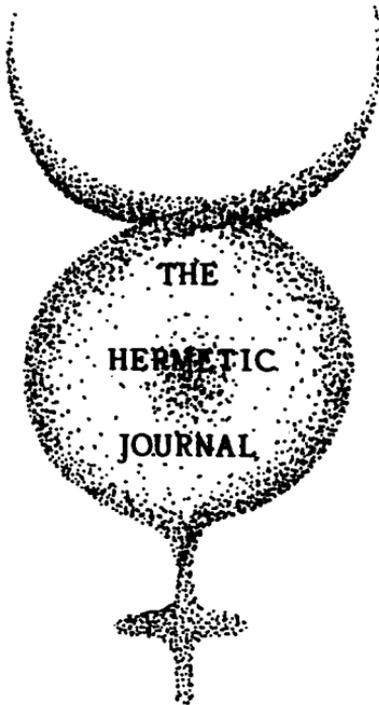


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EDITORIAL

In recent months here in Britain great controversy has arisen over human embryo research, and legislation designed to stop research on human embryos is currently before Parliament. Various groups have seen this as a deeply religious and moral issue using emotive phrases like "protecting the right to life of the unborn child". The doctors involved in this research, however, say that they find it difficult to draw any sharp line between the point when they merely have egg and sperm cells taken from their patients and an embryo that could develop into a fetus and thus become a new human being. A fertilised human egg, some eight or so days old, consisting of a sphere of cells, can only be viable if it implants into the wall of the womb, and even at this stage

of development is often naturally rejected by a normal healthy fertile woman. Add to this the fact that the development of twins seems to occur after this point, and one can see that many doctors interested in working with human embryos of up to eight or so days of age, feel justified in their stance that early embryos should not be seen as unborn human beings, and thus they believe that the simplistic moral position advanced by some critics does not address the facts.

Many important questions are raised by this moral issue that challenge us as esotericists. How do we relate the soul to the body? The embryo is initially merely an aggregation of cells that may in certain circumstances develop into an individual human being. At what point does the embryo acquire a soul? Earlier this century esotericists such as theosophists and anthroposophists did

not hold back from trying to find solutions to this riddle. (For example, Rudolf Steiner suggested that the 'ego' or spirit of a human being incarnated in the developing embryo around the 21st day when the neural tube, the basis for the spinal cord and the central nervous system, forms itself through a migration of cells across the embryonic disc).

I wonder, however, whether these earlier attempts of esotericists to see physical developments in the embryo as the work of the incarnating spirit building its physical vehicle for this life, remains a valid viewpoint in the present current of philosophical thought. For they retain a certain dualism between spirit and body that may not map onto reality.

Many parallels exist with other domains of human knowledge being explored at present. For example, just how is our consciousness bound up in our brain? The naive esoteric view that the brain is merely a machine through which our spirit gains a precarious hold upon an outer material plane of existence, although comforting and valid in a certain way, presents some difficulties when examined in the light of new discoveries in neuro-physiology and contemporary philosophy.

Likewise, recent theories of cosmology presents us with certain problems if we try to hold to naive dualism. A cosmological picture is emerging at present which radically explains the creation and evolution of the Universe as a result of the pre-geometry of higher dimensional space-time. But how do we account for the existence of intelligence, the sense of 'being', and our creative human consciousness within this model of cosmic evolution. Simplistically, we can argue for the existence of a spiritual plane which lies above or beyond the material universe and yet somehow directs its evolution. This was the path taken by the theosophists in their picture of 'spiritual evolution', but this ultimately is a return to a kind of

dualism. But perhaps in so doing we fail to take on board some of the most profound ideas in the history of human thought that are found in Quantum Theory, particularly in the realisation that consciousness is implicit in observation and that the 19th century ideal of the objective observer remotely observing events is no longer possible in Quantum Science. In the new philosophy of science that is emerging, consciousness arises out of quantum probability, and these are surely the ideas we must absorb if as esotericists we are to evolve and remain in touch with the currents of thought that will work in the next millenium.

It may be no accident that the hermetic alchemical tradition centuries ago looked closely at the possibility of creating or manipulating life in a test tube or flask. Thus their concern with the homunculus and the sowing of 'the seed of the red man and his white wife' in a retort to give birth to the Philosophic Child. The hermetic philosophy may indeed be capable of bridging this seeming gulf between spirit and body. There is a profound message in the Hermetic maxim "that which is above is as that which is below", which can conquer the simplistic dualism that I believe holds us back from a true rapprochement with new philosophical ideas struggling to be reborn in current human thought, but only when we remember to complete the phrase "and that which is below is as that which is above, to accomplish the miracle of the one thing".

Perhaps this realisation that the spiritual and the material are not separate realms, fundamentally severed one from another, but as the ancient hermeticists knew only too well, interpenetrate one another so profoundly that they cannot be teased apart, might help us address these deep problems posed us by the far reaching discoveries of our age.

Adam M'lea

In July this year I will be moving to Lampeter in Wales, and relocating the Hermetic Journal and Magnum Opus publishing business there. There should be little visible impact on subscribers to the Journal or book purchasers, as I have been able to arrange things well in advance to enable a smooth transition over this period. The Journal and book publishing will continue as usual. I will have the post office automatically redirect mail with minimal delay from the Edinburgh address for the next three years at least, so people shouldn't worry about mail going astray if addressed to 12 Antigua Street, Edinburgh. I will send out my new address and telephone number, with the next issue of the Journal which will be issued in August from Lampeter.

Deirdre and I will be living in a large cottage near Lampeter in rural mid-Wales. The peaceful atmosphere and slower pace of life in that environment should have some positive effect on my work and I am looking forward to the change as I have lived in the same flat above a noisy main road in Edinburgh for nearly 14 years. In addition I will be much nearer to the centre of population of Britain and only a few hours drive from the Midlands or Avon-Bristol area, so I expect to be able in 1986 to undertake a number of conferences and weekend workshops without the difficulties of extensive travelling I have had in organising such events from Scotland. Visiting me will prove a bit more difficult, and as we are quite remote and there is only a poor public transport system in that region of Wales, it would be best if any colleagues wish to visit for them to make a definite arrangement well in advance.

I have never before made any direct request to my subscribers for articles for the Hermetic Journal, as I do get quite a lot of material sent to me unsolicited, but as I know there are many talented and deeply studied readers of this Journal, I would just like to say that I am always open to considering additional articles for publication. I cannot pay, of course, for these, the Journal cannot be a profit making venture at the price I charge for subscriptions, but copyright remains with the authors and I never edit articles but include them in their entirety provided they meet a certain scholarly standard and are within the broad context of hermeticism embraced by the Journal. Anyone who wants to write something could if they wish send a synopsis for consideration.

PLEASE NOTE :- I have now purchased an optical text reader which reads your typescript (provided it is in a standard format) directly into my word processor, and this saves me time in preparing work for publication. If you want to write something for me, please, before typing up the final draft, send for my 'notes for contributors to the Hermetic Journal' which outlines this standard format I would prefer my writers to use.

Dr Francis Israel Regardie died in March 1985. It appears that though he had not been well for some time he had remained actively working. Regardie's contribution to western occultism was considerable and indeed he influenced two or three generations of occultists. Although he wrote many books out of his own inspiration, the major event in his creative life was the compilation and publication of the Golden Dawn material (the first edition of which was issued in 1937). Regardie had been very close to Aleister Crowley, acting as his secretary for a while, and was a practising occultist and member of a working lodge. In the 1930's he recognised the value of the Golden Dawn material he had access to and realised that this current of occultism was in great danger of dying out, for it was then pursued by its aged members in an atmosphere of great secrecy. Regardie felt that the esoteric material, the rituals and order lessons he had in his possession, should be published, but he agonised as to whether this was the best course of action. He



eventually decided to publish and the strong revival of interest in the Golden Dawn system certainly has vindicated him. Those who work with this current recognise they owe him a great debt for making this material available. It seems that Regardie profited little from this, indeed he was badly treated by publishers of this great work on the Golden Dawn, and he additionally suffered the loss of many of his manuscripts and source material through a theft. The unfair way he had been treated by publishers hurt him deeply, but happily during his last years, a american benefactor made possible the publication of a new edition of the Golden Dawn volume, which was substantially rewritten by Regardie. He continued to work even well into his eighties and during the last few years also collaborated in producing a set of Golden Dawn Tarot Cards. Apart from his occult magical work, Regardie was well known as a therapist practicing various techniques evolved from psychotherapy and esoteric lore for healing the psyche of his patients. He thus also contributed towards the rapprochement between depth psychology and esotericism that we have witnessed over the past decades.

Through his long life Regardie achieved a great deal indeed. He avoided the trap of setting himself up as a guru, though many American occultists would readily have made themselves his acolytes. He was too wise, too canny, to go in that direction, and all his life he preferred rather to be seen as a channel for the transmission of esoteric ideas and traditions, than to project himself as their source. The books in his own name - the Tree of Life, Garden of Pomegranates, the Philosophers' Stone, Art of True Healing, the Middle Pillar - reveal quite clearly he saw himself in this role of transmitter of the occult tradition. Francis Israel Regardie certainly lived a life of great value, inspiring and encouraging through his books and the personal help he gave to individual acquaintances, the continuing growth of interest in the esoteric teachings.

## HERMETIC ART

### GNOSTIC ALCHEMY OF THE IMAGINATION

By A.C. Evans ◦

There are the comic exaggerations of what elsewhere is expressed in elegy, namely, if you like, the Hermeticism of the spirit  
-Samuel Beckett (1936)

#### 1. ART AND EXPERIENCE

There are two ways of understanding art. There is a traditional philosophy which, as Susan Sontag (1961) has shown, is based on a mimetic theory derived from the Greeks (mainly Plato). But there is also a second way - perhaps of greater antiquity and authenticity - which defines art in terms of experience rather than imitation (*mimesis*) or even communication.

As Sontag explains, Plato defined art in order to limit its significance. He categorized it as "an elaborate tromp l'oeil and therefore a lie" because, according to his philosophy, the world is also limited in significance being merely the transient reflection of pure 'forms' - the numinous Platonic Ideas. So, if art was to be merely mimetic or imitative - a representation of the world - then it is reduced in status to nothing but an "imitation of an imitation". The reasons for the profound influence of the Platonic aesthetic and the reactionary utopian theory from which it derives are too complex to discuss here. Suffice it to say that the classical rationalism of the Greek philosophers which later fused with the other-worldly doctrines of Christianity was deeply opposed to the atavistic excesses of the preceding mythic-tribal cultures

The experiential view of art is in opposition to this rational limitation of art as mimesis. It is not a question of what art means - it is a question of what it does. It is a view of art as a vehicle for the imaginative transmutation of the artist: it derives from the idea that the artist is an adept, an initiate, a creator, or let us say, an alchemist skilled in the methods of purification and transformation, a quasi-divine manipulator of charged images and symbols.

In the hieratic epochs before the Greek exultation of reason, art was fused with ritual and magic. Poetry was a mode of ecstatic utterance, a technique of invocation for shaman-priests. Pictorial art was the externalisation of thought-forms - a mechanism of reification. Art was the origin of talismanic and sympathetic magic. Like the so-called 'divine' word of creation ritual images and verbal incantations were experienced as charged symbols - as transducers-transformers of psychic energy; a theurgic weapon in the armoury of the magus - the lapis philosophorum. Modern hermetic art attempts to return

to these ancient conceptions of the arts and the artist. It attempts, through all its forms (but especially through poetry and drama) to repossess the magical powers of the imagination stultified by millenia of rationalism

## HERMETICISM AND ART

Today the term 'hermeticism' relates to two distinct phenomena which are nevertheless linked together in deep and subtle ways. In traditional usage the term refers to a complex of esoteric mystery teachings dating from the Hellenistic period. Hans Jonas (1958) refers to "the religion of the Thrice Greatest Hermes", the legendary author of the corpus hermeticum. This collection of scriptures contains such works as The Pimander, a gnostic cosmogony, the Asclepius, a text which influenced the development of Renaissance aesthetic magic, and the famous Tabula Smaragdina (Emerald Table), a doctrine of nature later incorporated via Islamic sources into alchemical thought.

Throughout the ages the literature of the Western Hermetic Tradition has been associated with works of cryptic obscurity and enigmatic visual images. It is this 'obscurity' which has given rise to the common use of the word 'hermetic', as in the phrase 'hermetically sealed'. Many Hermetic works - such as Bruno's De Umbris Idearum (On the Shadow's of Forms, 1582) are of great imaginative power. And many alchemical illustrations such as those contained in Trismosin's Splendor Solis (1582), or the drawings of the Rosicrucian Matthieu Merian (for example his illustrations to Maier's Atalanta Fugiens, 1618) are artworks in their own right. When considered in hindsight they can appear as antecedents of Surrealism and certain modern fantastic paintings (such as the works of Ernst Fuchs or H.R. Giger). The works of The Netherlandish painter known as Hieronymus Bosch (1450-1516) are outstanding examples of a refined late Gothic style incorporating alchemico-hermetic visions which continue to exert a fascination despite (or because of) their 'hermetic' obscurity - particularly paintings such as The Garden of Earthly Delights and The Temptation of Saint Anthony (Lisbon). Bosch's paintings, which are infused with a millenarian pessimism reflect an instinctive understanding of the role of the artist (or his alter-ego, Saint Anthony) as a receiver of enigmatic visions and an explorer of the innermost recesses of the human mind. It is these qualities above all which recur with prominence in modernistic hermeticism.

Just as the antithetical mimetic theory of art gained ascendancy over post-mythic culture when the hieratic gave way to rational classicism, so a new 'hermetic' school or theory of poetry emerged during the European fin-de-siècle era (c1870-1914) when the influence of the Platonic-Christian worldview (as enshrined in doctrines of Progress and Cartesian mécanisme) entered a crucial phase of decay. During this period, as in the renaissance art combined with esotericism and gave birth to a new gnosis or aesthetic renovation. There are crucial differences, however. Our modern cultural crisis is more radical because it is a post-religious crisis - a naked crisis of 'the real' that deepens with every passing decade.

Christine Brooke-Rose (1981):

"That this century is undergoing a reality crisis has become a banality, easily and pragmatically shrugged off. Perhaps it is in fact undergoing a crisis of the imagination; a fatigue, a decadence."

It is typical of this cultural fatigue or 'decadence' that, unlike his renaissance predecessor, our modern artist-poet no longer relies upon traditional symbols or familiar modes of discourse and signification (except to subvert them, as in some styles of 'Post-modernism'). The obscurity (hermeticism) of modern art arises, therefore not from its assimilation of certain occult theories (the doctrines of the androgyne, the idea of 'correspondences') but from a ultrapersonal subjectivity bordering in some cases upon a solipsistic despair - as for instance in certain works by Mallarmé, Khnopff, Artaud and Beckett. The uninitiated reader-viewer finds modern artworks 'obscure' not (as is often asserted) because of some failure to communicate on the part of the artist but because the artist does not intend to communicate through works which are essentially private fetishes or personal sigils. Like a painting by Bosch they are often all the more effective for this very reason.

Nevertheless modern art and modern occultism remain complimentary tropisms: elements of a profound shift in modern sensibility. An understanding of magical terminology and ideas can help in appreciating modern art as an art of evocation, invocation and initiation a new aesthetic gnosis - a revolutionary inner alchemy of imaginative transformation.

In modern literature the term 'hermetic' has been used to identify a particular style or school of poetry. It was first popularised in establishment circles by the Italian critic Francesco Flora in 1936 when he used it in relation to the work of poets like Arturo Onofri, Giuseppe Ungaretti and other Italians such as Luzi, Gatto and Sereni. For Flora la poesia ermetica was a style of subjective writing originated by the French decadents and Symbolists of the fin-de-siècle: Rimbaud, Mallarmé and Valéry, and their precursors: Poe, Nerval and Charles Baudelaire.

According to J.A. Cuddon's Dictionary of Literary Terms (1977) the characteristics of this hermetic poetry are 'obscurity', subjectivism and evocative power. It is

"obscure difficult poetry in which language and imagery are subjective and in which the 'music' and the suggestive power of the words are as of great an importance (if not greater) as the sense."

Cuddon also observes that this poetry often exploited "occult symbolism".

There was also a simultaneous development towards hermetic obscurity in the pictorial arts during the fin-de-siècle era. As literature moved closer to the absurd and the indeterminate, eroding the frontiers between poetry and prose and fact and fiction, transforming conventional syntax, so painting moved via Impressionism and Neo-Impressionism towards a final decomposition of meaning (Dadaism) and a total elimination of objective representation (Abstraction). This decomposition was accompanied by a plethora of schools and secessionist movements, each more outrageous and more 'modern' than the last: Decadence, Symbolism, Naturalism, Art Nouveau, Synthetism, Expressionism, Magic Realism, Futurism, Rayonism, Cubism, Orphism, Metaphysical Painting and Surrealism to name but a few. Many of the artists and writers in these movements incorporated occult ideas into their work - the painters, Gustave Moreau, Fernand Khnopff, Jean Delville and Frank Kupka, for example. But it is important to distinguish between the use of occult ideas as a theme and the conception of the artwork itself as having intrinsic magical properties.

At the core of the artistic developments in the nineteenth century flowed a powerful all pervasive current of influence. Heretical, iconoclastic, radical and above all anti-classical, anti-rational, anti-mechanistic and anti-academic, this chain of development has recently been identified by critics as the "experience-of-limits" literature. (phrase originated by Julia Kristeva) [see Brooke-Rose(1981)].

Writing about one of the most notorious exponents of this strand of literature - Louis Ferdinand Céline - Erica Ostrovsky(1967) has referred to a "black current" of writing, "filled with militant pessimism and violent derision, denoting a vision that is no less sombre than its poetic strength."

Grouped under this heading of "experience-of-limits" are a number of famous - or infamous - names: Poe, Sade, Kleist, De Quincey, Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, Rimbaud, Baudelaire, Lautréamont, Mallarmé, Huysmans, Laforgue, Kafka, Nerval, Jarry, Céline, Artaud, Bataille, and the Surrealist poets, chiefly André Breton. Today the tradition is manifest in the works of Samuel Beckett and William S. Burroughs.

The outstanding achievements of this modern tradition have been stylistic innovation and a bold exploration of the repressed, negative aspects of the human mind - regardless of consequences. Without exception each one has set out to "enlarge the limits of the human signifiable" (Brooke-Rose), creating a form of writing both idiosyncratic and often inaccessible ('hermetic'). For example Céline's Journey to the End of Night, Beckett's How it is, Rimbaud's Season in Hell, Artaud's New Revelation of Being, Mallarmé's Un Coup de Des, Nerval's Aurélia, Lautréamont's Maldoror and Jarry's Faustroll.

In a wider context one can point to a number of experimental styles derived from the 'experience of limits' tradition: the linguistic experiments of the decadents (Laforgue, Huysmans), the 'words-in-freedom' of the Italian and Russian Futurists and the 'pure psychic automatism' of the Surrealists. The hermetic 'obscurity', and the shocking content of most of these works almost always provoked moral panic in the uninitiated reader and outright hostility from the critical establishment. Like heretics, these artist-poets became maudits or pariahs, outcasts exiled, like occultists, to the margins of cultural acceptability. Like Mallarmé or Stefan George they only wrote for small circles of initiates but functioned, nevertheless as intercessors between society and inscrutable forces of change.

If this modern hermeticism is a new form of inner alchemy, then the creative process is a procedure of purification - further, it is a form of self-initiation. The pariah-artist (maudit) of the nineteenth century was the epitome of social alienation: a nihilist aesthete isolated by the obscurity of his works, enclosed, like des Esseintes (the hero of the seminal novel A Rebours (1884) by J.K. Huysmans) in a sanctum of art, an inner retreat where psychic forces - unleashed in a mana effect by the melohypnosis of creativity - precipitate a crisis of individuation. [This idea of a secluded retreat was not just a literary fantasy. Many distinguished fin-de-siècle personalities retreated into a real-life 'thebaid', for example: W.B. Yates in his watchtower, Strindberg in his 'Blue Tower', Fernand Khnopff in his self-designed house, Franz von Stuck in the Villa Stuck, Marcel Proust in his invalid's room.] Taken to the limit this crisis became a magical ordeal - a confrontation with the experience of psychic death. This is the experience common to all esoteric traditions and variously known as the Nox Profundis, the Dark Night of the Soul, or in alchemical terms, the Nigredo (Blackening).

As C.G.Jung and others have shown, the alchemical process reflects 'archetypal' processes of psychic growth - 'individuation' or occult self-initiation. Hermetic art, while superficially referring to a cultural construct - Flora's poesia ermetica - is also grounded in the same psychic procedures. It follows that an examination of the works of a true hermetic artist like, say, Mallarmé, should reveal the same 'archetypal' procedures of individuation as Jung's analysis of hermetic texts. Furthermore a wider historical perspective reveals that 'hermeticism' in various modes - gnostic or aesthetic - emerges at particular times in cultural history. The reasons for this can also be understood in terms of individuation, or initiation - collective evolution. The Hellenistic era, the Renaissance and the modern fin-de-siècle period were all epochs of profound change: epochs of cultural and social crisis.

## 2. PERSONAL HERMETICISM - some key works by Mallarmé

The supreme master of fin-de-siècle Hermetic Symbolism was Stéphane Mallarmé(1842-1898), the greatest and most influential poet of the period. In his writings he laid bare that twilight zone of experience where language - stretched to breaking point - implodes to reveal a void of non-meaning. He formulated a coherent philosophy of paradox (described at length by R.G.Cohn) and created an idiosyncratic style to express the subtlest nuances of thought. In his personal life he became the epitome of the vatic poet or voyant - a seeker after "Orphic explanations of the Earth" - an alchemist of language engaged in a rigorous procedure of purification - an intercessor between an initiated readership of fellow poets and "the absolute" (Néant/Azur)

### The Grand Oeuvre

Chisholm (1962) has pointed to a direct correlation between Mallarmé's art and the alchemical process:

"For Mallarmé, objects are always... only starting points, baser metals that have to be transmuted into the pure gold of correspondences,"

The term 'correspondences' refers here to the idea of poetic analogy introduced into French poetry by Baudelaire and derived from Boehme and Swedenborg.

Chisholm also writes:

"For these magical transmutations of objects, as for his other transformations, Mallarmé's most important adjunct, his pierre philosophale, is the word."

These critical observations help us to categorise Mallarmé's Hermeticism from the viewpoint of magical-alchemical tradition. The objective of his art is TRANSFORMATION. The means of transformation is THE WORD. Words are a mode of signification, (as are IMAGES) which, like magical sigils or sacred fetish-objects, become for the poet (as for the sorcerer-magus-chemist) charged SYMBOLS with a power of EVOCATION. These powers of evocation are augmented by the doctrine of CORRESPONDENCES provoking the effect of Sympathetic Magic. The object of these transformative procedures may appear to be aspects of the external world - just as the ancient alchemists applied their 'art' to metallic elements. However, as modern research explains, this

external operation complements an interior, or subjective operation of potentially greater significance - the transformation of the operator himself. Thus the aesthetic alchemy of hermetic poetry correlates closely with the ancient hermetic and magical traditions which all derive from natural inner processes of psycho-somatic development variously called 'Individuation' or Self-Initiation. Modern hermetic art, however exhibits certain unique characteristics. Firstly: self-reflexiveness. This refers to a tendency for modern artists to use art itself as their primary subject, a technique which greatly enhances the hermetic effect of obscurity. Secondly there is the tendency to avoid traditional symbolism and modes of discourse leading to further 'obscurities' achieved via private symbolism and extreme stylistic experimentation. (As, for instance in the prose poetry of Samuel Beckett). An interesting case of similar processes at work in modern magic is the magical trance art of Austin Osman Spare whose mysterious writings and images derive much of their power from an intensely private occult system of sigilization.

While Mallarmé indeed pictured himself working upon a 'grand oeuvre' in the tradition of the alchemists ('our ancestors') he took the trouble to gently dissociate himself from contemporary occultism (he referred to the 'pauvre kabbalistes'). The reason for this was twofold: firstly because, in the fin-de-siècle era there was a genuine divergence between artistic avantgardism and occult revivalism. The poets were confronting a dissolution of meaning and tradition at the forefront of cultural development whereas the occultists were primarily re-vamping alleged 'ancient' traditions. Secondly because, as Chisholm also points out, while Mallarmé can in some respects be considered an 'idealist' [primarily as a historical label in so far as Decadence and Symbolism have been identified as aspects of an idealist countermovement against middle of the road Naturalistic Realism] he was in a deep and subtle sense also a materialist. Like the proto-scientific alchemists he grounded his transmutations "in the domain of physical realities...He is preoccupied by the essence of things; but an essence has to have an object, has to be the essence of something." (Chisholm). This 'materialism' is connected to an intrinsic element in the creative imagination which insists upon interpreting erstwhile abstractions (eg symbols, words) as literal experiential realities. [O'Keefe(1982) has identified this 'literalness of the imagination' as an essential characteristic of magic.]

In the fin-de-siècle era there was confusion between this idealism and materialism just as there was confusion between pure hermeticism based upon private symbols and the usage of traditional archetypal symbols derived from myth and legend (as for instance in the paintings of Gustave Moreau which Huysmans nevertheless perceived as examples of modernism). By the 1920s the Surrealists were making clear distinctions between 'mystical' (idealist) categorisations of art and 'materialist' approaches, capitalizing upon systems of thought like Psychoanalysis and Marxist dialectical materialism which were not available to the fin-de-siècle poets. This accounts for the impossibility of incorporating Surrealism into an occultist framework. Modern occultism does not draw clear distinctions between 'mysticism' (idealism) and magic (materialism).

In a short article called Magic(1893) Mallarmé identified "une parité secrète" between alchemy, sorcery and art (poetry). In general terms he imagined the creative process as an act of distillation and compression - a slow purification of "the words of the tribe", as he wrote in The Tomb of Edgar Poe. This purification would enable the creation of the grand oeuvre, the ultimate book (sometimes called Le Livre) conceived as a network of cosmic analogy:

"a book containing the sum of his co-ordinated attempts to transmute everyday realities into their higher correspondences, just as the alchemists had sought the philosopher's stone which would enable them to transmute baser metals into gold," (Chisholm)

This cosmic book - fragments of which were (perhaps) embodied in some of Mallarmé's own writings discussed below - was to be an Orphic explanation of the Earth" symbolised by an akashic aura enveloping the planet with the "unwonted mystery of a vast brilliance". Mallarmé often used the image of a constellation of stars signify this Book which was not immortal but a perishable human projection.

#### MANIFESTO OF THE HERMETIC:"Prose pour des Esseintes" (1885)

If there could be such a thing as a manifesto of hermetic poetry then this crucial work would be it. Prose was a basic statement about the poetic experience of visionary perception, the phenomenon Mircea Eliade has called 'hierophanization'. Its iconography derives from the archetypes of the voyage, the island and the soror mystica (female companion). Symbols familiar to students of the hermetic tradition but occurring in the poem naturally and in no way rendering it less 'obscure' to Mallarmé's contemporary readership.

The poet, accompanied by a mysterious female penetrates an island which is also a magic garden, Mallarmé populated this magical garden with irises, lilies, gladiolae and fantastic flowers of his own creation called Iridées. Here the poet experiences an epiphanic moment, a hierophanization of the senses and perceives the flowers as numinous symbols - living, vibrating surrounded by an aura or "lacuna":

"...each one..was adorned with a lucid lacuna  
which separated it from the garden."

These iridescent objects are an epiphany of living energy patterns called into being by the poet who through his art has unravelled the secret of their magic names.

Mallarmé indicated that he was more than cautious towards such phenomena (the birth of the lapis?), knowing the fate of his predecessors Baudelaire, Nerval and Poe whose lives had been disrupted by the obsessive influences of such "mystic" energies. At this point the female companion (his anima) intervenes and, by a smile, exercises a restraining influence. The poet hesitates and realises just in time that his "craft" must be strengthened by a remorseless process of refinement before his will can respond to these primal visions.

In Prose Mallarmé defines the work of the hermetic artist as "a work of patience" ("the work of my patience, Atlases, herbals, and rituals"). The beauty of the magic island cannot be assimilated by incoherent frenzy, a view which contrasts sharply with traditional romantic ideas of art.

For Mallarmé the iridées or occult flowers were symbols of his lapis philosophorum: the creative, vibratory word - the poem itself as R.G. Cohn observes, he knew that the lapis was an "excessive and dangerous vision" rising atavistically from the collective unconscious. Mallarmé hinted at this in the following lines:

"Hyperbole! de sa memoire  
Triomphalement ne sais-tu  
Te lever, aujourd'hui grimoire

Dans un livre de fer vetu"

(Hyperbole! from my memory  
Triumphantly can't you  
Rise today old gramarye,  
Cloaked in a book of iron.)

- trans. R.G.Cohn

Students of the esoteric tradition will appreciate the implications of the word "grimoire" in this context - under certain circumstances the lapis becomes demonic. Its creation is an ordeal - a descent into the dark night of the soul. Indeed on Mallarmé's magic island is a tomb inscribed with the single word "Pulchérie" (Beauty) hidden behind the "too great" gladiolus. Much of Mallarmé's work revolved around the idea of death. The motif was a preoccupation of his mentor Edgar Allan Poe who derived his doctrine of aestheticism from the idea that absolute beauty can only be fully grasped beyond the grave.

It is important to remember that this poem was dedicated to des Esseintes, the ultra-aesthete - hero of Huysmans' A Rebours. Des Esseintes was inspired by Baudelaire's injunction to seek "the new" and was thus a fictional embodiment of the heretical imperative at the heart of modern art - the compulsion to push to the limits of human experience, to "enlarge the limits of the human signifiable (Brooke-Rose/Kristeva). But, in following this command to the letter, by secluding himself in his refined Thebaid on the outskirts of Paris and subjecting himself to a violent experiment in reversion, Des Esseintes destroys himself, Like the poet depicted in Rimbaud's Drunken Boat he finds that he must return to normality - or die.

In Prose Mallarmé presented his reaction to the problem posed by Huysmans in A Rebours. His answer to Des Esseintes' terrible predicament was to direct attention to the "work of patience" - the lesson of total aesthetic asceticism, total dedication to the project of hermetic purification, the slow purification of 'the word', and dialectically, the will-imagination of the artist strengthened in the flames of the creative process.

In A Rebours Des Esseintes faced death (or total psychosomatic collapse). He reached the brink of the Void and fell back. Shattered and crushed in spirit he turns to God. Mallarmé, on the other hand evolved a response to nihilism which counterbalanced this religious relapse. In Prose he acknowledged that Aestheticism leads to psychic death but intimated that death is an ordeal. Death can be overcome with discipline - with the work of "patience", the "science" of "atlases, herbals and rituals".

Cohn reminds us that Mallarmé conceived his art as a total experience, an exercise both spiritual and profane, a gnostic replacement for the "vestigial Christian myth".

KATABASIS: The "Sonnet on X" (c 1866)

According to Cohn this was Mallarmé's "first truly hermetic poem". It was begun during a crisis known as Les Nuits de Tournon (c1866) during which the poet formulated his vocation and rejected his belief in God. The poem is untitled and is referred to as the Sonnet on X because it is composed using rhymes ending with the letter.

Like many other poems by Mallarmé this sonnet is devoted to the process of poetic creation. The second quatrain depicts the setting: an interior (perhaps inspired by a Redon drawing), an abandoned room. These are vague shapes of

furniture and an overwhelming sense of absence, abolition or desertion. The dominant motif is a peculiar object, a shell-like container or "ptyx" described as "an abolished trinket of sonorous emptiness." A phrase in parenthesis reads:

"...for the Master has gone to gather tears  
in the Styx with this single object on which  
nothingness prides itself."  
- trans. A.Hartley

The Master-Poet has vacated his room, his inner sanctum (the essential fin-de-siècle Thebaid) by some act of escamotage trans-location.

The symbol of the cross (or X) was of central importance in Mallarmé's aesthetic of gnostic paradox. It represented dual polarity and indicated the structure of the universe/mind drawing upon a typically 'hermetic' idea - the intersection of opposites (analysis / synthesis, positive/negative, male/female) schematically fixed in terms of the vertical/horizontal axes. Obviously these ideas are closely related to the Cabalistic Tetragrammaton - and we know that Mallarmé was familiar to some extent with the writings of Eliphas Levi Zahed. Students of Jungian theory will appreciate the significance of the cross as a symbol of the Self and the linkage of quaternities with mandala symbolism.

Significantly Kenneth Grant (1977) identifies the cross as a symbol of both the true self and of the idea of Projection into Otherness. It is possible to trace these themes back to ancient death-doctrines such as those enshrined in The Egyptian Book of the Dead. This cross symbolism reinforces the themes of initiation and crisis - the temporal setting of the poem is midnight, the temporal equivalent of the cross, the time when the spheres of Being and nonbeing intersect - a time of change and anguish: The Dark Night of the Soul.

The empty room (salon vide) is the typical room of the nihilist aesthete who has pursued his quest for the "experience of limits" to the point of psychic death - and beyond. The room is empty because the "experience of limits reveals an absence of meaning. This abyss or void of non-signification (the Mallarméan Néant) is revealed during the agonies of a self-induced "dark night" or Nigredo experience. The opening image of the poem depicts a lamp-bearer, an embodiment of the existential anguish (angoisse) of the pariah-poet exiled on the margin of cultural acceptance but who, by his very existence, mediates between the uninitiated and the abyss.

During his crisis of 1866 Mallarmé had perceived and assimilated the idea that reality is a void and wrote in a letter the formula: "rien qui est la vérité" (the nothingness which is truth). Against this "suicidal absurdism" (Cohn) Mallarmé placed a "glorious dream" (glorieux mensonge): art devoid of communicative meaning but containing a power of transformation - transformation of the poet, and through him, of the world itself.

## THE Gnostic DIMENSION

Hans Jonas (1858) has explained a number of similarities between the post-classical Hellenistic era (when the original Hermetic writings were produced) and the modern period. Both periods are characterised by a sense of crisis and a nihilistic evaporation of values, and both periods gave rise to doctrines of self-redemption through knowledge. Other commentators like O'Keefe (1982) have defined the Gnostic cosmologies of the Hellenistic era as religious or magical projections symbolising the oppressive hegemony of social structures which are in essence power-structures. [see O'Keefe(1982) p537].

This aspect of Gnostic-Hermetic thought generated an antinomian, revolutionary tendency which is also prevalent in avant-garde modernism, specifically in the defiant separation of art from morality practiced by Aesthetes and Decadents or the strident anti-establishment and anti-religious attitudes of the Dadaists and the Surrealists.

But there are crucial differences between the ideas of the original gnostics and those of the proponents of the new Hermeticism of modernity. For although the original Gnostics condemned the created universe as a prison, much as Baudelaire was to view nineteenth century France as "a hospital in which the sick are all obsessed with a desire for a change of bed", their cosmology still retained the idea of divinity, however alien or remote - the Deus Absconditus.

The task confronting the modern Gnostic is more extreme, more daunting still for he is faced with a universe of complete ambiguity and utter meaninglessness. Furthermore he inhabits a culture in the throws of convulsive change manifest in the eclipse of scientific determinism, the recognition of the unconscious mind, the (so-called) de-mythologization of religion, the collapse of classicism and positivism and the emergence of a fearful new cosmology. This new cosmology which has replaced the old 'sacred canopy' of traditional belief shows a universe of bleak solitude (no friendly extra-terrestrials), ambivalence, indeterminacy, relativism and existential 'angst' generated by the 'absurd' and the blurring of the subject-object relationship. There are no absolute values other than those we chose to project into the Void of unknowing Chaos.

This, in brief, is the wider content in which a new Hermeticism must be understood. This new Hermeticism, this alchemy of the imagination was forged in the fires of alienation by artist-pariahs or poète-maudits working in the 'experience of limits' tradition. They resurrected the magical idea of The Word (or alchimie du verbe). They reestablished the word-image as a creative force born of the disintegration of traditional artistic methodology and conventional discourse. From Impressionism to Cubism, from Baudelaire to Mallarmé and from Huysmans and Artaud to Beckett the writers and artists of the 'experience of limits' tradition formulated a difficult but ultimately positive response to the 'dark night of the soul', the collective Nigredo, which continues to envelop Western society.

The 'experience of limits' requires experience of The Self - even possibly, the re-creation of the self, the generation of a new mode of the 'androgynous monster' or REBIS of alchemy. In its wake it brings a new art of pure evocatory magic and personal transformation. And in the wake of this new art comes a new magia innaturalis, a new magic devoid of the traditional clutter of dead symbols, the necrotic residua of decaying culture. In the melohypnosis of artistic creation the adept works with private symbols which undermine meaning and derail reason. He creates new archetypes through which he plumbs the arcane deeps of both the Void within and the Void without.

According to the master hermeticist, Stephane Mallarmé, the imagination must be augmented by an arduous process of inner purification and ever-subtle refinement. The 'science' (gnosis/knowledge/art) of patience and endurance leads via experience of a magical death-ordeal (katabasis) to acceptance of a radical disengagement from the world. Further it brings an understanding of a new nihilistic, dynamic vision, a vision of the 'real' as 'fiction' - the Void within merges with the Void without.

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## MEDITATIONS ON THE NAME OF GOD

by Gavin S. Bennett ◉

Over the past year or two my interests have led me to "embrace the Name". Certain meditations on same I have found extremely fulfilling and I thought, perhaps, they might be of interest to readers of the Hermetic Journal.

I do not intend to go into any great written detail but would hope that the outline I've used would bear fruit according to each individuals usage.

Basically it involves two separate sets of visualisations of the Name **יהוה** (long may it be praised) using its letters in different configurations according to the four worlds of the Kabbalah.

(The first configurations are illustrated on pages 20 and 21).

The second configurations (page 23) are based again on the Name of Four through the four Worlds but are less easy to illustrate as they involve a passage similar to that already indicated, although with visualised movement to the Infinite from the human scale. This can only be illustrated finitely (miniaturised !) in sequence from above to below.

Again the Heh in Assiah can be seen as the great gate of manifestation. Passing back through it one can take the Vau as the spear of protection in one's right hand and passing back through the other Heh's gate put back on the breast-plate of Vision (☉).

As if in layers each subsequent world is visualised. The further passage to Perfection is pursued by interior perfection to the scale of Infinity.

May all bring down the Hidden Cross to vanquish the Devil.

י הוה

is thus derived

𐤄

The Unmanifest,  
The Hidden Cross.

אד

Adam Kadmon,  
The Heavenly Man.

אד

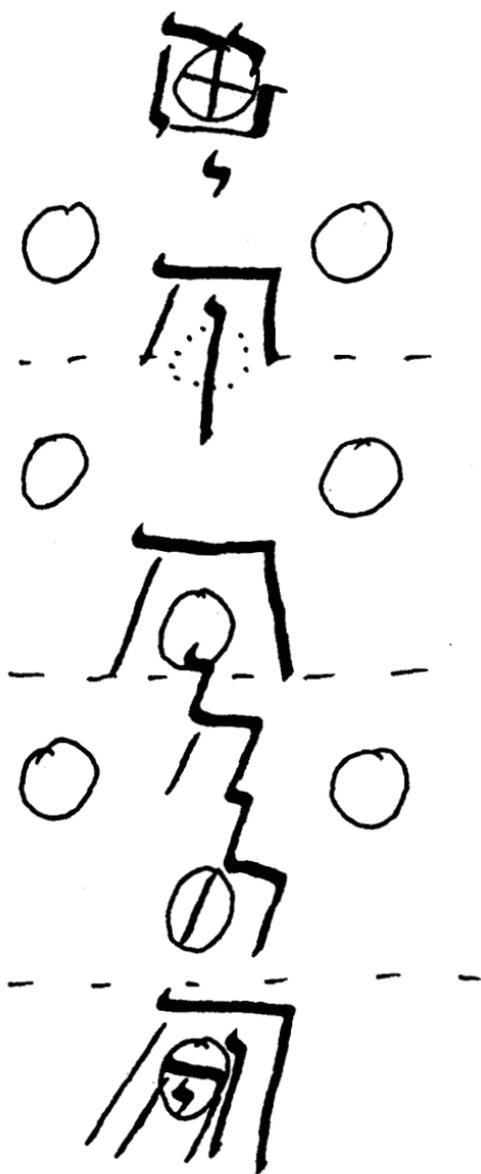
The Steps  
The Cross of Ascension.

אד

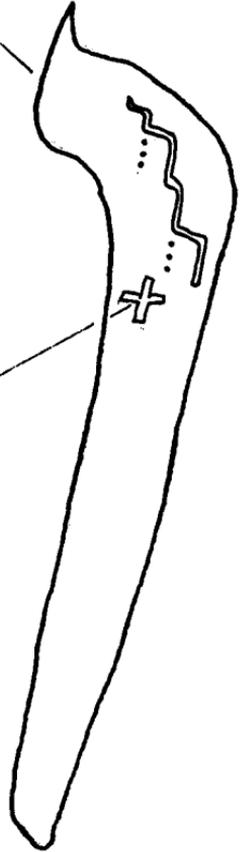
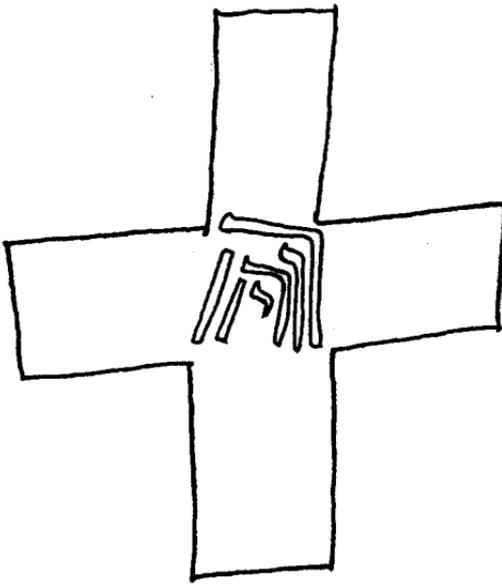
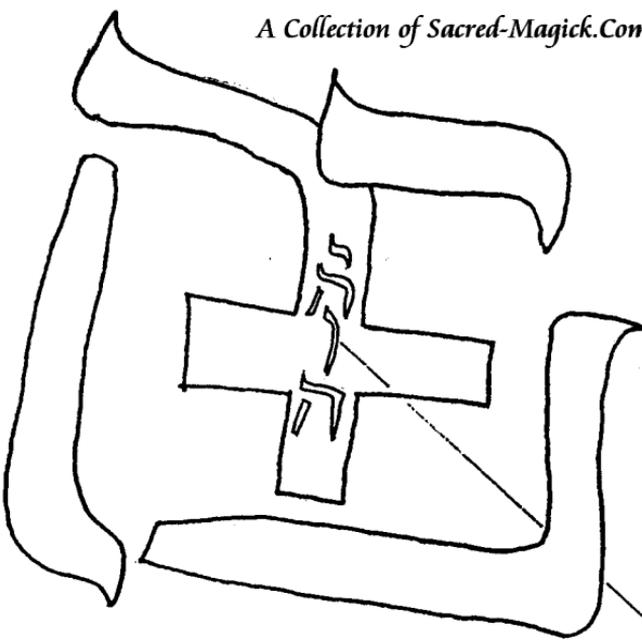
The Devil,  
The Lord backwards  
leading within.

which on the Great Tree gives us the Name throughout the four worlds.

Thus:-



In Assiah the configuration leads us back as through a gate from the exterior, the manifest to be carried by the Hand into the interior. Yetziratically the cross from the two Heh's can carry us up the steps to the Heavenly Man. It needs no further detail from my small hand.



THROUGH A GLASS, DARKLY

A RESPONSE TO 'SPIRITUAL COSMOLOGY IN MODERN SCIENCE'

IN HERMETIC JOURNAL NUMBER 27

Pete Ludbey ◉

I read 'Spiritual Cosmology' with interest, and a certain degree of enthusiasm - but the aspect which caused the enthusiasm will not be too evident in this response, so I want to make the thrust of my argument as clear as possible right now. My criticism is based, not on any defect in the 'New Cosmological Picture' itself, but in the idea that it has any inherent advantage in esotericism over the ideas which it is designed to replace - the Ptolemaic model.

We are all seeking Occult knowledge, and included in a list of possible meanings in my dictionary for 'occult' is the phrase 'beyond the range of ordinary knowledge', which neatly encapsulates the point I wish to make. To criticise an esoteric system because it does not conform to current scientific thinking is invalid on two grounds -

1. The scientific method does not admit of discovering truth 'truth', only eliminating falsity (while this does not make the Ptolemaic viewpoint true, it does put one in the rather unenviable position of having to revise one's system of occult thought every time some physicist or astronomer discovers something new), and
2. Much more importantly in this context, and a point which was actually brought out in 'Spiritual Cosmology', the Ptolemaic system, as used in occultism, 'worked' for thousands of years and, for many, continues to do so. From both a 'scientific' and an 'occult' point of view, that is the important thing - a system is tested by its results, not by its conformity with another system.

For all that the discoveries of Science are wonderful and frequently mind-boggling (and I am an avid proponent of the idea that everyone should be conversant with, at the very least, the general trends of current scientific thought), its descriptive and predictive formulations seldom satisfy the occultist, because what we are seeking cannot be described in everyday language - an inner growth, a change in our perception of the world, that has and can have no absolute referents in the outside world, and can be communicated only by means of parables and analogies to those others who have experienced, or are ready to experience, that change. The occult is 'beyond

the range of ordinary knowledge' for that reason, and descriptions of occult experience are frequently couched in terms so baroque and recondite as to make Ptolemaic Astronomy a shining mirror of scientific clarity beside them. It is to stress this difficulty that esoteric thinkers have used phrases such as

'Aurum nostrum non vulgi'

'Obscurum per obscurius, ignotum per ignotius'

'Not this, not that'

'The Way that can be named is not the Constant Way'.

- and probably a million others I have forgotten or not stumbled across ; the point is that the words we use are always allegorical. If our system has to conform with current scientific thinking in order to prove its validity, then Christ never rose from the dead, because his body would have begun to decompose, Osiris could not have been reassembled by Isis, because she didn't have the requisite surgically sterile environment, Adam couldn't have been 100 cubits tall, because his bones would have snapped beneath his weight - and all you alchemists had better start saving up for a decent-sized particle accelerator if you want to turn lead into gold.

In an endless series of mutually incompatible and increasingly outlandish scenarios, people have conveyed to one another systems of thought which have usually served a dual purpose -

1. To explain who they are and where the world came from (which can successfully be replaced by, or based on, current scientific theories if one so wishes - and which I recommend) and,
2. To convey the method whereby occult knowledge and experience can be obtained by those determined enough (which Science, with its insistence on repeatable and objectively verifiable experiments, cannot deal with).

These two functions are not in any way connected, and only the fact that, in the early days of our race's psychic evolution, the 'scientist' and the 'occultist' were usually the same person, led to the confusion of the two realms of knowledge. The value of a system in occult terms has few points of contact with the objectively verifiable requirements of a hardened scientist, even if firmly grounded in theories which are currently acceptable, and so can be measured solely by whether it 'produces the goods' for an individual occultist.

Let me repeat that I see nothing wrong with the 'New Cosmological Picture' in itself ; but I maintain that it is useful only in the terms that any viewpoint on the Universe is, or can be, useful - it is one more analogy, one more parable of the Great Work ; no more and no less. If someone finds it servicable as an ingredient in their own progress, then Adam McLean is to be thanked for having suggested it ; if we all find it so useful that its popularity grows until the old is cast out in favour of the new picture, then we are all privileged to have been in at the birth of such a major step in occult practice ; but in either case its validity will be shown in its usefulness to individuals, and not in its conformity with a view of the Universe that happens to be currently acceptable. Whatever the infamous dictum of Hermes Trismegistus actually means, it doesn't mean that an occult system has to be in accord with 'fact' - if it does, no magical system that I can think of has ever worked !

The Universe is ONE THING, and in order to (partially) understand it we divide it up ; our carving knife is, like it or not, the scientific method.

The explosion in human knowledge resulting from its use and progressive refinement has brought benefits that few, if any, of us would willingly be without ; but the benefits of esoteric thought are in a totally different category, and to reformulate it in terms of current cosmology may be worse than irrelevant, and we could throw out the baby with the bathwater, unless the process is carried through with an enormous amount of forethought. If the Ptolemaic system was ever any good to an occultist, then we can be sure that it was not because of its astronomical accuracy. If we are going to take the scientific carving knife to the occult (and I think the process is long overdue) then the way to go about it is not to update the occult exegesis in terms of the current scientific 'myth', but to ask why the bizarre, contradictory systems of the past and present work!

The analogies, similies and metaphors we have inherited from the past are merely the bricks and mortar within which the rooms and corridors of the 'Invisible College' are enclosed. New rooms are forever being built, and it is often valuable to explore them ; but it is the contents of the rooms, not the order in which the bricks were laid in the walls, that determines their value.

I agree with Adam Mclean in his criticism of our 'slavishly adhering' to a system - but it is SLAVISH ADHERENCE that is damaging, not a particular system. Despite the inadvertant impression I may have given, I am not a propagandist for the Ptolemaic system - but to systematically remove its 'errors' may give it an aura of scientific respectability, but may hide the most important discovery in modern occultism ; that there needs to be no single grain of 'objective truth' in an occult metaphor for it to produce the goods, or even the Gods!



## THE WROCLAW CODEX OF THE MAGICAL CALENDAR

by Rafal T. Prinke ◉

The importance of the Magical Calendar attributed to Tycho Brahe was discussed by Adam Mclean in his edition of it (Magnum Opus Hermetic Sourceworks No. 1). He also compared the engraved Latin version published in 1620 with the manuscript copy in Vienna and found that the latter contains a number of misspellings and therefore that the published version is earlier. But is it the original or was there an earlier manuscript version ?

When I was looking through the book Die Rosenkretzer by Will-Erich Peuckert (I was not "reading" it as my German is very poor), I found there a short note about a manuscript entitled Ein immerwrender natürlich-magischer Calender which, at that time (1928), was in the Breslauer Universitätsbibliothek. The note was not repeated in later, rewritten, editions of the same book which appeared under the title Das Rosenkreutz. As the title was similar to that of the Magical Calendar, I got interested in the matter and when an opportunity occurred I went to Wrocław (Breslau) to see if the MS is still there, and if so to examine it. Fortunately, the University Library was not destroyed during the war and I found the MS in a very good condition.

It consists of three sheets of very thick parchment, inscribed on one side only, and it can be seen that once they were joined together and formed one big table of correspondences (each of the three sheets is in large quarto format). The inscriptions and drawings are in many colours, the letters are cursive, and the language is German throughout. Both the layout and the content of the Wrocław Codex are almost exactly the same as those of the engraved plate (with a few minor exceptions), so the relationship between them must be much closer than between the published calendar and the Vienna Codex. The most important thing, therefore, is to establish its date or, at least, which one of the two is earlier and possibly original. There are some clues which make it possible to put forward a hypothesis about it. First of all it is the handwriting, which is certainly early 17th or even may be late 16th century though, of course, it is difficult to date the handwriting to within a few years, as an elderly person would write in the style he had learned in his youth. The next point is that the MS is very beautifully executed suggesting "originality", especially as I have not found any misspellings or other mistakes. The latter fact also seems to indicate that the author of the Wrocław Codex was not just a copyist but knew something about the subject matter of it, which is further suggested by the colouring of the various seals and talismanic figures according to the traditional colour correspondences of the planets and signs of the Zodiac. The use of parchment indicates that it had a great importance for the author or possessor ; it cannot indicate an

earlier date as one of the astronomical tables refers to the Old Style and the New Style calendars (just as in both the other versions) and therefore the earliest possible date is 1582.

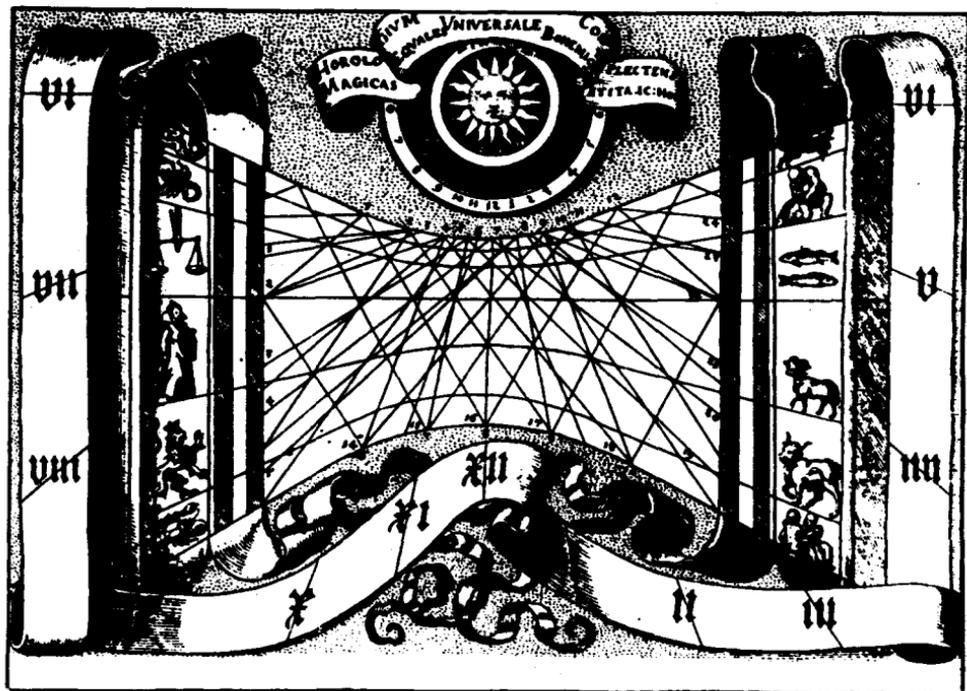
Perhaps the most important and informative clue is the fact that the Wroclaw Codex is not attributed to Tycho Brahe, nor to Trithemius, nor to any other more or less improbable author. However, the other two names associated with the calendar remain in their places : in the bottom left hand corner we read:

Auth. Johan Baptista  
Groschedel ab Aicha

and on the right side at the same level:

Joh: Theodore de Bry  
Excudebr.

This is again a suggestion that this manuscript is the original of the Latin engraved plate published in 1620. It has not been associated with Tycho Brahe yet when it was made and only the names of actual authors were recorded. It may also be noticed that the engraved version has "BAPTISTA", while the MS has the correct spelling "Baptista", so it seems that the engraver made a mistake while copying it.



One more considerable difference is the big sun-dial diagram (used by Adam McLean as the frontispiece to his edition). Besides being slightly different in graphic design, the MS version has the signs of the Zodiac in different arrangement: they start with Aries in the middle of the left hand column and go upwards in the clockwise direction, while in the published version they start on the right hand column and go downwards (also in the clockwise direction). The engraved design has some Arabic numbers on the network of lines in the centre, while the MS has the same in Roman numerals and additionally two columns of figures on each side (four in all), each of which is surmounted by the letters "St.M." (probably "Stunde" and "Minuten", i.e. hours and minutes, as the figures suggest, e.g. 17.3, 16.12, 14.14. etc.). I know too little about sun-dials to judge which of these schemes is more correct astronomically (but the MS seems to be more precise). The inscriptions above the sun reads : "Eine Allgemeine Sonen Uhr" ("A Universal Sun Dial") as compared to the printed version's "The Universal clock, encompassing magical equalities, and striking the hours accordingly in Bohemia". It is possible that the "Bohemia" was added in order to make the Tycho Brahe association more credible. The great astronomer lived in Prague, Bohemia, as the court of Emperor Rudolph II, but he came there only in 1597, so "Bohemia" and "1582" are mutually exclusive as far as Brahe is concerned.

All these facts clearly suggest that the Wroclaw Codex is earlier than the published Latin version of the Magical Calendar (and, of course, than the Vienna Codex), and may even be the original copy. As it is not attributed to any improbable authors, I am inclined to believe that Groschedel and de Bry are its real authors. Adam McLean observed that Groschedel, who was the author of two alchemical books, was rather a compiler than an original writer. Since the Magical Calendar is a magnificent compilation, his authorship is quite probable. Also, if we accept that the published version was engraved by de Bry (or under his supervision), then it is probable that the Wroclaw MS was drawn by him. All the small pictures and sigils are exactly identical with the engraved ones, even in such minute details as the tents behind Moses in the top right hand corner and the "horns" on his head. They are executed with great artistry and precision, and the calligraphy is also very nice. If this hypothesis is correct, it may have considerable importance for our understanding of the role played by Johan Theodore de Bry in the Rosicrucian hermetic revival. Besides being a publisher and engraver of hermetic works, he may have also produced manuscript drawings, etc. for individuals or groups (the Rosicrucian Order, if such existed, or circles connected with such eminent hermetists as Fludd, Maier, Sendiviogius, Boehme, etc.).

I wanted to give a list of colours used in the Wroclaw Codex but, on second thoughts, I decided that it would be too complex and would take up too much space to be worth publishing. However, if any of the readers is interested in it, I will be able to supply the colouring instructions individually on request.

It is also interesting that the MS of the Magical Calendar is bound together with a manuscript copy of the well known Rosicrucian text D.O.M.A., about which I will write separately. It is difficult for me to date the leather binding but it is certainly not later than the 18th century. Curiously enough, Manly Palmer Hall, who obviously did not know about the Wroclaw MS, added the Magical Calendar plate to his edition of D.O.M.A. Perhaps he was guided by his intuition which told him that these two texts are somehow connected?

## EMBLEMATIC MEDITATION

by Adam McLean ©

The stream of mystery wisdom we know as the hermetic tradition, embraces many facets. It has a coherent set of metaphysical ideas that continue to make sense even within the currents of present day scientific thought, a spiritual psychology which recognises the importance of the process of change and transmutation very relevant to the present condition of the human soul, and an elaborate system of symbols which can still speak directly to us, and seem to be a map of archetypes etched into our innermost being.

When we begin to look at the material of the hermetic tradition we are quickly struck by the elaborate and beautiful emblematic engravings especially from the late 16th and early 17th centuries, such as those of De Bry, Merian and others, illustrating the works of Robert Fludd, Michael Maier, Mylius, Khunrath, etc, which now seem almost mandatory for inclusion in today's popular books on the 'occult' and related themes.

Only rarely in such present day popular books are the symbolic contents of these emblems addressed by any meaningful or sensitive commentary, and they are all too often used merely as a form of decoration, or to pad out an otherwise inadequate text. Although these emblems have within the last decade or so been rescued from neglect becoming recognised as some of the finest examples of the engravers art, I hope that they will not become too overexposed and familiar as to have their impact on the soul diluted. In my work with the Hermetic Journal and Magnum Opus books, I have focussed especially on these emblems and tried to provide meaningful commentaries rather than using them in a decorative way.

I believe these emblems are too important to be dismissed merely as fine examples of symbolic engravings. Indeed, if we work with them with any sensitivity, we will come to recognise that they possess a kind of inner life, a numinous quality. They are not merely symbolic keys to unlock the mysteries of hermeticism, but can be experienced as bearing a kind of living spiritual force that can still work in our souls today if we are prepared to contemplate them in the right way. In this short article I would like to suggest some ways in which we can work sensitively with this material.

### Some Suggestions for working with Emblematic Meditation.

First of all it is important to get good examples of these emblems as so often small details in the symbolism will be found to be important. I prefer to work with them as individual emblems each on separate sheets of paper rather than bound up in a book as they are then free of any context or

implication of hierarchy or sequence, and can begin to reveal their own internal architecture. The hermetic emblems are often found forming series as with Michelspacher (4), Rosarium (20), Pandora (20), Splendor Solis (22), Mylius (28), Maier Atalanta (50), Stolcius Hermetic Garden (160).

To begin with we should merely familiarise ourselves with the symbolism of the emblems we have decided to work with, rather than immediately trying to analyse their structure. For until we have fully breathed their complex net of symbols into our souls, initial intellectual analysis usually results merely in our unconsciously projecting our own ideas and preconceptions onto the symbols, rather than allowing them to unfold their being to us. There are quite a few writers who, rushing headlong into an interpretation, reveal their own preconceptions and philosophical outlook rather than truly encountering the inner ground of the emblems they seek to grasp. (A prime example of this is Johannes Fabricius in his book *Alchemy: The Medieval Alchemists and their Royal Art*, in which many hermetic emblems are beautifully illustrated, but are interpreted only through the authors attachment to a Freudian psychological model, and his text often seems to overwhelm and ignore the essence of the emblems.)

If we are to work with the emblems we should initially be aware that we have to guard ourselves against such projections.

The sheer density, enigmatic, and at times almost surrealistic nature of the symbols on the emblems allows them to echo back almost anything we care to project upon them. However, I believe we have to recognise that they are not merely mirrors in which we can narcissistically reflect our own philosophy and view of the world, but in fact they possess a living spirit that transcends such projections.

So with these points in mind, we must begin by trying to build up in ourselves an inner version of the emblem. Beautiful as it may be as fine lines etched on a copper plate and pressed into paper, the essence of an emblem stands outside its particular depiction. Our initial work then involves freeing the content of the emblem from the paper and dissolving it in our soul. Some of us will find copying or redrawing the emblem, and even colouring in its symbols a useful exercise at this stage. As we work in the right way with some series of emblems, we find we are developing a kind of dialogue with the symbols and that slowly they seem to be becoming a part of our inner life. In a sense we are breathing in their essence.

This process is best undertaken sporadically in response to our feelings and inspiration, rather than pushed too hard with the kind of discipline we might apply to learning a mass of facts about a subject, in order to write about it or pass some exam. I find that if I place the particular set of emblems I currently wish to work with, on the wall of my study, or just carry them around as a set of cards that I can bring out whenever I want and spread them on a table or on the floor, then after a few weeks of living with them in this way, even the most elaborate sequences unconsciously, without any stress or pressure, have become woven into my inner world.

Indeed, only at the point where we hold its entire complex of symbolism within ourselves, can we begin to work in a creative experiential way with an emblem sequence.

Emblems are flat plates, usually square, rectangular or sometimes circular windows through which we glimpse an elaborate world of symbols. As such we are forced by the format to adopt initially the role of observers at a peep show. It is this format that in fact makes the emblems so powerful. In a sense they are esoterically protected. Profound esoteric exercises have been compressed into these emblems in such a way that they remain entirely harmless to those who are unable to find in themselves the inner resources to work with

them and bring them to life, and resurrect them in the activity of their souls. This is not so true of some other methods of transmitting esoteric exercises, such as ritual or group meditations, which can often have an unsettling effect upon the unprepared soul. Rituals used in any public context, outside of a working group of esotericists, should be carefully designed and balanced so as not to unduly disturb any of the participants.

The esoteric content of the hermetic emblems are not so restricted because people initially view them from the outside as observers, and consequently intense and powerful esoteric material is found openly displayed and yet simultaneously hidden in these emblems. An emblem only comes alive, or active esoterically, when one steps through the frame of the picture and becomes a participant and not merely an observer of the symbolic peep show.

Just as the emblem steps towards us, freeing itself from the printed page and rebuilding itself in the imaginative pictures of our inner world, so if we are to truly make relationship with it, we in our turn must step into the sphere of action of the emblem.

[At this point I would like perhaps to expand somewhat the concept of an emblem. Although we can identify them as engravings, woodcuts or coloured drawings in manuscripts, in a sense the hermetic allegories found in various texts should be seen as paralleling emblematic material. Indeed, if we contemplate such an allegory in something of the same way suggested for the emblems, then we arrive at the same point where we bear the emblem or allegory living within our being and have to step into the symbolic action to give it life.]

We have to transform our emblem from a flat plate into a three-dimensional landscape of symbols within which we can stand. At this stage it will be found useful to begin meditating on the symbolic content of the emblem. Say we have chosen to work with a particular series of emblems and have reached the point where we have their symbolic content living within us. Occasionally, without necessarily any great preparation or ritual, we can slip into a visualisation of the emblems as windows upon a landscape of symbols, one after another in the order in which they were originally depicted. The first few occasions we might fail to get through the sequence without tiring, however, this doesn't matter and we should just repeat this short exercise say once a day for a week or so.

After a few sessions, this exercise should become more and more tedious as we are able to easily recall before our inner gaze each emblem in turn, and a point will be reached when we find our seeming good progress is disturbed (in a way in which it wasn't earlier) by symbols shifting around and getting muddled, even though we know quite well where each of the symbols ought to be the tableau. Unless we have had any indication in the meantime through warning dreams or intuitions, this is the point where we step decisively into the space of the emblem. Now our meditations should become perhaps less casual as we begin to explore this inner landscape of symbols.

At this stage I find it useful to provide a structure within which the emblem is free to unfold and yet is bounded and contained in the soul. For this purpose one can build the image of an inner walled garden say, or a mystical island bound by a calm sea, or a strong fortified castle or palace, an alchemical retort or vessel, or the enclosed sanctuary of a temple. The purpose of such a meditative container is to provide a space within which the emblem can unfold its symbols and allow us to explore them with a sense of inner security, in that we can at any moment in our meditation return into our inner garden, vessel, or sanctuary. If we chose not to use such a technique it is not really a problem for the experienced meditator, but some people find that the symbols in an emblem occasionally lead them off on trains of

associations which leave them feeling uncomfortable or disoriented. Although this is not especially troublesome and will wear off in a few hours it can interfere with our everyday work and responsibilities, and such experiences in fact usually lead to people giving up their inner work rather than continuing to feel dissociated. This feeling is in fact a positive one, a sign that psychic energy is being developed by polarities being exchanged between archetypes. The discomforting aspect arises from it being initially misplaced and unintegrated within the existing patterns of our inner life.

It is not possible to go into great detail on meditative techniques and experiences in such a short article, but I hope given time to be able to write at length on these matters. We will find that there are four different levels of working with emblematic meditation.

Spiritual existential level - pure consciousness of being

Astral - energetic flow of psychic energy, drama

Etheric - weaving into life forces

Physical - encountering the emblem outside ourselves

In the first level we encounter the emblem in its physical manifestation as a pictorial image outside ourselves. We have to take this through our eyes and imprint it in our physical brain so it becomes in a sense a physical pattern within ourselves. However, when we build up an inner picture of an esoteric emblem we find something different occurs from the common process which we do all day long with mundane things we have to remember for our work or everyday life. The emblems contain carefully polarised and balanced symbols that stimulate and resonate with archetypal structures in us. In a sense they begin to send out roots and grow into our being, and at this stage we can say that they have come to life within us released from the dead outer image on paper. In present day esoteric parlance we can say that the emblems have permeated through into our etheric body. Those more attached to physiologically based models of the psyche could well describe this as the fact that the emblem has been transferred from a initial mere mapping of its physical characteristics onto visual memory in the brain, to a less localised pattern of energy ramified throughout our being, free to make associations on different levels. It could be pictured as the movement of the image from the localised receptors in the visual cortex till it becomes non-localised over the two hemispheres analogous to the way all the information borne in a hologram can be found at every point in its two dimensional plate.

It does not really matter just how we chose to describe this process to ourselves intellectually, the experience of the emblems coming to life within us remains the same. The next stage of stepping into the frame of the action, can be described in esoteric language, as experiencing the substance of the emblem working in our astral body. It involves relating to the symbols and letting them communicate with us, and at this stage the symbols can dramatically metamorphose, weaving around themselves emotional currents. The emblem often temporarily takes the form of an inner dramatic action, and we will sometimes have the sense of receiving communications or messages from some deep underlying part of ourselves. The symbols begin to speak to us. This process can be disturbing to inexperienced meditators, and it is best if the exercise is pursued with certain safeguards or techniques (for example the meditative container of the safe inner sanctuary). I will be describing some of these methods in a later article.

The best safeguard is to have a kind of map or model of the process we are undertaking. This gives us an inner vantage point or centre from which we can temporarily withdraw to consider the significance of some inner event experienced in emblematic meditation. Some present day esoteric exercises use a technique of "pathworking" which is underpinned by the kabbalistic Tree of Life system, so that at almost any point one can gain some understanding of what is happening in an inner experience by mapping this onto the Tree of Life and looking at the correspondences.

Of course the Tree of Life system does bear within it certain underlying philosophic and religious structures which may make it unsuited to those individuals who do not wish to work within this Kabbalistic current, and it is not in itself essential for such pathworking or inner journeys. There are other systems for understanding inner polarities and archetypal forces which arise out of the hermetic alchemical tradition and are equally valid. In the longer term I hope to be able to articulate and describe such a map of inner work which can be used to find our way easily through the experiences gained in meditation on hermetic emblems.

This stage of moving the emblem from the etheric to the astral realm within us can give rise to dramatic and exciting experiences, and perhaps the biggest danger here is that we cannot readily digest these experiences, and that they rattle around inside our souls making us feel quite uncomfortable. Such imaginative experiences are inevitable in this kind of inner work, indeed this stage involves the development of just this inner ability of being able to inwardly digest polarised astral energy thrown out by the archetypal symbols. If we persevere then eventually we will come to gain this inner ability, and can then become more inwardly free of the emotional currents generated by the archetypes living within us, which are stimulated by resonances from such emblems.

We are then free to move to a final stage of inner work with an emblem in which we encounter the spiritual being that resides there. Esoteric exercises are in essence merely vehicles for incarnating spiritual being. They are devised to have definite forms which reflect in outer physical symbol, etheric and astral substance, a spiritual principle which has a core or essence we can describe as having an immanence of 'being'. The emblems we are heirs to in the hermetic tradition were devised by people experienced and adept in a wisdom of the spiritual ground of consciousness. Each emblem sequence has had woven into its symbolic web a reflection of some spiritual essence, and it is only when we are able to touch upon this level that we can truly say we have encountered the being of an emblem.

Hermetic emblems thus bear within them seeds of being that can tinge and transform our innermost essence. When we are able to absorb them in our lower vehicles through such meditative work, like drops of quintessence they subtly transmute our souls and make us glow with inner spiritual life. The wise adepts of the hermetic tradition have left to us their most precious treasure, their tincture and philosophers' stone, revealed and yet still hidden from us until we resurrect them within our being through inner work.

As I was writing the article on emblems, I was also working on transcribing some the mystical manuscripts of Dionysius Andreas Freher, the early 18th century illustrator of the works of Jakob Boehme. I came across the following piece which I felt somehow resonated with the theme of the article. The Freher manuscripts will be published in the Magnum Opus series later this year :-

We are our selves a living Image of God, wherein, and whereby He hath expressed visibly; and represented comprehensibly, his own Invisible and Incomprehensible Being; as it is manifested in and to Himself, through Eternal Nature. All these things therefore that here may come into Consideration, and relate to his Eternal Manifestation, we do carry along with ourselves verily and really, in our own Body, Soul and Spirit: And we should find them there all together, more or less, plainly, distinctly and Intelligibly, if we were not so very great Strangers to our own created Beings.

Many literal Books and writings without us, nay even the very best of them, are so far from being able to afford us any true and solid Knowledge of ourselves, and of God our Creator, that they rather are so many Hindrances and Impediments, darkening the Light of our Intellectual Eye, by filling the Brain with a great multitude of void and empty notions; or when at the best, with many confused if not quite false Ideas. Though we are not to deny, but that some of them, written by a Teaching from above may be able to give us (and this chiefly at the beginning) some manuduction, fit to direct us into our true and nearest way; which is all their Office and ministry, besides and beyond which we are to desire and to expect from them nothing else.

That when once we received this Benefice and ministry, of being directed by them into the right way, we are to lay them aside, and so turn away from all that is without, and so Introvert our Mind, and to consider only, or primarily Ourselves, our Will, Senses, Motions, threefold Life and Actions etc, which are so many legible characters and Lineaments; drawn by the Eternal Invisible God after his own Original Image. And then by this means, and by this only, all these things that else are quite abstruse, remote and Incomprehensible, will be made so plain and clear, and so near unto us as we are unto ourselves. And this is to Read our own Book, written by the creating Finger of our God. Which Reading only, or chiefly, is most seriously recommended unto us, especially in this our present Age, wherein, more than ever before, Man's Mind is stirred up by a great Desire, after the very deepest Ground of that most Mysterious Tree rooted in Eternity, and stretching forth its Branches throughout all this Temporal Principle.

THE WESTERN WAY - Volume I The Native Tradition by  
Caitlin and John Matthews. Arcana RKP 1985, pb, 179pp,  
£4.50

This is the first of two volumes on the Western Way and covers the Native Tradition. The second volume which will be published in 1986 will address the Hermetic Tradition. The authors picture the 'Native Tradition' of any country as taking people from tribal to individual consciousness, and see the 'Hermetic Tradition' as leading people from individual to cosmic consciousness. This first volume on the native tradition does not attempt a detailed historical survey of this tradition, but instead highlights a number of themes that we find there - the Old or Primal Religion of the 'Foretime', the Earth Magic of the ley lines and energies bound up in ancient sites, the Gods of native mythologies, the sense of the existence of the Otherworld, the experience of living in parallel with a secret Commonwealth of spiritual beings. The authors' exposition of these themes are integrated with a well designed series of meditative exercises that aim to take the reader through the substance of the book on a deeper level. Indeed, I feel that these exercises are so much a part of the book's inner structure that it is essential for the reader to work through these in order to grasp the full significance of what Caitlin and John Matthews are trying to communicate. Through this book they are really asking us to step upon the Western Way and begin to take an inner journey through a rich and multi-faceted spiritual landscape. This is not a book of remote intellectual speculation or scholarly analysis of esoteric history, nor a precisely delineated esoteric system, but essentially is a call to people to work inwardly with the riches that we are all heirs to in the native tradition of the Western Way. I look forward to the publication of the second volume on the hermetic tradition.

- Adam McLean

Margaret Stutley. The Illustrated Dictionary of Hindu Iconography. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985. 175 pp. line drawings (no plates).

Stutley's Illustrated Dictionary of Hindu Iconography demonstrates the rich profusion of Hindu symbols and religious artforms. The symbolic significance of each small part of an icon is shown: the material used, the position of the figures, the garments, colours, emblems, as well as any accompanying minor deities, associated animals, birds or plants. Hindu symbols of all types other than figures are also discussed.

Like Margaret Stutley's previous work a Dictionary of Hinduism (co-written with her late husband James), this is an invaluable reference work for scholars and fills an important gap in books on Hinduism. My only criticism, which applies to both these works, is that, since all entries are listed in transliterated Sanskrit, they are not much use to nonspecialists. Margaret Stutley provides for each book a brief list of English subjects with Sanskrit equivalents, but I have never found these very useful in practice. A more detailed English index and cross-referencing system would make these works more accessible. Nevertheless, The Illustrated Dictionary of Hindu Iconography will doubtless become a classic, like the Dictionary of Hinduism before it.

- Deirdre Green.

Is there a possible connection between Glastonbury, the Grail and the Great Pyramid of Egypt? Are there hidden references to a secret of cosmic proportions hidden in the landscape of Britain? What connection is there between a famous medieval painting and the stories of the Grail? These are just some of the questions asked by Michael Beckett in this extraordinary little book, in which he reworks and expands material from Castle of Air (1981). His thesis, which is by no means easy to paraphrase, is that it is possible, following clues at the site and in the early records of Glastonbury Abbey, to project onto the landscape of Britain a mysterious geometric plane (called The Pyramid of Albion) which closely coincides with the dimensions of the pyramid at Giza. Other clues, gleaned from the famous painting by Jan and Hubert van Eyck, L'Agneau Mystique, the symbolism of the Qabalistic Tree of Life, the mysteries of Atlantis, and the huge Megalithic complex of sites including Avebury, Silbury and Callanish suggest a parallel mystery. Just what this mystery is, proves harder to say. One of the many irritating aspects of Beckett's work is the almost total absence of either footnotes or sources of any kind - which in a book which is admittedly speculative, can make one suspicious - however, although I would find it hard to accept all of his arguments, his conclusions are certainly stimulating. If I read them correctly, that is. What in effect, Beckett seems to be saying is that a realisation about the origin of life, its purpose and its possible goals, was made in the distant past (or the equally distant future) and that a semi visual glyph was planted in the landscape of Britain, thus making it unique for all time and giving rise to the repeated claims, from as far apart as Tibet and Africa, that these islands are (or were) the Otherworld. In fact, as Beckett rightly indicates, the Otherworld is everywhere at once, and only appears to be in one place or another on certain occasions. The same may well be true of the mystical Pyramid of Albion. Certainly the reappearance of a triangular form in many places and at many times is perhaps rather forced - as is some of Beckett's etymology (interpreting Corbenic as cors benit or sacred corner seems like a wilful avoidance of the better corps benit (Blessed Body) which would actually fit the thesis better - but one cannot get away from the fact that while not all his reasoning may be sound, Beckett has, almost incidentally, stumbled on an important secret and managed to elucidate much of it. Whether or not you choose to accept the possibility of the Pyramid of Albion (I must confess I have my doubts) there is something more than a little exciting about the concept of a "fourth dimensional shadow" on the land which possibly forms a link between this world and another - a function which the Grail certainly forms - casts an interesting light on the origins of life, the 'something from nothing' syndrome, and on our view of the past. After all, why should we see time as either a straight line or a spiral, why not a triangle instead? A thought provoking and readable book from a new writer to watch out for. You might not agree with it, but you won't be able to forget it.

- John Matthews

MANUAL OF SIDEREAL ASTROLOGY by Lokanath  
Sothis Weir glow 1985, pb, 70 pp, (available from Azoth,  
42 Hay Lane, London NW9 0ND, £5.95 including post).

Western astrology has inherited a method of mapping the heavens that was established two millenia ago by Ptolemy, however this method of assigning the signs of the zodiac to the heavens failed to take into account the precession

of the equinoxes and consequently when a western astrologer says, for example, that 'the Moon is in 10 degrees of Aries' the Moon actually can be seen in the sky in the 16th degree of Pisces. Most astrologers ignore this problem, and some even are ignorant of this fact, as they work entirely from tables and have no contact with the heaven of stars. Hindu astrologers, however, work rather with a sidereal zodiac that correspond to the actual position in the heavens, though in other ways their esoteric science has been bounded by dogma and religious doctrine (and, for example, few Indian astrologers pay any attention to the trans saturnian planets). In this book Lokanath shows how to set up a sidereal chart, synthesising eastern and western methods into a comprehensive and workable system, giving tables of correspondences for the signs and aspects, and presenting us with some ideas derived from his study of tantric astrological traditions. He shows us how to set up a sidereal chart using tables, or a programmable calculator, and includes a computer program that will take all the drudgery out of the calculations. This book should be read by anyone interested in astrology, and it might help to broaden the mind of those who doggedly hold to the conventional western form of astrology which which has become out of step with the stars.

- Adam McLean

THE SECRET GOSPEL by Morton Smith  
Aquarian Press, 1985, pb, pp 165, £5.95

In 1958 Professor Morton Smith visited the monastery library of Mar Saba in the Judean desert. There he made a major discovery for the study of first-century Christianity. On the final pages of a seventeenth century volume he found a handwritten copy of part of a previously unknown letter from Clement of Alexandria, who referred to secret teachings of Jesus and to a Secret Gospel of St. Mark, from which he quoted. Here is the fascinating story of Professor Smith's discovery and the steps he took to authenticate the fragment, which raised such questions as : What did Jesus do in the secret rites performed with a select few of the Disciples? Why are there so many traces of this secret ministry in the New Testament? And why was the Secret Gospel kept hidden? No one who is interested in Christian origins and the development of Christianity can afford to ignore this compelling and controversial book.

- from publisher's publicity notes

JESUS THE MAGICIAN by Morton Smith  
Aquarian Press, 1985, pb, 227 pp, £5.95

"Jesus the magician" was the figure seen by most ancient opponents of Jesus; "Jesus the Son of God" was the figure seen by his followers. "Jesus the Son of God" is pictured in the gospels: The works that pictured "Jesus the magician" were destroyed in antiquity after Christians got control of the Roman empire. We know the lost works only from fragments and references, so modern scholars have generally paid no attention to the evidence for Jesus the magician and have taken only the gospels as their sources. Morton Smith attempts to correct this bias by reconstructing the lost picture from the preserved fragments and related material, mainly from the magical papyri. Beginning with an account of the destruction of the evidence and consequent problem, he sketches the historical framework of Jesus' life - the facts that can be established, even from the gospels, with relative confidence - and then collects the reports about Jesus the magician from the gospels and from Jewish and pagan sources. He then explores the implications of these reports and reexamines the gospels

for evidence that accords with the picture they oppose. Such evidence indicates the common core from which both legendary pictures developed. Finally he investigates the sources and implications of this core material. This book has been written in the belief that advanced research on the life and teaching of Jesus is a matter of legitimate concern and possible interest to educate men and women in all walks of life, as well as to professionals in New Testament Studies. Morton Smith is currently Professor of Ancient History at Columbia University.

- from the publisher's publicity notes.

THE ROSE CROSS AND THE GODDESS by Gareth Knight  
Aquarian Press, 1985, pb, 192 pp, £5.95

The world is currently in a dilemma. Pollution, overpopulation and the nuclear arms race reflect the psychic unbalance of mankind, which can only be resolved when the Rose of the Spirit is encouraged to bloom again on the Golden Cross of the elements. Gareth Knight shows how the individual can conduct the quest for the Eternal Feminine Principle at its many levels, through a series of examples. Part one concentrates on The Magic Circle Maze Dance, a step-by-step guide showing how to build up a magic circle; from a central focus of inner consciousness, as balanced by the principles of the positive and negative pillars of life expression. The remainder of the book demonstrates how the Feminine Spirit of the Rose has been realised in various major systems of esoteric practice including The Heroic quest for the Hesperides, the quest for the feminine principle by the ancient Greeks, and The Tibetan Experience: An Eastern Perspective. Finally The Return of the Goddess analyses the legendary opinions and growth of the cult of the Virgin, and The Initiation of the Earth, gives a pattern for those who want to put into effect the expression of the feminine principle.

- from the publisher's publicity notes

THE BOOK OF THE DEAD by E.A. Wallis Budge  
Arcana RKP, 1985, pb, 700 pp, £7.95

Belief in the immortality of the soul was fundamental to Egyptian religion. Throughout their long history, the ancient Egyptians inscribed upon the walls of tombs and sarcophagi, coffins and funereal stelae, papyri and amulets, various hymns and religious texts to ensure the well being of the dead beyond the grave. The Book of the Dead was intended to give the deceased immortality, to provide everything required in the other world to ensure victory over enemies, to procure the friendship of those who could help him, to enable him to go wherever he wished, whenever he wanted to, and finally enable his soul to reach the kingdom of Osiris. This translation by E A Wallis Budge, first published in 1899, is from the Theban Recension and contains 22 plates and 420 vignettes. David Lorimer has written a short introduction explaining the significance of the Book of the Dead

- from publisher's publicity notes

RESEARCHES ON THE I CHING by Iulian K Shchutskii  
RKP, 1985, pb, 254 pp, £6.95

A companion volume to Richard Wilhelm's translation of the I Ching, this book is now available in this paperback edition. It comprises Shchutskii's valuable survey of the European, Chinese and Japanese translations and literature concerning the I Ching and his own critical introduction to it. Shchutskii

takes an historical approach to the I Ching, going back to its origin and seeking to understand from the original text what the terms meant when first written. Thus he complements Wilhelm, who sought to translate the text as it was understood by the best Chinese intellectuals of his time. The author was born in 1897 and graduated from the Sinological faculty of the University of St Peterburg in 1922. Shortly after being made a Professor in 1935, he published his doctrinal thesis which forms the basis of this book. His unorthodox views political and religious views were not however looked upon favourably in the prevailing political climate of Stalinist Russia, and Shchutskii was arrested in 1937, later dying in a prison camp.

- from publisher's publicity notes

THE MEDITATOR'S MANUAL by Simon Court  
Aquarian Press 1984, large format ring bound, 112pp, £5.95

What is meditation? A great amount has been written on the subject that either confuses the reader or puts him or her off completely; but the only person who can really define meditation is you. Simon Court takes a new refreshing approach to meditation and relaxation with the beginner in mind in his new book. Each chapter takes the reader through an exercise based on one of the fundamental techniques that make up a balanced meditation practice. Included at the end of each exercise is a table to allow students to keep a personal record of their progress, and there is an additional list of the experiences of others who meditate. Amongst the many features of this book are some basic tips on posture and breathing, and appendices on Group Work and further Pathworkings. Here is all the information you need to experiment with meditation to elicit which form suits you best and use it to enable you to live in personal inner harmony with the outer world, and tailor it to suit your own individual nature. Simon Court has written numerous articles and presented a number of talks on Magic and the Western Tradition. Apart from teaching meditation, he belongs to several societies including the Servants of the Light Association. He lives in Australia where he works as a Freelance computer system consultant and spends his free-time writing.

- from publisher's publicity notes

THE TAROT WORKBOOK by Emily Peach  
Aquarian Press 1984, large format ring bound, 256pp, £8.95

Almost everyone has seen or heard of the Tarot Deck and quite a lot of people own this most accessible and easily learned of occult tools. But the opportunities for studying the Tarot as it should be studied under the experience of a Tarot Master, are very limited. In her TAROT WORKBOOK, Emily Peach bridges the gap between books on the Tarot that are over simplistic and those that are too advanced. The Tarot is not just simply a tool for 'fortune telling', but it is also a very special medium of mystical and magical attainment after the Western Tradition. There are chapters on the four individual Tarot suits, the Tarot-Kabbalah relationship, Tarot symbolization, (including Hebrew letters Number, Colour and Archetypal images), exercises to help you understand your cards and learn different card spreads. Dolores Ashcroft-Nowicki as also written a special pathworking for the book. By reading his practical manual and learning the methods thoroughly, you can transform your ignorance regarding this art into knowledgeable readings and become a successful and competent Tarot reader. Emily Peach enjoys teaching the Tarot and has been a student of the Servants of the Light Association for many years.

- from publisher's publicity notes