also given over to it.

And what is this Heart ? It is the thirty two hidden paths of wisdom that are hidden in it. "

This shows that the nation of Israel corresponds to the divine pattern of thirty two, and that also man does, as indicated by the spinal cord , which branches like the palm frond.

" Glory (Kavod) and Heart (Lev) both have the same numerical value, namely thirty two.

They are both one, but Glory refers to its function on high, and Heart refers to its function below. "

This passage indicates that this pattern of thirty two can be repeated above or below, whether it is creation, Israel, or man.

" We learn that no creation could look at the first light. It is thus written, 'And God saw the light that it was good.' (Genesis 1 :4).

It is further written, 'and God saw all that He made, and behold, it was very good.' (Genesis 1 :21). God saw all that He had made and saw shining, brilliant good.

He took of that good, and included in it the thirty two paths of Wisdom, giving it to this world. "

This quote reinforces the first two statements on the thirty two paths, indicating by the phrase 'first light', that this was the beginning of Biblical creation (Kabbalistically called 'Emanation') which proceeded from the Ain Soph and developed into thirty two paths of Wisdom.

CONCLUSION

Although the Bahir is a short (about 12,000 words) and fragmentary work, it is rich in valuable ideas and information of early Kabbalah. How much of this early development was influenced by Gnosticism is difficult to say, but there is a clear similarity between the symbolism of the Bahir

and the ideas embodied in Gnosticism. Also, Gnosticism was well developed many years before Kabbalah was known to exist. If it has not been done already, this would be an area where serious scholarly research would expose valuable information with regard to early Kabbalah.

The real age of the Bahir will probably never be known. If it was compiled in the twelfth century, it can easily be seen that much of its material is older, as is indicated by the many quotations from the Sepher Yetzirah. Also the terms commonly used in Kabbalah such as Ain Soph and the word 'Kabbalah' itself are not yet included. The term preceding that of 'Kabbalah' which is used in the Bahir is 'Maase Merkabah' (workings of the Chariot), a very old term used by Jewish mystics.

One of the main importances of the Bahir is that it is the earliest work that deals with the realm of divine attributes, above the created world normally considered by man, and above the seven heavens (Hekaloth) and palaces known to the Merkabah mystics. (The Bahir mentions heaven only briefly, as it does the seven earths). The Zohar further developed this pursuit of the ascent to the "divine origin" and was followed and extended by the teachings of such Kabbalists as Moses Cordevero (1522 - 1570), Rabbi Chaim Vital (1543 - 1620), Isaac Luria (1534 - 1572), Moses Chaim Luzzatto (1702 - 1747), and finally the Hassidim.

Hopefully, now that the Bahir is easily available in both Hebrew and English, it will receive much more attention and study from those who have the expertise to penetrate its more difficult mysteries. Also, with the publication of this article I hope that it has proven interesting enough to encourage the ordinary esoteric student to obtain a copy of the "Bahir" and study this very valuable and important work.

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THE INNER GEOMETRY OF ALCHEMICAL EMBLEMS

Adam McLean

Over the past five years of the Hermetic Journal, I have often illustrated in the Alchemical Mandala feature and other articles the profound symbolism wrapped up in the old sixteenth and seventeenth century emblematic engravings of alchemists and Rosicrucians. I have sometimes indicated how certain of these diagrams can be seen to have an underlying geometric skeleton structure upon which the symbols are arrayed. However, I never analysed this aspect in great depth and merely pointed out some simple geometric features. Patricia Villiers-Stuart in her publications has often brought to my attention the complex geometry that lies beneath such emblems, but I had not considered that this aspect was of paramount importance, until I recently requested from the British Library a microfilm of an important Rosicrucian book in their collection, the 'Speculum Sopicum Rhodo-Stauroticum' of Theophilus Schweighardt, published in 1618. Although a printed book this particular copy contains a number of manuscript additions made in the 18th century bound into the volume. Some of these manuscript additions analyse in great detail, the geometry underlying two emblems contained in this collection. Some of these I have illustrated overleaf (in negative). The first figure shows the emblem (contained incidentally in the 'Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians', Altona 1785, and found in other Rosicrucian sources), and the second, third and fourth illustrations show an ascending series of intricate geometrical analyses of the emblem. The evidence of these drawings certainly convinces me that there is another level to many of the emblematic engravings of this period that has yet been fully considered - the key of their inner geometry. The engravers of that period, de Bry, Matthieu Merian, Lucas Jennis, may well have worked a complex geometric message as well as a symbolic one into their beautifully executed engravings. I consider that this discovery is of great importance and hope that some of my correspondents might have the inclination to follow up in detail this aspect with regard to other engravings. There may be a whole layer of meaning that we are at present unaware of woven into these ancient emblems.

OMNIA AB VNO.

NAT VRA.

IGNIS.

TERRA.

AQUA.

AER.

VEGETABILIS.

MINERALE.

ANIMA

OMNIA

AD VNVM.

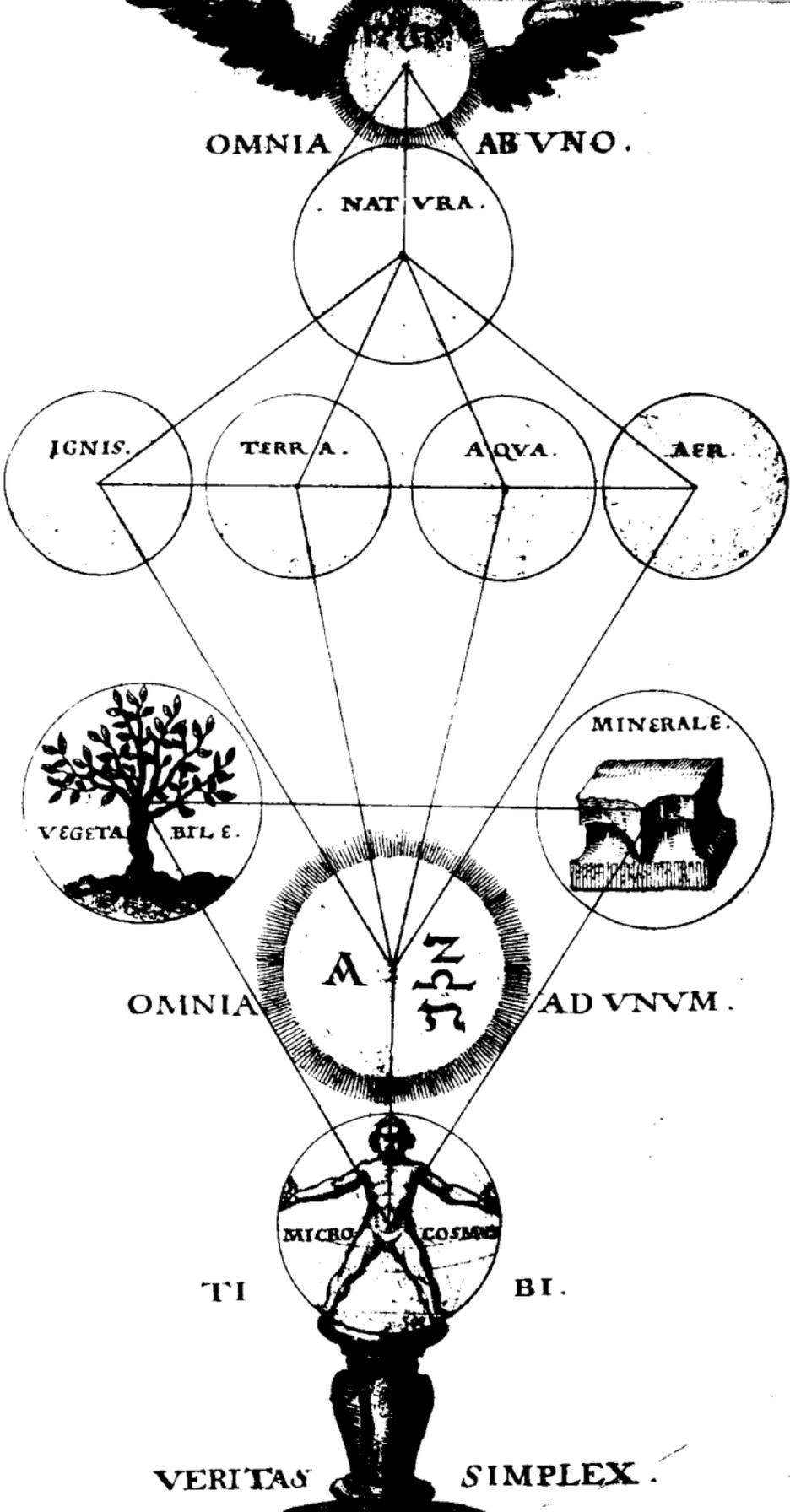
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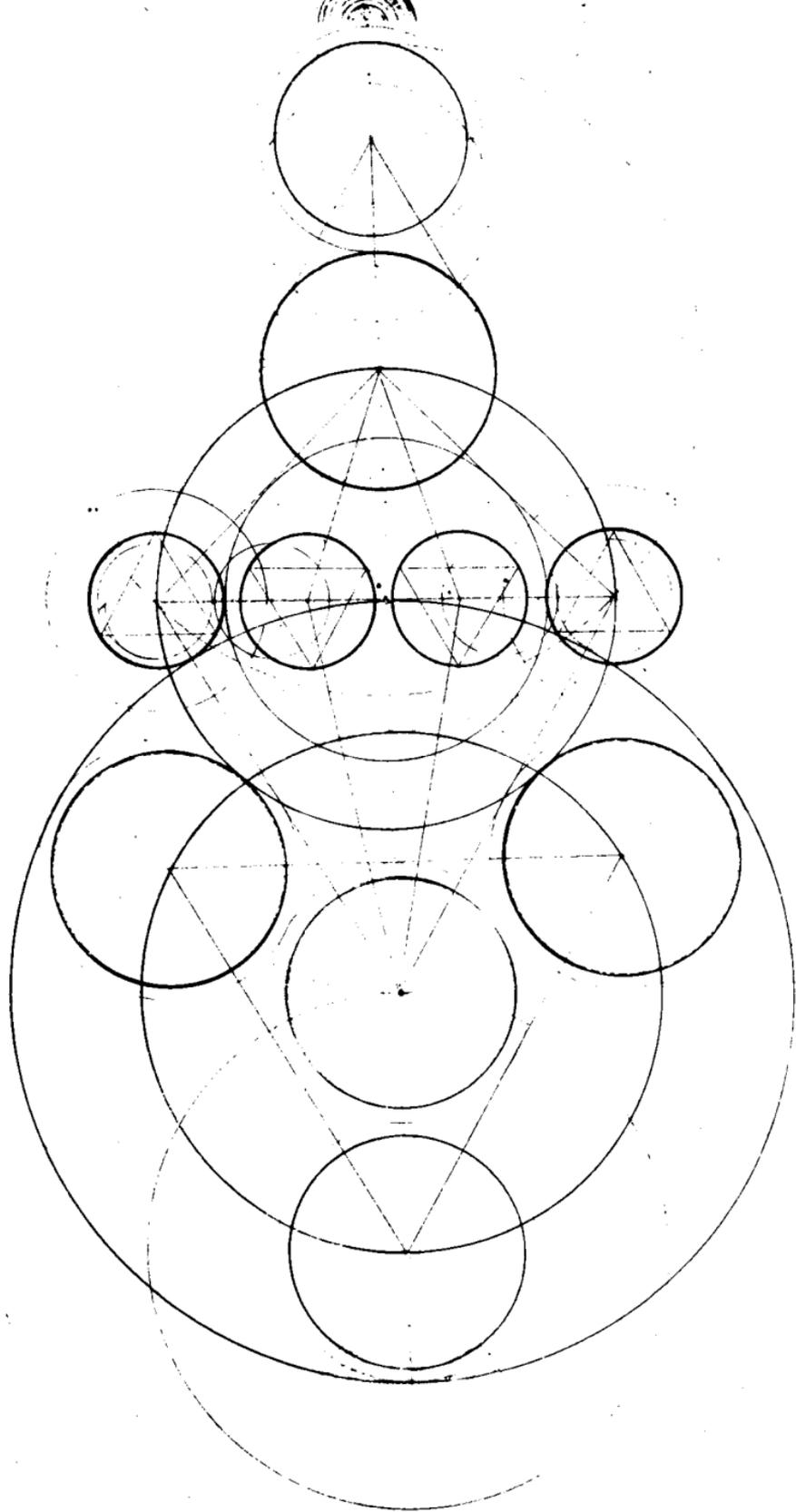
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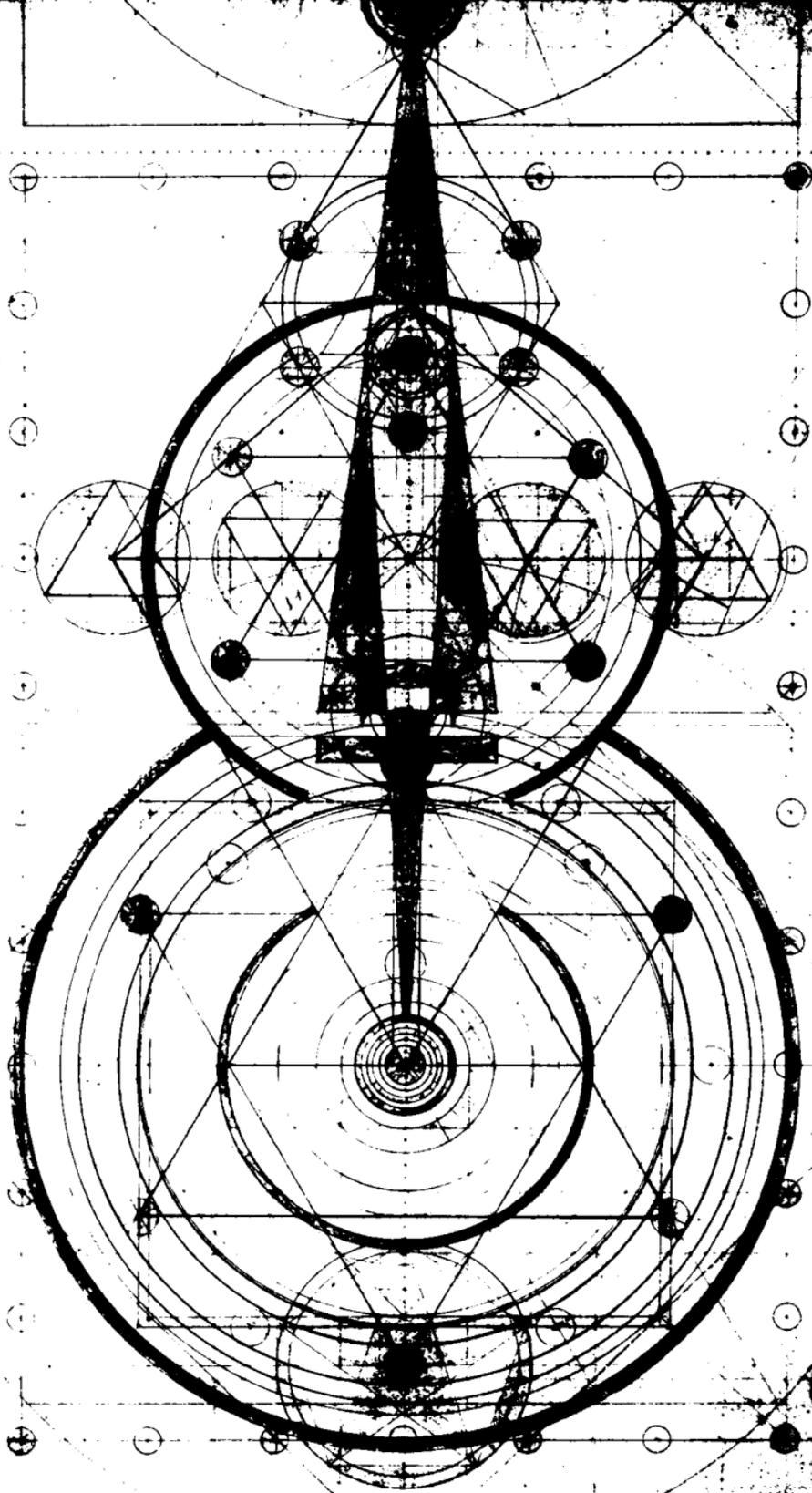
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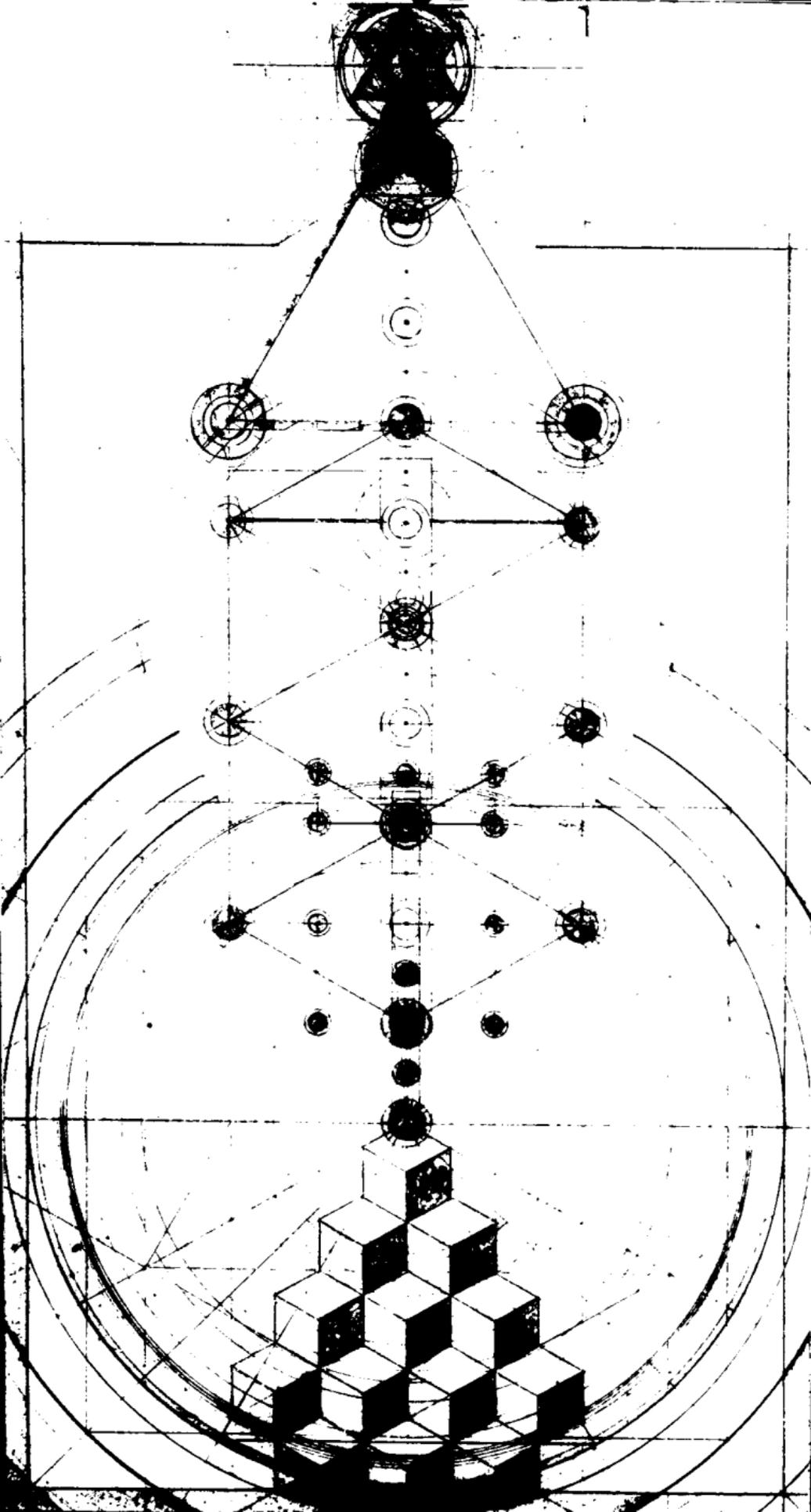
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PATHWORKING AND INNER JOURNEYS

Adam McLean ©

In recent decades the new term 'pathworking' has entered the western esoteric tradition. This emerged in certain esoteric schools in Britain and has been especially developed through the work of Gareth Knight. Pathworking is of course not new, and similar exercises have been the basis for many of the meditative techniques in the Western Hermetic system, (for example, the Jewish Hekhaloth mystical exercises for ascending through the heavenly palaces), and can also be seen paralleled in other traditions (Tibetan meditative workings with Tankas, various Eastern symbolic systems, and in certain shamanistic techniques found in many cultures). So the technique of pathworking is certainly not new, even although the coining of this new term in recent decades suggests a rebirth of interest in this inner journeying.

It seems that the term 'pathworking' was originally used in a precisely defined sense, but recently has begun to evolve and broaden somewhat as those using this technique have interacted with other parallel traditions. 'Pathworking' probably derives ultimately from the Golden Dawn system, particularly through Dion Fortune and the Fraternity of the Inner Light, and was brought into its modern expression through W.E. Butler, Gareth Knight, and Dolores Ashcroft-Nowicki of the S.O.L. esoteric school.

In its pure form it consists of meditative exercises structured into an imaginative journey along one of the twenty two paths on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. (I use the word 'imaginative' in a truly positive sense, not in the pejorative 'imaginary' - for these exercises use and reveal to us the power indwelling in the much disparaged and undervalued faculty of our imagination). Thus a pathworking involves an inner journey in consciousness from one Sephiroth to another. The practitioner has a series of symbols associated with the starting Sephira (God forms, planetary attributions, etc.), another group linked with the destination Sephira, as well as symbols found on the path itself (Hebrew letter and picture, tarot card, geomantic figures, astrological sign, etc). Successful pathworkings are meditative exercises in which the meditators project themselves, their innermost souls, upon an inner journey into that world in which these archetypal symbols exist as living entities, and interact with these archetypes as 'beings'. Such imaginative journeys are structured in such a way as to allow the spiritual energies bound up in these archetypal symbols to be directly experienced by the meditator. These pathworkings often release powerful spiritual energies from the Archetypes, resulting in

profound inspirational experiences, so in a sense can be seen as being quite dangerous and certainly imaginatively stimulating to the meditators. Thus it is that many of the practitioners of this pathworking system have held to the skeleton form of the Tree of Life as a foundation for constructing such inner journeys. They have sensed that to allow such exercises to become open to a freer meditative working with symbols might produce an amorphous shapeless base for these inner journeys which could result in the meditators being exposed to unstructured and unbalanced archetypal energies.

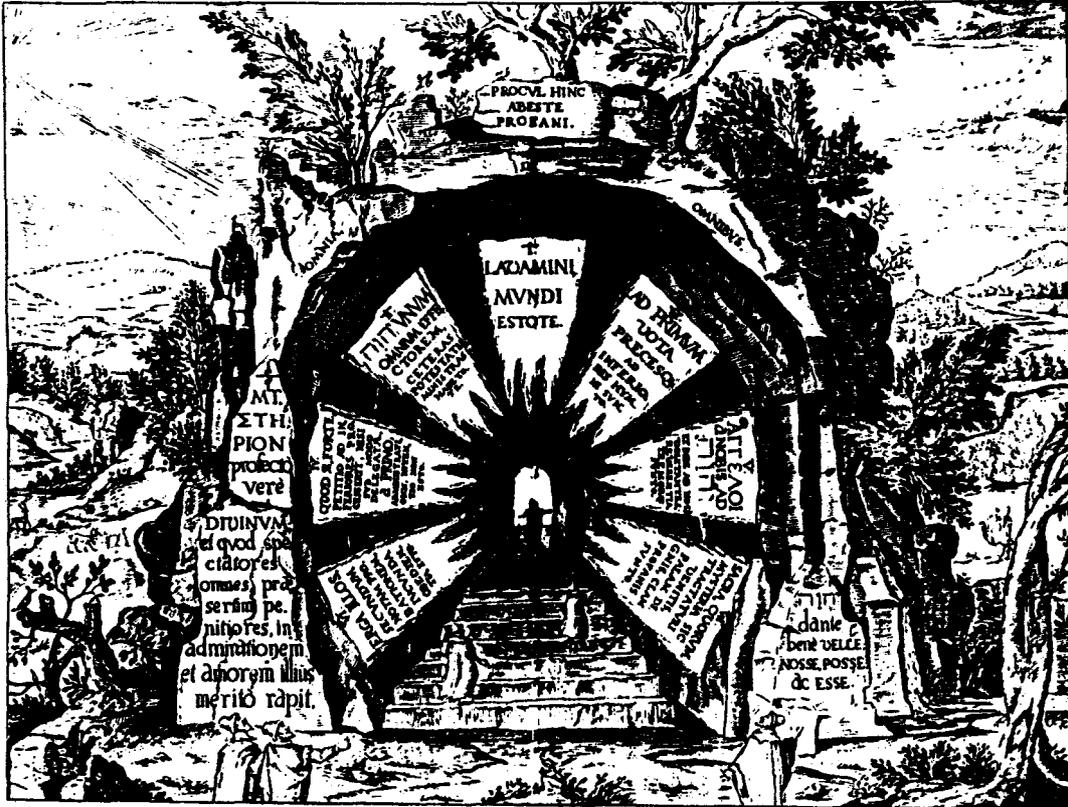
Over the past years of my working with the symbolic tradition in Hermeticism, I have become aware that there are many systems at work within such constellations of symbols, other than the Tree of Life Diagram. Indeed, often an attempt to reduce these to the Kabbalistic system involves damaging their subtle inner structure and one loses the essence of their special form. We might include here many of the alchemical allegories, the elaborate Western mandalas, or such systems of symbols as the Pandora, Rosarium, Mylius series, Lambspring, or Atalanta Fugiens Emblems, in which there are undoubtedly hidden symbols indicative of inner journeys, though these cannot be forced into a Kabbalistic form.

In my own meditative work I have used different techniques for undertaking such inner journeys which parallel 'pathworking' though are not identical with it. There are a number of such methods that can be utilised, but I will restrict myself in this article to one particular technique, that I am at present working into a practical guidebook to Inner Journeys that will be published shortly.

As other esotericists have recognised, it is important to have a format or basic skeleton structure upon which to build such exercises, otherwise an amorphous working will inevitably polarise and lay the meditator open to an unbalanced experience of the archetypes. One needs strong inner resources of soul to be able to handle raw unbalanced archetypal energies. Many of the so-called "primitive" magical systems, the Bon religion of Tibet, the shamanism still found in Africa, some elements in Northern European paganism, and the Amerindian traditions, press their initiates into strongly polarised experiences of the archetypes. One can certainly have an exciting if dangerous time working in this way with these forces !! In the Western esoteric tradition there has evolved methods for encountering these same elemental spiritual energies, but in a more balanced and harmonious way. In this we seek for continuity of experience rather than to have a single numinous, initiatory, powerful or frightening encounter with the archetypal energies, that remains in our memory for years. Such powerful experiences burnt into the memory by an unbalanced use of psychic and spiritual force can often become internal scars rather than positive experiences, and can cast a similar shadow into the soul as one finds is often produced by the taking of psychotropic drugs. (Those who have had 'bad trips' with LSD or mushroom preparations, are often left with scars in their souls that may become activated again when they undertake any esoteric work or are placed under psychic strain by outer pressures in their lives.)

The technique I will outline here is contained within the Hermetic tradition though (to the best of my knowledge) has never been explicitly described. However, we can see it to lie behind the Hermetic memory

systems, the allegories and many series of symbolic emblems. I have illustrated below one of the well known plates from Heinrich Khunrath's *Amphitheatre of Eternal Wisdom* (1602) which shows the entrance to the inner gate of the mysteries with its seven steps.



This meditative exercise involves us taking an inner journey through seven "doorways", "levels" or stages, and on each threshold encountering and working with an individual symbol. We will have the sense of voyaging inwards to a central goal or point from where we return to outer consciousness bearing an essence of this inner experience. I have already sketched something of this in the Introduction to my *Western Mandala* book published in the last few months.

This technique involves working with individual hermetic symbols and if we hope to use it successfully to explore our inner world, then we must build up a repertoire of these symbols. We will have to familiarise ourselves with at least one hundred of these individual symbols which constitute the inner language of alchemical emblems and allegories.

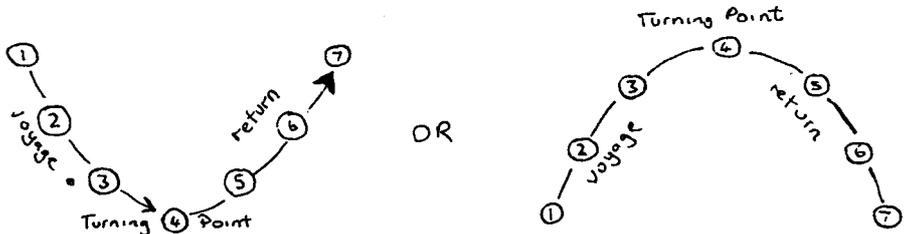
In making our inner journey through the seven gateways with their seven guardian figures, we have to approach each gate in turn visualising our chosen symbol on the threshold. As we do so we have to be aware of the archetypal content of the symbol. (This can be unfolded through your own research or you can follow the indications I am outlining in my descriptions of these symbols for the forthcoming book.) Each symbol

announces a challenge to the soul of those who approach it seeking entrance to the next stage of the journey. These "challenges" make us aware of certain aspects that we have to develop within our beings if we are to work fully with these archetypes. (The "challenges" are in a sense reflections of each of these archetypes in our souls.)

If we cannot meet the challenge of the symbol then we will find ourselves unable to proceed further. This is a protective mechanism built into hermetic symbol systems against people using symbols that are too disturbing or polarising for their particular psychic state. If we recognise the need for us to inwardly develop and meet what the symbol challenges, then we will be able to continue on the journey. Once across the threshold we must pause a short while from the active process of creating and maintaining the symbol, becoming more passive and opening ourselves to whatever the symbol might have to communicate to us. Most often, we will experience nothing definite here, but in time if we persevere with such exercises then we will begin to feel certain forces during these more passive states. All of this can be precisely described and outlined.

The sevenfold form of the journey is not an arbitrary choice but conforms to one of the basic structures in hermeticism. (There are other structural formats we could use to produce particular effects, however, this sevenfold form is extremely useful having almost universal application, so that in practice we will find it difficult to exhaust its possibilities.)

The seven stages of this journey should be pictured as :-



A descent to our innermost depths and return to outer consciousness. This can also be seen as an ascent to lofty spiritual heights and a return to the lower earthly realm. Both of these views are simultaneously true. (If our consciousness is not able to live with such an apparent paradox then perhaps we are not really suited to hermetic studies !)

An important element of this journey is that it has three distinct parts.

- An initial group of three stages - The Inner Voyage
- A central single stage- The inner core of the experience
- A final group of three stages - The Return.

Thus we have to view our journey as having three parts - an opening group that leads us to the central kernel from which we return bearing a fragment of inner experience back to our outer life.

The opening phase and encounter with the first guardian symbol sets the direction, the aspirations and tone for the journey. If we encountered a Lion symbol at this entry point this would challenge us if we had the inner courage to undertake such a journey. The Lion represents this masculine, courageous, adventurous aspect of ourselves. If we felt able to

work with this symbol then we would be well set for an adventurous journey. A symbol such as an Hermaphrodite met at this point would indicate that our journey necessitates an awareness of the masculine and feminine aspects of our beings and of our need to work towards an integration of these facets while on our inner journey. A water symbol, like a well, vessel or chalice, might challenge us to adopt a more passive aspect to our journey, and that we should inwardly listen, be receptive and absorb, rather than actively interact with the symbols we meet. The first guardian symbol thus sets the tone for our inner journeying.

On the second stage we meet opposition, and step into the dualistic antithesis to our journey. The symbol we meet here might be seen in this way as challenging and testing the integrity of our inner journey by voicing opposition. A sword encountered here would indicate we needed to examine our resources of will to continue on our path. A skeleton, death or other transformation symbol would challenge us to recognise that sometimes we must sacrifice or cast off some aspect of our self in order to be able to go further on the inner journey.

On the third level or stage we will meet with a symbol which we have to see and interpret as resolving the conflict of the first two stages. Here an initial synthesis is obtained and the first glimpse of the kernel of our inward journey.

The fourth stage is the central experience of our journey to the inner castle of our souls. The symbol encountered here is very important for in its kernel lies the essence of that experience we have to bring back to outer consciousness. The experience we have through our meeting with this symbol is the precious gift, the jewel, that we gain from our inner journey.

The fifth stage should be seen as the beginning of the arc of return. The symbol we encounter here gives us an indication of how we can gather the experience of our inner journey and bring it back into our outer consciousness. If we are able to meet the challenge of this symbol and cross this threshold then we will be able to return to the outer world with some essence of our meditative journey that will continue to echo in our souls and be the germ for further inner explorations. This fifth stage mirrors stage three, and we must contemplate how the two symbols met at these points relate and reflect each other - one being the synthesis on the arc of descent, the other that on the arc of return.

On the next stage, the sixth, we meet an element of opposition in the symbol, a check to our initial synthesis and impulse of return. Here the symbol will reflect back to us inner difficulties we have yet to resolve if we are to express the impulse we have gained from our inner work on returning to outer consciousness. Again this relates to the difficulties and opposition experienced at stage two on the inward arc of the voyage.

At the last stage we stand on the threshold of immanent return, surveying the whole journey that lies behind us. The symbol here encountered must be seen as pointing to the ways in which we can incorporate, retain and make relevant, all that we have experienced through this sevenfold immersion in our inner realm of soul, and what we have had worked into our souls through touching upon the spiritual world where the archetypes exist as living beings. If we can truly feel the symbol of this stage working in this way, then on passing across the threshold and returning to outer consciousness we may find that the experience will

echo and that we can still touch upon it even many weeks or months later, perhaps finding there some inspiration or insight that can help us with tasks or decisions we have to take in our outer life.

We will find this sevenfold structure to our inner journey both substantial enough to give a strong foundation that will stop the archetypal energies polarising readily, and also simple and flexible enough to be used in many different ways with material from a variety of traditions.

A further layer can be added to the journey by stipulating a particular sevenfold domain of action, rather than merely a series of doorways. Thus the journey could take place in the seven rooms of a castle, on a path winding spirally up a mountain of initiation having seven obstacles to pass, or a descent through seven chambers or caves into the chthonic depths for a working with ancient Greek Mystery material. All these can be precisely described and adapted for ones own use.

The symbols we meet on the different thresholds can be chosen in a number of different ways. They can be assigned by using a traditional sequence of images from an allegory, myth, mandala or mystery tale, or by opening ourselves and letting synchronicity chose the particular symbols, say using a set of symbol cards. This "random" choosing will not be a dangerous method as long as the symbols and their challenges are coherently balanced - a point I will describe in some detail when I publish this material. (This "random" choice corresponds to a reading of the Tarot Cards - which is not a dangerous procedure due to the fact that the archetypes therein are esoterically balanced). A third method, only able to be used by the experienced practitioner, allows the symbols to appear within the exercise itself, rather than having them determined beforehand. This mode of working requires a familiarity with the symbols, so people just beginning to use these meditative exercises will find it too difficult to sustain.

I believe this system for undertaking meditative inner journeys will be found to be of the greatest value for our working with hermetic symbolism. Some of my readers have said to me that while they appreciate the profound insights into the inner world that lie hidden in the ancient hermetic texts and symbol systems that I have uncovered and drawn to their attention in the pages of this journal and the Magnum Opus books, they just do not see any way of practically working with them. The system of meditative exercise which I am shortly to publish will, I believe, meet this challenge and provide a method of working with hermeticism suited to our present day consciousness.

The symbols of the hermetic tradition are the keys to the inner structure of our psyche. Our psyche, both in its conscious and unconscious facets, operates in a symbolic mode, and these archetypal symbols lie hidden within our souls as the means by which we experience the material world of perceptions, and the spiritual world, as well as our own inner workings. It is essential that we gain an insight into the ways in which our soul operates. This cannot be done by mere intellectualising, but needs rather that we experience our inner world in its own realm, through working with and relating to the archetypes on their own level. The method of inner journeying that I have sketched here can provide one technique for exploring this realm. In a sense, it is the software for experiencing the symbolic functioning of our souls, and I believe also can provide a bridge between esotericism and depth psychology.

This alchemical mandala from a tract entitled 'The All Wise Doorkeeper' contained in the *Musaeum Hermeticum* of 1625, does not require a lengthy commentary. It ties together the Four Elements, the four diagonal spokes of the wheel, with the seven spheres of the planets plus the realm of the zodiacal constellations. The four Cherubs blow their influences from the outer cosmic region towards the centre, descending through the realms of the planetary spheres to the earth globe at the centre which is the place of NATURE. The seven spheres are associated through the elements with different qualities, FIRE with the seven Angels, AIR with the seven organs of the human microcosm, WATER to the seven metals, and EARTH to the seven planetary bodies. The realm of Nature is threefold. There are Three Principles, Three Worlds, Three Ages, and Three Kingdoms in Nature. At the very centre is pictured an individual soul with two guardian angel forms. The text round this says 'It is the great honour of faithful souls that from their very birth an angel is appointed to preserve and keep each of them'. Around this is shown the seven Liberal Arts and five Sciences through which humanity can strive for an understanding of the spiritual ground of the world.

This mandala summarises the hermetic conception of the place of humanity in the scheme of things, picturing in a neat and beautiful way the relationship between our human microcosm and the vast space of the macrocosm within which we live and are but a small part.

PASSAGES TO THE OTHERWORLD

Deirdre Green ©

I would like briefly to consider the symbolism attached to Passages to the Otherworld. I am using the term 'Otherworld' here in a fairly loose sense, to describe a number of distinct (though interconnected) planes of spiritual being or consciousness which may be encountered in direct experience by the initiate, mystic or occultist. The term 'Otherworld', then, as I use it here, should not be seen as applying to realms of spiritual being as described only in one particular culture, nor should it be taken to denote one specific level of higher awareness to the exclusion of others (for example, the intuitional and not the astral, etc.) What I am concerned to discuss here is rather the images and symbols found in mythology, mystical and magical writings, ritual, etc., which are used to express transitions from the world of our everyday experience, to realms where higher forms of perception operate. There are, of course, many such symbols, but I will be concentrating on symbolic complexes which express the experience of rising above dualities to a union or transcendence of opposites, to a state of wholeness and integration; a state which is seen as 'timeless' or as partaking of a sacred time which is different from the lineal time of the world of our mundane existence.

Coomaraswamy sums up the nature of 'passages to the Otherworld' when he says, "Whoever would transfer from this to the Otherworld must do so through the undimensioned and timeless 'interval' that divides related but contrary forces i.e. dualities - D.G., between which, if one is to pass at all, it must be 'instantly'." (1) The everyday world of our material existence is characterised by duality and polarity; we conceive of it under the structures of various pairs of opposites (masculine/feminine, active/receptive; dark/light, evil/good, death/life, sorrow/joy; etc.). These pairs of opposites are variously portrayed by different cultures by means of symbols such as Sun/Moon, Yang/Yin (Taoism), Purusa/Prakrti (Samkhya), Siva/Sakti (Saivite Tantra), Force/Form (Kabbalah), King/Queen (alchemy), Adam/Eve, and so on. Pairs of opposites of this nature are complementary and necessary for an understanding of the whole and of the manifest world in particular: but they depend upon each other for existence, each is relative to the other, and therefore, esoteric traditions insist, their existence is only a relative truth. The great German mystic Meister Eckhart says that there can be no black without white; Jacob Boehme, the Hermetic philosopher and mystic (for whom the whole of manifest existence is made up of active and passive, 'masculine' and 'feminine' principles) says that Light could not exist

without Darkness, nor joy without sorrow.

This vision of the interdependence of opposites is basic to mystical and occult thought. The aim of the initiate is to unite the opposites to bring about a new synthesis or wholeness; it is here that symbols of androgynous deities and so on appear, and it is here also that the theme of transcending time as we know it is encountered.



The passage from the world of opposites to the Otherworld must be made suddenly because it is a passage from the world of time to the Timeless or Eternal Realm, the Realm which the German mystical tradition calls the 'Now' (Nu). Eckhart, his pupil Suso, and others, speak of the higher stages of mystical perception as entailing rising above the temporal order to a higher state of perception, where it is no longer meaningful to speak of 'before' and 'after', of past or future. As students of the esoteric we may have experienced something similar to this, where in deep meditation time seems to 'expand' or 'contract' so that we are not aware of the passage of mundane, lineal time. Our deepest spiritual experiences may often seem to last a lot less long, or a lot longer, than they do according to clock time. The same basic theme, of transcending time as we know it or of entering into a new dimension of 'sacred Time', can be seen symbolically expressed in various rituals in tribal societies and also in folklore and mythology.

An excellent example is found in the Kaushitaki Upanisad, which describes the 'journey' of the liberated soul after death. Following a passage through various states and symbolic terrains in which karma is worked out, eventually the soul comes to a celestial region where time and duality are transcended. Here are found a lake and a river, both of which have to be crossed "simply by using consciousness". (The journey to the Otherworld is, of course, primarily a movement in consciousness, but it is often symbolically expressed by a movement in time and space, a journey or quest; and the image of a river, lake or ocean to be crossed is more or less universal in this context.) The scripture in question says that time "flies away" before the enlightened soul, and good and evil deeds (which would otherwise be productive of karma and engender further incarnations) are "shaken off". The text continues: "As a man riding in a chariot looks down on the two chariot-wheels on either side, so does he the enlightened person look down on day and night, deeds good and evil, and all dualities. Delivered from both good and evil works, and knowing Brahman the nondual, impersonal Source of All - D.G., to Brahman he draws near." (2) The soul then reaches a celestial landscape with a sacred Tree, Palace, etc., which are said explicitly in the text to be symbolic of wisdom (prajna) and the life-breath (prana).

That this passage is said to describe a journey experienced after physical death does not detract from its illustrative value here, for esoteric traditions throughout the world have long held that there are profound parallels between after-death experience and mystical or magical experiences that may occur in this life. Death, like spiritual experience, is a gateway to the Otherworld; myths, symbols, ritual,

dreams, and the profounder types of metaphysics, likewise all partake in their own ways of this timeless realm beyond duality. The 'once upon a time' of fairy tales and folklore, too, is 'timeless time', mythical or sacred time.

Many interesting examples of the same theme are found in Celtic lore. It is often said of visitors to the Otherworld (Faery) that they are missed on earth for years, while it seems to them that they have only been away a few days. Thomas the Rhymer, a 13th century poet and prophet from the Scottish borders, spent seven years in Faery and thought he had been there only seven days :compare the meditative experience of time expanding and contracting which I mentioned earlier. Thomas' story offers many interesting symbolic images and experiences; I shall comment briefly on a few more of these later, and have discussed his Otherworld journey in full elsewhere. (3)

A graphically beautiful illustration of the Otherworld journey and the transcendence of duality in the Celtic tradition is found in the Mabinogi of Peredur. Amidst many other Otherworldly adventures on his journey, Peredur comes to a beautiful wooded valley with a river running through it. On each side of the valley are smooth meadows. On one side of the river is a flock of white sheep, on the other side a flock of black sheep. "When a white sheep bleated a black sheep would cross the river and turn white, and when a black sheep bleated a white sheep would cross the river and turn black." Note again the image of the river to be crossed, symbolic of a transition from one state to another.

The mythical symbolism here is a very evocative illustration of the truth that each duality contains its opposite hidden implicitly within itself: a truth also portrayed by the Taoist yin-yang symbol, where the black segment has a small white dot on it and the white segment a small black dot.



Peredur then sees a tree on the river bank: ".... from roots to crown one half was aflame and the other green with leaves." (4) This can be compared to other sacred Trees whose two sides represent complementary opposites (such as the Kabbalistic Tree, where the two side Pillars represent Force and Form).

I shall return to some more Celtic examples later, but first a short detour into anthropology may elucidate my theme further. The passage to the Otherworld, with its transcendence of dualities and its 'sacred time' quality, is often associated ritually and symbolically with a state that has become known to anthropologists as 'liminality'. Victor Turner (who, unlike some anthropologists, is to be noted for his sympathetic and thought-provoking evaluations of ritual) developed this concept out of the earlier research of Van Gennep and others on rites of passage. (5) Studying the Ndembu of N.W. Zambia, Turner found that many aspects of Ndembu ritual played upon various polarities such as life/death, masculine/feminine, cool/hot, white/red, left/right, good luck/misfortune, strength/weakness, etc. The aim of many Ndembu rituals is to unite certain of these pairs of polarities: oppositions are overcome or transcended by the ritual portrayal of unity. (It is unfortunately only possible to give a brief summary of Turner's work here.) Turner found that these rituals display what he calls



'liminality' (the word is from the Latin limen, meaning a threshold, which is highly relevant, for the crossing of various thresholds is an experience always encountered by the initiate or esoteric student). According to Turner, people or objects playing a key role in rituals are in a 'liminal' state, that is, they elude the normal classificatory system of the culture in question. The liminal state is outside or beyond secular differentiation and the social structure of the culture concerned, and is also beyond time. What this amounts to is that the person or object in the liminal state is in the 'betwixt and between' of Celtic mythology, as I shall later show, or in the state that mystics such as Eckhart, Plotinus, and Sankara describe as 'neither this nor that'. The passage from one state of existence to another, as shown for example in Ndembu initiatory rituals, involves passing through a 'stateless' liminal phase, a threshold. Turner finds that the qualities of liminality represented in ritual symbolism include: transition; timelessness or sacred time; totality, homogeneity, equality; anonymity, absence of status, absence of sexual differentiation; silence, simplicity, obedience, humility, acceptance of suffering. All these qualities can be seen as representing an attempt to return to the primordial wholeness and innocence of mythical, sacred time, where dualities hold no sway, and indeed as assisting us to rise towards this higher level of apprehension. The ritual and symbolic elements examined by Turner portray the ascent above the multiplicity, differentiation and

duality of everyday existence, and above worldly distinctions of status and so on, to a higher spiritual balance and equality. The rituals work by manipulating pairs of opposites (life/death, masculine/feminine, etc.) accepted by the Ndembu on the level of day-to-day action and thought, and by seeking to find a higher unity between these pairs of opposites. The ritual symbols and actions point the way to the Otherworld which is beyond social structures and beyond divisive dichotomies.

Liminality, and the associated ritual theme known to anthropologists as ritual reversal (where the opposites are not transcended in totality and homogeneity, but rather 'stood on their heads' or turned upside down) are not, however, peculiar to African culture but are extremely widespread. Liminality is shown in Celtic mythology in numerous 'betwixt and between' states. An example of this is found in the Mabinogion, where the hero of this particular part of the book, Lleu, cannot be killed indoors or out of doors, on horse or on foot. But if, he says, a bath were to be made for him on the river bank, with a thatched roof over the tub, and if a goat were made to stand alongside the tub, then if he put one foot on the goat's back and the other on the edge of the tub, being half under the thatched roof, whoever struck him then would bring about his death. Lleu can also only be killed with a spear which has taken a year to make and which has been worked upon only when people are at Mass - a ritually potent spear, that is, made during 'sacred time'. (6) Eventually, by means of a trick, he is killed in just these circumstances, and when he is killed he is also standing neither on dry land nor in water, and is neither clothed nor unclothed, having just risen from the bath and put on only his trousers in order to stand 'neither on the goat nor in the tub' (or, if we prefer, both on the goat and on the tub). Lleu is killed in a seemingly impossible state which is neither one thing nor another: it eludes classification and transcends the opposites. There are many other examples of such betwixt and between states in Celtic lore. They occur where events, people or things are represented which are in some way between one Realm of Being and another: in the contexts of ritual, Otherworld journeys, seasonal celebrations, death, magical transformations, and so on. Betwixts and between states point to a realm where things are fluid, where boundaries and categories are indistinct, where dualities are transcended: a realm of vision which cannot be confined or limited by time, place or multiplicity. They direct our consciousness towards a state of primordial unity. I have discussed other instances of betwixt and between states in Celtic lore elsewhere (7) and shall give just one other example here, from Thomas the Rhymer's journey to Faery. While passing through the Underworld (just one of the many planes of being that he experiences on his visionary journey) Thomas spends forty days and nights wading through a river of blood, and according to the ballad which tells his story, he "saw neither sun nor moon, but heard the roaring of the sea". This experience has many points of contact with the Underworld descents of other ancient Mystery traditions, and I have discussed this in my article on Thomas the Rhymer mentioned earlier; here I merely wish to draw attention to the recurrence of the symbolism of passing beyond dualities and of water. The sun and moon are worldwide symbols of the complementary pairs of opposites that make up manifestation on the material plane; in passing beyond these polarities (again by wading through a river) we enter a realm of nondual, undifferentiated spiritual

energy, of which the sea (which Thomas hears) is often a symbol.

Alwyn and Brinley Rees, discussing the story of Llew's death, point out an Indian parallel: the demon Namuci once got the better of the god Indra, "but released him on condition that he agreed not to slay him by day or by night, with a staff or a bow, with the flat of the hand or with fists, with anything wet or dry. Eventually, Indra slays him in the twilight with the foam of the waters." (8) And a Hindu parallel to Thomas the Rhymer's experience is found in the Katha Upanisad, which, describing the mystical experience of oneness with Brahman, says: "There the sun shines not, nor moon nor stars" (9) - and adds that in this realm all things shine with a primordial Light.

I have said that passages to the Otherworld are often symbolically expressed as journeys, and there are many images that recur in the course of the inner journey as described in different cultures: not only waters and seas to be crossed, but also gates, doors and other thresholds; tests and ordeals; helpers or guides met along the way; treasures to be won, battles to be fought, etc. Each of these motifs stands for a particular aspect of the inner life: a hurdle to be overcome, an ability to be developed, an aspect of the self to come to terms with, and so on. The journey of Jason in quest of the Golden Fleece is an Otherworld journey par excellence (the Fleece, which originally came from a Golden Ram which was a gift of Hermes, hangs from a tree and is guarded by a dragon). Jason and the Argonauts have many typically Otherworldly adventures on their Quest, but especially relevant here are the Symplegades ("Clashing Islands"). These are two small rocky islands which, tossing on the water, come together forcibly from time to time, crushing anything that may be caught between them. The Argonauts' boat has to be made to pass between the Clashing Islands in safety. The Islands can be seen as the warring opposites beyond which the questing hero, representing the seeker after spiritual knowledge, has to pass.

Another vivid symbolic image encountered on the Otherworld journey is the perilous bridge which has to be crossed, the bridge of a hair's breadth or the bridge with razor-sharp edges, the bridge which marks the transition from one Realm to another. This is known to many cultures: it is spoken of in Yorkshire folksong and in the devotional poems of the Hindu Bhakti mystics. It is found in Arthurian legend, where Lancelot has to cross a bridge made of a sword. (10) It was well known to the ancient Indian sages, as is shown by the Katha Upanisad:

"A sharpened razor's edge is hard to cross --

The dangers of the path -- wise seers proclaim them!" (11)

The transition across this bridge, like the passage between the Clashing Islands, must be made "in the twinkling of an eye" or "in a split second": the present moment, the 'Now' which is so short in duration as to be timeless, is the gateway to eternity. To be able to cross these thresholds is to be an adept: to be able to pass back and forth at will from one level of consciousness or being to another.

Perhaps I should add in concluding that the opposites are not to be rejected or denied, but rather seen as a greater Whole, integrated, resolved. The Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (Knowledge of Duality) are not two trees but one tree "manifest in two kingdoms" as Jacob Boehme puts it. (12) Certain Kabbalistic teachings by which Boehme may well have been influenced likewise hold that as long

as the two trees, which are seen as springing from one root, remain united, harmony between the opposites is assured; but when unity is lost and the two trees are seen as separate, disharmony ensues. Through seeing the opposites as complementary rather than antagonistic, and through eventually coming to see them as ultimately one, the opposites themselves seem to acquire added meaning and richness, even though we no longer see them as ultimate. It is a most important task for us all today to realise the coincidentia oppositorum within: to develop our latent side, and to unite the warring tendencies and drives in ourselves (such as thought and feeling, for example) which otherwise pull us in contrary directions. The symbolic complexes of myth and ritual which I have discussed can help us to bring about this balance within our souls, for they point to realities beyond themselves, to levels where the ambiguities, contradictions and polarities of existence can be mediated. They remind us that the classificatory categories and dualities which we use to order our mundane life should not be reified, or they will become obstacles to our understanding of higher levels of reality. They remind us also, perhaps most important of all, that Ultimate spiritual Reality defies all rational categorisation and differentiation, and can only be grasped in higher intuitive perception as a mystery or paradox where polarities are united.

Notes and References

- (1) Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, 'Symplegades', Studies in Comparative Religion, Winter 1973.
- (2) Kaushitaki Upanisad I.4, trans. R.C. Zaehner, in Hindu Scriptures (London, Dent, 1966).
- (3) Deirdre Green, 'Symbolism in Keltic Folk Music Part 2: Thomas the Rhymer', Inner Keltia, 3. I also have a book in progress on the symbolism of Celtic folk music lyrics.
- (4) 'Peredur Son of Evrawg', in The Mabinogion, trans. Jeffrey Gantz (Penguin Classics, 1976), p.243.
- (5) See V.W. Turner, The Ritual Process (London, RKP, 1969).
- (6) 'Math Son of Mathonwy', in The Mabinogion, op. cit., p.113.
- (7) Deirdre Green, 'Symbolism in Keltic Folk Music', series of four articles, Inner Keltia Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5; also 'Ritual Reversal at Samhain', Inner Keltia 3.
- (8) Alwyn and Brinley Rees, Celtic Heritage (London, Thames & Hudson, 1961), p.333.
- (9) Katha Upanisad V.15, trans. Zaehner, op. cit.
- (10) See Chretien de Troyes' Lancelot. A 13th century carving in St. Pierre, Caen, depicts Lancelot crossing the sword bridge.
- (11) Katha Upanisad III.14, trans. Zaehner, op. cit.
- (12) Jacob Boehme, Mysterium Magnum 17.11 (London, Watkins, 1965).

My thanks to Robin Williamson and Pam Moore for the idea for "Tree of Leaf and Flame" picture.



EDWARD KELLEY -
MEDIUM,
MAGICIAN,
AND ALCHEMIST

Adam McLean

The fact that it is exactly 400 years ago that John Dee and Edward Kelley undertook their famous 'Angelic Workings', has turned me to researching and trying to assess the importance of these two upon Western esotericism. There are still people working with the 'Enochian material', as it has come to be called, though much of it has been distorted through the late nineteenth century Golden Dawn synthesis and the work of Crowley. In looking back at Dee's original notebooks and deciding that the time was propitious to publish the entire corpus, I have inevitably been forced to concentrate on Dee. Although there are many problems still to be cleared up concerning the historical facts of Dee's life, his intellectual and esoteric achievements are undoubted, but his fellow worker Edward Kelley remains veiled in mystery. He is often portrayed as a charlatan and con-man who deceived a gullible Dee with his supposed mediumship in the hope of financial gain. This picture, however, is hopelessly wrong. Dee was an advisor at the Elizabethan court and to survive in that environment of intrigue and treachery surely required the greatest reserves of perspicacity and judgement of people. Courtiers, perhaps more than any other people, needed to develop an ability to judge the integrity of those who presented their petitions to them. (The equivalent in our own society would probably be Members of Parliament, against whom one can never level a charge of naivete.)

It still remains difficult to come to a reasonable or balanced picture of Edward Kelley. The rumourmongers of history (even popularist writers today) have done him a great disservice, projecting upon him the reputation of a fraudulent medium and opportunist. Kelley's mediumistic faculties came to the fore during the period 1583 - 1589 when he travelled with Dee to the continent and was particularly intense during their stay in Prague where Dee was received by Emperor Rudolf of Bohemia, an enthusiast for all things esoteric and active patron of writers magicians and alchemists. When Dee returned to England in 1589 Kelley remained behind convinced that he could establish himself as a practicing alchemist. He seems to have performed some convincing demonstrations of his powers before Rudolf and other members of his court, and would appear

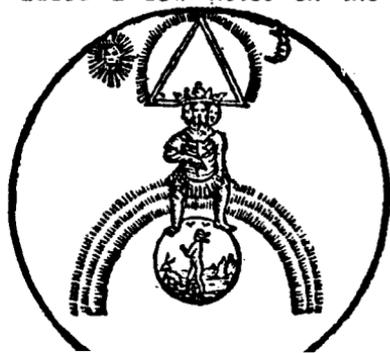
to have been all set for a sensational career as an alchemist possessing the powder of projection. Emperor Rudolf went so far as to reward him with a knighthood. Kelley claimed to have discovered this powder of projection during his treasure hunting period. Shortly before he met Dee, Kelley had gone through a period of treasure seeking though the use of magic. The famous nineteenth century engraving reproduced overleaf shows Kelley and a certain Paul Waring (not Dee, as almost all commentators have erroneously assumed), raising a ghost through Magic in order to question this spirit on the whereabouts of treasure. During one of these treasure hunts Kelley had been able to purchase two phials and an alchemical manuscript which were said to have been found in the tomb of St Dunstan at Glastonbury. One of these phials contained the red powder which Kelley later used in his transmutations.

After performing some well witnessed transmutations, Kelley's powder of projection seems to have run out and he fell from favour with the court for a while, and was indeed imprisoned (though not harshly treated) by Rudolf in 1594. He died in November 1595 after falling from a turret during an escape attempt. This story of Kelley's later life seems more like an archetypal projection than a real picture. We note how it parallels to a great extent the story of Michael Sendivogius of a decade or so later, and we have to ask ourselves if in both these cases this might not be a reading into their lives of an archetypal myth of the alchemist which was current at that particular time - the idea of them finding their powder of projection in mysterious circumstances rather than making it themselves, the public transmutations, their fall from favour when their 'powder' ran out.

Kelley seems to have had an interest in alchemy before he met Dee but when these two got together Kelley suspended this interest to follow Dee in their elaborate investigation of the Angelic Workings. After Dee left Prague to return to England, Kelley resumed his alchemical practices. So it may well be that rather than seeing Kelley as having influenced and manipulated Dee, it might be nearer the mark to recognise that Dee dominated and used Kelley for the purposes of his own investigations.

During his alchemical period Kelley wrote two books, his 'Stone of the Philosophers' and his 'Theatre of Terrestrial Astronomy'. This latter work, although not very informative, is distinguished by a series of 16 small engravings. Whether these were originated by Kelley is not recorded, however, they do echo certain themes in similar emblem books of the period, especially the 'Splendor Solis' and 'Speigel Der Philosophen' of Salomon Trismosin published during the closing decade of the 16th century, and the famous 'Rosarium Philosophorum'. I have reproduced here this series of emblematic engravings and added a few notes on the symbolism.

The opening illustration, shows the Sun and Moon above with the Trinity sitting upon a rainbow of seven colours which Kelley links with the seven metals. Below on the earth globe, a blindfold figure stumbles about. This figure probably represents the ignorant state of humanity, unknowing of the spiritual powers working on the earth.





The illustration from the second chapter entitled 'Of the mutual conversion of the elements; how one element predominates over another; whence the substance of the metals is generated', shows the seven metals standing upon small hills. In the foreground Mercury is distinguished by his hermaphroditic nature. It is out of this mercury that the work of transformation will proceed. Four winds or spiritual influences blow from the realms of the Fire, Air, Water and Earth.



The third illustration shows again the seven planets but now Jupiter has fallen from his hill and is being hacked up by the alchemist below on the lower right. Saturn is the next to fall. This chapter bears the sub-title 'Metals consist of Mercury and Sulphur and furnish us with the first substance of the Elixir.'



The fourth figure from the chapter 'Of the preparation of the Mercurial earth' shows all the planetary metals (bar the Sun and Moon who stand behind on their hills) being placed by the alchemist into a flask.



In the next illustration 'Of the Conversion of Prepared Mercury into Mercurial Earth', the alchemist distills the essence of these over into a receiver. There is shown at the lower right the motif of a yellow lion suckling a green lion.

Next, in the sixth chapter entitled 'Of the Exaltation of Mercurial Water', there is seen to appear in the flask a green Dragon devouring blue serpents. In the sky appears the motif associated with this emblem, a winged dragon in ouroboros gesture.

This first group of five stages describes in emblematic form the initial dissolving of the primal material (the archetypal planets) into a solution that contains all the potential forces necessary for the work of preparing an essence. At this point the five metals have been dissolved and their essence extracted, now it remains for the Solar and Lunar forces to be brought into this process.





The following stage (the seventh), 'the Solution of the Sun with Mercurial Water', shows a complexity of symbols. In the flask a winged boy stands half submerged in the water, while a winged dragon leaves the flask and eats the Sun. Above stands the motif of the Green Lion devouring the Sun (well known from the Rosarium Series).



The next stage links with the preceding, for here we see the dragon rising out of the flask and eating the Moon. The winged boy in the flask now lies as if dead at the bottom of the vessel. In the background a sun seems to sink into the earth and we are reminded of the 19th figure from the Splendor Solis. This chapter is entitled 'Of the Preparation of the Earth or Moon of the Sages'.



At this central point in the process although the Solar and Lunar forces have been incorporated they have not yet truly met. This occurs in the following ninth stage where the alchemist is seen pouring the contents of the flask of the seventh (solar) phase into the flask of the eighth (lunar) one, effecting 'The Conjunction of the Sun and Moon'. The emblematic motif here is the pelican nourishing its young upon its own blood. The Sun and the Moon jug drop their essences into vessels. In the background a man is sowing seeds.



The following group of seven stages is the ascent out of this initial bringing into solution of the primal elements of the work, to the preparation of the Elixir. Thus the tenth figure characteristically is a Nigredo stage, the blackness. Here we are shown a Black Sun and Black Moon (again this echoes a figure from the Splendor Solis series). The alchemist contemplates his book and waits for the matter to resolve. In the background the corn has begun to sprout.

The next stage is that of the Peacock's Tail, in which the work in the flask goes through an inner digestion marked by the appearance of ever changing colours. In the background the corn also changes colour as it ripens, indicating that the work is near to completion.





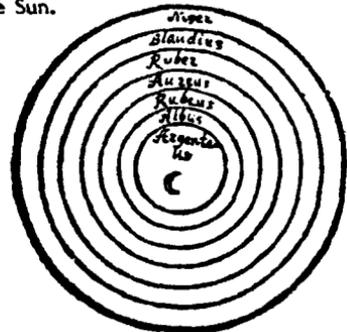
The twelfth emblem shown is that of the White Tincture. A white King is enthroned with Luna at his feet and receives the acollade of the other planets. Beside the King the alchemist still tends his furnace. Within his flask is a full moon.



The last stage is that of the Red Tincture, and under the chapter heading 'Of the Perfect Red Elixir', the last four emblems are depicted. The thirteenth emblem shows the alchemist achieving the goal of his work for in his flask is seen a purple Sun.



The following illustration which links with the twelfth, pictures the Red King enthroned, holding aloft his sceptre and with the sun and moon symbols at his feet, receiving the submission of the other planets.

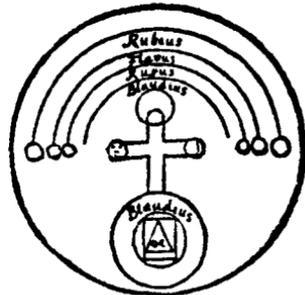


The final two figures relate to the opening emblem. The sixteenth particularly shows in a diagrammatic way that the trinity which stood above and outside the earth at the beginning of the process has now descended into the body of the earth. The Sun and Moon have achieved a state of balance on the arms of the cross.

HAND COLOURED KELLEY EMBLEMS

Some of the more prosperous subscribers might care to help subsidise the activities of the Hermetic Journal by purchasing a set of these emblems.

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OTTO, ELIADE, JUNG AND THE SACRALITY OF MATTER

Andrew Mouldey ©

In this essay I propose to bring three rays of light to a single focus: Rudolf Otto's *sensus numinis*, Mircea Eliade's dialectic of hierophanies and Jung's archetypal perspective. Hopefully this combined exegesis will illuminate the alchemical experience of matter and serve as a phenomenological orientation for research into the sacred sciences.

Perhaps no work of phenomenology has had a more profound influence on religious sensibility than Otto's 'The Idea of the Holy'. Published in 1917, this work was a corrective to the one-sided rationalism prevalent in theology and the comparative study of religion. It gave careful consideration to the non-rational aspects of religious experience and formulated a vocabulary that is now indispensable to the phenomenologist. Later I will discuss the influence of Otto's thought on Eliade and Jung.

Otto maintained that religious experience is 'sui generis', that is, qualitatively different from all other modes of experience. Naturally we resort to terms belonging to the secular domain to convey the content of religious experience, for example when the deity is described in anthropomorphic language. But such 'analogues' should not be taken literally; they are merely imperfect attempts to speak of the transcendent by means of ideas derived from mundane experience. But what grounds are there for maintaining the autonomy of religion? According to Otto, religious experience arises through man's contact with the 'wholly other', a dimension of reality that is extra-worldly and that transcends human comprehension. Jung conveys this sense of the other in the following passage from the 'Two Essays in Analytical Psychology':

"This 'something' is strange to us and yet so near, wholly ourselves and yet unknowable, a virtual centre of so mysterious a constitution that it can claim anything - kinship with beasts and gods, with crystals and with stars - without moving us to wonder, without even exciting our disapprobation." (1)

Otto characterised the particular feeling tone of the experience of the other by means of a neologism which he derived from the Latin *numen* - a spirit that inhabits a sacred grove. Just as the word *omen* gives us ominous, *numen* can be converted into 'numinous'. Otto went on to examine the object of numinous experience under the heading "*mysterium tremendum et fascinans*", emphasising its dual structure. The *tremendum* denotes the awesome majesty of the transcendent: Yahweh revealing himself to Job out of the whirlwind, Krishna's theophany in the *Bhagavad Gita*, or the hexagram of the Creative in the *Book of Changes*. This aspect of the divine overwhelms man and reminds him of his creaturely status, or, as Otto puts it, his 'numinous unworth'. Yet the impulse to

escape from this fearsome power is countered by the fascinans, that is the compelling, alluring quality of the mysterium. Numinous experience is constituted by a "strange harmony of contrasts", by an ambivalence before what is "wholly ourselves and yet unknowable".

Although the *sensus numinis* is in essence non-rational, this does not preclude it from being an object of rational reflection. Indeed, without such reflection religious sensibility would remain fixated in undifferentiated numinosity. To some extent the process is furthered by the use of analogues, but these cannot, by definition, do justice to the autonomy of religious experience. In order to resolve this problem Otto had recourse to Kant and postulated 'the holy' as a *a priori* category. Just as the twelve Kantian categories structure the data of empirical consciousness, so does the holy allow for the schematization of the raw numinous experience. While analogues are at best partial, the holy is a complex category "richly charged and complete in its fullest meaning". (2)

There is a paradox implicit in Otto's thought that serves as a point of departure for Eliade. The "wholly other" transcends the *a priori* limits of experience and yet it manifests itself to man through the *sensus numinis*. Something of the eternal and the infinite descends into time and space to reveal itself to our earth-bound consciousness. Eliade calls this "the paradox of incarnation" (3) and regards the phenomenology of religion as the endeavour to describe the structures through which the numen is disclosed.

The paradox of incarnation implies a finite medium or channel through which the wholly other can become manifest. This may take a variety of forms: a ritual object or gesture, a holy place, a mandala or icon, a piece of liturgical music, a dream, vision or even a charismatic person. There is no limit to the objects that can assume this mediating role and Eliade refers to all such phenomena as "hierophanies". He derives this term from the Greek *hieros*, meaning sacred, and *phaino* - to show. Thanks to the paradox of incarnation the wholly other or, to use Eliade's term, "the sacred", reveals itself through a mediating form that initially belongs in the realm of "the profane". While the sacred transcends the empirical world, the profane is limited by space, time and causality. But once an object becomes a hierophany it is divested of its profanity and participates in the reality it reveals. It becomes, so to speak, saturated in the sacred and, by virtue of its numinosity, it serves as an object of contemplation or worship. *Homo religiosus* desires above all to dwell in close proximity to the sacred; his hierophanies constitute an inner and an outer centre without which he would be unable to orientate himself in relation to the psyche or to the world. Myths and rituals keep him in touch with the centre and thereby remind him of his primordial birthright.

Eliade has constantly stressed that hierophanies cannot be understood outside their cultural and religious context. The phenomenological analysis of these structures must be based on ample historical and anthropological data. But he has also shown that it is not enough just to gather descriptive material: myths, rituals and religious symbols imply a certain mode of being in the world and this existential aspect is also the proper concern of the phenomenologist. As might be expected, this methodological point has provoked no little controversy.

In 'The Forge and the Crucible' Eliade explores the myths and symbols bound up with mining, metallurgy and smithcraft. He traces these

archaic mythologems back to the archetype of the Earth-Mother and forwards to alchemy and the rise of experimental science. By demonstrating that primitive man's dealings with matter took place in "a universe steeped in sacredness", he is able to convey vividly the contrast between present day technological culture and a pre-scientific world-picture:

".....the cosmos has been desanctified as a result of the triumph of the experimental sciences. Modern man is incapable of experiencing the sacred in his dealings with matter, at most he can achieve an aesthetic experience. He is capable of knowing matter as a 'natural phenomenon'. But we have only to imagine a communion no longer limited to the eucharistic elements of bread or wine, but extending to every kind of 'substance', in order to measure the distance separating a primitive religious experience from the modern experience of 'natural phenomena'." (4)

Despite the gulf between the archaic and modern experience of matter, Jung has shown that alchemical symbols occur in the dreams of individuals who know little or nothing of the art. If the desacralization of matter through the rise of experimental science has brought about the decline of the alchemical tradition, depth psychology has made it possible to pursue the opus alchemicum as an internal process.

Like Eliade's hierophanies, the archetypes of Jungian psychology are numinous entities. Indeed it was on this basis that Jung distinguished between personal and collective unconscious contents. Alchemy, in his view, involved the projection of archetypal images onto matter:

"In order to explain the mystery of matter he projected yet another mystery - his own unknown psychic background - into what was to be explained: *Obscurum per obscurius, ignotum per ignotius!* This procedure was not, of course, intentional, it was an involuntary occurrence." (5)

Without the explanatory models of experimental science matter is full of mystery and this state of affairs activates unconscious projections. For the alchemist, transformations of chemical substances in the retort were saturated in the numinous, but modern man has long since withdrawn this projection.

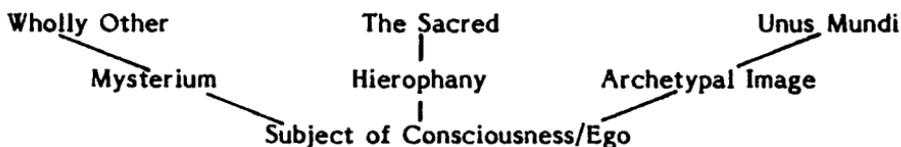
Some distinguished writers on alchemy regard Jung's hypothesis as reductionistic. (6) His endeavour to interpret alchemical symbolism is vitiated because he does not allow for the distinction between the spiritual and the psychic. This criticism calls for some clarificatory remarks on the concept of projection.

Firstly, Jung's idea of projection must be distinguished from Freud's. In psychoanalysis, projection pertains only to repressed unconscious contents; but when Jung applies this term to alchemy he is speaking of the projection of transpersonal, archetypal contents. Admittedly it could be argued that Jung is still psychologizing in a more or less subtle way, but this objection does not apply to Jung's final formulation of the archetype. 'On the Nature of the Psyche', a later work by Jung, contains the proposition, "archetypes have a nature that cannot with certainty be designated as psychic." (7) This modification, at first sight surprising, follows from Jung's intuition that the archetypes that dwell in the soul are one with the ordering principles of the cosmos. In 'Mysterium Coniunctionis' he wrote:

"The background of our empirical world appears to be in fact a *unus mundus* The transcendental psychophysical background corresponds to a 'potential world' in so far as all those conditions which determine the form of empirical phenomena are inherent in it. This obviously holds good as much for physics as for psychology, or, to be more precise, for macrophysics as much as for the psychology of consciousness." (8)

Symbolically this insight is expressed by the image of man the microcosm contained within the macrocosm, while the archetypes that connect the two are described as quasi-psychic or "psychoid". This far reaching hypothesis, which harks back to Pythagorean cosmology, is the major premiss for a unified world-picture encompassing depth psychology and physics. The "*unus mundus*" that Jung refers to (9) is the alchemical equivalent to Plato's world of ideas or to the Intelligence (*Nous*) of Plotinus. Through a paradox of incarnation the forms in the "potential world" descend into time and space where they are both veiled and revealed to human consciousness.

In the diagram below I have schematized the three accounts of the paradox of incarnation presented by Otto, Eliade and Jung:



The terms wholly other, the sacred and *unus mundus* all denote a dimension that transcends duality. Consequently this level of reality can only become accessible to consciousness through a mediating form that serves as the object for the conscious subject. According to Otto, the wholly other reveals itself to consciousness through the *mysterium*, the object of numinous awareness. Eliade emphasises the diversity of ways in which the sacred manifests itself through the profane. This coincidentia oppositorum is possible because of the mediation of the hierophany which paradoxically participates in both realms, sacred and profane. For Jung the mediating principle is the archetypal image. The noumenal forms of these images subsist in the *unus mundus*, distinct and yet continuous. It is only by manifesting themselves as images to discriminating consciousness that the archetypes 'as such' enter time and duality.

Although it offers advantages of economy, the scheme outlined above is somewhat one-sided. Because it implies that transcendent reality 'descends', through the paradox of incarnation, to a wholly passive and receptive consciousness, it tends to devalue the role of the mind in shaping religious experience. Some qualifications are called for if we are to avoid the risk of distorting the phenomenological perspectives of the three thinkers.

'The Idea of the Holy' is not just a typology of religious experiences; it is also a detailed description of how the *mysterium* becomes constituted in consciousness. The data of the experience is schematized by means of a special a priori category, the holy, and the non-rational *sensus numinis* finds expression in symbols and in doctrine. For his part Eliade constantly refers to the creativity of archaic man in the formulation of myths or

sacred cosmologies and in the development of techniques of transcendence. But homo-religiosis is also homo-faber. In 'The Forge and the Crucible' Eliade explains how the sense of the sacrality of matter enabled "primitive man to immerse himself in the sacred by his own work as a creator and manipulator of tools." (10) Despite the desacralization of work in urban civilisation, "the primordial experiences linked with a sacred cosmos were periodically given new life by means of craft rites and initiations." (10a)

Finally I must mention an extraordinary passage in Jung's autobiography where he relates his personal realisation of "the cosmic meaning of consciousness". This occurred when he was standing alone in the Athai Plains, a Kenyan game reserve, and he felt that he was the first human being to acknowledge the world "but who did not know that in this moment he had first really created it". Through this experience he discovered what his myth was:

".....that man is indispensable for the completion of creation; that, in fact, he himself is the second creator of the world, who alone has given to the world its objective existence - without which, unheard, unseen, silently eating, giving birth, dying, heads nodding through hundreds of millions of years, it would have gone on in the profoundest night of non-being down to its unknown end." (11)

Jung then concludes by defining man's status as the microcosm:

"Human consciousness created objective existence and meaning, and man found his indispensable place in the great process of being." (11a)

To return to our schema: in the psyche of modern man there is an opaque screen between ego-consciousness and the intermediate level. This precludes the possibility of transcendence and confines him to a profane, one-dimensional mode of being. Yet the barrier is by no means impenetrable; as Eliade has shown, the history of religions and depth psychology can serve to reinstate the sacred. Perhaps they can also recall us to the alchemical outlook so that the material world can be recognised for what it truly is: a luminous hierophany.

Notes

- (1) C.G. Jung, Collected Works, Vol.7, Two Essays in Analytical Psychology, (Routledge & Kegan Paul), p.237.
- (2) Rudolf Otto, The Idea of the Holy (Oxford University Press - New York), p.45.
- (3) Mircea Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion (Sheed & Ward), pp 29-30.
- (4) Eliade, The Forge and the Crucible (Rider), p.143.
- (5) Jung, C.W.12, Psychology and Alchemy, pp 244-5.
- (6) See for example: Titus Burckhardt, Alchemy (Stuart and Watkins), and S.H. Nasr's writings on Islamic cosmology and science.
- (7) Jung, C.W.8, p.230.
- (8) Jung, C.W.14, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, p.538.
- (9) The doctrine of the unus mundus is explicated in Ch. VI of *Mysterium Coniunctionis* and in the writings of M.L. von Franz.
- (10/10a) Eliade, The Forge and the Crucible, p.144.
- (11/11a) Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections (Fontana), pp 284-5.

ALCHEMICAL IMAGERY IN BOSCH'S GARDEN OF DELIGHTS by Laurinda S. Dixon

HB, 225 pages, 168 illustrations published in the U.S.A. by UMI Research Press 1982, and distributed in Britain by Bowker Publishing, Erasmus House, Epping, Essex, price £34.00.

Those who have visited me in Edinburgh will have seen the full size reproduction of Hieronymus Bosch's Garden of Delights that covers a whole wall of my workshop/study. So I was very pleased to see this book by Laurinda Dixon on the Alchemical imagery in his painting. I have puzzled long over this painting and contemplated it in many ways over the past years and still many of the meanings of its obscure symbols eludes me. This book, originally written as a Ph.D. thesis for Boston University, in no sense provides a final solution or revelation of the mystery of this painting, but does outline the many parallels with alchemical symbolism. Indeed, nearly half the book is taken up with illustrations of the alchemical emblems that reflect symbols used by Bosch in his painting. This book will be invaluable to anyone trying to penetrate the mysteries in the work of this great Master of painting and symbols of transformation, and may awaken some scholars and art historians to the need for them to take seriously esoteric ideas.

ALCHEMICAL STUDIES C.G. Jung, translated by R.F.C.Hull. PB, 444 pages illustrated, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1983. £8.95.

It is good that Jung's work continues to interest enough people for Routledge and Kegan Paul to feel justified in issuing some of his most important writings in cheap paperback editions. The psychological and religious implications of alchemy preoccupied Jung during the last thirty years of his life. This collection of five essays, with numerous illustrations, traces his developing interest in alchemy from 1929 on and may be read both as a useful introduction and as a valuable supplement to his longer works on the subject, *Psychology and Alchemy*, *Aion*, and the monumental *Mysterium Coniunctionis*.

Each of these essays is an extended commentary on a theme with alchemical associations, some of which Jung had referred to in earlier publications : an ancient Chinese Taoist text, *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, the visions of Zosimus, a Greek alchemist and Gnostic of the third century AD. 'Paracelsus as a Spiritual Phenomenon' stands out as a separate study, a discussion, with an emphasis on alchemical sources, of the arcane speculations of the 16th century Swiss natural philosopher, physician and empiric known as Paracelsus. Its striking effect arise from the fact that Jung could identify himself with his dynamic and explosive countryman.

We can only hope that Routledge will be able to issue more of Jung's collected works in these cheap paperback editions.

Both of these titles are edited by R.A. Gilbert who is well known as a bookseller and collector with a long standing interest in the Western Mystery Tradition.

THE SORCERER AND HIS APPRENTICE : Unknown Hermetic writings of S.L. MacGregor Mathers and J.W. Brodie-Innes, Edited and Introduced by R.A. Gilbert. PB, 224 pages, £5.95. Aquarian Press 1983

The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn is remembered today for the system of practical magic that it taught, created by S.L. MacGregor Mathers. He also provided the theoretical background to magic through his many books, essays and private papers. Though many of these have been reissued in recent times, many others are still unknown since they were originally published in obscure journals, and the most significant of these have been gathered together in this collection, together with a selection of essays by his chosen successor, the Scotsman J.W. Brodie Innes.

THE MAGICAL MASON : Forgotten Hermetic Writings of William Wynn Westcott, Physician and Magus, Edited and Introduced by R.A. Gilbert. PB, 318 pages, £6.95. Aquarian Press 1983.

Amongst the founders of the Golden Dawn, William Wynn Westcott as Physician, Freemason and scholar, brought to the Order the body of occult theory that proved to be its most significant legacy. Most of his work, however, has remained unknown, hidden in old journals and among private Order papers. Now, for the first time, the most important of these are brought together into one volume to provide a true understanding of the living tradition that moulded the Golden Dawn.

FIRST STEPS IN RITUAL : Safe, Effective Techniques for Experiencing the Inner Worlds by Dolores Ashcroft-Nowicki. Aquarian Press, PB 96 pages, £2.95.

THE SHINING PATHS : An Experiential Journey through the Tree of Life by Dolores Ashcroft-Nowicki. Aquarian Press 1983, PB 240 pages, £4.95.

In these two books Dolores Ashcroft-Nowicki, the Director of Studies of the Servants of Light School of Occult Science, one of the best known and most respected of contemporary British occultists, sets out to describe in her practical and no-nonsense approach some ways in which we can begin to work with Rituals and the inner exercises of Pathworking. *First Steps in Ritual* is a collection of simple magical rituals, culled from a variety of traditions, to enable those new to occult practices to experience interior realities with confidence and in complete safety. The inner power of the student is gradually awakened through the process of constructing a temple and learning to use it with safety and confidence. The simple rituals described are taken from a number of traditions including the Qabalistic, Egyptian, Celtic, Orphic, Navaho and Slavonic. *The Shining Paths* is a unique collection of magical pathworkings based on the thirty two paths of the Qabalistic Tree of Life. These pathworkings are a specific form of visualisation exercise in which the mind-self is projected into a series of situations and landscapes that can be viewed on a mental screen, or, once the mind has been trained, experienced as a participant with full sensory perception. All of these exercises have been thoroughly tested and the newcomer may therefore attempt them with little or no apprehension.