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## Editorial

The outer world we all have to deal with in our daily life so often appears as a negative and restrictive one, so much so that many sensitive spiritually oriented people are so overwhelmed by the problems, tensions and horrors of outer society and culture that they feel a definite need to escape. In common with many others I can empathise with and understand such a reaction, however, I recently noted a disturbing trend among certain of my correspondents that I feel I have to confront and attempt to answer.

Several people, who I have a considerable respect for, have expressed to me an inner pain that gnaws within them. Having become aware that the whole trend of twentieth century thought, in its philosophical foundations, technologically inspired science, and the cynical critique of any idealism by the media, has driven outer culture away from the esoteric and spiritual, it is understandable that they have come to feel the true answers to the challenge of our age will be found in returning to the ideas and philosophical grounds of, say, 17th century hermeticism and Rosicrucianism. I tried in my correspondence to point out that this was not what I intend through my work, so in case I may have misled or failed to express my direction clearly enough, I

would like to take the opportunity of stating it here.

I don't feel there can be any naive return to the past. "Golden Ages" never really existed. They are projections of our present ideas onto history. Few of us would care to have lived in ancient Egyptian society, or in classical Greece. Early life in neolithic Britain was a hard struggle with the elements rather than some idyllic "Celtic" world of wise old men and women guiding a gentle populace - a world instead of petty tribal warfare and the inhumanity of animal and child sacrifice. The world of 16th and 17th century Europe was a very hard one, when there was little freedom from worldly cares, and unorthodox views were summarily dealt with in a harsh manner. This was an age in which old women, mentally disturbed, and physically handicapped individuals were burnt as witches before jeering crowds. Not a world I for one would choose to live in !

There is a danger that we become so obsessed with comparing our present world with an ideal we project upon history which never existed, that we fail to recognise the spiritual currents in our own time. There are so many streams of spiritual and esoteric thought working in the world today, in the visual arts, in music, literature, philosophy and even in science itself. However, it is up to us to find this spiritual core, for it is not cast in the same esoteric language of a previous age, but in the new language of our own time. We have to seek it out and recognise it in its new guise and not expect the creative minds of the twentieth century to use the nomenclature of 17th century kabbalah or hermeticism.

I would prefer my work to be seen as arising from a builder of bridges, rather than from a piper attempting to lead people back naively into a non-existent "Golden Age" in the past. The bridge must be built from both ends. We must investigate the past and find the ideas and philosophies laid down archetypally in our inner world, and at the same time attempt to grasp

the profound revolution in human society and culture that we are at present living through. It is the sheer intensity of the present revolution that creates in us states of anxiety and crisis. Perhaps in 50 years time people will look back at the closing decades of the twentieth century as being one of the most significant in human evolution, with a certain envy at not being alive during such exciting times. So many things are being worked out in our times, and I believe we must try to build the bridge out of the substance of our present age. As the ideas of fundamental physics and abstractions of mathematics are so important in forming the overall philosophical spiritual structure of scientific thought - it is here we must begin. Consequently I wish to announce the formation of a new project within the sphere of the Hermetic Journal, which will focus upon trying to grasp the spiritual esoteric significance of developments in our present day science. Anyone who would like to help with this would be most welcome to contribute and share ideas with me.

If esoteric ideas are to have any vigour or life they must eternally be reborn in the present, cast into new forms, and expressed in new language. I hope like me you do not fear the present and seek to help in building the bridge in our souls between the spiritual esoteric ideas of the past and the new impulses that press us towards the future.

I hope my readers will find no dichotomy or disharmony between finding articles on the delight of discovering a version of the Ripley Scowle that throws new light upon the symbolism of this ancient document, and a few pages later to read about some new theoretical investigations into the structure of the universe by present day physicists. Anyway, perhaps such leaps in thought should be natural to esotericists ! I hope you will find this to be one of the strengths of the Hermetic Journal.

Adam McLea

## MICROCOSMIC REFLECTIONS

Andrew Mouldey ©

Plato called the cycle of astrological ages the Great Year, an epoch of 25,000 years divided into twelve eras or aeons of 2165 years each. He believed that each of these eras was a different incarnation of the macrocosm Man renewing the cycle of death and rebirth - in much the same way the individual microcosmic man, according to esoteric doctrine, enacts the cycle of successive incarnations on his spiralling path to greater consciousness. (1)

The age of Pisces is drawing to a close and Plato's macrocosm Man is about to assume a new incarnation. In Jungian psychology this Man is regarded as a symbol of the self and, like the Platonic figure, the self changes its incarnation in the course of the psyche's development.

Erich Neuman has developed the idea of an incarnating self in the final chapter of his unfinished work 'The Child'. Here he postulates a self that is "formless and both extra psychic and extra worldly" (2). At each stage of the psyche's development this self incarnates itself in an archetype without becoming identical with it :

Thus its manifestation changes from phase to phase; it appears first in the mother archetype, then in the father archetype, next as a group self, then as an individual self. (2a)

In this passage Neumann suggests that the self exists on two ontological levels: the psychic and the extra psychic. Whereas classical Jungian psychology confines the phenomenology of the self to the psychic plane, Neumann speaks of an extra psychic self or "self as such". This self wants to become incarnate in the archetypes but encounters the ego's resistance whenever its manifestation changes.

While the self knows that new wine cannot be stored in old bottles, the ego has a conservative tendency. When an archetype serves as the temporary abode for the self, it assumes supreme value for the ego and so each transition to a new archetype entails a crisis. These conflicts continue until psychological maturity when the formless self enters the 'lower' self, i.e. the self as centre and totality of the psyche. At the end of the cycle the self of the psyche becomes the containing archetype for the extra-psychic self.

Jung uses the Greek word 'Kairos' to refer to the right moment for this metamorphosis of the gods. In his essay on the Dogma of the Trinity Jung shows how the traditional idea of the three ages of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit applies to the experience of Kairos on an individual and a collective level. At the close of the Age of the Father and the beginning of the Age of the Son there is an acute state of conflict. The controversies arising from Jesus' attitude to the law, recorded in the Gospels, illustrate this condition. While

the father stage requires conformity to a "definite and ready-made pattern of existence which is habitual and has the character of law" (3), the stage of the son brings emancipation from the authority of the father through discrimination and consciousness of one's individuality. In Christ's crucifixion between the two thieves we have "an eloquent symbol" of this conflict of opposites (4).

The tensions seek resolution in the third age, when man regains 'the perfection of origins' without sacrificing the freedom and individuality won in the previous stage; his ego undergoes a relativization rather than a negation. Although he retains the level of consciousness reached in the second age, he now acknowledges a higher authority in the trans-personal self. When the ego is subordinate to this principle man becomes receptive to the influence of the Spirit that proceeds from the Father and the Son.

In 'Aion' Jung shows how the transition from the Age of the Father to the Son coincided with the beginning of the Age of Pisces. It would not be illogical to conjecture that the opposites characterizing the Age of the Son, and of Pisces, may well find a resolution in the Aquarian Age. If this turns out to be the case, the new aeon will coincide with the Age of the Spirit.

I attempted to amplify Jung's insight into the processes of resolution that seem to be taking place in the modern psyche, when I wrote my Kairos Paper for the Journal of the Analytical Psychology Club of London, 'Harvest' in 1980. Sections one and two of this paper will also focus on the transformations of the self as totality of the self during the present aeon. Section three looks toward the Aquarian Age and goes beyond the limits of classical Jungian psychology to the idea of the extra-psychic, formless self. The conjunction between this self and the self of the psyche is taking place in the transition from the Age of the Son to the Age of the Spirit.

[ 1 ]

The Age of Pisces is characterised by a split in the archetype of the self. This dichotomy is reflected in the figure of Christ who has been the dominant symbol of the self for the era:

In the empirical self, light and shadow form a paradoxical unity. In the Christian concept, on the other hand, the archetype is hopelessly split into two irreconcilable halves, leading ultimately to a metaphysical dualism - the final separation of the kingdom of heaven from the fiery world of the damned (5).

Christ's duality is explicit in many Gnostic versions of the myth and in the eschatological drama of Christ and Anti-Christ. Jung has also shown how it is implicit in the ambivalence of Christ's main theriomorphic symbol: the fish. Although it would be plausible to connect the tension of opposites in the Christian psychology to the Pisces sign of the two fish swimming in contrary directions, there are no known pictorial representations of this nature dating from the early Christian period.

It was in Gnosticism that the metaphysical dualism, Jung mentions, was taken to an extreme. From a psychological point of view this tendency was symptomatic of the Gnostic inflation. In the passage below Jung describes the "upward tending pneumatic attitude" of the early Christian and the Gnostic:

Man's original dependence on a pneumatic sphere to which he clung like a child to its mother was threatened by the Kingdom of Satan. From him the pneumatic man was delivered by the Redeemer, who broke the gates of Hell and deceived the

archons, but he was bound to the Kingdom of Heaven in exactly the same degree. He was separated from evil by an abyss (6).

The pneumatic man lived in the expectation of Christ's Second Coming. When this great hope was not fulfilled a regression was inevitable. The libido, that had been invested in the anticipation of Christ's return, flowed back into man and heightened his ego consciousness "by accentuating his personal psychic processes" (6). As a result he fell from the pneumatic sphere into Knowledge of the shadow.

The conflict within the self received a further twist in Manichaeism. Here the dissociated shadow aspect of the self was projected onto the body with the result that the picean division extended to the boundary between the body-self (7) and the self as totality of the psyche. This Manichaeism tendency also insinuated its way into orthodox Christianity and left its mark for centuries to follow.

How did such radical dualism condition gnostic man's attitude to nature? In gnostic mythology the creation is shown to be the work of an inferior demiurge who thought he was the supreme deity. Man was regarded as a solitary consciousness in an alien world. According to Hans Jonas this image of man is also to be found in modern Existentialism. Both the Gnostic and the Existentialist express the sense of "having been thrown" into the world:

We are reminded of Pascal's "Cast into the infinite immensity of spaces," of Heidegger's *Geworfenheit*, "having been thrown", which to him is a fundamental character of the *Dasein*, of the self-experience of existence. The term, as far as I can see, is originally gnostic: life has been thrown into the world, light into darkness, the soul into the body (8).

Jung tells us of a very different image of man that is being formed in the depths of the collective unconscious. The mandala creations of modern analysts seem to reinstate the image of man as a microcosm. Unlike the Gnostic and Existentialist image, the microcosm entails man's cosmic relatedness rather than his "having been thrown" into the world. At the same time the symbolism of the mandala has an affinity with a piece of Gnostic mythology:

The *anima mundi*, the demiurge or divine spirit that incubated the chaotic waters of the beginning, remained in matter in a potential state, and the initial chaotic condition persisted with it. Thus the philosophers, or the "sons of wisdom" as they called themselves took their *prima materia* to be a part of the original chaos pregnant with spirit. (9)

According to Jung the modern mandala symbolizes the extraction of the divine spirit from the darkness of matter. This process is also carried out in alchemy where the two principles are separated so as to be reunited in the chemical wedding.

The parallel between the Gnostics and the Existentialists indicates the extent to which modern man has inherited a Manichaeism split between body-self and psyche-self. When the pneumatic man fell into ego consciousness this dichotomy still persisted. Modern man is a fallen pneumatic man but his mandala seems to point to his redemption. The opus that it symbolizes goes beyond Gnostic dualism to the reintegration of the psyche-self and the body-self in the mystery of the *coniunctio*. As the split between the two totalities is healed a new image of man emerges into consciousness. Instead of feeling as if he were 'thrown' into the world, man regains his sense of solidarity with the cosmos; as microcosm he now relates to the world as macrocosm.

In the next section we will see how this transformation in the image of man is complemented by the evolution of the god-image. According to Jung this development is also prefigured in the modern mandala, that differs from the traditional form in one crucial respect. There is usually a symbol of the deity at the centre of a traditional mandala, but in the modern version this symbol tends to be absent. Contemporary man no longer projects the imago Dei and in his mandala "the place of the deity seems to be taken by the wholeness of man" (10). The Kairos is leading us away from the idea of the god 'out there' of orthodox theology toward the god within us that Jung equates with the self. This development seems to be a stage in the transition from the Age of the Son to the Age of the Holy Spirit.

[ 2 (i) ]

We have told how conflict arose in the self during the Age of Pisces. As a result matter and the feminine principle were excluded from the imago Dei to become the problematic fourth in relation to the Trinity. This fourth was personified in the figure of Satan, but now, as we approach the Age of Aquarius, he is about to be reintegrated :

...the quaternity as produced by the modern psyche, points directly not only to the God within, but to the identity of God and Man. Contrary to the dogma there are not three but four aspects. It could easily be inferred that the fourth represents the devil. (11).

Jung's view of the Trinity has not gone unchallenged. Victor White asks, with justification, whether it is necessary to regard trinitarian symbols as failed quaternities, to see the number three as only four minus one. Might it not be the case that ternary symbols are "archetypal images in their own right, which present a content distinct from the quaternity?" (12)

This is not to dispute Jung's insight into the connection between the quaternity and psychic wholeness, only to question the applicability of four-fold symbolism to the Deity. Father White goes on to point out that symbols of the Deity are seldom in the form of the quaternity. The Hindu Trimurti or Osiris, Isis and Horus, not to mention the numerous examples of the divine Father, Mother and Child in mythology are ternary and dynamic in contrast to the quaternary and static symbolism of the self. Contrary to Jung, Father White suggests that it might be possible to distinguish between symbols of the self and of the Deity on this basis.

When Jungian psychology is revisioned in the light of Christian theology the Deity and the Self are kept distinct but not separated by an abyss. While God is symbolised by the Trinity, Christ, as a symbol of the self, is associated with the quaternity. Because he is the second Person of the Trinity and, through the Incarnation embodies two natures divine and human, the Three in One is united to the Four. However, in this conjunction the Trinity and quaternity are not confused:

The Four is thus indeed brought into the life of the Three, without the Three in any way becoming four or the four being obliterated by the Three, the creature by the Creator. (13)

This process, that began with the incarnation of Christ, as second Person of the Trinity, is continued by the third Person, who, as the Paraclete descends into the soul of fallen man. The idea of continuing incarnation is central to Jung's theological vision, but before taking up this theme we must consider a crucial preparatory event : the declaration of the Assumption of Mary.

So far we have viewed the piscean split in the archetype of the self from the standpoint of masculine psychology. For a woman the dominant symbol of the self in the Christian era has been Mary, who is also the highest form of the anima for a man. But like the figure of Christ the Mother of God is also a divided symbol. After pointing out Mary's pagan prefigurations in Isis and Semele Jung asks pertinently :

...what has become of the characteristic relation of the mother image to the earth, darkness, the abysmal side of bodily man with his animal passions and instinctual nature and to "matter" in general? (14)

Because of the patriarchal tendency in Judaeo-Christianity the mother image was polarised. While the dark aspect of the feminine principle, along with matter, was equated with evil, the light aspect became embodied in the figure of the Virgin Mary.

This split in the feminine symbol of the self has been brought towards a resolution by the Dogma of the Assumption. The ascent of Mary's soul to heaven with her body is preparatory to the reunification of the body-self and psyche-self and thus to the incarnation of the Holy Spirit in the soul of fallen man. Understandably Jung saw the declaration of the dogma as "the most important religious event since the Reformation".

We cannot examine the theological problems arising from Jung's view of the Assumptio Mariae in this paper, but we must consider his position insofar as it pertains to the drama of the Trinity. For Jung the Assumptio paved the way for the transformation of the masculine Trinity into a quaternity so that it could receive the feminine principle and matter. This claim, however, would have to be modified in the light of Victor White's argument that ternary and quaternary symbols represent two distinct archetypal perspectives. On this view the Assumptio leads, not to the transformation of Trinity into quaternity but to the continuing unification of the Three in One with the Four. In the next section we will show how this coniunctio enables the Holy Spirit to take up its dwelling in the human soul.

[ 2 (ii) ]

Jung has suggested that the proclamation of the Dogma coincides with the strivings of science to formulate the relationship between matter and psyche in a "uniform world picture" [15]. Modern man might then regain the sense of the sacrality of matter that Eliade conveys in "The Forge and the Crucible":

... 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 only as a 'natural phenomena'. But we have only to imagine a communion, no longer limited to the eucharistic elements of bread and 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' [16].

Modern man's attitude to matter is a consequence of the Apollonic consciousness that James Hillman describes in 'The Myth of Analysis'. This mode of consciousness is estranged from the feminine and "the abysmal side of bodily man with his animal passions and instinctual nature and 'matter' in general":

We have called this consciousness Apollonic, for, like its

namesake, it belongs to youth, it kills from a distance (its distance kills), and, keeping the scientific cut of objectivity, it never merges with or "marries" its material. [17]

In his account of the Dogma of the Assumption and its psychological implications, Hillman maintains that all talk of a "uniform world picture" is null and void unless Apollonic consciousness is relativised to allow for:

...a corresponding change of attitude in regard to the material part of man himself, which has, as Jung says, always been associated in our tradition with the feminine. [18]

This change of attitude requires the unification of the psyche-self and body-self for its realization :

The uniform world image in metaphysics requires a uniformity of self-image in psychology, a conjunction of spirit and matter represented by male and female. [19]

When psyche-self and body-self are united in this way, the dualistic image of man is replaced by man as a microcosm. Only on this basis does it become meaningful to speak of psycho-physical parallelism and a synchronistic view of reality. Of course it is not difficult to demolish Jung's hypothesis when it is viewed through the distorting lens of an Apollonic image of man.

The synchronicity principle makes it possible to discern a meaningful connection between two causally unrelated events. Such an occurrence is not regarded as an isolated coincidence, but interpreted as a manifestation of acausal orderedness. Events that disclose 'the latent rationality in all things' have a numinous quality and are a corrective to an insistence on Apollonic distance. [20]

It would be misleading to suggest that the synchronicity principle owes nothing to the categories of Apollonic consciousness. It was the empiricist philosopher Hume who first questioned classical causality theory and the discoveries of modern physics that "shattered the absolute validity of natural law and made it relative" [21]. Had these developments not taken place Jung would have been unable to include the synchronicity principle as the fourth factor in the trinity of classical physics: space, time and causality [21]. This change of world-image entails a corresponding modification in self-image, which in turn leads to what Eliade calls a "new existential dimension".

From the perspective of the space, time, causality triad, external events have no existential necessity. Whatever happens to me 'could have been otherwise'. My ego seems to have been 'thrown' into the world where it is at the mercy of contingency. Only through the inclusion of the synchronicity principle, as the fourth, does this bleak existential landscape undergo a change. When causality is complemented by synchronicity, events can be seen as meaningfully related and referred back to an underlying acausal orderedness. The ancient idea of the 'sympathy of all things' qualifies the existentialist point of view.

There is one common flow, one common breathing, all things are in sympathy. The whole organism and each one of its parts are working in conjunction for the same purpose... the great principle extends to the extremest part, and from the extremest part it returns to the great principle, to the one nature, being and not being. [23]

As a microcosm man reflects this order in his psycho-physical constitution, he is part of the whole.

In 'Images and Symbols' Eliade suggests that the rediscovery of a microcosmic view of life would act as a counterweight to the sense of

contingency that haunts modern man:

By regaining awareness of his own anthropocosmic symbolism, ... modern man will obtain a new existential dimension, totally unknown to present-day existentialism and historicism: this is an authentic and major mode of being, which defends man from nihilism and historical relativism without thereby taking him out of history. [24]

This "new existential dimension" does not only protect man from 'the terror of history' [25] it leads him to the fulfilment of all history :

For history itself will one day be able to find its true meaning: that of the epiphany of a glorious and absolute human condition. We have only to recall the value attached to historical existence by Judaeo-Christianity to realize how, and in what sense, history might become "glorious" and even "absolute" [26].

The rediscovery of anthropocosmic symbolism awakens modern man to the sense of the unity and wholeness of his own body. It also enables him to enter "a new existential dimension" in which the self as body totality is reunited with the self of the psyche. This 'narcissism' paves the way for the fulfilment of history and the realization of a "glorious and absolute human condition".

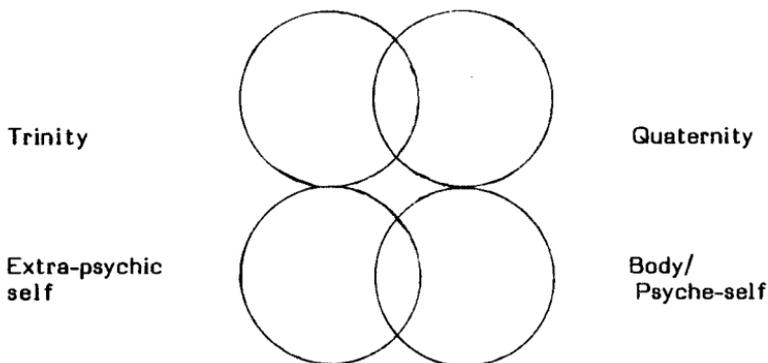
But how is modern man meant to re-learn the old body-cosmos correspondences? For Eliade the problem lies outside the scope of the history of religions and we must now turn back to Jung's analysis of the modern mandala. In these creations Jung discerned the continuation of a Gnostic trend of thought that has been dormant for many centuries. He also observed that they contained the anthropocosmic symbolism, which is so important in Eliade's eschatological vision. It is here that we find the point of departure for regaining the correspondences between man and world. According to Jung the modern mandalas symbolize:

... either the divine being hitherto hidden and dormant in the body and now extracted revived, or else the vessel or the room in which the transformation of man into a divine being takes place. [27]

On the macrocosmic level the extraction and revivification of the divine being corresponds to the restoration of the Anthropos to his former glory; on the microcosmic level it corresponds to the coniunctio of psyche-self and body-self. This is indeed "the epiphany of a glorious and absolute human condition" and although Jung makes no explicit eschatological statement elsewhere he does anticipate the descent of the Holy Spirit into man [28].

For Jung and Eliade the reinstatement of the image of man as microcosm is preparatory for a Kairos transformation in the modern psyche. Neumann's ontology of the self has made it possible to specify this transformation; it is the coniunctio of the body-self and psyche-self. According to Hillman a coniunctio of this nature is necessary for an emancipation from a one-sided Apollonic consciousness.

It is time to move the ontological limitations of the 'esse in anima' doctrine of Jungian psychology. By doing so we will be able to envisage a second coniunctio in which the formless self enters the unified archetype of the psyche-self and body-self. When this coniunctio takes place, the self becomes its own container, like the alchemical vessel that is said to be consubstantial with its content. [29] At the same time the Three in One is united with the Four:



Through the union of the lower circles the image of man is transformed. He is no longer a divided and solitary being, thrown into the world, but the microcosmic vessel of the formless self as Holy Spirit. When the upper circles, representing the Trinity and the quaternity, unite the image of God is transformed. Now the distance between the Deity and man, characteristic of the Piscean Age, is superseded by the equality of man with his Creator that Jung saw to be gaining expression in the modern mandala.

This Kairos is represented in the symbolism of the 'vision of the world clock' that came to one of Jung's patients with "a feeling of the most sublime harmony". [30] The clock consisted of a vertical circle with a border divided into  $4 \times 8 = 32$  partitions and a horizontal circle in four colours. It moved in accord with three rhythms or pulses which gave the mandala a ternary aspect:

If we hark back to the old Pythagorean idea that the soul is a square, then the mandala would express the Deity through its threefold rhythm and the soul through its static quaternity, the circle divided into four colours. And thus its innermost meaning would simply be the union of the soul with God. [31]

Significantly, here Jung regards the ternary symbol in the mandala as an archetype in its own right and not as a truncated quaternity.

The interpretation of the Three in One and the Four that began with Christ's incarnation is continued by the incarnation of the Holy Spirit in man. Naturally such a birth cannot take place if the conscious attitude is Apollonic and dualistic; it requires both the reunification of psyche-self and body-self and the acknowledgement of our 'psychological bisexuality'. As James Hillman has pointed out in 'The Myth of Analysis', such a "uniformity of self-image" brings with it a new mode of being. If Apollo has dominated consciousness in the Age of the Son, it may well be that the androgynous deity, Dionysius, [32] will rule in his place during the Age of the Spirit. This epiphany of Christ-Dionysius might also inaugurate that "glorious and absolute human condition" that Eliade sees as the fulfilment of history.

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- 2 Erich Neumann. *The Child*. Hodder, London 1973. pg. 183
- 2a *Ibid.*, pg. 182
- 3 Jung. *Collected Works [CW] vol. 11*. RKP. pg. 181

- 4 Ibid., pg. 182                      5 CW 9 (ii). pg. 42  
 6 Ibid., pg. 256. CW 11. pg. 287 (para 439)  
 7 The term 'body-self' was coined by Neumann to describe an important stage in the evolution of consciousness :

Long before a consciousness centred in the ego takes cognizance of the self as the center of psycho-physical totality, the self appears as a body-self. i.e., as a totality directing the body and all its functions.

The Great Mother. Bollingen, New York 1955. pg.277

Neumann refers to this stage as "narcissism" :

Centroversion, during its first conscious phase manifests itself as narcissism, a generalised body feeling in which the unity of the body is the first expression of individuality. This magical relation to the body is an essential characteristic of centroversion, and love of one's own body, its adornments and sacralisation, constitute the most primitive stage of self formation... The magical correspondence between world and body scheme also belongs to this early narcissistic phase.

The Origins and History of Consciousness.

Bollingen, New York, 1955, pg. 307. Cf. pg. 288ff.

As a psychological disposition Gnosticism is the antithesis of what Neumann calls "narcissism"

- 8 Hans Jonas. The Gnostic Religion. Beacon Press, Boston 1963. pg. 334  
 9 CW 11. pg. 98-9                      10 Ibid., pg. 82                      11 CW 11. pg. 61  
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 13 Ibid., pg. 113                      14 CW 9 (i). pg. 107                      15 Ibid., pg. 109  
 16 Mircea Eliade. The Forge and the Crucible. Rider, London 1962. pg. 143  
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 18 Ibid., pg. 216                      19 Ibid., pg. 217  
 20 See : CW 8. pg. 525-6, where Jung relates the experience of a female patient and the scarab beetle.  
 21 Ibid., pg. 421                      22 Ibid., pg. 512ff  
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 24 Mircea Eliade. Images and Symbols. Harvill Press, London 1961, pg. 36  
 25 See : Eliade. The Myth of the Eternal Return. Bollingen, N.Y. 1965 - Ch.4  
 26 Eliade. Images and Symbols. pg. 36  
 27 CW 11. pg. 104                      28 Cf. Ibid., pg. 412-15, 431-4  
 29 See : CW 9(ii). pg. 237-42, and CW 12. pg. 236-8  
 30 CW 11. pg. 66. Cf. CW 12. pg. 203ff                      31 CW 11. pg. 72  
 32 See Hillman. The Myth of Analysis. pg. 258-98

## THE KUNDALINI ENIGMA

Lokanath Maharaj ©

Most readers of occult literature will have come across Kundalini - it is usually associated with a bodily power which when it rises from its root centre causes all sorts of magical siddhi and eventually Liberation itself.

Associated with Kundalini are the six chakras within the body. These ideas have very wide currency in the West. Mostly this seems to stem from the mammoth work of Sir John Woodroffe ('Arthur Avalon'), and various publications of the Theosophical Society.

Despite its claim to being a worldwide, non-sectarian path, the Theosophical Society was very largely based on Hinduism - indeed its Indian branch was (and for all I know still is) staffed by orthodox Brahmin pandits.

'Serpent Power' by Sir John was one of his earliest books. In later volumes he was to regret the importance he had placed on the one or two Sanskrit texts around which it was based. However the main thrust of this article is to show that the contemporary understanding of the Six Chakras, Kundalini, Serpent Power and so forth is very very far away from the original idea, as found in the still-existing Tantrik and Nath schools..

Perhaps rather surprisingly I would first like to quote an extract from Gurdjieff's 'All and Everything' relating to this subject :

"The whole of what is called 'Indian Philosophy' now existing there, is based also on this famous Kundalina, and about the word itself there exist thousands of various occult, secret and revealed 'sciences' which explain nothing."

Gurdjieff explains elsewhere that what is now called Kundalini should have the name Kundabuffer, and has a function in the human body which is to cause the possessors to have a very imperfect or 'asleep' view of reality. We shall see that Gurdjieff's description is not dissimilar to the Nath view!

The word itself has uncertain derivation. In MacDonell's 'Sanskrit Dictionary' it is related to a ring, especially an earring, to anything which is coiled, and in its masculine form as a snake. If we use Gurdjieff's spelling as Kunda-Lina it means something which is hidden (Lina) within a fire-pit (Kunda). Kundalina as a spelling is found in several Tantras.

It would be alright to leave this topic as it stands, were it not that the meaning of this word in Tantra is closer to Gurdjieff's spelling than the more commonly used form.

What connection can a fire-pit have with these ideas? The Brahmins normally used a fire-pit to perform Homa or the fire-sacrifice. This pit was often very elaborate, with a set of steps up to it, like a mini-pyramid. It could also be of different shapes, depending on the purpose and significance of the rite.

The philosophy of Shiva and Shakti is vital to an understanding of this

tangle. In Nath and Tantrik 'philosophy' Shiva is the noumenon, the point without a centre, the Witness, impossible of description. Shakti is phenomenon, with Her triple gunas of Rajas, Sattvas and Tamas she gives birth to all the worlds, to all Creation. Yet Shiva and Shakti are inseparable.

An important point is that Tantrika postulated no difference between Macrocosm and Microcosm. The essence of their spiritual quest was that a human being embodies within herself or himself Shiva and Shakti. Shiva in an individual represents the Spirit, the Knower, the Atman. Shakti represents the whole web of physical and psychic powers, from the food centres in the body right up to reasoning, emotions, and the various subtle bodies.

In 'Matrika Bheda Tantra' it is stated that an embodied being, i.e. Shiva incarnate, is without qualities. "In the Muladhara is Shakti in the form of a serpent. O Parameshani, in this centre the embodied being resides. The embodied is unaffected by the wished-for pleasure, which clearly has qualities. The embodied being is without qualities... Kundalini, the form of Sun, Moon and Fire is endowed with qualities." (Patala III)

Unlike some other traditions, the Tantriks maintain that as the embodied being is the Microcosmic form of Shiva, he or she is already liberated. The practical work (sadhana) is intended to help the individual to this realisation, by peeling off the multifold forms of Shakti to reveal Shiva. One of Shakti's most common names is Maya. This word means illusions. Seeing himself, as it were, reflected in the diverse mirrors of what is essentially his Creation, the embodied Shiva 'forgets', baffled by the multiplicity of Shakti.

So it is Shakti who enjoys, who consumes, who is happy, who is sad, who is born (Creation), lives (Maintenance) and dies (Dissolution). The omnipresent Shiva is unaffected by this play. The Tantra we have quoted above goes on to describe a practical method of disentangling oneself from the various influences of Shakti.

This involves sacrifice. As the practitioner knows that she or he is already liberated, already free from any qualities (gunas), anything reaching the five senses is offered to Shakti within the body. Just as the Brahmin (a word which means one who knows the Absolute) gives sacrifice to the external fire-pit, so the individual should give whatever is received to an internal fire-pit, the abode of Shakti.

In practical terms this involves the offering of sense-impressions, breath, food and all pleasure to the bodily Shakti. Apart from making a person more alert and aware, this also centres a human being as one with Shiva within.

It seems as if the inner meaning of 'Kundalini' as a serpent zigzagging up the body has become confused with a process or a bodily Shakti known as 'Nasika Shakti'. She is an aspect of the Goddess of Prana or Vital Breath. Like every Tantrik Devi She has her own Yantra or diagram for worship. When taken in her microcosmic aspect Prana-Shakti represents the channels of Vital Breath within the body. This is Her Yantra within a human being.

'Kundalini' is associated with the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet, each of these being on the petals of the various chakras. Many have wondered as to their significance. But one of Shakti's other names is Matrika, a word which means the Letters of the Alphabet. In this form She deludes with word and language, causing an embodied individual to identify himself or herself with one or another concept or word.

The number of the chakras is generally taken as we find them in Avalon's book. But there is very little agreement in Tantrik texts as to the number, situation, and significance of these chakras. Some texts mention 6, some 7, some 9, some 16, some 22 - in fact if you wished to pick a number it would be

easy to find some Tantrik text which stated that this was the number of Chakras in the body.

It is going back a long way, but there may be some readers of the Hermetic Journal who have the first issue. I wrote there an article describing the different 'food-centres' or dhatus in the human frame. There are seven of these, and their places in the body correspond with the well-known 'chakras'. Presiding over each is a Shakti or energy, each of whose names ends with 'ini' - Dakini, Hakini, Sakini, etc.

They have terrifying forms. For example : "Meditate on Sakini in the 4 petalled lotus, as having 5 faces, 3 eyes, of smoky colour, presiding over Bone, holding elephant hook, lotus, book, Knowledge gesture, liking mudga beans, intoxicated with liquor, attended by Varada and others". Each of the Goddesses has fangs.

In Tantrik iconography if a Shakti has fangs it means She is a consumer. In this case She consumes the primary product of food metabolism, converting it into bone - one of the seven Dhatus or alchemical bases of Ayurveda and Indian Alchemy. The highest of the products of food according to this view is Semen or Ova - the basis of new life. All this gives a very physiological slant to the 'chakras'.

Yet Macrocosm and Microcosm were thought of as One. For this reason the body and its processes were not considered unspiritual, indeed it and them were deified as Shaktis!

I hope my article has given readers some 'food for thought'. There is no reason, spiritually speaking, for a disciple of a Tantrik path to follow 'Kundalini Yoga' - this is a modern term not found in the works of the ancient Indian sages. Other methods exist for Liberation, and if an individual tries to meddle with Prana Shakti in his or her body the result could be death. The main aim is to become awake, to be the Witness of what manifests as Shakti.

Unfortunately Western ideas have backfired into modern India, and many people believe unreservedly in the Kundalini, the 6 Chakras, and 'Raising the Fire Snake'. It is a curious paradox, but the same process has occurred with the words 'Tantra' and 'Yoga'. Most Indians believe Tantra = Sex and Yoga = physical jerks - so much that when I was in India and attempting to find Sanskrit Tantrik texts I was offered Masters and Johnson and the Kama Sutra!

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## THE RIPLEY SCROLL

Adam McLean ©

The "Ripley Scrowle" is one of the most important late 16th century emblematic expressions of the alchemical process. Although this scroll was never published in a printed form, it was influential upon the explosion of emblematic symbolism during the first decades of the 17th century, and many copies of it must have then been in circulation. Indeed there are to my knowledge without my undertaking any extensive research, at least six copies still extant - two in the British Library, one in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, another in a US collection, a further copy in a European Library, and the one which I have had the opportunity of examining at length in the possession of the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh.

The "Ripley Scrowle" can I believe be positively dated to the last few decades of the 16th century, being contemporary with the Rosarium Philosophorum woodcuts, the Splendor Solis, the Crowning of Nature manuscripts, and the Pandora woodcut illustrations, which were the forerunners and inspirers of the remarkable engravings of de Bry and Merian that characterised the 'Rosicrucian' period of alchemical symbolism from around 1600-1630. The Ripley Scroll is however ascribed to Sir George Ripley a famous English alchemist of a much earlier time. It is common in the alchemical and occult traditions to find that important and seminal works to be published and distributed under the name of a famous adept of a previous century. Numerous items were thus issued under the name of Roger Bacon, or Raymond Lully. The Rosarium Philosophorum was said by some to be the work of Arnold of Villanova, and it was hinted that the Splendor Solis was the work of the teacher of the great Paracelsus, 'Salomon Trismosin'. So it is not at all surprising to find this elaborately illuminated parchment scroll linked with Sir George Ripley.

Sir George Ripley was one of the most famous of English alchemists. He was born at Ripley in Yorkshire in 1415, of a good northern family, and was able to travel abroad to the continent where he learned the secrets of alchemy, and he particularly makes mention of studies he undertook in Luvain and Rome and alchemical legend links him further with the Knights of St John at Rhodes (the remnants of the Knights Templar organisation). Back in England he was by 1471 established as a Canon regular of the Augustinian Priory at Bridlington in Yorkshire. He died in 1490 having established quite a high reputation and had been able to pass on his knowledge to a number of pupils.

The verses on the scroll may have been written by Ripley as they are in the style of his other writings, but the designs on the scroll are unlikely to be by Ripley himself, but would seem to derive from the late 16th century revival

and reworking of alchemical material into a visual symbolic form.

Ripley's main work is his 'Compound of Alchymy' (1471) in which the alchemical opus is seen as a journey to an inner or philosophical castle by entering through 12 gates corresponding to a series of twelve alchemical processes. Another of Ripley's works which is well known is his 'Cantilena' or 'Song', which described the alchemical process through the image of the alchemical marriage, the conception, gestation, and birth of the tincturing Son of the Philosophers. The images of the Cantilena are found in the symbolism of the first section of the Scroll.

We shall only have space here to examine two sections out of the four main divisions of the scroll. (The whole document will be described in detail in the forthcoming *Magnum Opus Compendium of Alchemical Emblems*.)

I consider the copy I found in the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh as being the most complete and symbolically intact of the versions of the Ripley Scroll. The British Library versions are ravishing in their colouring and technical skill of the artwork, but the symbolic material is quite corrupt and incomplete in sections. If we merely consider the first section of the document with its series of flasks in a circle, only the Edinburgh version fills in the details of the process showing what is going on in the flasks. The British Library versions depict each flask with the same contents and do not include the textual references to the operations and the work with the Solar and Lunar forces. Only when I discovered the version in Edinburgh was I able to grasp the full content of the symbolic process, and I believe that this document though not the most beautifully executed of the versions, is the most complete, and is invaluable and essential to our understanding of the 'Ripley Scrowles'.

The Royal College of Physicians 'Ripley Scrowle' was given to their library in 1707 by the Earl of Cromarty. This parchment roll was in fact owned by his grandfather Sir George Erskine of Innertiel. As the Earl of Cromarty inscribes on another volume in his gift :-

"I haveing found by letters directed from one Dr Politius (a Polonian or Silesian) to my grandfather Sir George Areskine of Innertiele, brother of the Earl of Kellie and grandchild to the Earl of Marr, a Senator of the Colledge of Justice, and Privy Counsellor to King James the 6th and to King Charles 1st, who was a great student of natural philosophy, evn to a considerable advancement in the hermetick school, and had a correspondence in very remote parts with the sonnes of Hermes, and of whose fruits of his expensive and secret correspondence with them I have depositat some volumes of manuscripts mostly of his own handwritt.

"This was sent to him by the society at Hess, and directed under the convoy of the said Dr Politus, who by his letters to Sir George declares that by the direction of that society his chief errand to Scotland was to confer with him. And I judged it a monument not unworthy to be consigned to the Honourable Colledge of Phisitians at Edinburgh, both for its conveyance and matter...."

Sir George Erskine was perhaps the closest friend and advisor to King James the VI and I. When a child he had the advantage of being placed together with the young James under the tutelage of George Buchanan, and this closeness in their youth seemed to stay with them all their life. When James became King of Scotland he appointed Sir George to his Privy Council, and when James was raised to be King also of England, Sir George accompanied him to England and became his closest and most trusted advisor at the English court. Sir George had a great interest in the esoteric and especially in the then emerging

Rosicrucians, and his extensive manuscript collections also in the same Library contain probably the earliest translations of the Fama and Confessio into English together with extracts from some of the early Rosicrucian and alchemical texts. The Society at Hess mentioned by the Earl of Cromarty is most likely a reference to the Rosicrucians and the Dr Politus must have been one of their emissaries. Sir George seems to have made little direct mark on history, but he was a trusted friend and did have the ear of the King, and his interest in alchemy and the Rosicrucians must have influenced him in his dealings with state matters. Students of Rosicrucian history may do well to investigate further this obscure though important figure.

The first section of the scroll depicts a bearded old man showing to us a flask in the form of a double pelican (that is, with two tubes coming from the top of the vessel and reentering it lower down its belly, thus returning drops of the substance distilled from the lower part of the flask continually. This is the alchemical process of circulation or continuously recycled distillation. On one side of the ribbon is inscribed "The burial place where the fountain is hidden from which is born the ferment or stone coloured in many ways", while on the other is "the Hidden Stone".

Within the flask at the top is the statement "You muste mak Water of the Earthe, and Earthe of the Ayre, and Ayre of the Fyre and Fyre of the Earth". This reminds us of the cycling of the Elements found in the Crowning of Nature manuscript (see Magnum Opus number 3, or the article in the Hermetic Journal number 7). The upper part of the flask has feathers representing rising vapours (Airs) and descending droplets of liquid, and the bottom of this vessel is seen to be immersed in a furnace or perhaps a water or sand bath. The feathers have 'spiritus' or 'anima' (soul) written beside them, and between them is seen the body of a black toad. Thus we have the separation through heating in the flask of the body of the toad (or primal substance) from its soul and spirit which rise and descend in the flask as the airy feathers and water droplets. Ripley's other writing especially refer to the toad, which he decried as the prima materia out of which the whole work unfolded.

Below this is a great mandala of eight circles (divided as we shall see rather as  $1 + 7$ ), seven of which are connected by chains of three links to a central tablet or document bearing seven seals. Two figures, an older bearded man and his younger apprentice, are examining the seals.

The first of these circles, at the top right, is connected by a banner proclaiming the 'Prima Materia'. The following seven are connected to the seals by the three-linked chains which bear in sequence Sun, Moon, Sun, Moon, Sun, Moon, Sun. The inner circle round the two central figures bears seven statements which link together these transition stages: in sequence, Body, Spirit, Soul, Body, Spirit, Soul-Water-Water, Spirit.

The first circle at the top right of the group shows us the Sun shining above a central tree to which are bound a naked female and male figure. These are being killed by a figure on the left with an axe, and by a figure on the right by a spear, while beneath them are two lions labelled 'the Green Lion' (Leo Viridis) and the 'Red Lion' (Leo Rubia). A toad and a dragon are seen beside the female and male figure respectively, while from the dying female emanates a soul in the form of a Moon disc, and from the male emanates a soul in the form of a bird. This cycle represents the extraction of the prima materia from the bodies of the Solar King and Lunar Queen. This is the familiar theme of the Chymical Wedding where the bride and groom are killed and the essence which constitutes the starting point for the alchemical work

of transmutation is collected as the prima materia.

Following this the work is showing passing through seven stages of development pictured as flasks inside of which the alchemical process is symbolically described. In each of these stages the flask is being heated upon a furnace. In each picture different numbers of figures are examining the work in progress, these appear to be dressed as monks though some among them seem to be women).

The first stage is labelled 'Solutio' and shows the bodies of the king and queen of the prima materia undergoing in the flask a decay or dissolution. A bird essence flies upwards in the flask. This is observed by 4 figures. (Around the circle is "The soul forsooth is his sulphur not burning".)

The second stage, labelled 'Black', shows the flask fitted now with a still head fitted, and the essences in the form of a bird and a female figure being distilled off the two decaying figures, and collected in three vessels. The two figures watching this process would seem to be a man and a woman. (Around the circle is in latin "because of the former weakness I am fed with fire and the first moisture".)

The third stage, labelled 'Black', our three monks pour the bottle of essence back into their flask where now only a single figure is seen at the bottom. The essence ascends and descends in the form of a bird. (Around the circle is "And I am gently divided by my friends commencing in the second exaltation".)

The fourth stage, also labelled 'Black' (completing three stages of blackness), shows us the single figure at the bottom of the flask giving birth to a child while droplets and a bird descend. Four figures are observing this activity. (Around the circle "I am able to be exalted to the highest subtlety according as I am reduced to simplicity.")

The fifth stage is now labelled 'White' and shows the child or reborn homunculus rising out or standing in the waters in the bottom of the flask. The Mother figure has dissolved. This stage is watched over by 5 figures. (Around the circle "I am dried up, I am deserted, I drink and I am made white.")

The sixth stage, labelled 'White', shows again the child form in the flask now watched over by 6 figures. (Around the circle is "I am bereaved and am far from my characteristic home, I am a long time in our second reduction according as the body is embraced and become friendly to us".)

The seventh stage, the third to be labelled 'White', shows us again the Child figure in the flask watched over by 7 figures, three among whom hold empty bottles and we can presume they have emptied these into the flask. (Around the circle "Thus gently with friendly fire according as some other violence is not able to be overcome".)

These watching figures could be the archetypes of the seven planets or perhaps the seven metals.

Around the bottom of the furnace is :-

THE BLACK SEA    THE BLACK MOON    THE BLACK SUN,

and underneath this is:-

'Here is the last of the White Stone and the beginning of the Red Stone', with these verses written below :-



THE MAN WITH THE BEARD AND THE WOMAN WITH THE BREAD

"Of the sonne tak the lighte  
 The redd goume that is so brighte,  
 And of the moone doe also  
 The white goume there keep to,  
 The philosophers sulphur wiffe  
 This i-called withouten stryfe,  
 Kyberte and Kybryte i-called allsoe  
 And other names many moe;  
 Of him draw out a tincture,  
 And mak then a marrage pure  
 Between the husband and the wife  
 Spoused with the water of lyfe;  
 But of this worke you must beware,  
 Or els thy worke wil be full bare.  
 He must be made of his one kinde,  
 Marke thou well now in thy minde;  
 Acetum of philosophers men call this,  
 And water abidinge, soe yt is  
 The maydens milke of the dewe,  
 That other workes doe renew,  
 The spirit of life men called allsoe,  
 And other names many moe."

"The which causeth our regeneration  
 Between the man and the woman,  
 Soe looke, that noe deusion  
 Be there in the conjunction  
 Of the moone and of the sonne;  
 After the marriage is begone,  
 And all while they ben a weddinge  
 And him to her drinkinge  
 Acetum it is very fyne  
 Better to them than any wine;  
 Nowe when this marrage is done  
 Philosophers calls this a stone,  
 The which hath greate nature  
 To bring a stone that is pure,  
 So he have kindly norrishinge  
 Be perfitt heate and decoction;  
 But in the matrices where they be put  
 Looke never thy vessel be mishutte  
 Till they have engendered a stone  
 In the world there is not such one."

The next two phases are shown as taking place in open vessels centred on a column.

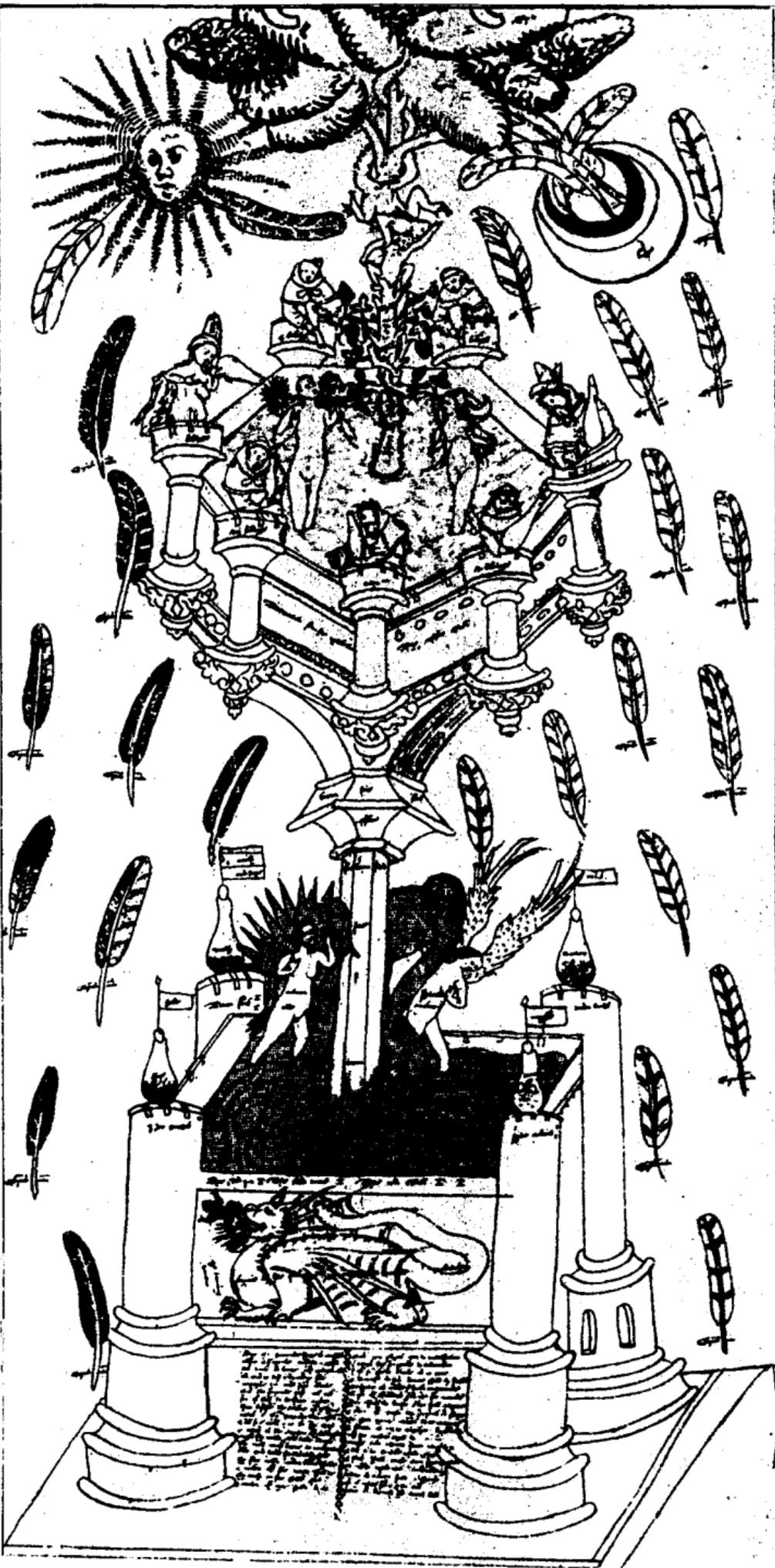
The upper vessel is seven-sided, each corner of its heptagon shape has a little turret in each of which stands a figure holding a flask which each pour in turn into the water of the heptagon enclosure. The turrets are labelled 1st-7th Imbibing or Drinking. The first is a woman and the others appear all to be men (they could be the planets with Venus as the female figure). Anyway three of them have poured in their essences and four have still to do so. From the centre of the vessel a tree trunk rises and spreads its canopy of branches high over this strange fountain. To the left is the Sun and to the right the Moon, and feathers representing the Spirit and Soul of the process fall down from the sun and moon around the central space of this mandala. Within the heptagonal vessel a Sun King and Moon Queen are seen to the left and right of the tree respectively. These two each hold a vine creeper which climbs around the central bole of the tree and supports many bunches or grapes and vine leaves. About half way up the trunk of the tree a male figure is seated, and is met by a Lilith woman, half-woman half-serpent, who coils her body seductively down from the high foliage of the tree canopy above.

Here we have a strange meeting of the male and the female in the horizontal axis within the sea or liquid of the heptangular vessel where they entangle their vine plants - and another meeting along the vertical polarity in the Lilith figure above with the male figure who sits below on the trunk of the tree. Along the horizontal polarity the male and female bodies are labelled corpus (body), while on the vertical polarity the female Lilith figure is labelled 'Spirit' and the male figure 'Soul'.

On the lower wall of the heptangular vessel is written :-

THE WHITE SEA THE WHITE MOON THE WHITE SUN

This is a remarkable gathering of symbols, especially the horizontal-vertical uniting of the masculine and feminine forces - horizontally in a bodily way, vertically as a linking of Spirit and Soul. The Lilith figure is here the 'spirit' linking with the male 'soul', turning



orthodox theology on its head and also ascribing spiritual agency to the Lilith-snake aspect which one would normally expect to see in the role of the temptress into sin. This is in a sense an inversion of the symbolism of the myth of the Fall of Humanity as recounted in Genesis, and gives us a glimpse of the profound esoteric philosophy of the alchemists who worked towards uniting and integrating the duality pressed into the human psyche by orthodox religion. To work with such symbols in meditation provides a healing of these dualistic wounds in the human psyche.

The next stage proceeds in a square vessel with four corner towers each bearing flasks containing the essence of the elements. These are labelled with the corresponding qualities - Hot, Cold, Wet, Dry - and the attributes "Fire purifies", "Air or spirit enters or penetrates", "Water washes" and "Earth supports". From the centre of this four sided vessel rises a great pillar which in fact supports the upper heptagonal vessel we described above. Leaning upon this is an old man with a beard, whose body is labelled "Corpus". To the left is a male figure surrounded by a aura of clouds and flames, and is labelled 'anima' (soul) - 'oil'; while to the right is a female figure winged with scales upon her wings, and labelled 'spirit' and 'water'. The liquid they stand within is labelled as a mixture of Body, Soul and Spirit, in contrast to the the liquid in the heptangular vessel which was a mixture of Body and Soul only. The lower part of this square enclosure bears the legend :-

THE RED SEA THE RED MOON THE RED SUN

and below this is seen a winged dragon with fiery breath in the act of devouring the black toad. On the body of the dragon is "Here is the fume which is called the mouth of choleric (fire)". Below this are two verses :-

"One the grounde there is an hill,  
Allsoe a Serpent within a well;  
His tayle is longe with winges wide  
All ready to flee by every side,  
Repayre the well faste aboute,  
That the serpent pass not out;  
For that he be there agone,  
Thou loseste the vertue of the stone,  
What is thy grounde thou must know here,  
And allsoe the well that is soe clere:  
And eke the Dragon with his tayle,  
Or else thy worke will little avayle,  
Thy well muste brenne in water clere;  
Take good heede for this is thy fire,  
Thy fire with water brent shall be,  
And water with fire washe shall he;  
Then earth on fire shall be put  
And water with ayre shall be knyte."

"Thus you shall goe to putrefaction,  
And bring the serpent to redemption,  
First he shall be blacke as a croe,  
And downe in his denne shall be full lo;  
I-sweld as a toade that lyeth on grounde,  
Burste with bladders sittinge so rounde,  
They shall to borste and lye full playne,  
And thus with craft thy Serpent is slayne;  
He shall change colours there many one,  
And turne as white as wil be the bone,  
With the water that he was in,  
Washe him cleane from his sinne;  
And let him drinke a litle and lyte,  
That shall make him fayre and whyte,  
The which whiteness is ever abiding,  
Lo here is a very full finishinge:  
Of the White stone and the Red  
Heare is truly the very ded."

## THE PHOENIX AND CINDERELLA

Wolfe van Brussell ◊

"When ashes and sand have been timely heated in the fire, the Master makes therefrom a glass, which henceforth is always able to resist the fiery heat. In colour it resembles a transparent Stone and is no longer recognisable as ashes. For the unknowing this is a great and secret art ; but not so for those who know, for it is their craft, attained through knowledge and experience... For the true Tartarus is concealed in the ashes and must be set free, and after its dissolution the Strong Door of the royal Chamber can be opened."

Basil Valentine The Twelve Keys

Basil Valentine is describing the alchemical process of the purification by fire of the stone of the wise; the glass vessel (grail or ship) in which the spirits may be contained. It is also a straightforward description of the way in which glass was made in ancient times, and in which handmade glass is still made today. Glass is made in extreme heat, from sand and organic ash, and yet the hand of man makes from this aridity a substance resembling coolness, moisture.

Glass does occur naturally, as the result of volcanic or meteoric action, and, very rarely, by lightning. Obsidian is formed by the rapid cooling of lava, and was prized by early man for the making of edged tools. Harder than man-made glass, obsidian has the property of flaking, when chipped, to produce a smooth curved surface with a razor edge.

Tektites originate from outer space and are made by the vitification of meteorites as they burn up on entering the earth's atmosphere.

Glass is in fact a liquid. This sounds fairly unlikely as you look at a window pane, but truly it is a supercooled silicious liquid. This means that the liquid has become viscous without having a freezing point. The molecules in a pane of glass are pulled downwards by the force of gravity so that your window pane is actually flowing downwards. Medieval windows have been found to be measurably thicker at the bottom for this reason.

The main ingredient of this supercooled liquid is silica - sand, flint or quartz crystals. Pure silica only turns into molten glass at 1510°C, when, as Valentine says, it is extremely heat-resistant. For most glass, including stained glass, a flux is added to the silica, with some lime to act as a stabilizer, so that the process will take place at a lower temperature. The flux is usually soda ash or potash. The cooling of the glass so formed is crucial, preventing crystallisation so that the supercooled liquid has such a high viscosity that it has most of the properties of a solid.

Silica/soda/lime glass is perfectly transparent and colourless. A really

perfect sheet of glass allows the light to pass through unchanged, emerging at the same angle it entered by. The qualities of the glass can of course be altered during manufacture to concentrate or to diffuse the light ; to create shimmering, iridescent effects.

To colour glass, metal oxides are dissolved or sometimes suspended in the molten glass. The molecular structure of the solution is then such that certain light wavelengths are prevented from passing through the glass, and it is the unabsorbed wavelengths passing on through that give the glass its colour.

If this is getting a bit technical, like Basil Valentine's alchemy it has practical and metaphysical applications. Glass has been used by mankind in various ways for at least 4000 years, and until the middle ages the glassblowers and glaziers would have been aware of the spiritual implications of the physical processes they performed. The sense of exoteric and esoteric were not so separated then. To learn the craft one would have become apprenticed to a guild of master craftsmen who would impart the processes, physical and spiritual, by which the glass was made. I am not suggesting that every journeyman-glazier was an Adept, but that an awareness of magic, of alchemy in particular, was part of the consciousness of mankind. The alchemical references in Shakespeare would have been picked up by his contemporary audience, though obviously on different levels, but they were not aimed specifically at a magical elite. These concepts (See Charles Nicholl, *The Chemical Theatre*), like those of the Elements, the Humours, the Heavenly Spheres, were firmly implanted in the common thought of the day. The keepers of the Mysteries then were those who knew the secret properties of the chemical elements - among other things used in glass manufacture, the vitriol, cinnabar, antimony and so on.

Imagine yourself in the darkness and heat of a medieval glass furnace room. The identical process can be seen to this day where handmade glass is manufactured and it is well worth seeing. (Hartley Wood & Co., Sunderland).

The constituents of the glass are being heated in the "pot" or clay furnace. This squat, chimney-shaped vessel, built up in layers six inches at a time, air dried for six months, has itself been fired in a wood kiln at  $1100^{\circ}\text{C}$ , a process taking five or six days. Now it can withstand the pressures of vitrification.

Apprentices are pumping furiously at bellows to increase the heat within the furnace ; everyone's skin is glowing in the reflected, ruddy heat. Soda ash and lime have been added to the clear liquid glass, bubbling away as impurities like sulphur boil out of the furnace. A man approaches the pot with a handful of gold, probably coins roughly milled into powder. He judges the weight carefully in his hand. Today the ruby will be made, the most precious, the most expensive glass, then as now.

He throws the gold powder into the pot,



and the apprentices peer hopefully into the interior, but even when gold has melted into suspension the liquid remains clear. The fire is allowed to die down and all wait around the pot with bated breath. Slowly, slowly the glass cools until suddenly a roseate glow transfigures the watery liquid and it becomes deep ruby red.

The intensity of the red produced is such that a sheet of it would appear black ; so a thin layer or ruby is "flashed" onto a layer of clear glass to make the reds used at Chartres and Canterbury. Today most reds are made with Selenium rather than gold because it is cheaper, but gold-reds and pinks can still be obtained.

The use of glass itself in magical work is largely ignored or forgotten. This is strange when one considers the interest in the properties of metals, colours and precious stones. There are two main considerations; firstly, that of colour, used symbolically or for healing; and secondly that of the constituent elements, again for symbolic or talismanic work. Precious stones and coloured glass have their separate advantages and disadvantages in certain situations; it depends what one is looking for. Both have symbolic value, both can create a focus of colour in themselves or as coloured light and both may or may not contain a specific constituent element of relevance in a working. Given the choice between a large flawless gemstone and a circle of coloured glass, I know which I would choose!

However, there are considerations that might lead one to choose glass rather than a naturally-occurring gemstone. The most obvious is the financial consideration; although coloured glass is not cheap, one could obtain good-sized pieces of a dozen or so beautiful colours, each of which could send lovely patches of sun, moon or spotlight of pure colour down upon you, or your living-room carpet, without spending an enormous amount of money. Or one could avail oneself of the glazier's art in blending and balancing chosen colours, perhaps in symbolic form, as a stained glass panel. Good-sized gemstones would be prohibitively expensive.

The other consideration is that a stone is a living thing ; its crystal lattices and individual vibratory rate give it a 'mediating personality' of its own. It has its own intrinsic power which one can become sensitive to, but one has no right to try and alter this.

Glass, however, although it contains the electrical/magnetic resonations of quartz, is so much a product of man (always excepting naturally-occurring obsidian of course !), that is virgin material, and can easily be charged, imprinted, what you will. Magically, a piece of glass is what you make it, whereas the essential part of a gemstone remains itself, however used. For many purposes, especially in healing, coloured glass is more accessible and more flexible in use, although there will always be occasions when the innate power of a gemstone is exactly what is necessary.

I have not even mentioned mirrors, those especially wondrous blends of quartz and quicksilver ; or prisms and prismatic cutting, or the optical grinding of lenses, for instance. But for those who wish to work with potentised coloured light, here is a list of the main chemical elements used in colouring glass. Personally I find that a green works just as well whether it is made of copper or iron salts, but then I'm not a purist, intention is all.

Your Telephone Directory should enable you to contact stained glass suppliers, usually a helpful bunch, though they are fairly unlikely to know the constituents of an individual colour on the shelf.

All modern glass contains a certain amount of lead.

<u>Colour</u>	<u>Oxides used</u>
Reds (also pinks, oranges)	Gold, Selenium Copper, Cadmium
Yellows	Selenium, Sodium Chromium, Silver(stain) Cadmium
Greens	Chromium, Copper, Iron
Blues	Cobalt, Chromium
Purples	Manganese, Cobalt
Black	Concentrated Copper

Silver oxide has the unique property of staining glass yellow when applied and kiln-fired. This 14th century discovery changes the molecular structure of the glass.

Next time you look out of the window, remember the Phoenix-like emergence of this crystalline liquid-solid from the ashes and dust in the primal heat and darkness of the glory hole.



## AN ESOTERICIST LOOKS AT COSMOLOGY

Adam McLean ©

Cosmology and Cosmogogenesis, the understanding of the process of the creation of the world, have always been important aspects of esotericism going right back to the early creation myths of the Babylonians, the Hindus, the Greeks, the aboriginal peoples, and especially for our Judeo-Christian West, the Genesis picture of the Jews. All these Creation myths have provided valuable material for the speculations of esotericists throughout the centuries, out of which they have continually fashioned and formed new interpretations and perspectives.

To envisage the creation of the world is to inwardly gaze into the mysteries of primal causation and ultimately is a gateway through which we can contemplate the spiritual ground of the world. As a species, we will always be able to find the spiritual in contemplating the creation of the Cosmos, for the alternative of living with the existential bleakness of a purely material world is not acceptable to the human spirit. Thus contemplation of cosmology is for the esotericist one of the most successful means of touching upon the ways in which the spiritual and the material ultimately relate to one another.

Such cosmological concerns fired early 17th century hermeticism. The new theory of Copernicus, the investigations of Galileo, the precise measurements of the planetary motions made by Tycho Brahe, and the new ideas of Kepler, sparked off a response from esotericists like Robert Fludd, who devoted the opening sections of his great "History of Both Worlds" to the Origin and Structure of the Cosmos (published as *Magnum Opus Hermetic Sourcework No 13* in 1982). We see this kind of cosmological speculation in other Rosicrucian writings of the period and also, for example, in the Lurianic School of Kabbalah, and other branches of the occult tradition.

In the late 19th century Madame Blavatsky fashioned a new synthesis of cosmological ideas, derived from Kabbalah, hermeticism and from certain esoteric Buddhist and Hindu sources, and gathered this together into her "Secret Doctrine" which provided the driving force behind Theosophy. A decade or so later Rudolf Steiner adapted and moulded this into his own speculations on the creation of the world out of spirit. Another well known esotericist, Dion Fortune, later reworked these ideas into the thesis of her 'Cosmic Doctrine'. A less well known writer, Sergius Gortan Ancona, developed a kabbalistic picture of the creation of the cosmos taking place by means of four stages of descent through the four worlds or levels identified in the Kabbalah. The esoteric stream initiated by Gurdjieff and Ouspensky, and continued by Bennett also worked with ideas on the interweaving of the

spiritual and the material in the creation of the world.

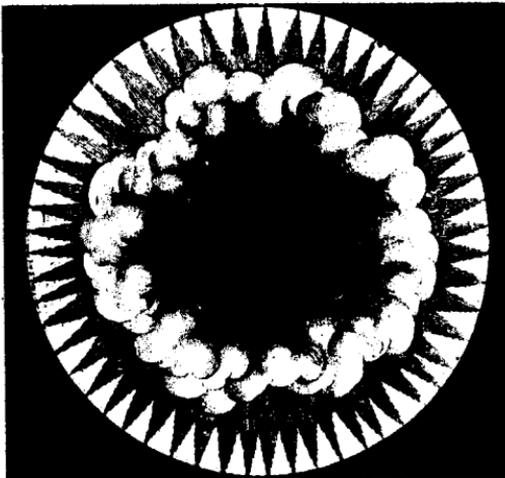
Cosmology, in attempting to answer profound questions about the origin of the world must touch upon deeply metaphysical ground. Cosmology and Cosmogonesis is also one of the most exciting outer frontiers of science, where the scientific method for investigating the world presses, tries and tests itself against those metaphysical boundaries which many esotericists and religiously oriented people believe to be their own especial realm which science cannot and should not enter, the world of first causes and eternal spirit.

Esotericists of previous ages have not ignored the findings of their contemporary science, but tried to incorporate them into their metaphysics, however, many people today who hold to spiritual ideas feel threatened by the giant steps being taken by science (and the consequent social and political challenges of derived technology), and understandably wish to retrench in ancient ideas and philosophies. It is my view that if we have but the courage to gaze at the findings of modern science in its investigation of the creation of the cosmos, we will find there not a refutation of metaphysics but a reaffirmation, albeit coded in a new and unfamiliar language and terminology. As esotericists we may have to update some of our traditional terms, whose meaning has become rather diffuse and nebulous, to match the precision of contemporary physics. However, if we follow the experimenters and theoreticians of present day cosmology and fundamental physics, I believe we can recognise at this exciting frontier of human exploration the birth of a new metaphysics which re-unites the streams of science and hermetic esotericism that became separated in the 17th century. For the truth is that science is itself changing through its contemplation of these fundamental questions about the creation of the cosmos and the ultimate constituents of the world, and becoming again more metaphysical. Present day physicists are straining the previously rigid formalism of materialistic reductionism to the point where they are working with new and revolutionary ideas that are so close to the metaphysical that only the most blinkered and prejudiced of materialists can fail to see the links. Within our lifetime and probably before the end of this century it seems more than likely that we will see a grand unification of physics and metaphysics.

Although the outer form of our ideas may change throughout the centuries, our inner mode of creative thinking at its core is patterned through sets of archetypes. So it should not be too surprising that the speculations of present day physicists, however abstruse and abstract, nevertheless arise in their beings through the filter of archetypes in their souls, and in this fundamental sense, their ideas echo and resonate with those of esotericists contemplating these same mysteries. I have explored this theme in detail with regard to sub-atomic particle physics in my article "Fundamental Physics: Recapitulation of the Archetypes of the Ancient Alchemists" in the Hermetic Journal Number 19.

When physicists contemplate the creation of the cosmos they touch upon (even unconsciously) certain powerful archetypes in their souls and we find that their ideas emerging from this realm, though expressed in abstract and abstruse mathematics, nevertheless echo certain esoteric contemplations found in the hermetic, kabbalistic and alchemical traditions.

So in this article I would like to indicate some of the ways in which these ideas of contemporary physics and cosmology are important from an esoteric perspective, and suggest possible points of contact and unification of the esoteric viewpoint with that of the scientists.



### The Big Bang

The picture of creation which has emerged in recent years and meets all the observable and experimental facts that can be gleaned about the creation of the Universe, is that of the Big Bang driving an expanding universe. In this picture the Universe is seen as beginning at a moment some 15,000,000,000 years ago when out of an emptiness in which space and time did not exist, a great explosion occurred which created space, time, radiation, and matter. The universe as we know it today with its billions upon billions of galaxies, emerged out of a primal seething chaos, erupting out of what is called a singularity - a point at which space and time are so tightly wrapped within each other that the gravitational field is infinite. Similar singularities are thought to exist in space at the centre of collapsed stars - the so-called "Black Holes" - however, this singularity at the beginning of the Universe is a much more powerful phenomenon.

Of course, we can immediately ask what force or power made this singularity out of which the cosmos emerged. The more traditional among us might see a white bearded old man stepping back into the picture as the Prime Mover (now in the role of 'Creator of Singularities'), however, quantum theory seems to be able to explain this singularity as a vacuum fluctuation or perturbation. Quantum theory shows through the Uncertainty Principle that any particle or quantum energy state exists "virtually" at any point in space. Through this Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle we can see that any energy state can come into existence provided it is for a sufficiently short period of time. The higher the energy (or greater the mass) the shorter must be this period of time. So-called empty space is in reality a pleroma seething with virtual particles, that do have a measurable effect on our outer world (as shown in the experiments of Lamb in the 1950's which won him the Nobel prize). So given a sufficiently short period of time (this must be within the "Planck Time" of  $10^{-43}$  sec) a virtual singularity can come into being. The singularity at the beginning of the universe was able to become more than virtual, and manifested its presence in the creation of the total substance and energy of the universe in an instant. Only in the past year or so has a theoretical picture emerged that can explain how out of nothing substance can be manifested. For one of the implications of the extreme curvature of space and time brought about by



forces are bound together, then as the temperature of the Universe drops, Gravitation firstly separates itself off from the other forces and becomes a distinct force in its own right. The other three forces remain united until about  $10^{-35}$  sec when the strong nuclear or colour force separates itself from the other two. This is the time of the Hadron or Quark era when pairs of high energy particles (hadrons or quarks) are pulled out of the fabric of space by the gravitational bootstrap. At this time the strong forces dominate and determine the destiny of the Universe, and its rapidly expanding space is a quark soup of ever changing particles metamorphosing with their antiparticles, protons-antiprotons, neutrons-antineutrons together with stranger and even more obscure quantum states. Although it might seem only to be a jiffy later, with our 'logarithmic' perspective on time, there is a vast gulf until at  $10^{-6}$  sec or so the weak forces decouple from the Electromagnetic and a Lepton Age arises in which initially the so-called weak-forces dominate and the quark-antiquark pairs of the previous era almost annihilate each other and their energy now manifests as a sea of electrons positrons and neutrinos. As the temperature falls still further with the expansion outward of space, the electromagnetic forces come to the fore in an Photonic or Radiation-light era from about a second after the big bang. Here the substance-energy of the universe exists as photons penetrating and flowing through a sea of particles which become in time the prime matter, the hydrogen and helium, that is the material envelope of the universe.

In the esoteric stream of theosophy and anthroposophy which has its origins in esoteric buddhist and Hindu sources as well as in Kabbalistic cosmological speculation, the universe is seen as existing in four distinct Cosmic eras - the four previous planetary embodiments or Rounds of Blavatsky's theosophy, which are named Ancient Saturn, Ancient Sun, Ancient Moon, and the Earth planetary stage in Steiner's terminology. In these esoteric traditions these previous Cosmic epochs come into being through the ways in which the spiritual wove itself in stages gradually deeper into materiality. Perhaps the physicists view of the creation of the cosmos is merely another envisaging of the same process and can be linked with the four epochs recognised in esotericism.

The era when the quantum gravitational effects held sway and the near infinite density of the gravitational forces wrapped space and time around itself, could be seen as corresponding to the first age, the epoch of Ancient Saturn. The era when the strong nuclear forces separated out from gravitation at about  $10^{-35}$  sec or so is the time of the quark era during which the universe was an exploding fireball in which pairs of quarks were being carved out of the fabric of space by the bootstrapping of the gravitational field, could well be linked with the era known in the occult tradition as the epoch of the Ancient "Sun", the second descent of the spirit into materiality. The third descent or clothing of the spirit in materiality, called in esotericism the third planetary round or Ancient "Moon" (this of course has no direct connection with the physical Moon of today), can be seen to correspond to the age around  $10^{-6}$  sec after the big bang when the weak forces decoupled themselves and the universe was a going through a leptonic era, and electron-antielectron pairs annihilated each other. Because of the very slight asymmetry of the weak forces, the balance of matter-antimatter was subtly tipped in favour of matter, during this period. Esotericism indicates that it was during this Ancient Moon stage that the foundations of materiality were being laid. In the final stage from about a second or so from the big bang, the universe had cooled to a level where matter and radiation formed a balance and no further profound quantum alchemy was possible. There is in a sense a

continuity between this time and our present era, and we can thus see this being the fourth era or round, the Earth planetary embodiment, the present state of incarnation of the spirit in substance.

### The Anthropic Principle

Another way in which esoteric ideas and modern physics seem to coincide (or at least reach out to each other) is through what is known as the "anthropic principle". As you can imagine from the short description I have given of the physicist's account of the early universe within its first second or so, the universe emerged with the greatest of violence from the naked singularity. The laws of physics have worked into them certain constants fixed at definite values which cannot be derived from the theory. These constants have to be accepted as 'a priori' parameters of the theory, and have been measured to great accuracy. If these constants had different values then a different universe would have arisen from the singularity. For example, Planck's constant ( $h$ ) which determines the level at which quantum effects become significant is extremely small  $6.625 \times 10^{-34}$ . If it had a higher value then the universe would indeed have been a much different place, for quantum effects would have a part to play in the macro world. Other constants, such as the gravitational constant determining the strength of this force, the fine structure constant which fixes the relative strength of the electromagnetic and the other fundamental forces, or Hubble's Constant fixing the expansion rate of the Universe, completely determine the world we live in. Physicists are becoming aware that these constants seem to have values that so work together that the conditions were exactly right for the formation of galaxies, stars, and the recycled second generation stellar material, containing the heavier elements that could form planets, and set the conditions for organic life to become embodied in material processes. The chances of these constants having formed themselves in just such a way as to create the right conditions for human life to come into existence is so small that some physicists have suggested that there might be a principle, the "anthropic principle" behind physical evolution which set these initial parameters so that human life could come about, and a consciousness arise that could contemplate the magnificence of the cosmos. The group of physicists who work with this idea thus believe that human consciousness is an essential parameter of the universe. The alternative view to this is that there are a multiplicity of universes existing simultaneously differing in the ways in which the constants of nature have been fixed in the individual physics of each universe.

The implications of living in a sea of multi-interpenetrating universes which possibly could be able to come into contact or influence each other at nodes or knots in space-time is very disturbing to some thinkers as it seems to reintroduce into physics the possibility of other worlds. If such a metaphysical view of other interpenetrating universes became scientifically respectable then esotericists should have little problem (apart from nomenclature) of having their perceptions of the existence of multi-levels to reality recognised.

The main alternative to the multi-universe view, the Anthropic Principle, also seems to provide for making scientifically respectable the ancient hermetic maxim that the Macrocosm and the Microcosm are one, and contain the same forces, and that we cannot leave the human consciousness out of our consideration of the nature of the Cosmos.

## The Eleven Dimensions of Reality

Actually there is another alternative to these two views that although seeming to provide a physical explanation for the mystery of the values of the constants of nature, in fact takes us into an even more esoteric territory. This alternative picture is a corollary of the Theory of General Relativity revived by one of the leading thinkers of modern physics, Steven Weinberg. In this picture the fundamental forces of nature are seen as being part of a Grand Unified Force. Thus the four forces, Gravitation, the strong and weak interactions, and electromagnetism, are seen as being special case of the Unified force, and are each described by a set of equations created by a complex mathematical theory involving an eleven dimensional space. This mathematical system can allow physicists to derive the values of the constants of nature from the theory.

Of course we do not live in such an eleven dimensional space, but in a four dimensional world of 3 spatial dimensions and time. So just how do physicist's theories allow us to grasp this problem.

What is beginning to emerge is a picture of the early stage of the Universe, before  $10^{-43}$  sec being 11 dimensional - 10 space dimensions and 1 of time. As the fundamental forces separated from one another (in the way I have described earlier as the big-bang) and the symmetry of the unified force became broken, seven of these dimensions became wrapped round one another forming a tight ball of minute size, leaving the universe outwardly 4 dimensional. What this means is that each single point of our world is actually a wrapped up 7th dimensional sphere on the microscopic scale, many orders of magnitude smaller than a sub-atomic particle. These 10 space dimensions are not arbitrarily chosen but derive from the mathematical formalism of quantum gravitational theory.

Esotericists can only wonder at the kabbalistic nature of this picture, as the 10 dimensions of space + time, through the spontaneous symmetry breaking which creates the four fundamental forces and gives them their special character, become 3 plus time, and the seven are folded back upon themselves into a tight compacted 7th dimensional sphere which appears at each single point in our world. This is surely a kind of Lurianic Kabbalah.

Also it is interesting that behind each point of our world there is seen to lie a seven dimensional sphere. Here the esoteric idea that the seven planetary archetypes are woven into the substance of our world (if stripped of their connection with the physical planets as such) seems to meet with the speculations of modern physics.

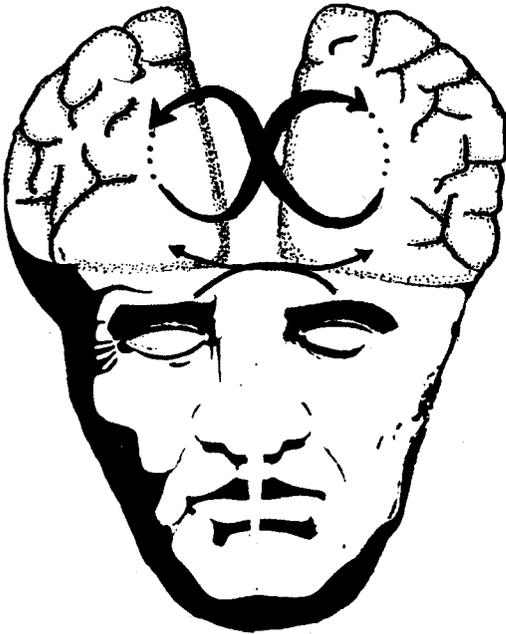
It may be that here we have an explanation in physical terms for the elusive 'seven ethers' of esotericism working behind each point in the fabric of our world. In fact the particles of the four fundamental forces are seen in this theory as waves moving through the medium of these seven-dimensional spheres. Although each of these seven-dimensional spheres are tightly wrapped up, their topology may have strange properties that might allow some other more subtle links to be forged between them. So this idea from the forefront of theoretical physics may have many esoteric manifestations.

Certainly it is amazing that this theory of the structure of the cosmos throws out so many magical numbers, the TEN sephiroth, the SEVEN archetypal planetary forces, the FOUR elements. It will be fascinating to see just how this theory develops and whether its predictions regarding the physical constants can be verified and given a measure of scientific credence. It seems to me that this theory might bring together some of the fundamental ideas of physics and esotericism.

When working on this article I suddenly had a perception concerning the work of John Dee. Perhaps the most enigmatic of Dee and Kelley's esoteric works is the "Liber Logaeth" (Sloane Ms. 3189 in the British Library) consisting of 99 tables of 49 x 49 letters. The magical operations out of which these tables arose was seen by Dee as an exploration of the inner structure of the world, and he was especially convinced of the importance of the number seven in his esotericism.

I came to see that the Liber Logaeth may well be describing a seven dimensional cube, of side seven units. Each of the tables has 49 x 49 letters, that is  $7^4$ , or a 4 dimensional cube of side 7 units. If we take 7 of these tables this provides us with a further 5th dimension. If we take 7 times 7 of these tables, i.e. 49 of the tables, this gives us a complete description of a 6th dimensional cube. There are actually twice this number of Tables in Sloane 3189, so the manuscript as it stands can only be descriptive of two layers of a seven dimensional cube. The occult work out of which this vast system of tables of letters emerged was undertaken under far from ideal conditions, so it may well be incomplete. If it were to completely describe a 7th dimensional cube of side 7 units (each with a letter) it would have to have had 49 x 7 i.e. 343 tables altogether. It would have pleased Dee greatly, one feels sure, if the magical operations he embarked on with Kelley had produced a system of  $7^7$  (seven to the power of seven) lettered squares. [An alternative view, consistent with the existing number of tables in the manuscript, would be that the 6th dimensional cube is embedded into 7-space in a dualistic way. Thus there are only two states or polarities in the seventh dimension. Thankfully, we can still pursue esotericism without having to master the topology of seven-dimensional space!]. Whether the 'Liber Logaeth' is incomplete or not may never be answered but perhaps this picture of the seven dimensional space might provide one way of investigating and trying to understand the elaborate system of this most enigmatic work of renaissance occultism.

I believe this could also be linked into the symbolism of the seven sided Rosicrucian Vault. The Rosicrucians in characterising this symbolic structure as a "Compendium of the Universe" intended that we use a sevenfold template in order to investigate the foundations of inner and outer reality. The heptagonal structure of the Vault could well be interpreted in the light of Dee and Kelley's work on the 'Liber Logaeth', or by paralleling its archetypal form with Dee's earlier book, 'The Hieroglyphic Monad' in which among other things he explores the sevenfold.



## MEDITATION

### BALANCING OUR INNER WORLD

Adam McLean ◉

In the western world the simple practice of meditation has been much misunderstood. Christianity, the dominant religious tradition outwardly established guided prayer as the spiritual exercise for the laity and by keeping the exercise of meditation exclusively for monks and priests has probably made this most natural of faculties of human consciousness instead seem obscure and remote from our everyday experience. This may have contributed to us in the West feeling meditation to be an exclusive, difficult and somewhat abnormal state of mind, indeed its recent "reintroduction" from the East and its popularisation in outer culture has tended only to further befuddle people, giving meditation the aura of being a "foreign" religious practice unsuited to the Western mind. In addition the fact that meditation has been practiced in various cults and occult traditions, has furthered the impression among the wider public that it is a cranky, abnormal thing to do, a refuge for eccentrics.

Arising out of this obscurity and the fact that people exaggerate distort and project their own views upon any human faculty that is imperfectly understood, the practice of meditation has suffered often from extravagant and overblown claims as to its effects upon people. Many cults and occult groups promote the idea that their special meditative exercises will overnight transform our inner beings or quickly give us profound noumenal experiences, and can make us into mystics, magicians or highly spiritually aware people almost instantaneously. These distortions cast an unfortunate shadow over the practice of meditation. They can make it appear such a precious "spiritual" activity, that many ordinary people who do not see themselves on such a lofty plane, feel that meditation is beyond them, or conversely, the level headed amongst us are often put off because they feel meditation is the pursuit of cranks and weirdos.

Those of us who have actively undertaken meditative exercises over a period of years know that it is hard work, that the moments of insight and

inspiration have to be won out of sustained discipline, and those who meditate regularly know it as an entirely inner activity that arises naturally out of their own normal state of consciousness, a way of looking deeper into their selves.

Perhaps what we need is a way of looking at meditation that can strip away the obscurities and help us to see it as playing a perfectly natural and entirely healthy role in our search for personal growth and deepening of our experience.

I believe that one way that might prove very useful is for us to see meditation as a means of bringing about a necessary balance in our being. Our society, evolved over many millenia, has undoubtedly brought us many gifts and possibilities, but these have been bought at a high price. The cost we have had to pay is of having our consciousness developed in a lop-sided manner. Even in our enlightened times (and despite the best intentions of sensitive and aware teachers), every day in our schools, our children, who are to be the bearers of the future destiny of humankind, are forced into patterns of consciousness that are not balanced and integrated. Our society needs people with sharp pointed minds that can abstract, analyse and compute. These abilities can only be heightened and developed in our children by a pressurised educational system that is unable to encompass the other half of the human being, the intuitive, synthesising, poetic side of human nature, and consequently these aspects are often repressed, ridiculed and made to appear of no value. This rather brutal technique does achieve its aim, and develops a core of lop-sided minds to keep our society set on its course, though this is only bought at the extremely high price of declaring a large part of the population as educational failures.

Over the past few decades, researchers into the architecture of the brain have identified a polarity in its operation between the right and left hemispheres of the cerebral cortex, the region of the brain immediately below our skulls. The left hemisphere seems to be the area where language, mathematical abstraction, logical argument, symbol manipulation and computation are in some way incarnated. The right hemisphere is where our faculty of representing inner and outer things in a visual-spatial sense, our capacity to pictorially symbolise, is centred, along with our ability to synthesise, intuitively and creatively connect ideas together.

The faculties and abilities of the left hemisphere are just those which are given especial prominence in our society, and some researchers in this field have gone so far as to refer to our present age as being that of a left-hemisphere dominated civilisation.

I would like us to consider that one way of looking at meditation is as a means of integrating and balancing these polarities in our inner nature. Meditation can be looked at from various perspectives, can be seen as bringing us into touch with high spiritual forces and entities, or as being a purely physical activity promoting a relaxation, and evenness of pulse rate, breathing and electrical rhythms with a consequent rejuvenation in our bodily organs and brain. All these perspectives are equally valid touching upon different levels or ways of looking at the subject - and the sketch I would like us here to consider is an attempt to throw some insight upon meditation by linking the physical and psychic views.

The left hemisphere of our brain which primarily controls the right side of our body, listens through our right ear, and sees the right side of our visual field, seems to be the focus of our "consciousness" of ourselves as an abstract observer living within the flow of experiences that we are continually immersed in. The educational and training patterns of our society

and culture have forced us into living more and more in our left hemisphere. In the right half of our brains lives a more obscure and hidden part of ourselves that we cannot understand in a left-hemisphere way, and yet which is no less important. This hidden part of our being can suddenly emerge and press into our consciousness a solution to a problem that seemed insoluble in logical, step by step, linear terms, or can present us with some sudden flash of intuition, or a creative impulse that might mark the start of a long process of artistic creation. This right hemisphere seems to be particularly active in moulding our dream life, and structuring our inner phantasies and imagination. Although many of us do not touch directly upon this realm of our inner being very often, these right hemisphere impulses are like the philosophers' stone of the alchemists, they tinge and transform our outer experiences, seemingly out of all proportion to our degree of encounter with them.

I believe we can come to see meditation as a tool for encountering and linking together the different inner experiences we have in our two hemispheres, and building and sustaining a channel in our inner life through which these two aspects of our being can communicate with each other.

In this view of meditation as a tool for bringing about this inner connection, it is not surprising that meditation will be found in different civilisations and cultures to take quite different forms, meeting the particular set of the relationship of left and right hemispheres which characterised the peoples of that time and culture. In classical times meditation is often characterised as an exercise of the intellect and the word seems to have been primarily used to describe a focussing of thought, in contemplative thinking. Meditation would indeed need to take the form of such abstracting among peoples or cultures where the left hemisphere had not yet emerged as dominant. I think we can recognise in some eastern practices that their meditation served the purpose of strengthening left-hemisphere activity in order to achieve balance in their inner world.

In our present age, we the people of the western European tradition, are heirs to a great culture, but one which has been achieved at the expense of developing their inner world in a lop-sided manner. Thus the meditative exercises that have emerged in our time are especially designed to help us reestablish a balance in our inner beings. These exercises emerge out of the hermetic tradition and especially in the work of the alchemists with archetypal symbolism. During the period following the Renaissance, when the present structure of our intellectual and abstract consciousness was being forged and consolidated, the alchemists, hermetic philosophers and Rosicrucians, sought to create ways of balancing their inner forces through imaginatively working with symbols. It is this hermetic tradition that we have inherited today as our primary means of working to balance our inner being.

We can see quite clearly how the practice of inner visualisation helps us forge a link between the two sides of our nature. Guided meditation especially involves a linking of the hemispheres. Our verbal language faculties are seated in our left hemisphere. So when, in guided meditation, we listen to someone presenting us with a series of word pictures, this initially involves the participation of our left-brain. If we are accomplished meditators we can go a stage further in inwardly picturing what is presented to us in words, building an imaginative, visual-spatial representation of these verbal indications. This actually must be done in our right-hemisphere. Thus in such an exercise there is a movement from left to right brain. However, in order to get a truly significant experience from such guided meditations we must go a stage further, and become released somewhat from the ties of the

left-hemisphere verbalisations. An experienced guide in such meditations will sense when and where to allow a space to develop and hold back a little from presenting more verbal pictures. The pictures built up in the right half of our brain, initially only a shadow puppet of the verbal idea presented to our left brain, now is allowed to do as it will with the image and let its own being and forces play and mould the picture. This is the point when the symbols shift and can form a new constellation, when some new pattern or experience forms itself in the space of our meditation. This new working of the symbols arising out of the forces of our right hemisphere rays back into our left brain, and if we are open to the experience, we begin to restructure and translate it into left brain terms, words and abstract thoughts. Thus this form of meditation uses the highly developed facility of our left brain as a tool for presenting our right brain with symbolic material and allowing the right brain to communicate and reply directly to our left brain consciousness. Of course such guided meditations will be unsuccessful if the guide is not sensitive to what is going on inwardly in his or her fellow travellers.

The next step is to become one's own guide, and this will be found to be one of the most highly developed means for such inter-hemispheric communication.

Recent investigations in depth psychology and neurophysiology identify a deeper structure in our brains, lying below the two hemispheres, called the limbic system of the midbrain, as the possible seat of our inner programming of archetypal symbols. Both hemispheres have links with this underlying area and thus it is that symbols are the common language of the hemispheres. For symbols can be both abstract and imaginative - as with numbers, we have the abstract symbols '3' and '4' and the imaginative symbol of the Triune-Trinity and Quaternary with their multiplicity of different expressions.

We have seen that to use this form of meditation successfully we have to seed our left-brain with series of symbols, projecting these into our right-hemisphere visualisations. But if we can go further and use the limbic system as a relay system or amplifier between the hemispheres then the intensity and value of the communication between them will be increased. The limbic system of the midbrain seems to contain archetypal systems of symbols encoded in a form which makes sense to either hemisphere, so all we need do is to use this language of the limbic system symbols to amplify and develop further the power of our meditation. The key to unlocking the archetypal symbolic energies in the limbic system lies in bringing into our meditation a sense of the dramatic and theatrical, for the limbic system is an outgrowth from an older part of our brain more concerned with primal forces, our survival reflexes, our need for power, nourishment and the hot emotional sea of our sexuality. The inner structure of the limbic system (I don't mean here the way in which it is incarnated or wired in physiological hardware terms, but rather the software programming of archetypal symbols that have been woven into it through human evolution), has been explored and mapped by various investigators and traditions of inner knowledge. One of these is undoubtedly found in the symbolic tradition in hermeticism, and I believe that the symbolism of alchemy is indeed a software map (resulting from the explorations of deeply contemplative souls during the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries) of an inner bridge within our being between the divided facets of our inner life. One way of uniting this work with visualising archetypal symbols with the sense of the dramatic lies in meditations which take the form of inner journeys, explorations through symbols within a dynamic sense of voyaging and exploring unknown realms within our being.

To gain access to the inner archetypes in the limbic system we have not

only to reflect the symbols back and forth between the hemispheres but also to invoke the primitive raw energies within our beings and allow this to flow into the symbols. This can be achieved through uniting our sense of the dramatic with our imagination, in explorations and inner journeys in which we encounter the archetypes and allow them to speak within our souls. It is these raw energies that are the key to activating the archetypal level. This is perhaps the means by which magical ritual and ritual theatre are effective in producing powerful changes in our consciousness. (I will be exploring this in a later article.)

If we can begin to work using 'inner journeying' or in some other manner with these indications from this software map, then we can truly experience the inner hermetic androgyne and use this Stone of the alchemical philosophers to transform our inner world making it more integrated, whole and complete.

This is the ultimate frontier for human exploration, journeying inwards into our own inner core, experiencing the ways in which we think, symbolise, visualise, intuit, and create new ideas. It is the most difficult task we can undertake and few have the inner resources of soul to struggle alone along this path, but all of us can benefit from taking even a few faltering steps in this direction.

I hope this picture might help some of us to see meditation as playing a normal healthy role in the unfolding of the possibilities still buried and woven in the depths of our physical, psychic and spiritual being. It is not merely experiencing weird distortions of reality, or giving ourselves up to phantasy and illusion and escaping from the harshness of outer reality into an imagined inner world, but a necessary and essential step in building a bridge between the unbalanced facets of our inner world, our consciousness and unconscious, our thinking and our imagination, which are physically incarnated in the two hemispheres of our brains.

#### Afternote

Shortly after completing this article one of my subscribers was kind enough to send me some copies of meditation tapes used in an American organisation called The Monroe Institute. I found these tapes to be most interesting in that they used what they called "hemi-sync", that is bringing the two hemispheres of our brains into synchronisation, by presenting each of the hemispheres with two different frequencies. This is relatively easy to do for a sound presented to the right ear is channeled almost exclusively to the left hemisphere and vice-versa. So in using these tapes one merely uses stereo headphones and listens to the sounds. These are especially chosen to slightly differ in frequency so that the beating of these sounds can only be perceived by our two hemispheres working together, thus "hemi-sync". This method will probably be of some value to those beginning meditative work and I can recommend it as a gentle and safe way of getting into such meditative work, though I doubt whether one can go far along the path without an intensity of inner work. Such outer techniques are valuable as supports, but work activated from within our souls will be found to be most effective.

SKY DANCER by Keith Dowman

Routledge &amp; Kegan Paul, 1984. 379pp £7.95 paper

Tantra is one of the most deeply esoteric of all spiritual teachings, and those readers of the Hermetic Journal who have not yet explored it would be well advised to do so, both for its own worth and also for the number of important similarities it bears to Hermetic teachings (such as the stress on the union of opposites, on ritual, and so on).

This is the newly-translated biography of Yeshe Tsogyel, consort of Padma Sambhava, the legendary 8th century founder of the Nyingmapa sect of Tibetan Tantric Buddhism. The biography was written in the 18th century; it may well be partially based on older material, but those concerned over matters of historical authenticity should note that we have few reliable records of 8th century Tibet. Still, it is for its timeless elements that the book is most valuable. The term "sky dancer", from the Sanskrit dakini, denotes a female Buddha or enlightened woman, and this book will be of interest not only to those involved in the study of Tantra, but also to those concerned with women's spirituality and the place of the feminine in religion. The book is notable for some valuable descriptions of Tantric ritual and initiation and of the experiences of kundalini yoga.

Keith Dowman provides lengthy commentaries on the technicalities of Tantric initiation and meditation, on the relationship between women and the metaphysical attributes of the dakini, on the lineages of transmission of teaching of the Nyingmapa sect, and on the historical value of the text. Generally, these commentaries provide food for thought, although from a scholarly point of view they leave certain important questions unraised.

History, legend, folklore, hagiography, myth, cannot be disentangled here; but to read the book as it stands is to uncover an interesting and often profound testament of the experiences of a Tantric initiate.

Reviewed by Deirdre Green

AT THE TABLE OF THE GRAIL Ed. John Matthews

Routledge &amp; Kegan Paul 1984, 245pp. £5.95 paper

Contributors : Geoffrey Ashe, Hannah Cross, Adam McLean, John Matthews, Helen Luke, Caitlin Matthews, Brian Cleeve, Lois Lang-Sims, Gareth Knight, Bob Stewart, Dolores Ashcroft-Nowicki, Peter Lambourn Wilson.

Each of the above writers contributes to this anthology an essay on an aspect of the Grail archetype and Grail legends, the general aim of the book being to look at the material from both theoretical and experiential points of view. The result is as diverse as the Grail tradition itself, but coalesces into a multifaceted jewel which is a vessel for the power of the archetype that inspires it. John Matthews, in his Introduction, expresses the wish that we may glimpse the patterns that form and dissolve with each writer's evaluation or contribution, until the patterns make up a whole and the Grail's message to each of us is understood within our own depths. It is no easy task to edit a collection of essays which, by the very nature of their subject-matter, necessarily express a wide range of opinions and insights. But John Matthews rightly stresses that there are many paths to the Grail, all of them valid, and the reader who is prepared to give to, as well as take from, this book will uncover the unity beneath the diversity.

Inevitably, each reader will have his or her particular preferences regarding individual essays. I found John Matthews' own 'Temples of the Grail' excellent (the Temple is seen both as an inner reality and as an outwardly-manifesting archetype), while Dolores Ashcroft-Nowicki's pathworking leading us to the Grail Castle is wonderful (replete with beautiful, powerful and evocative symbolism) and Bob Stewart's contribution is original and interesting. Readers of the Hermetic Journal might wish to note that Adam McLean contributes an article on the Grail and alchemical transmutation in history and symbol. Most of the articles are well-written and well-researched, although Brian Cleeve's literalistic interpretations and unsupported hypotheses are to my mind rather implausible.

There are many important themes and recurrent images running through the book; most noticeably, several contributors stress the importance of the balance of the masculine and feminine principles (and hence the reinstatement of the feminine necessary to bring about this equilibrium). Perhaps each reader of this book will uncover the patterns that are important for himself or herself, for if the book is as true as it seems to be to the archetype that inspires it, it may be understood in various ways, under different forms or images, according to the consciousness of the individual. At any rate, it is an important book with a deep magic and beauty about it.

Reviewed by Deirdre Green

THE SECRET TRADITION IN ARTHURIAN LEGEND: The Magical and Mystical Power sources within the Mysteries of Britain  
by Gareth Knight , Aquarian Press 1983, pb 302pp. £5.95

This book is an important contribution to our understanding of the Arthurian legends. Gareth Knight's long involvement in such material reveals itself on every page, and here we do not find the superficial parallels and theorising that characterises many books on this subject, but those much more penetrating insights that obviously can only arise in one who has inwardly worked and pondered over the material for many years. I am writing this review some six months after the book was published and thus have had the opportunity of noticing the critical reaction of some commentators and reviewers. It seems to me that much of this criticism arises out of the fact that this is not a book presenting a detached overview of the Arthurian legends (more than enough of those have been published over the past few decades), but rather a sharing of insights gained by one who is actively working and living within this material, and those who know Gareth Knight personally or who have had the opportunity of attending one of his Hawkwood weekend workshops, will certainly testify to his deep immersion in this particular stream of the Mystery tradition. So this book provides us with the opportunity to step inside the soul of one who has inwardly struggled with the archetypal beings that sustain the Matter of Britain. I feel sure that some people will reject the book merely because of some statement that may not mesh with their own preconceptions. However in doing so, they are both missing out and failing to do the book justice. For this book in a sense sums up an esoteric current within the Mysteries of Britain. I for one have benefitted from Gareth Knight being so willing to share his perceptions and insights into these matters with me through this book.

Adam McLean