

# NOVA HERMETICA AND ITS THREE MAGI

*When they had opened their treasures,  
they presented unto him gifts; gold  
and frankincense, and myrrh.  
Matthew 2: 11*

*Or let my lamp at midnight hour,  
Be seen in some lonely Tower;  
Where I may oft out-watch the Bear;  
With thrice-great Hermes, or unspear  
The spirit of Plato to unfold  
What Worlds or what vast Regions hold  
Th' immortal mind that hath forsook  
Her mansion in this fleshly nook.  
Milton  
Il Penseroso*

# NOVA HERMETICA AND ITS THREE MAGI

Foreword

## NOVA HERMETICA

1. **The Philosophia Perennis and the Precursors of Medieval Philosophy**  
Neo-Platonism, Gnosticism, Hermeticism, Magical Thinking, Religion
2. **Elements of Medieval Hermeticism**  
Astrology, Alchemy, Rosicrucianism and Magic

Bibliography

## THREE MAGI

3. **Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe (1749–1832)**  
Celebrant of the Chemical Wedding of Art and Science

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4. **Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925)**  
Rosicrucian Magus and Spiritual Scientist

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5. **Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961)**  
Modern Gnostic and Alchemical Psychologist

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# **NOVA HERMETICA AND ITS THREE MAGI**

## **FOREWORD**

### **‘Nova Hermetica and its Three Magi’**

‘Nova Hermetica and its Three Magi’ grew out of an earlier work of mine: ‘Nova Quadrivium and Nova Hermetica’. I decided to develop the ‘Nova Hermetica’ section of this work. Over many years I have gained an awareness that many of the elements of hermetic thought appeared in the works of Goethe, Steiner and Jung. While they did not embrace identical elements of the hermetic tradition they each drew inspiration from the same reservoir. This source of inspiration not only coloured their thought. It was also a significant reason for their exclusion from the mainstream of scientific orthodoxy.

The present work attempts to treat the three ‘magi’ as separate individuals and independent thinkers. It is a particularly difficult task to separate Goethe and Steiner. It has not always been possible to avoid overlap in their treatment. This is largely because they share similar epistemological underpinnings. Also Steiner became Goethe’s scientific expositor and natural successor. He actually absorbed much of Goethe’s thought into his own teachings.

### **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe**

Goethe was held up to ridicule by the noted literary critics T.S. Eliot and J.B. Priestly. However they judged him purely on the quality of his literary output. In this respect Goethe would have agreed with them – and he said as much. Both of these eminent literary critics however missed the point that Goethe judged his scientific studies as being superior to his literary output. When both his Art and Science are studied one can see the genius of Paracelsus shining through him.

He was a latter-day alchemist who synthesised the concepts of art and science in the laboratory of his mind. The natural world, for Goethe, included beauty and

morality. For Goethe, Art was the extension of the natural world by man's efforts. Morality was a quality that only man could contribute to spiritual evolution. The laws pertaining to Art and Morality were of a higher order but still discoverable. Beauty and the moral order were part of the whole. They contributed to the oneness of nature. To exclude them from investigation was not true science. For Goethe, man himself was the perfect measuring instrument. He saw no sense in pretending that scientific observation could exclude the observer from its findings. Man, as observer, could never have an 'outside onlooker' consciousness. He was, as observer, always mixed up with the observation. Moreover, Goethe argued, true science was not about proving anything. It was about the development of ideas. The concept of 'proof' belonged to the legal profession and not to the world of science.

### **Rudolf Steiner**

As a student of Goethe's scientific works Rudolf Steiner enlarged the scope of Goethe's studies. Whereas Goethe applied the principles of metamorphosis to botanical and zoological transformations Steiner extended these applications to architecture, the social sciences and many other areas. Goethe perceived metamorphosis in the dimension of time. Steiner also perceived metamorphosis in the dimension of space.

Steiner developed a philosophical system based on the proposition that the natural order was encoded in man. He called this system Anthroposophy. Steiner took the hermetic doctrine that 'man was a microcosm of the macrocosm' as being literally true. The key to reading the hieroglyphics hidden in man was the application of the principle of metamorphosis. For Steiner, '**thought**' existed in nature and in man. When these were brought into harmony '**insight**' emerged. Man's '**thinking**' played an active role in the evolutionary processes of creation.

Steiner's immersion in Theosophy, the Order of Oriental Templars, Freemasonry, Rosicrucianism and the Mystery Religions of the world, is reflected in the contents of the 6,000 lectures he delivered over thirty years. He seemed to absorb a great deal of gnosticism and medieval hermeticism into the framework of his own world-view. He not only showed a great facility in utilising ancient and medieval thought, he often

revealed a meaning which had been obscured. In short, Steiner exhibited a remarkable sympathy with old-fashioned ideas and an antipathy towards the materialism of science. He was greater than Goethe, his hero. Steiner's modern scientific knowledge was formidable. He was a brilliant mathematician and had a remarkable facility with modern synthetic geometry. He has been ignored by orthodox science and his teachings about the reality of the spiritual world have been subject to ridicule or given the 'silent treatment'.

### **Carl Gustav Jung**

Carl Jung and Rudolf Steiner adopted the same attitude towards medieval hermeticism and gnosticism. Rather than belittle the findings of these speculative thought systems they sought to understand the hidden reality that these alchemists and astrologers were seeking to probe. In fact the purview of Goethe, Steiner and Jung included much more than the specialised branches of science today. Their vision of science accepted the unity of nature. Nature included beauty, morality and paranormal phenomena. For these three magi, science thus included qualitative aspects as well as quantitative ones.

To find a conceptual scheme that embraced values and facts, at the same time, is a monumental undertaking. Modern science is quantitative and objective not qualitative and subjective. These three latter-day magi opened the doors wide to all phenomena. They did not restrict scientific investigation to only those events which were calculable. Jung not only found psychological science in alchemy he embraced the paranormal. He accepted synchronous phenomena as a legitimate aspect of human experience. It was worthy of scientific investigation even if it could not be fitted into the experimental paradigm.

### **Other Latter-Day Magi**

There are a number of other 'magi' whose names could be added to those of Goethe, Steiner and Jung. These include Emmanuel Swedenborg, Joseph Smith, Madam Blavatsky, George Gurdjieff, Peter Ouspensky, John Bennett and L. Ron Hubbard. Each in his/ her own way has drawn on elements of the occult tradition. However not many of these have examined the laws of thought (noetics) to justify their teaching. Nor have many sought to clarify the epistemological underpinnings of

their 'science' as Steiner has done. Indeed, the reason why Goethe, Steiner and Jung stand above the others is because they have dared to challenge the epistemological underpinnings of scientific determinism and scientific materialism.

### **Polarity as an Important Element in the Thought Structure of Goethe, Steiner and Jung**

The Three Magi incorporated the concept of **polarity** into the structure of their own thinking. They do this in very individual ways and it is necessary to distinguish polarities of the first order and polarities of the second order. Goethe emphasised the polarity of the colour scale and the polarity of light and dark. Steiner's elaboration of the polarity of his twelve senses underpins his epistemology. Steiner extended the concept of polarity to its ultimate extent. He developed a whole thought system in which anthropos (man) and the cosmos were polaric. The embryonic form and the sense systems of man were constituted by the form forces, processes and substances of the cosmos. Jung's elaboration of the 'structure' of consciousness reflects an elaborate dependency on polarisation. It is interesting to note that orthodox science now devotes a great deal of attention to the concepts of matter and anti-matter space and counter-space, gravity and levity and so on. It does this at the same time as it derides the unorthodoxy of the three magi!

### **Science, Scientism and the Scientific Method**

The three terms: 'science', 'scientism' and 'the scientific method' are not always differentiated by commentators. '**Science**' is the investigation of objects, processes and events which occur outside AND inside of man. It is concerned with understanding and obtaining **insights** which help to explain relationships between phenomena. Goethe did not wish to limit the scope of science and so he argued that science should concern itself with beauty and morality as well as matter, motion and force.

'**Scientism**' advances the thesis that the methods of investigating the external world should be applied to investigating the internal world of man (psychology) and man's relationship with his society (sociology) and his culture (anthropology). Scientism claims that if there is 'no scientific evidence' available then an entity should not be presumed to exist. Advocates of Scientism like Richard Dawkins are unaware of the

assumptions they make about the nature of time, space, causality, ideation and concept formation. They also assume an '**outside onlooker**' role of the scientist without acknowledging the critical role that man's **thinking process** plays in perceiving relationships. These epistemological matters were carefully entered into by Rudolf Steiner before he enunciated his own spiritual science.

The '**Scientific Method**' of investigation involves data gathering through observation, hypothesis formulation, hypothesis testing and its application to further discovery. Each of these stages involves **the thinking processes** of the scientist. The nature of these thinking processes involve selection and exclusion of data, perception of possible relationships and predictions of future outcomes. The selection and exclusion of data is itself a **value process** not an **observation**. It belongs to the realm of **axiology** and value formation. It is in this domain that Goethean science should be evaluated. The perception of possible relationships is an aspect of the **thinking process**. It involves a process which goes beyond the sense-bound world. It seeks to penetrate by thinking into what is concealed from the senses. It is a process which attempts to relate sense data with the memory-bank of stored data for possible connections. Richard Seddon summarises:

*The study of all sciences has as its goal the discovery of the hidden thought content within its nature. Man has to align his own thinking with that hidden content. Thinking does not add to reality but is of the same reality. When the right concept is found we say 'Aha I see'.*

pp. 30-31

and again

*The percept is thus not something finished and self-contained, but only one side of the total reality. The other side is the concept. The act of knowing is the synthesis of percept and concept.*

Seddon, p. 38

Goethe, Steiner and Jung identified themselves as scientists. This designation has met with scorn and derision by academia. These three magi were scientists who enlarged the scope of science by changing its philosophical basis and the number of its applications. They were each prodigious in output and gave an hermetical flavour

to their science. Their approach may gain resonance in the newly discovered worlds of quantum physics and virtual reality. However this will only happen after a re-examination of the noetical basis of orthodox science.



# **NOVA HERMETICA AND ITS THREE MAGI**

## **CHAPTER 1 The Philosophia Perennis Precursors of Medieval Philosophy**

### **Part 1 Ancient Traditions**

#### **The Philosophia Perennis**

##### **Neoplatonism and its Teachers**

Plotinus (205–270 AD)

The One, The Good, The First Principle

Microcosm and Macrocosm

Hierarchical Universe

Philo (20 BC–50 AD)

Logos and Sophia

Importance of Initiation

Porphry, Iamblichus and Proclus

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Lucifer and Ahriman

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Hermes Trismegistus

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#### **Magic and Religion**

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##### **Mystery Religions and Schools**

Mithraism and its Grades of Initiation

The Conversion of Emperor Commodus (180–192 AD)  
Mithraism and Christian Literalism  
The Evolution of Consciousness Jean Gebser (1905–1973)

# NOVA HERMETICA AND ITS THREE MAGI

## CHAPTER 1 The Philosophia Perennis

### Part 1 Ancient Traditions

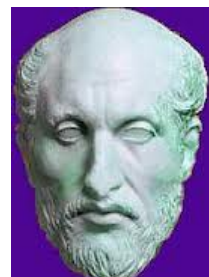
#### The Philosophia Perennis

The development of esoteric thinking in the 16th and 17th centuries of Europe has its origins in three ancient traditions, viz: Neoplatonism, Gnosticism and Hermeticism. These traditions reach back to Egypt, Persia, Greece and Rome. Magical thinking is also an aspect of the perennial philosophy. It makes its appearance in both religion and science.

#### Neoplatonism and its Teachers

Neoplatonism is the system of thought which was based on the exposition of Plato's philosophy by Plotinus (AD 205–270) and his successors Porphyry (AD 232–305) and Proclus (c. AD 410–485). These men emphasised the Neoplatonic **One** which transcended Being and Thought and could only be reached through mystical experience. For the neoplatonist the universe was a living organism in which its parts were related and connected to a whole. Neoplatonism was a forerunner to **holistic thinking** and made its appearance in Goethean thought. The Divine Mind was the source of the **anima mundi**, the world soul. The **spiritus mundi**, or world spirit, linked the world soul with the earth itself. Man was a microcosm of the macrocosm. A **magus** could command nature by recognising the 'signature' of plants and animals.

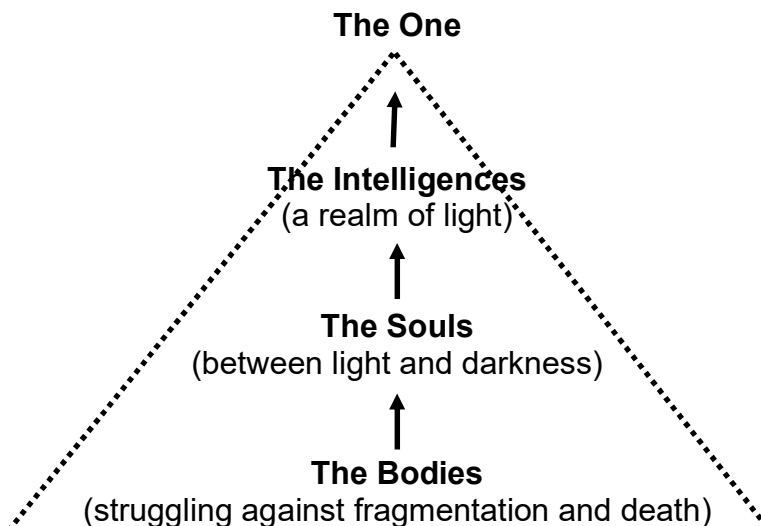
**Plotinus (205–270 AD).** Plotinus was born in Egypt. Although he was not a Christian his writings had a great influence on theologians such as Augustine. His teachings placed emphasis on the **One**, the **Good**, the **First Principle**,



which radiates love to all souls. Creation issued from God's thinking. Plotinus's theory is often described as a 'theory of Emanations'. The Platonic Forms emanate from the One.

**Microcosm and Macrocosm.** The **Divine Mind** was locatable in the Empyrean of God beyond the **Sphere of the Fixed Stars**. The **Primum Mobile** was below the stars and was the source of the daily rotation of the heavens. Beneath the Primum Mobile was the sphere of the 7 Planets filled with ether, then the Moon and finally the Earth. The Earth contained the **Four Elements** (Earth, Water, Air and Fire) and their admixture generated the mineral, plant and animal Kingdoms. The Divine Mind was the source of the **Anima Mundi** or World Soul. Man was a **Microcosm of the Macrocosm**. All intellects are identical with the Divine intellect.

**Hierarchical Universe.** Plotinus' universe is hierarchically organised and the higher something is, the more unified it is.



As with Gnosticism, the Neo-Platonists emphasised the importance of spiritual experience through **personal contact** (not priesthood contact), with God.

**Philo** (20 BC–50 AD)

**‘Logos’ and ‘Sophia’.** The 1st century Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria developed the concept of divinity known as the **‘Logos’** which forms part of the opening chapter of John’s gospel. For Philo, as for the Gnostics, **Sophia** is the **‘Mother of the Logos’**. Philo was particularly devoted to Pythagoras and was well versed in music, geometry, astrology and the mysticism of pagan religions and mystery schools.



**Importance of Initiation.** For Philo, **initiation** was the entrance to a new world. He distinguished between

enthousiazein (being divinely inspired)

kornbantian (being mystically frenzied)

bakeuein (divine madness)

katechesthai (being possessed by the deity)

and ekstasis (ecstasy)

### **Porphyry, Iamblichus and Proclus**

These three successors to Plotinus each developed aspects of his teaching.

**Porphyry** believed that knowledge of the planets and their relationship to man was an important tool in self-knowledge. **Iamblichus**, unlike Plotinus, was an advocate of magical rites. He understood that the gods of the world religions were just an example of different ways of approaching the same true God.

**Proclus** proclaimed that ‘the Spirit in us was a veritable image of Dionysus’.

### **Gnosticism**

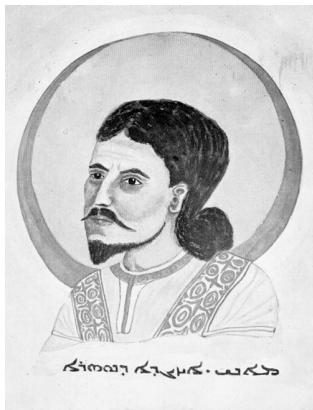
There were many varieties of gnostic thought in ancient times. These included **Manichaeism** derived from Persian–Syriac–Egyptian thought culminating in **Valentinianism**. Judaeo–Christian varieties including the thought of **Marcion**. They each taught that there is a spark of divinity in each of us and that this **‘spark within’** can make contact with the **‘spark without’**. Moreover this can be achieved without

the mediation of a priest. **Dionysius the Aeropagite** influenced Christian doctrine about the spiritual hierarchy. His teachings about the **Pleroma** were not adopted by Christianity.

All gnostics believed that salvation came through knowledge.

### **Mani (216–276 AD) and Manicheism**

Manicheism was founded by the Persian teacher **Mani** (216-276 AD). Its



doctrine owes much to Zoroastrian teaching as well as Christian thought. St Augustine (354-430 CE) was a Manichean for 12 years. The 10th century **Bogomils** of **Bulgaria** and the **Cathars** of 12th and 13th

centuries of **Southern France** derived their teachings from Manicheism. These teachings were based on two eternally opposed principles, viz light (Lucifer), and darkness (Ahriman). Darkness and matter are

### **Valentinus (100–180 AD) and Valentianism**

the result of a fall from the fullness of light. In Manicheism the eating of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil by Adam was a virtuous act.

Valentinianism was the culmination of the Syrian-Egyptian Gnosis. Valentinus claimed he received his teachings of Christianity from his master Theudas, who had received them from Paul. In this system matter was spirit in the beginning and after it had 'matterised' it would become spirit again. Man was a microcosm of the macrocosm.

Valentinus was the author of *The Gospel of Truth* found at Nag Hammadi. His teachings were very influential and widespread. He distinguished between 'hylics', 'psychics' and 'pneumatics', i.e. bodies, souls and spirits.

### **Basilides (c. 117–161 AD)**

Basilides was a Syrian gnostic who was active in Alexandria. This place was the home of the great second and third century masters Carpocrates, Valentinus, Clement and Origen.

Basilides wrote a gospel and a commentary on the gospels called *The Exegetica*. Unfortunately these were burned 'by order of the church' as were the thirty-six priceless volumes written by the neo-platonic philosopher Porphyry. Basilides taught that Gnosis was the consummation of many lives of effort, i.e. reincarnation.

### **Marcion (c. 144 AD)**

Marcion was an influential gnostic teacher born in Pontus in Asia Minor and active in Rome. He rejected the Old Testament and parts of the gospels that he regarded as falsified. Marcion was a leading Paulician and taught that Paul was the only true apostle.

### **Dionysius aka Pseudo – Dionysius**

Dionysius was a co-worker of Paul (Acts 17: 34). His teachings developed into a school in Athens. When Justinian closed the school in 529 four mystical treatises appeared under the name of Dionysius the Areopagite.

These works had a profound influence on Erigena, Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, Dante, Nicholas of Cusa, Meister Eckhart, Pico Mirandola, Marsilio Ficino, Edward Spenser, Coleridge etc.

Dionysius the Areopagite outlined the details of the government of the spiritual world. These details provide the rankings of spiritual beings. The lowest spiritual being is Man. Above Man are the Angels, Archangels, Principalities, Powers, Might, Dominions, Thrones, Cherubim, Seraphim and then the Over-Being, the hidden Godhead. The Apostle Paul used a similar nomenclature when he wrote to the Ephesians:

*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers of the Darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

(Eph 6: 12)

## The Pleroma

In the beginning there was a spiritual fullness or **Pleroma**. The Pleroma consists of 30 'aeons' of which four are paramount, viz the 'Father', 'Silence' (or thought), 'Mind' (Nous) and 'Truth'. From these four spring such spirits as '**Anthropos**' and 'Ecclesia'. The last and youngest of the 30 is 'Sophia' (or Wisdom). '**Sophia**' falls victim to 'Suffering' and hence separation from the 'Father'. With suffering comes 'Limit', which keeps Sophia separated from her desire to comprehend the '**Father's**' greatness. The pilgrim has to enlist the aid of the 'Higher Sophia' to do battle with the '**Demiurge**'. The 'Demiurge' is the creator of the seven planetary heavens and of the physical, which solidifies into matter. Satan also exists and attempts to influence the '**Pneumatics**', the '**Psychics**' and the '**Hylics**'.

## Hermeticism

### Hermes Trismegistus

A third source of influence on Renaissance thinkers was Hermeticism. Its source is the primordial wisdom known as '**prisca theologica**' which is generally thought to have come from Egyptian and Persian sources through Plato. This body of wisdom is conventionally ascribed to the legendary '**Hermes Trismegistus**'. His name is a combination of Hermes and Trismegistus or 'thrice greatest'.

Hermes Trismegistus, the mythical author of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, one of the most influential collections of esoteric spiritual writings of all time.

Artist: Johann Theodor de Bry, c. 1580.





Hermes was the winged messenger god who was the Greek equivalent of the Roman god '**Mercury**' and the Egyptian god **Thoth**. Hermes Trismegistus combines the attributes of a Priest, Philosopher and Scientist (Alchemy and Astrology). He became the symbol for the source of the divine word to mankind. His name is sometimes associated with **Enoch** and **Moses**. He appears in the Koran as **Idris**.

### **The Corpus Hermeticism**

In 1460 a collection of treatises came to the attention of **Cosimo de Medici** (1389-1464). He commissioned the scholarly monk **Marsilio Ficino** (1433-99) to translate them. The treatises were about philosophy, religion, alchemy, magic and mysticism.

**The 'Pimander'**, known as the '**Shepherd of Men**' was a Gnostic cosmogony which explained how the intellect (nous) gained direct access to a knowledge of deity.

**The Perfect Sermon of Asclepius** speaks of a hierarchy of beings below the divine unity.

**The Emerald Tablet or Tabula Smaragdina** became the 'bible of the alchemists' and greatly influenced Paracelsus (1493-1541). It contained the 'occult law': 'As above, so below'. This linked the macrocosm and the microcosm, heaven and earth, God and humankind.

## Part 2 Magic and Religion

### **Magic and Religion**

In his work *The Occult Tradition* David Katz outlines some of George Frazer's ideas on the distinction between magic and religion. These ideas were contained in Frazer's celebrated *The Golden Bough* (1800). The second edition of this book bore the sub-title *A Study in Magic and Religion*. Frazer argued that both magic and science were bound by the principle of causality and immutable law. For Frazer an age of magic preceded the age of religion. His magician – scientist was a 'kind of constitutional scientist' who documented and applied law. The religionist attempted to propitiate or conciliate the powers superior to man.

### **Magic as a Prelude to Science**

In this age of scientific determinism the subject of magic is treated with ridicule and disrespect. Magical practices are associated with trickery, illusion and legerdemain. However, this attitude of belittling the role of the magician does not allow a fair representation of the more positive aspects of his role in society. The magician provided society with a conceptual attitude towards the unknown that was a forerunner to modern scientific investigation. The magus was a man who sought to put nature under his control. Unfortunately magic became debased with sorcery and witchcraft. The great scientist and mathematician of the 17th century, Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), is often referred to as 'the last of the magicians' rather than the first of the modern 'scientists'.

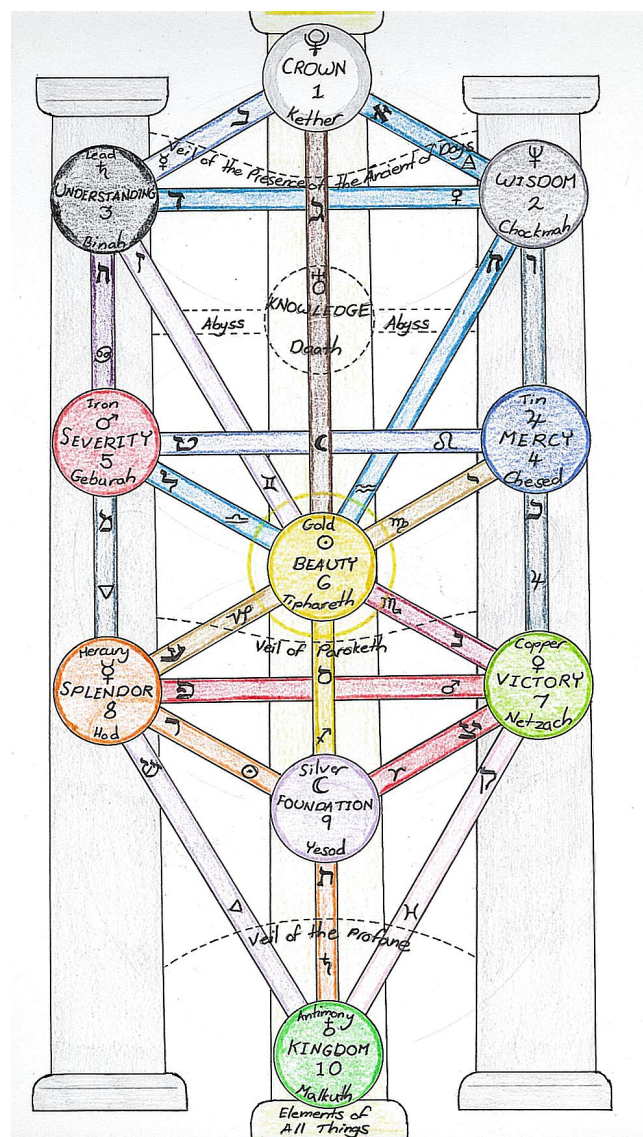
### **The Kabbalah**

The Kabbalah is an ancient oral Jewish 'system' of thought which provides an alternative but parallel understanding of creation which is not based on approved rabbinic sources. The 'system' provides links with mystical traditions, magical traditions, alchemy, tarot and hermetic thought generally.

### **The Tree of Life**

The **Tree of Life** is at the heart of Kabbalistic teaching. **The Sefirot** are ten divine attributes of this tree which commence at the top or crown known as

'KETTER'. By following the 'lightning flash' path through the tree of life one proceeds through HOKHMAH (wisdom), BINAH (understanding), DA'AT (the Abyss of knowledge), to the active Sefira of HESED (Mercy) and back to the passive Sefira of GEVURAH (Judgement). From Gevurah the lightning flashes to passes to TIFFERET (Beauty) where quickening takes place. It then passes to NEZACH (Eternity) and then back to the passive HOD (Reverberation). It balances itself in YESHOD (Foundation) before becoming manifest in MALKUT (Kingdom). In this manner the Lightning Flash flows down, through the four worlds of 'Jacob's Ladder'. These worlds are fire, air and water to earth. Thus the insubstantial becomes substantial. The Sefirot is used by Kabbalists to describe the processes involved in all creative processes from lighting a match to walking a dog.



## **Mystery Religions and Schools**

Mystery schools can be found in a great number of places, especially around the Mediterranean world at the birth time of Christianity. These schools were sometimes forerunners to organised religions such as Druidism in Wales and Ireland and Mithraism in Persia and Rome. They were also repositories of knowledge of science and the arts and forerunners to universities.



A second century Roman marble statue depicting Mithras sacrificing the bull.  
The split blood of the bull ensured the fertility of nature.

*The Atlas of Secret Societies*  
(p. 17)

The Pythagorean mysteries, the Dionysian mysteries, the Elusinian mysteries and the Gnostic mysteries of Judea and Samothrace were such repositories. Indeed, there were common elements in many of the religious mystery teachings. A number of these enacted stories of a mythical dying and resurrecting godman. This godman was Osiris in Egypt, Dionysus in Greece, Attis in Asia Minor, Adonis in Syria, Bacchus in Italy and Mithras in Persia. Fundamentally all these godmen are the same mythical being.

### **Mithraism and its Grades of Initiation**

Mithraism was one of many mystery religions that gained popularity around the Mediterranean region prior to the arrival of Christianity. It was of Persian origin but was very popular with Roman soldiers in the first four centuries CE. Its adherents worshipped the sun god Mithras who was s saviour god. Like other mystery cults it had a progressive initiatory structure in which the novitiate advanced from Corvus (Raven), through Nymphus (Bride), Miles (Soldier), Leo (Lion), Perses (Persian), Meliodromus (Runner of the Sun) to Pater (Father). The consort of Mithras was Magna Mater.

### **The Conversion of Emperor Commodus (180–192 AD)**

According to Plutarch, Romans were first initiated into the cult by followers brought back from the campaign waged against Mithradates by the Roman General Pompey in c64 BC (Plutarch's *Life of Pompey*, 24). After Emperor Commodus was initiated into the cult there was an explosion in the building of Mithraic sanctuaries across the empire. (See Cumont, F. *The Mysteries of Mithras*; Dover Books, 1903.)

### **Mithraism and Christian Literalism**

As **Christian Literalism** grew in power, it adopted more of the trappings of the **Pagan Literalism** it replaced. In imitation of Mithraic priests Christian bishops wore a 'mithra' and carried a shepherd's staff. They also called their priests '**Father**' after the Mithraic practice. The title of the Pope, '**Pontifex Maximus**' is still used by Roman Catholics. It was the same title used for the Mithraic High Priest (Reference, *Jesus and the Goddess*, by T. Freke and P. Gandy, p. 44).

Tom Harpur reminds his readers:

*The birth of the Persian sun-god Mithras was celebrated on December 25. It had a Eucharistic-type meal, observed Sunday as its sacred day, had its major festival at Easter (when Mithras' resurrection was celebrated), and featured miracles, twelve disciples, and a virgin birth.*

*(The Pagan Christ, p. 81)*

## **Jean Gebser (1905–1973) The Evolution of Consciousness**

Although Frazer's *Golden Bough* was highly influential in anthropological circles its effects have been superseded by more elaborate cultural theorists. Jean Gebser and William Irwin Thompson have provided enlarged frameworks of understanding.



Gebser's theory of the evolution of consciousness is traced through five stages: Archaic, Magical, Mythical, Rational and Integral. These five stages are not strictly evolutionary in historical terms. They may be sequential in a psychological and cultural sense but some individuals and some cultures may be fixated at a particular stage. Thus a whole culture may be fixated at the magical level. Some cultures will have representatives of each of the five levels. William Irwin

Thompson (b. 1938) is also a cultural theorist who delineated five stages of political – social organisation. Each stage gave rise to typical means of communication: Oral, Script, Alphabetic, Print and Electronic. The Oral stage lent itself to magical beliefs because there was no disputing the dominance of the patriarchal authority. When there were scripts recording approved texts then these became standards against which utterances could be tested.

# **NOVA HERMETICA AND ITS THREE MAGI**

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#### **Alchemy**

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The Spagyric Physicians

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The Confession Fraternitatis (1615)

The Chymische Hockzeit (1616)

#### **The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreuz**

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**Robert Fludd** (1574–1637)

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**Crystal Gazing, Magnetism and Divination**

**Gematria and Notarikon**

Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494) and Francesco Giorgi (1466–1540)

**Contraries or Polarities**

Bernardino Telesio (1509–1588)

**A Living Earth**

Tommaso Campanella (1568–1639)

**Creation Ex Deo and Ex Nihilo**

Jacob Boehme (1575–1624)



# NOVA HERMETICA AND ITS THREE MAGI

## CHAPTER 2 Elements of Medieval Hermeticism

### Part 1 Astrology

#### **The Renaissance**

The period between the 15th and 17th century gave rise to a number of remarkable thinkers. A number of these men had interests in astrology, alchemy, the Kabbalah, magic and mysticism. These interests, with varying emphases, were united in the teachings of the secret societies – especially the Rosicrucians. Those who sought justification for Christian teaching drew on Neo-Platonic teaching and, in the case of Greek Orthodoxy, drew on Aristotelian thought as well.

#### **Astrology**

Today astrology may not receive the credence it once had in Babylonia or the acceptance by the early Christian fathers. Despite its denigration it still persists into modern times. The 20th century psychoanalyst and founder of Individual Psychology, C.G. Jung, justified his interest by this statement:

*Whatever is born to a particular moment in time takes on the qualities of that moment of time. The meaningful co-incidence we are looking for is immediately apparent in astrology.*

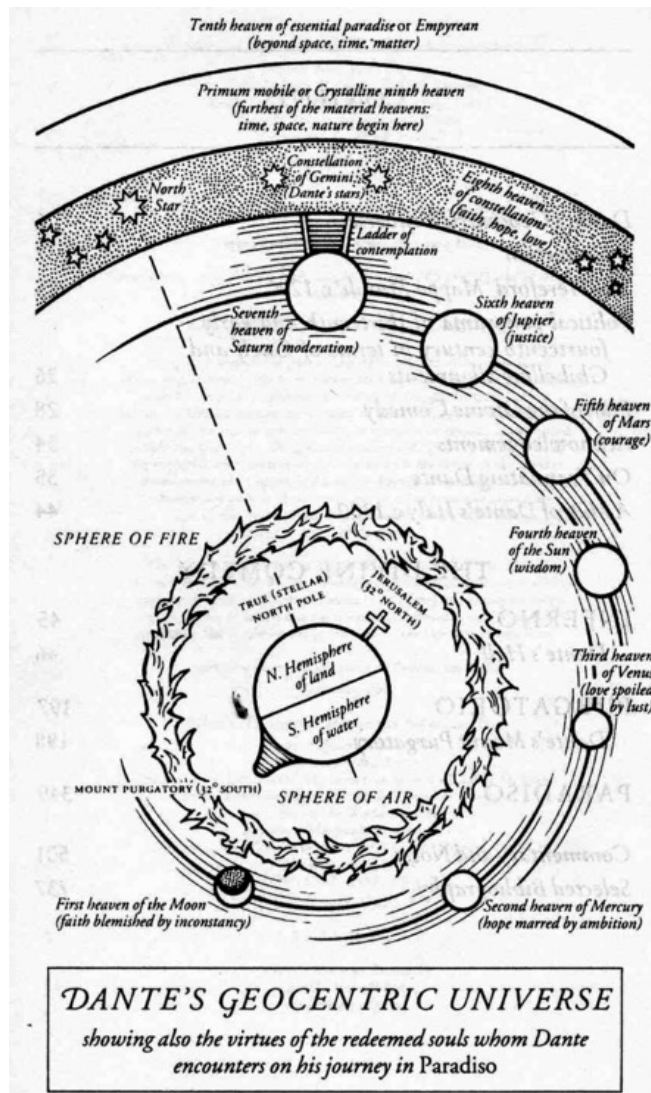
‘Rulers in both ancient Mesopotamia and China consolidated the powers of the state with the help of an astronomical bureaucracy’ (*Skywatchers, Shamans and Kings* by L.C. Krupp, p 234). Christianity taught that the Magi followed a star to the infant Jesus.



In medieval Christian cosmology, the earth was at the centre of the universe, surrounded by the concentric celestial spheres of the sun, moon, planets and stars. 'Beyond' the stars – and 'outside' physical space – was the heavenly Empyrean of God. See *The Pearly Gates of Cyberspace* by Margaret Wertheim, p. 34.

### Man and the Planets

The medieval astrologers were obsessed with the notion that '**within the part the whole was contained**'. This notion is incorporated in the hologram and the practices of iridology and reflexology. In effect, it meant that if man was a 'microcosm of the macrocosm' then man's very nature contained aspects of the planets, the sun and the zodiacal constellations. The task of the true seeker was to discover the relationships between man and the heavenly bodies. This was done by discovering correspondence and signatures.



In Dante's cosmos, the celestial heavens of the planets and stars serve as a metaphor for the Christian Heaven – the realm of God and the angels.  
 See *The Pearly Gates of Cyberspace*  
 by Margaret Wertheim (p. 50)

### Correspondence and Signatures

Kepler's astronomical laws concerning the orbiting of planets shows a striking correspondence to the musical scale used by man. When Chaladni discovered the relationship between 'form' and 'tone' it was possible to deduce that the 'form' of man emanated from the music of the spheres. A less tangible 'form' emanated from fixed stars and was known as man's 'astral' body. The constellations of the zodiac contributed to the form of the animals. The planets left their 'signatures' in the metals: Mars (Iron), Venus (Copper), Saturn (Lead), Jupiter (Tin), Mercury (Quicksilver), The Moon (silver) and the Sun (Gold).

### **Dr John Dee (1527–1608)**

The importation of astrological references into the Christian story provided an approved climate for the acceptance of brilliant scholars such as the Elizabethan Magus Dr John Dee. 'When Queen Mary died in 1558 the young Queen Elizabeth asked Dee to cast a horoscope to choose the most propitious date for her coronation.' (*The Atlas of Secret Societies* by David Barrett, p. 56). Dee wrote *Monas Hieroglyphica* in 1564. His learning traversed Mathematics, Kabbalism, Neo Platonism, Neo Pythagoreanism, Numerology, Astronomy, Cartography, Alchemy and Divination.



A 16th century portrait of John Dee aged around 67. Dee was a mathematician, astronomer and astrologer, cartographer and much else.

### **Giambattista Porta (1531–1615)**

In 1558, Giambattista Porta (1531-1615) published his *Four Books on Natural Magic* (*Magias naturalis libri iii*).

*His vision of natural magic ... involved the application of experiments and mathematics ... As the name implies, natural magic was meant to exclude the role of demons ... Astrology was a vital aspect of natural magic.'* (see *A History of Natural Philosophy From the Ancient Worlds to the Nineteenth Century* by Edward Grant, p. 171).

## **Part 2 Alchemy**

### **Alchemy**

Alchemy had spread to Europe from the Arabs in Spain and Byzantium in the 11th-13th century. It was the beginning of modern chemistry but was often blended with Gnostic elements, Aristotelian science, Kabbalistic gematria and Mesopotamian

astrology. Its practices were known by Albertus Magnus, Dr Dee, Roger Bacon, Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, Paracelsus and Isaac Newton among other notable and respectable thinkers. Medical practitioners from Europe and Chinese Taoists 'doctors' sought to use metals, such as mercury, to effect cures. They sought to discover a cosmic '**elixir**' to heal the sick. Today they are best known for the efforts to obtain the '**philosophers stone**' through the transformation of lead into gold. They used '**The Emerald Tablet**' as their standard reference text.

### **Henry Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486–1535).**

Nettesheim popularised alchemy and hermetic thought when his encyclopaedia of magic became known. ***De Occulta Philosophia*** was written in 1510 but not published until 1538 – three years after his death. This work expounded the teachings of the Neo-platonists belief in the soul of man with its astral garment acquired through man's descent from the heavens. It also drew on the teachings of Hermes Trismegistus and the mysteries of the Kabbalah. He assigned an **Intelligence and Being** to each of the planets and stars. The Intelligence of the Earth Star was Man himself.



### **Theophrastus Bombastus Hohenheim known as 'Paracelsus' (1493–1541)**

Paracelsus was a renowned Alchemist. He is widely revered as a physician, mystic and philosopher. He is credited with revolutionising medical practice by challenging the prevailing theories of the second century physician Galen. Galen understood illness as rising from an imbalance in the four 'humours' or bodily fluids. Paracelsus moved towards an understanding of the human body as a **chemical** laboratory imitating the real world. He introduced a new principle to the four 'humours' of blood, viz. mucus, gall and black bile. This was the '**quinta essentia**'. The physician's task was to restore the harmony of the 'humours'



by finding the '**quintessence**' of every illness. Paracelsus also believed that disease was caused by living parasites. Homeopathic remedies and detoxified poisons could be made into medicines that killed the parasites. He used ether and opium-based painkillers to ease suffering.

Paracelsus also accepted von Nettesheim's thoughts concerning man's relationship to the sidereal or starry world through a subtle cosmic or astral body within man.

### **The Spagyric Physicians**

Paracelsus influenced the spagyrics physicians by classifying chemical substances according to their correspondence to the processes of '**salt**', '**sulphur**' and '**mercury**'. These three elements were understood as cosmic influences affecting three systems of man, vis. head, thorax and digestion. In the early 20th century Dr Encause, writing as 'Papus', attempted to convey the Paracelsian usage by relating the 'salt' processes to 'thinking' including nerve formation; the 'mercury' processes to 'living' to indicate the influences of elements on the pulmonary and circulatory system and the 'sulphur' processes to the chemicals which have an influence on the **metabolic system**. The spagyrics or alchemical physicians also practised a process known as the '**vegetabilisation of metals**'. This is done by composting plants with minute doses of metallic salts for two or three crop seedings. Paracelsus and the spagyrics physicians understood disease as a disharmony among the three cosmic processes. Health came as a result of restoring the harmony of three bodily systems.

## Part 3 Rosicrucianism

### The Three Rosicrucian Manifestos

In the early 17th century three documents were circulated in parts of Germany. They were:

- The Fama Fraternitatis (1614);
- The Confession Fraternitatis (1615); and
- The Chymische Hockzeit or The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreus (1616).

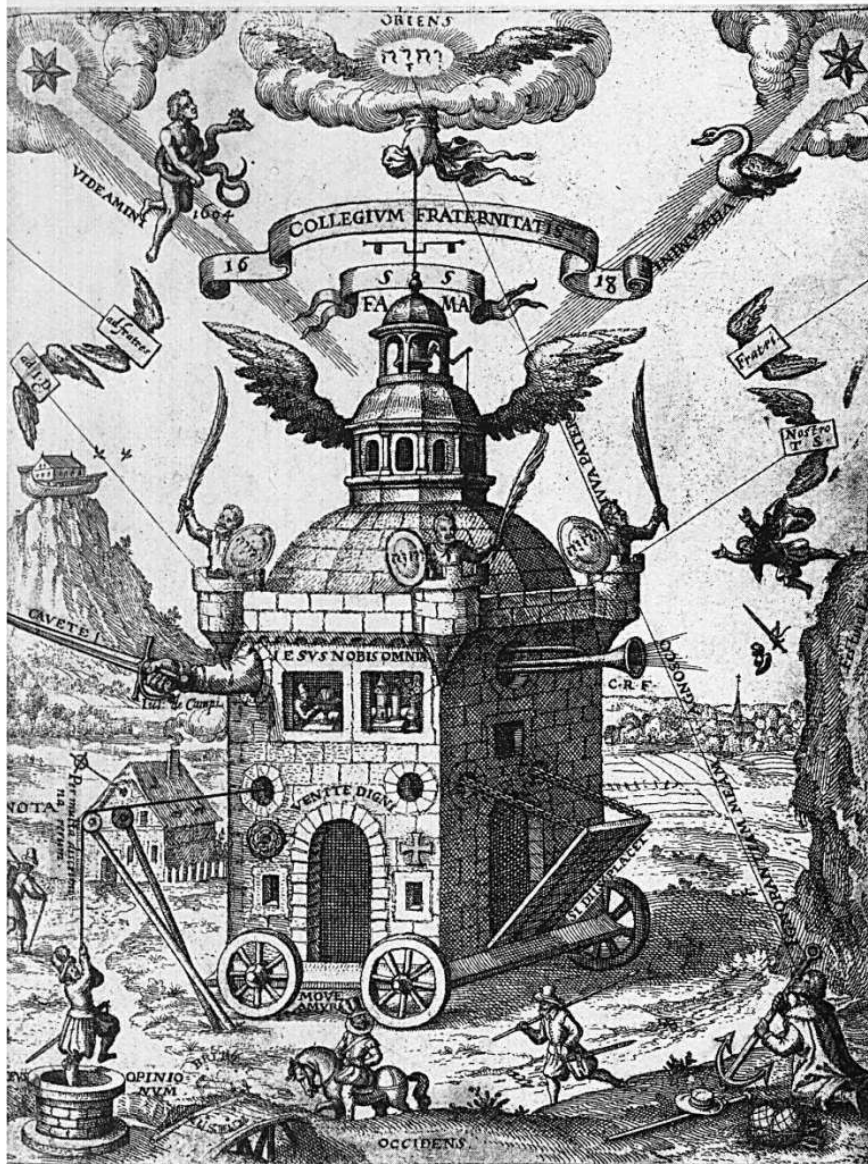


German theologian Johann Valentin Andreae (1586–1654),  
the probable author of the third Rosicrucian manifesto.

All three of these documents were anonymous and they describe a Rosicrucian Brotherhood known as an 'Invisible College' of enlightened men. This invisible brotherhood was composed 'of physicians who healed without payment; who wore no distinguishing habit; who met once a year; who attempted to find someone to succeed him; that their seal, mark and character should be the words 'Rosy Cross' (see *The Atlas of Secret Societies* by David Barrett, p. 62).

### The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreus

This document is in the form of an allegorical romance. It is unlike the two earlier manifestos. It tells of the personal and spiritual journey of Christian Rosenkreus who has a vision on Easter Eve, in which he is given an invitation to attend a wedding of a King and a Queen. The fable is divided into seven chapters.

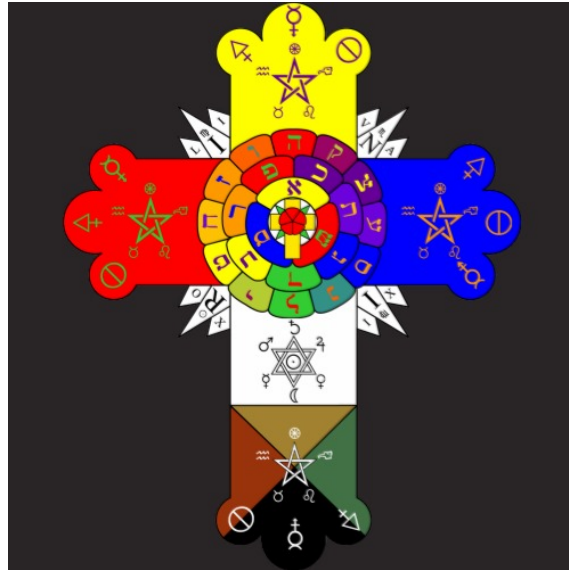


An unusual interpretation of *The Temple of the Rose Cross* by Theophilus Schweighardt Constantiens, 1618.

### The Document as a Coded Initiation Journey

The fable may be interpreted in several ways. The marriage betokens the **'union of opposites'** and the **transmutation** of baser spiritual qualities into the gold of spirituality. On his journey Christian Rosenkreuz is initiated into the Chivalric order as a Knight of the Rose Cross. Strangely this parallels the account of Frederick V's initiation into the English Order of the Garter whose symbol is the Red Cross of St George.





A classic late-19th century interpretation of the rose cross imagery from the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn: Westcott's lamen or the Rose Cross lamen.

### **The Rosicrucian Enlightenment**

Some have interpreted the contents of the fable as a veiled political tract to support the political ambitions of Frederick V (1596-1632). Indeed Frederick V, Elector Palatine of the Rhine, married Princess Elizabeth, daughter of James I, King of England and Scotland, on 14 February 1613.

Frederick V was at the time a candidate for the Holy Roman Emperorship and he successfully courted the vote of the seven Electors. He did this by promising to usher in a new dawn of occult knowledge which is known as the Rosicrucian Enlightenment.

### **Part 4 Magic**

#### **Hermetic Man as a Magus**

Those who were believers in Hermetic teachings during the European Renaissance were a type of magus. The magi, or magicians were also scientists who believed that in nature one event follows another necessarily and invariably without the intervention of any supernatural agency. The Magus, knowing the laws of nature could actually make nature do his bidding! This knowledge was sometimes hidden

or occult. The magus employed a dynamic understanding of **sympathies** and **antipathies** within living bodies and special plants and stones.

The Renaissance magician sought to manipulate material objects by utilising his knowledge of the zodiac and planetary conjunctions. **Spells** drew on a knowledge of **correspondence** and sympathies.

### **Correspondences**

The highly influential 'Emerald Tablet' proclaimed the doctrine that:

*All that is above is like that which is below, and all that is below is like that which is above.*

This doctrine promoted the idea that every object conceals a secret and that everything has a hidden message like a hieroglyph.

There were two kinds of correspondence

**Natural:** These exist in nature and may be seen or invisible, they are found between the planets and parts of the human body – such correspondences were the original basis of **Astrology**. Steiner referred to some of these correspondences, e.g. head – Saturn, heart – sun, moon – digestion/ reproduction.

**Textual:** The kabbalists taught that there was a relationship between nature and revealed texts.

For kabbalists there was 'a complex system of symbolic links between astrological signs, hebrew letters/ numbers, the sephiroth of the tree of life, tarot cards, hindu and other gods, musical notes, precious stones, colours, scents and many other things.

### **The Kabbalah and Magic**

To a Kabbalist magic exists only in the world of '**Yezirah**'. Yezirah may be manipulated by an invocation or a specific prayer. It is a separate world of emotions, the soul and angels.

**Robert Fludd (1574–1637)**

Robert Fludd was one of the most distinguished and eminent men of his day. Like Dr John Dee he was influenced by Kabbalistic thinking, astrology, neo-platonism and neo-pythagoreanism. However he did have some novel ideas of his own. Like Carl Jung, he believed that the archetypes contained their opposites within them. God was both good and evil. Man was a microcosm of the macrocosm and was composed of four humours: sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric and melancholic. When man focuses on his understanding of his essential inner nature he opens up the opportunity of influencing the outer world. One of Fludd's important works was his *Utriusque Cosmi Historia*, which synthesised the knowledge of Pico, Paracelsus and Dee about Pre-Copernican astronomy and medical science.

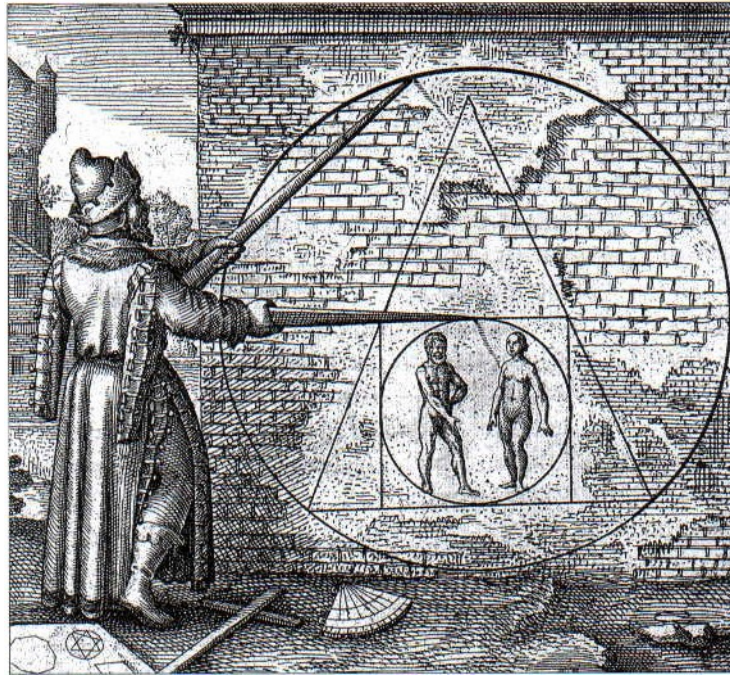


'The Rose Gives Honey to the Bee' from Robert Fludd's *Clavis Philosophiae et Alchymiae* 1633. The seven-petalled red rose above the thorny cross is one of the most potent Rosicrucian symbols. The bee represents both industry and wisdom. See *Atlas of Secret Societies* (p. 62)

**Michael Maier (1568-1622)**

Michael Maier was a devout German Lutheran who was a scholar of hermeticism and an active rosicrucian. Maier joined Fludd in England. He wrote *Atalanta*

*Fugiens* whose title was a reference to the race between Atalanta and Hippomenes. Atalanta lost the contest by stopping to collect the golden apples that Hippomene had strewn in her path. For Maier this story was an alchemical allegory regarding mercury and gold. He also wrote *Arcana Arcanissima* (Secret of Secrets), *Silentium post Clamorem* (The Silence after the Shouting). This latter work was a defence of Rosicrucianism.



Rosicrucians were natural philosophers. This engraving from Michael Maier's *Atalanta Fugiens* (1618) shows the mathematical problem of squaring the circle. *Atlas of Secret Societies* (p. 66)

### **Crystal Gazing, Magnetism and Divination**

Crystal gazing, scrying and divination were activities of many 15th century magi such as Dr John Dee and Edward Kelley (1555-97). These practices had their origins in the distant past. Pliny the historian, the specularii of 5th century Ireland, the magi of Persia and even the biblical seers documented a fairly widespread use of gemstones, crystals, magnets and divining rods. Associated with these aids were such tools as tarot cards, dice and the practices of haruspicy. Dream interpretation and oracular statements made in a trance condition were among the range of clairvoyant gifts available to the true believers.

## Gematria and Notarikon

**Pico della Mirandola** (1463–1494) and **Francesco Giorgi** (1466–1540) undertook the task of using the Kabbalah to prove the truths of Christianity. They utilised the principles of ‘**Gematria**’ where each letter stands for a significant numerical value and the ‘**Notarikon**’ whereby words are seen as abbreviations.

	א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט
absolute	1*	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
ordinal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
reduced	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

	י	כ	ל	מ	נ	ס	ע	פ	צ
absolute	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90
ordinal	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
reduced	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

	ק	ר	ש	ת	ך	ם	ן	ף	ץ
absolute	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900
ordinal	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
reduced	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

\*also equals one thousand (the meaning of the letter "alef")

Gematria

1	א	ALEPH	Dieu de l'infinité
2	ב	BETH	Dieu de la sagesse
3	ג	GIMEL	Dieu de la rétribution
4	ד	DALETH	Dieu des portes de lumières
5	ה	HEH	Dieu de Dieu
6	ו	VAU	Dieu fondateur
7	ז	ZAYIN	Dieu de la foudre (fulgoris)
8	ח	CHETH	Dieu de la miséricorde
9	ט	TETH	Dieu de la bonté
10	י	YOD	Dieu principe
11	כ	KAPH	Dieu immuable
12	ל	LAMED	Dieu des 30 voies de la sagesse
13	מ	MEM	Dieu arcané
14	נ	NUN	Dieu des 50 portes de lumières
15	ס	SAMEKH	Dieu foudroyant
16	ע	AYIN	Dieu adjurant
17	פ	PHE	Dieu des discours
18	צ	TZADDI	Dieu de justice
19	ק	QOPH	Dieu du droit
20	ר	RESH	Dieu tête
21	ש	SHIN	Dieu sauveur
22	ת	TAU	Dieu fin de tout

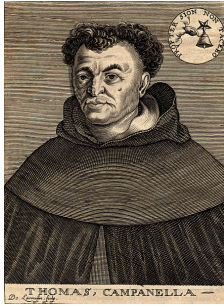
Notarikon

## Contraries or Polarities

**Bernardino Telesio** (1509–1588) was an influential person in the magical tradition. He taught that the processes of creation were the result of a union of opposites: sun/ earth, male/ female, dark/ light, dense/ rare, mobile/ immobile and so on.



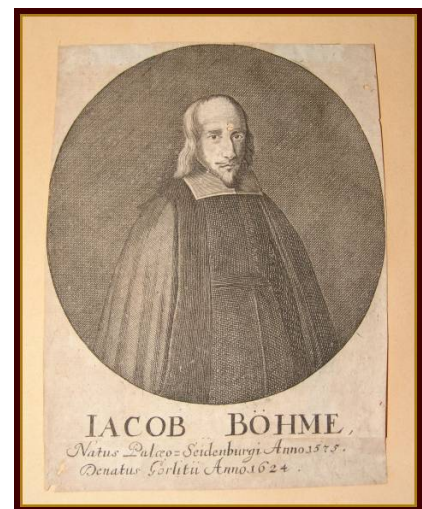
## A Living Earth



**Tommaso Campanella** (1568–1639) was influenced by Telesio. He taught that the source of heat and therefore of motion was also involved in the union of opposites. He believed that the world was a ‘feeling animal’ and that plants and metals had sense and feeling.

## Creation Ex Deo and Ex Nihilo

**Jacob Boehme** (1575–1624) shepherd, shoemaker, linen maker and mystic taught that matter was created not from nothing (creation ex nihilo) but from God himself (creation ex deo). Creation took place by a series of separations or divisions. Light emanated from the primal divine intelligence and divided into light/ dark being transmuted into fire/ water, out of which all of the elements separated. There is no fundamental opposition between matter and spirit. Divine spirit is the original **prima materia** from which the entire universe sprang.



Adam was composed of a perfect balance of opposing qualities of male/ female. His first ‘fall’ was in the separation of male from female. His first love was the **Virgin Sophia**. When he and Sophia were expelled from Eden this was his second ‘fall’.

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**NOVA HERMETICA  
AND ITS  
THREE MAGI**

**CHAPTER 3  
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe  
(1749 – 1832)  
The Chemical Wedding of Art and Science**

*Goethe, 1817, portrait by Ferdinand Jagemann*

*Each to the whole its substance gives  
Each in the other works and lives.*

Goethe's Faust

*Goethe did not consider art and beauty as a realm that was torn out of  
the interconnection of reality, but as a higher stage of nature's order.*

*The Riddles of Philosophy*  
Rudolf Steiner, p. 113

*For Goethe, art is a 'manifestation of secret natural laws' ...  
Art is the continuation and human completion of nature.*

Ibid, p. 113

*For the world conception of Goethe and Schiller, truth is not only  
contained, in science, but also in art.*

Ibid, p. 142

*He has said many things about Nature but he has never laid down his  
conception of Nature in a permanent thought structure.*

*Goethe's Conception of the World*  
R. Steiner, p. xv

*To Goethe colours are new formations which are developed in the  
light, not entities that have merely developed out of the light. He had  
to reject the Newtonian view because of his own mode of thinking in  
conformity with the idea. The Newtonian view has no knowledge of the  
nature of the idea.*

Ibid, p. 146

*There is only one thing for which Heisenberg criticises Goethe: 'If one  
should wish to reproach Goethe, it could only be for not going far  
enough – that is, for having attacked the **views** of Newton instead of  
declaring that the whole of Newtonian Physics – Optics, Mechanics  
and the Law of Gravitation – were from the devil.*

Ernst Lehrs, *Man or Matter*  
(see p. 20)

**CHAPTER 3**  
**Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832)**  
**The Chemical Wedding of Art and Science**

**Part 1**  
**Introduction**

**Greatest European Man of Letters**  
**Multifaceted Life**  
**Truth in Art and Science**  
**Nature as One**  
    The One and the Many  
    Analysis and Synthesis  
**The Galileo of the Organic**  
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**Part 2**  
**Goethe as Artist**

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**Newton and Goethe**  
**Goethe and Kant**  
**Goethe's Perception of Meaning**  
**Goethe's Approach to Science**  
**Manifoldness Out of Unity**  
**'Morphology' and 'The Metamorphosis of Plants'**  
**Anschauende Urteilskraft**  
**The 'Urflanze'**  
**'Steigerung'**  
**Steiner on Goethe's Doctrine of Metamorphosis**

**Definition of Axiology**  
**Fact and Value**  
**No Value-Free Facts**  
**Aesthetics**  
**Active Imagination**  
**The Mind as an Organ of Perception**  
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**Part 4**  
**Goethe's Understanding of Light Polarity and Colour**

**Light as Understood by Goethe**  
**Light and Dark and Colour**  
**Light in Nature**  
**Inner Light and Outer Light**  
**Modern Physics and the Polar Principle**  
**Newton's 'Optics' and Goethe's 'Fablenlehre'**  
**Entwurf einer Fablenlehre (1810)**  
**Changing the Linear Spectrum into a Colour Circle**  
**The Dark Spectrum and the Light Spectrum**  
**Goethe's Approach to Scientific Proof**  
**Discovery as the Perception of Meaning**

**Bibliography**

## CHAPTER 3

### Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) The Chemical Wedding of Art and Science

#### Part 1 Introduction

##### **Greatest European Man of Letters**

Johann von Goethe was born just 22 years after the death of Isaac Newton (1642–1727). In matters of science they were almost antithetical in approach. Goethe is usually identified with the German romantic tradition of literature and his name is associated with Herder (1744–1803), Fichte (1762–1814), Schiller (1759–1805), Lessing (1729–1781) and Friedrich Schlegel (1772–1854). However there was much more to Goethe's life than his literary pursuits.

##### **Multifaceted Life**

In addition to his poems, novels and his monumental drama, Faust (Part 1 and 2), Goethe was a Privy Counsellor who administered the day-to-day affairs of state for Duke Karl August of Weimar. Goethe not only built roads, bridges and canals he established a 'national' theatre and with Schiller, directed plays. He sought to develop Weimar as a cultural centre and to some extent he succeeded. Strangely enough Goethe thought of himself foremostly as a scientist and not as a poet! Although Goethe's scientific interest is often regarded as dilettantism this was not the assessment of Rudolf Magnus:

*I can testify from personal experience to the extraordinary fascination of repeating Goethe's experiments with his own instruments of realising the accuracy of his observations, the telling faithfulness which he described everything he saw.*

*The Wholeness of Nature*  
Henri Bortoft, p. 29

##### **Truth in Art and Science**

For Goethe there is only one source of knowledge. This source is the world of experience and it includes the experience of ideas. Knowledge comes from observations WITH thinking **not** observation PLUS thinking. In the world conception

of Goethe and Schiller, truth is not only contained in science but also in art. Art is 'a manifestation of secret natural laws and is the continuation and human completion of nature. Art and beauty are embedded in nature and are subject to observation and scientific detection as are molecules and calorific value.

## Nature as One

### The One and the Many

Another key concept in Goethe's thinking relates to **part/ whole** relationships. Man is part of nature yet the whole of nature is in him. Man is a microcosm of the macrocosm. In his *Wholeness of Nature* Henri Bortoft gives two examples of '**wholeness**'. These relate to the '**camera obscura**' and the '**hologram**'.

- In the camera obscura (or pin-hole camera) the whole world of external objects enters the pinhole as a total image. The whole is reduced to a point  
and conversely
- If a holographic plate is shattered each of the parts contains the original whole picture.

### Analysis and Synthesis

Analysis appears as **Atomism** in philosophy. It is the view that the physical world is the sum of individual and indivisible parts. The point-wise geometry of Euclid is an example of atomistic thinking.

Synthesis manifests itself in '**Holism**'. This is the view that the parts only have meaning in relationship to the whole. Modern synthetic geometry is an example of holistic thinking in which forms are generated from planes.

Goethean thinking is typically holistic and planar rather than atomistic and point-wise.

## The Galileo of the Organic

Although Goethe studied electricity and optics in great depth he is better known for his botanical and zoological research. His most devoted apologist, Rudolf Steiner,

called him 'the Galileo of the Organic'. Goethe's espousal of the principle of metamorphosis in both plant and animal development profoundly influenced Steiner (see Chapter 4). Goethe explained that there is 'another way of apprehending nature, active and living, struggling from the whole into parts.'

### **Monism**

For monists there is no order of reality hiding behind the world of the senses. A monist may be a materialist like Haeckel or believe in a sense-filled world like Goethe. Dualists such as Plato split the world into spirit (ideas, forms) and substance. Goethe does not do this. For Goethe there are no limits to knowledge as there is for Kant. 'There is no world beyond the sensory one. Within it, Goethe argued, lies the complete reality, accessible through our own spiritual activity. As thinking beings we are already inhabitants of the spiritual world.'

(G. Lachmann's *Rudolf Steiner*, p. 96).

## **Part 2 Goethe as Artist**

### **Three Evaluations** (Eliot, Priestly and May)

Goethe was no literary dilettante and he was no scientific dabbler. **T.S. Eliot** however thought otherwise:

*Of Goethe perhaps it is truer to say that he dabbled in both philosophy and poetry and made no great success of either.*

**J.B. Priestly** was not as scathing as T.S. Eliot and reluctantly conceded:

*We cannot help feeling, just as most of his contemporaries felt, that there is a final element in Goethe that represents more than the sum total of his accomplishments .... It is as if Goethe had performed a double act of creation, creating his works within the larger containing act of self-creation.*

*Literature and Western Man*

J.B. Priestly, pps. 134-135

The great psychotherapist **Rollo May** was more fulsome in his appraisal of Goethe. Of Goethe's Faust he wrote

*The drama is great also because it deals with the profound problems of how we should live .... Goethe's Faust is a poignant and powerful expression of the myth of our modern age.*

### **Early French and German Influences**

As a young boy Goethe amused himself and family visitors with his puppetry performances. His particular favourite was *David and Goliath* which he performed in French. At the age of nine his mother took him to see a performance of Racine's 'Britannicus' and young Goethe added his rendition of this play to his repertoire.

By the time he was eleven Goethe had been tutored on the rules of the theatre by the son of a visiting French actor. It is said that 'he knew everything about the Aristotelian unities and could recite Racine, Corneille and Diderot by heart'. He also watched performances of German farces in the Franfort public square.

### **Goethe's Infatuation with Shakespeare**

At sixteen years of age Goethe had learned enough English to read Dodd's *Beauties of Shakespeare*. He wrote a love poem as a result of his infatuation with his new found literary hero. Goethe's semi-autobiographical novel, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, reflects his admiration for the works of his newly discovered literary genius. Of Shakespeare, Goethe's hero says:

*one feels as though the monstrous books of fate have been opened,  
and the stormwinds of full-blooded life roar through them.*

*Voltaire's Coconuts*

by Ian Buruma (pps. 59-60)

### **Searching for the German Volk Identity**

Goethe did not like Johann Herder's criticism of his 'dandyish' dress and his changeable tastes but they did agree on two things: that Shakespeare was a genius and that genius was a law unto itself. Goethe led the Shakespearomania that infected Strasbourg and the German university towns of the 1770s. Gottfried Lessing, the greatest critic of his time regretted the fact that Germany had



discovered Shakespeare after Corneille and Racine had been translated from the French. He now proclaimed that the English style and manner of thinking was more to the German taste. Ian Buruma expresses this new found enthusiasm:

*German genius could be ignited only by another genius, and the best kind of genius is one who owes everything to nature and does not repel us by the perfections of art.*

*Voltaire's Coconuts*

Ch. 3 Goethe's Shakespeare, p. 60

Goethe was the inheritor of Herder's search for the German 'volk'. Goethe ingested as much of Shakespearean skill and metaphysical insight as he could. This was to capture the authentic voice of the German people. This task brooded within him for forty years and emerged in his monumental philosophical poem *Faust*.

### **The Faustian Legend**

In 1587 a pamphlet called the 'Chapbook' was published in Germany. This booklet was entitled *The Damnable Life and Deserved Death of Dr John Faustus*. There was an actual John Faustus who lived in northern Germany in the mid-sixteenth century. Apparently he was a mischief-maker who spent some time in gaol for playing magical pranks on his neighbours. Whether John Faust's magical pranks resembled those attributed to Dr John Faustus is not likely. This is because the Damnable Doctor is alleged to have had sexual intercourse with Helen of Troy!

### **A Medieval Morality Play**

At the end of the Middle Ages in Germany the story of Dr Faust was adapted into a travelling morality play. In this process the story's legendary character acquired the characteristics of Christian condemnation for unrequited sins. The Mythic Faust had to be punished in hell-fire for forming a pact with the devil. It made for good theatre. It equated the yearning for new knowledge with guilt and punishment. This punishment was in the fires of hell. Watching this the medieval Christians freed themselves from their own fears while Faustus vicariously suffered for the viewing audience.

## **Christopher Marlowe (1564–1592)**

Christopher Marlowe was born in 1564, the same year as Shakespeare. Although he was a contemporary of Shakespeare he was killed in a brawl when he was twenty-eight. He wrote several dramas of recognised merit. His *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Dr Faustus* consolidated his claim to dramatic greatness. Some have suggested his greatness would have surpassed Shakespeare had he not been killed at such a young age.

### **Marlowe's Faust**

Marlowe's 16th century Dr Faustus is often confused with Goethe's 18th century Dr Faustus. They draw on the same mythological archetype but each play seeks its own metaphysical meaning. Goethe had the advantage of writing much later than Marlowe. Marlowe's Dr Faustus has degrees in medicine, philosophy and theology but lusts for more knowledge which is hidden and magical:

*Philosophy is odorous and obscure,  
Both law and physics for petty wits,  
Divinity is basest of the three,  
Unpleasant, harsh, contemptible and vile,  
"Tis magic, magic, that ravished me"*

The pride, greed and lust for knowledge and god-like power leads him to join forces with Lucifer. Mephistopheles pleads with Faustus to reconsider his proposed pact with Lucifer. Faustus will not be deterred. He signs a pact with Lucifer in blood. It is that he will have all power for twenty-four years. This power was to rival divinity and allow Faustus to indulge in 'all voluptuousness' – sex, magic, astronomy and last of all to make love with Helen of Troy – the form of the beautiful itself. However Helen, long since dead, is now a demon and Faustus cannot have her because he is motivated by power – not love.

At the end of his twenty-four year compact Marlowe's Faust is taken by the devils to the adders and serpents of ugly hell. His sin is the sin of hubris, i.e. his refusal to accept his human role in the grand scheme of things.

## **Goethe's Faust**

Faust is Goethe's most famous work and is considered by many to be one of the greatest works in German literature. The earliest forms of the work, the *Urfaust* were developed between 1772 and 1775 but not published as Part One until 1806.

Goethe edited this work several times and the 1828-29 edition was his last re-editing. Although Goethe finished Part 2 in 1831 it was not published until after his death in 1832. The entire dramatic tragedy is rarely staged. The Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland stages it on an annual or biannual basis.

Unlike Marlowe's Faust Goethe's Faust goes to heaven. Goodness, it would seem, comes from evil. Helen is revealed as unattainable mythic beauty and the old patriarchal power is bound to come to grief. Mephistopheles achieves tragic grandeur as a fallen angel. Goethe's representation of him is not the master of evil. In the final analysis Faust outwits him.

## **Attempting to Capture the Zeit Geist of the German People**

The principal characters of Part One include Heinrich Faust, Mephistopheles, Gretchen, Marthe, Valentin and Faust's student Wagner. There are 31 different scenes in this drama. It is usual to describe the work as a tragedy yet it has many comic passages, feature songs and it lacks a tragic ending. It might be described as a musical comedy. It is not clear whether Faust is a villain or a romantic hero. Walter Kaufmann's translation presents Mephistopheles as one of the most likeable characters in the play! One commentator avers –

*It is par excellence a Romantic masterwork precisely because it explores a wide variety of polar opposites without resolving them.*

*Goethe has created a microcosm of life, trying to preserve its complexity, its tensions, and its dynamism. IT IS USELESS TO TRY TO FIGURE OUT THE REAL POINT OF FAUST.*

*Wikipedia Study Guide for Goethe's Faust*

One can only guess that Goethe was attempting to capture the spirit of his age and the temper of the German spirit. Perhaps he was attempting to capture the many faceted character of the German volk in much the same way as Chaucer and Shakespeare did for England.

### Part 3 Goethe as Scientist

#### Goethe's Self-Evaluation as Scientist



In his article on 'Goethe's Scientific Consciousness' Henri Bortoft explains that Goethe cannot be easily pigeon-holed. While he is renowned for his poetic and literary skills by the literati, he regarded his scientific pursuits as his greatest achievements.

*As for what I have done as a poet, I take no pride in it whatever. Excellent poets have lived at the time as myself; poets more excellent have lived before me, and others will come after me. But that in my century I am the only person who knows the truth in the difficult science of colours – of that, I say, I am not a little proud, and here I have a consciousness of a superiority to many.*

(Goethe to his secretary Eckerman in 1829,  
quoted on p. 309 of *Man or Matter* by Ernst Lehrs).

#### Goethe – No Scientific Dilettante

Goethe's scientific investigations and his findings are usually ignored or belittled as amateurish. Such attitudes cannot be squared with the reactions of Rudolf Magnus when he surveyed the wealth of equipment and specimens retained in Goethe's home in Weimar. He found 'numerous specimens from Goethe's work in geology (more than eighteen thousand specimens), botany and zoology, together with many instruments from experiments in electricity and optics' (see p. 29 *Goethe's Scientific Consciousness* by Henri Bortoft). Goethe spent twenty years of painstaking work on his research into the phenomena of colour. Goethe evaluated his work on the metamorphosis of plants in the following manner:

*Not through an extraordinary spiritual gift, not through momentary inspiration, unexpected and unique, but through consistent work did I eventually achieve such satisfactory results.*

(Ibid, p. 30).

Bortoft agrees with Goethe and adds that Goethe's appraisal 'applied equally to all his scientific works'.

### **The Road to Materialism and the Development of the Onlooker Consciousness**

The road to the present-day Scientific Materialism is thought to have commenced with Francis Bacon (1561–1626). His advocacy of inductive reasoning has become a cornerstone of scientific methodology. The road leads to the studies of Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) and proceeds to the discoveries of Isaac Newton (1642). A parallel philosophical pathway accompanied this scientific road. It can be traced in the writings of John Locke (1632–1704), Bishop George Berkeley (1685–1753), David Hume (1711–1776) and Immanuel Kant (1724–1804). This philosophical route proudly proclaims that we can only have knowledge of our perceptions. We can never have knowledge of 'the thing in itself'.

### **Epistemology**

Epistemology is the study of 'how we know' or 'how knowledge is acquired'. The western style of thinking owes a great deal to the early Greek philosophers for the rational manner in which thought is shaped. With the emergence of British Empiricism, Rationalism became associated with the rigour of the scientific method. This style of thinking differentiated sensation, perception and ideation. It did not, however, give much attention to the entity who was doing the sensing, the perceiving or the ideating. Nor did British Empiricism carefully delineate the number of senses or the relationship that sensation bore to perception. Also it did not explain how sensation and perception could give rise to language or be related to thinking.

### **Newton and Goethe**

Newton and Goethe bestride the intellectual landscape of modern western thought. They do so for different reasons. It is tempting to see their thinking as polaric but this would not reveal their essential differences. We might say that Newton's science was QUANTITATIVE and concerned with measurement whereas Goethe's science was QUALITATIVE and aesthetic. However, these differences are of a secondary order. The essential differences are basically noetical and epistemological. Newton begins with such fundamental entities as MOTION and a concept of MATTER which is corpuscular. He connects these entities with a third

entity – FORCE. If matter has no motion it acquires INERTIA which is a potential force. Because of Newton's materialistic assumptions modern scientists talk of PHOTONS and GRAVITONS as if they were corpuscular. Newton adopts an OUTSIDE ONLOOKER role of the scientist without question.

### **Goethe and Kant**

Goethe challenged the scepticism of Kant's claim that we can never get beyond man's perception to know objective reality. We can only know about the perceptions. We can never have knowledge of 'the thing in itself'. For Goethe man as spirit is part of nature as spirit. Thought is in nature as well as in man. Truth is the synthesis of the world's thought and the thinking of man.

### **Goethe's Perception of Meaning**

'Goethean scientists do not project their thoughts onto nature but offer their thinking to nature so that nature can think in them and the phenomena disclose itself as an idea. In this way, it is the being of the phenomenon itself which appears as idea. It is not a question of a correspondence between an idea produced by the mind and the phenomenon in nature – which would be the way that our modern epistemological dualism would try to understand it. ON THE CONTRARY, IT IS AN ONTOLOGICAL PARTICIPATION OF THINKING IN THE PHENOMENON, SO THAT THE PHENOMENON CAN DWELL IN THINKING. Knowledge for Goethe is an element of being itself, and so scientific truth is ontological and not representational as it must be for subjectivism.'

(see Goethe's *Way of Science*,  
pps. 242-243 by Henri Bortoft)

### **Goethe's Approach to Science**

On the other hand, Goethe assumes that man is not an 'OUTSIDE ONLOOKER' trying to discover the secrets of nature from an outside observation box. Nature and man are of a UNITY and nature will only reveal her secrets through man's participatory reflection.

In today's 'parlance', Goethe thought holistically while Newton thought atomistically. Goethe knew what quantum physicists are only now discovering: the observer, in the

very act of observing, influences and participates in the observation. The results of observation include the thinking of the observer. Modern science refuses to acknowledge this fact.

### **Manifoldness Out of Unity**

On November 9, 1785, Goethe reported to Frau von Stein: 'I go on reading Linne; I have to, since I have no other book with me.' During these studies it became more and more clear to him that

*what appears in the endless multiplicity of single plant individuals is, after all, only one basic form; and this basic form itself ... possesses the capacity for endless modifications, whereby manifoldness is created out of unity.*

(Quoted from the *Introduction to Goethe's The Metamorphosis of Plants* by Rudolf Steiner, p. 13.

This Introduction is a reprint from *Goethe the Scientist*, published by the Anthroposophic Press, Spring Valley, NY, 1977).

### **'Morphology' and 'The Metamorphosis of Plants'**

Goethe was an assiduous and long-term student of botany. He wrote two extensive essays, 'Morphology' and 'The Metamorphosis of Plants'. Goethe perceived that the leaf is the pro-typic shape of all of the plant's foliage:

*'It dawned on me', writes Goethe in a letter to Herder, 'that in the organ of the plant ... (called) leaf ... lies hidden all formations. FORWARD OR BACKWARD, THE PLANT IS EVER LEAF and ONLY LEAF. The leaf undergoes manifold variation and metamorphosis: it appears time and again, in cotyledon, stem-leaf at different stages and development, sepal, petal, stamen and carpel.'*

(p. 39, *Nature Ever New*, George Adams)

### **Anschauende Urteilskraft**

The concept of 'Anschauende Urteilskraft' may be translated as 'perceptive judgement', i.e. a combination of perception and valuing.

*For Goethe seeks the explanation of something living, not merely in the logically thought-out relationship of cause and effect, but through what he calls 'anschauende Urteilskraft', i.e. perceptive judgement.*

*(The Plant Between Sun and Earth,  
George Adams and Olive Whicher, p. 35).*

### **The 'Urflanze'**

Another one of Goethe's perceptive observations concerns his idea of the 'Urflanze' or 'Archetypal plant'. He proclaimed the idea that the plant **kingdom** appeared as a single mighty plant. The Ur-plant had various geological manifestations as fern-tree, coniferous tree, palm tree and as dicotyledon but each type manifested the same parts. These four manifestations were expressions of an underlying unity. They were examples of the principles of metamorphosis working in nature on a grand scale.

*We note that tree formation occurs successively at four different levels – as fern-tree, as coniferous-tree at the stage of the gymnosperms, as palm-tree at the stage of the monocotyledons, and lastly in the form in the species of the leaf-trees at the highest level of the plant kingdom, the dicotyledons. The ur-plant achieved these various tree formations successively.*

*(See p. 92 Man and Matter by Ernst Lehrs)*

### **'Steigerung'**

A fourth holistic observation of Goethe was his recognition of three successive rhythms of expansion and contraction in the life-history of the flowering plant. 'In this climbing up the spiritual ladder Goethe learned to recognise one of nature's basic principles. He termed it 'Steigerung' (heightening). Thus he saw the plant develop through metamorphosis and heightening towards its consummation (and ultimate renunciation)'. (see p. 85 *Man or Matter* by Ernst Lehrs).

The perceptive observations of Goethe seem, to the layman, a re-iteration of the botanical principles enunciated by Emmanuel Swedenborg:

*...there is no limit to this ascending scale, but series on series. Every thing, at the end of one use, is taken up into the next, each series*



*punctually repeating every organ and process of the last. We are adapted to infinity.*

(p. 460, *The Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*)

### **Steiner on Goethe's Doctrine of Metamorphosis**

Steiner comments on Goethe's views:

*It is not a question of emphasising the fact that leaf, calyx, corolla etc. are plant-organs identical with each other and unfolding out of a common form. The essential point is Goethe's conception of the whole plant-nature as a living thing, and how he thought of the individual parts proceeding from the whole. Goethe's basic conviction was that*  
**SOMETHING CAN BE PERCEIVED IN THE PLANT AND ANIMAL WHICH IS NOT ACCESSIBLE TO MERE SENSE OBSERVATION.**

*(See Goethe's Conception of the World, by Rudolf Steiner, p. 87).*

### **Definition of Axiology**

Axiology is the study of values and it underpins the study of aesthetics, ethics and religion. It has an instrumental application to the study of economics and other social sciences. Values are not normally associated with scientific studies but with Goethe they are central.

### **Fact and Value**

A naïve science is founded on the assumption that all phenomena can be reduced to facts. It adopts a QUANTITATIVE approach to its propositional statements. On the other hand, values have a QUALITATIVE aspect to them. Values arise when there are CHOICES to be made. They are concerned with what OUGHT TO BE rather than what IS. When a researcher chooses NOT to investigate a suspected relationship or possible variable he is making a VALUE JUDGEMENT.

### **No Value-free Facts**

It should be noted that the domain of value is not limited to MORAL DILEMMAS such as whether stem-cell research should be reliant on unwanted embryos. It needs to

be clearly understood that values are also enmeshed in the hum-drum process of data selection or exclusion. There can be no value-free facts.

### **Aesthetics**

In Goethe there is an undoubted respect for scientific rigour but there is also an appreciation of the observation that Nature, herself, is an artist who will not yield her secrets to an entirely quantitative investigation of the world!

### **Active Imagination**

In Goethe there is much of the poet. He did not believe that the world would surrender its secrets to passive reception or mere logical thinking. For Goethe, nature is an artist and an active use of imagination is as important as logic in understanding her. This was expressed so succinctly by Rudolf Steiner:

*Man must not be studied merely according to logic, but according to a reason only acquired when intellectual perception has passed over into artistic perception.*

and

*No one can understand that in the butterfly there is the nature and the quality of a flower raised into the air by light and cosmic forces,  
UNLESS HE CAN ALSO TRANSFORM HIS ABSTRACT THOUGHTS  
WITH ARTISTIC MOBILITY.*

(see Rudolf Steiner's *Man As Symphony of the Creative Word*, p. 71).

### **The Mind as an Organ of Perception**

Goethe believed that thinking was the 'primum mobile' of the universe. 'Thought' is nature's DNA! 'Thought' is in man as well as in nature. When man contemplates the natural world it thinks in him because they share the same 'substance'. For Goethe there is an essential unity between man and nature and, because of this 'wholeness', scientific knowledge is gained intuitively. Much is gained through the senses but only when the mind functions as an organ of perception rather than as a simple receiver.

## **Goethe's Scientific Attitude**

Goethe was convinced that 'it is out of place in scientific work to present proofs at all. For him 'proving' is a legal task which one should leave to the lawyers. A scientist does not need to **prove** his ideas but rather **develop** them'.

(see H. Popplebaum's *The Battle for a New Consciousness – Chapter 11 Ways and Byways to Spiritual Perception Goethe and Oken.*)

## **Part 4**

### **Goethe's Understanding of Light Polarity and Colour**

#### **Light as Understood by Goethe**

Light is invisible and according to Goethe light is not perceivable by the senses. Unlike Newton, Goethe did not believe that colourless light contained the seven colours within itself. Goethe demonstrated that colours only make their appearance at the border between light and dark.

#### **Light and Dark and Colour**

Goethe's study of nature had taught him 'that life on all levels takes its course in a perpetual interplay of opposites'. There was inhalation and exhalation, systole and diastole and there was light and dark (not white and black). The function of light was to make visible the material world without itself being visible (see Lehrs, p. 339). When Goethe looked through Büttner's prism colour only emerged at the border between light and dark.

#### **Light in Nature**

For Goethe 'blue is illuminated darkness while yellow is darkened light' (Lehrs, p. 317). He also expressed his understanding by proclaiming:

*Colours are Deeds and Sufferings of Light.*

(From E. Lehrs *Man or Matter*, p. 317)

## **Inner Light and Outer Light**

Goethe distinguished man's inner light from the sun's outer light. The outer vision by means of the physical apparatus of the eye was preceded by an inner vision. This inner vision manifests in the picture forming imagination. While after-images appear as a result of stimulation by external light their manifestation cannot be accounted for solely by retinal fatigue. It must also take into account the intensified activity of the eye. At this point Goethe turns out attention to 'the deeds and sufferings of the inner light'. This means to bring to consciousness the subtle effect of colour that bestow an exciting or healing effect on children. For Goethe the so-called 'ray' of light and the eye were made for each other. *The eye with its affinity to light comes into being in the apparently dark space of the mother's womb. This points to the possession by the human organism of an 'inner light which first forms the eye from within'.* Ref. Ernst Lehrs *Man or Matter*, Chapter 10 Seeing as Deed (i) (pps. 324-337) and Chapter 11 (pps. 338-352).

## **Modern Physics and the Polar Principle**

Although Isaac Newton believed in the reality of the atomic world he had no comprehension that his atoms would contain positive and negative (and neutral) particles. Nor did he imagine that scientists of the future would be juggling such polarities as matter and anti-matter, space and counterspace, gravity and anti-gravity (black holes). When Newton turned his attention to the characteristics of light and colour it never occurred to him that 'light-ness' and its polar equivalent 'darkness' could **both** be responsible for the formation of colour.

## **Newton's 'Optics' and Goethe's 'Fabenlehre'**

Newton's theory of colour begins with assuming that all colours are contained in light. Newton's understanding was based on excluding the colour-seeing faculty of the eye. Goethe founded his theory on the eye's experience of colour.

As a student, Goethe had been taught "that colours in their totality are contained in light". Using a set of prisms borrowed from the physicist Büttner, Goethe was astonished when he projected light onto a white wall:

*But how astonished was I when the white wall seen through the prism remained white after as before. Only when something dark came against it a more or less decided colour was shown.*

and

*It did not need any long consideration for me to recognise that a boundary or edge is necessary to call forth the colours, and I immediately said aloud, as though by instinct, that the Newtonian doctrine is false!*

(Quoted from *Man or Matter* by Ernst Lehrs, p. 313).

### **Entwurf einer Fabenlehre (1810)**

After systematically tracing the origins of Newton's error, Goethe produced an account of his own theory in 1791 in *Beiträge zur Optik*. He did not publish his actual masterpiece, *Entwurf einer Fabenlehre* until 1810. In this work, according to Ernst Lehrs, Goethe brought forward his crowning work.

*There for the first time in the history of modern science, a bridge is built between Physics, Aesthetics and Ethics.*

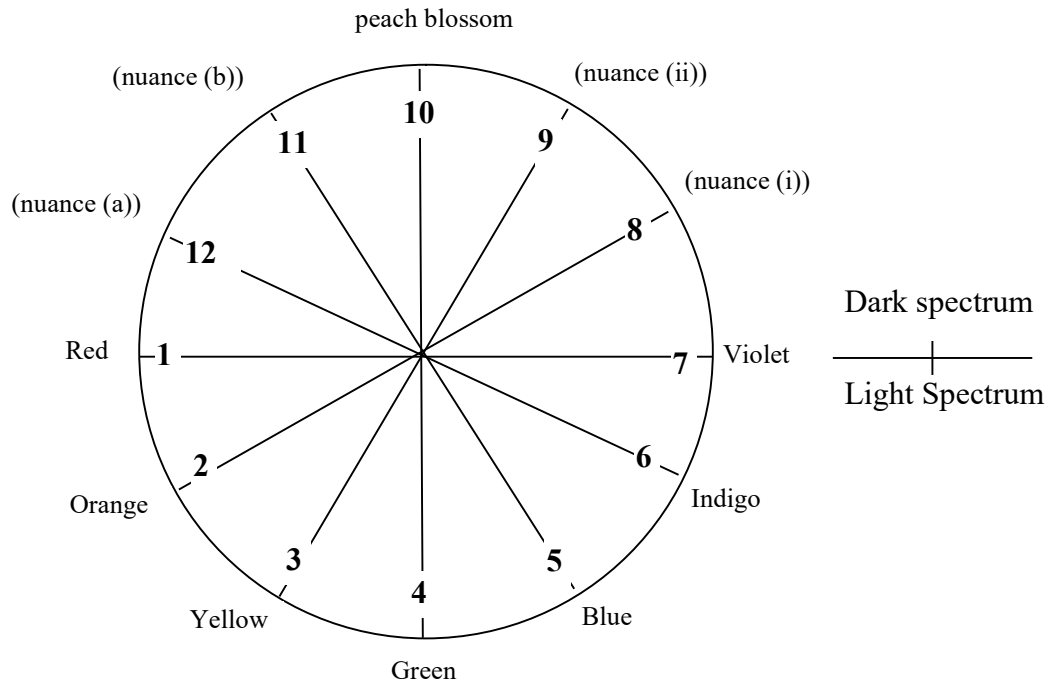
Lehrs summarises the synthesising of man's inner nature with the nature of the world outside him in the following words:

*The eye with its affinity to light comes into being in the apparently dark space of the mother's womb. This points to the possession by the human organism of an 'inner' light which first forms the eye within, in order that it might meet the light outside.*

(*Man or Matter*, p. 326).

### **Changing the Linear Spectrum into a Colour Circle**

Goethe found that by bending the linear spectrum of colours into a circle so that both the lightness and darkness is given due weight, another colour is formed opposite green. This 'new' colour is variously known as 'peach blossom' or 'purpur' or 'magenta'.



### The Dark Spectrum and the Light Spectrum

It is more correct to identify two spectra: The arrangement depicted in the diagram above led Rudolf Steiner to talk about twelve colour conditions. Steiner then speculated on what would happen when this colour circle was expanded so that the five upper colours finally disappeared. The lower arc gradually becomes linear and the seven colour light-spectrum emerges. Steiner advanced the proposition that whenever we see the ordinary spectrum we are only seeing a portion of the total spectrum. He then proposed that when we see a rainbow with its seven-coloured spectrum it is always accompanied by an accessory rainbow. Together, both rainbows yielded the twelve-fold spectrum. (See *The Warmth Course – Fourteen Lectures* given by Rudolf Steiner, March 1-14, 1920, Mercury Press, Spring Valley, NY, 1988).

### Goethe's Approach to Scientific Proof

Hermann Popplebaum summarises Goethe's attitude to scientific proof in his article on the contrasting approaches to scientific research adopted by Goethe and his contemporary, Lorenz Oken:

*Goethe finds it repulsive when someone intrudes the method of proof into science. This is the reason he rejects the procedure of the*

*Newtonians. For they choose an experiment that suits their purpose and argue from it: light enters the prism and is split into colours by the prism; this proves that light consists of colours. For Goethe such a procedure is radically wrong and dangerous in its consequences.*

(see Hermann Popplebaum's *The Battle for a New Consciousness* (Ch. 10 'Ways and Byways to Spiritual Vision, Goethe and Oken, pp. 110-126), Mercury Press, 1992).

### **Discovery as the Perception of Meaning**

Newton's experiments with the prism is presented as 'proof' that white light consists of a mixture of colours. It is described as if it had been observed.

*When meanings are mistaken for sensory data in this way, we have what amounts to the conjuring account of science – the rabbit is pulled out of the hat, but only because it was put there in the first place. The difficulty with this is that the 'result' of the experiment is invested with a cognitive authority which it does not have. (p. 57, Henri Bortoft).*

What Goethe perceived in colour was NOT an intellectual construction of the mind but a participation in the wholeness of the phenomena. He experienced an 'insight' not an 'outsight'. The quarrel between Goethe and Newton is not simply a rivalry over which theory of colour is correct but, rather, which pathway to discovery yields greater access to truth. The essence of a discovery is not in the so-called 'facts' of sense-observation but in the non-empirical domain of cognition. It is a process of participation-in rather than an observation-from-without.

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**NOVA HERMETICA  
AND ITS  
THREE MAGI**

**CHAPTER 4  
Rudolf Steiner  
and  
Spiritual Science**



**Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925)**

**Rosicrucian Magus and  
Spiritual Scientist**

*Man is born to unite the content of his own thinking to the thought content of the outer world.*

*Fruits of Anthroposophy*  
p. 9 and 10

*Man is not merely a spectator of the world: he is rather the world's stage upon which great cosmic events continuously play themselves out.*

*Study of Man*  
R. Steiner (p. 54)

*It is important to remember in reading his work that nothing is intended to be final, conclusive or dogmatic. Life is full of complications and contradictions and any valid account of it must reflect this fact.*

Foreword to *Study of Man*  
by A.C. Harwood

*By the very virtue of the fact that we think, we are co-creators of the world which we habitually regard as being presented to us as a complete and finished picture by our senses.*

Biography of Owen Barfield  
(Ch. 10, p. 190)

*The notion that consciousness evolves became very central to Steiner's later works. This is not the same as a history of ideas in which there is change in the contents of the mind. It is the more radical insight into the fact that the mind itself changes.*

Freely paraphrased from  
Gary Lachman's  
*Introduction to Rudolf Steiner*  
(p. 77)

# **CHAPTER 4**

## **Rudolf Steiner and Spiritual Science**

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**Bibliography**

## CHAPTER 4 Rudolf Steiner and Spiritual Science

### Citations

#### Part 1

#### The Influence of Goethe in the Life of Rudolf Steiner

##### Range of Influential Thinkers

A great number of philosophers and thinkers provided mental stimulation for Rudolf Steiner's own thought. Among the most influential were Fichte, Schiller, Hegel, Kant and, of course, Goethe. Others, such as Hartmann, Haeckel, Newton and Friedrich Nietzsche influenced him negatively. However there are a great number of medieval and classical thinkers who also shaped his thinking. The deeper currents of his philosophic framework are pre-figured in his monumental *The Riddles of Philosophy*. The contribution of Rosicrucian and Hermetic thought is not fully revealed by him. In many respects Steiner's Anthroposophy is a modern Gnosticism blended with a New Rosicrucianism.

##### Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)



*Steiner was Goethe's successor*

Goethe was born just 22 years after the death of Isaac Newton (1642-1727). In a number of senses, Goethe's approach to science was antithetical to that of Newton. This is nowhere better illustrated than in the differences between Newton's *Optics* and the *Fablenlehre* of Goethe. Rudolf Steiner studied Goethean science extensively and, in most of Goethe's endeavours, he could be considered Goethe's successor. 'We might say that Steiner begins where Goethe leaves off.' (Robert McDermott's *The Essential Steiner*, p. 40-41).

### **The Galileo of the Organic**

Steiner's early immersion in the scientific works of Goethe and Steiner's independent application of a metamorphic style of thinking led him to write and publish *Goethe's Theory of Cognition* in 1886. This work no doubt contributed to Steiner's appointment in 1888 to the team of encyclopaedists who were editing Goethe's published and unpublished manuscripts. Although Steiner did not take up his appointment until 1890 his labours on Goethe's scientific investigations continued to 1897. Steiner came to regard Goethe as 'the Galileo of the Organic'.

### **Steiner's Debt to Goethe**

Steiner's debt to Goethe is foremostly in his adoption of Goethe's world-view. They both regarded man's thinking as the platform from which world evolution proceeded. They both believed in the essential oneness of man and nature. 'The one is in all and the all is in one.' The relationship between the one and the many may be perceived through the process of metamorphousness.

A second debt of Steiner to Goethe lies in the realm of epistemology. For both of them the activity of thinking was more fundamental than percept and concept. Thinking was not simply a shadowy copy of some reality. Knowledge comes from observation **with** thinking not observation plus thinking. For both Goethe and Steiner the mind functions as an organ of perception not simply as a medium of logical thought.

Thirdly for both Goethe and Steiner truth is unitive which means being at one with nature. Truth is also intuited. For both of them there is no hidden reality hiding behind the sense-bound world, though in this matter Steiner went well beyond Goethe. Steiner delineated twelve senses and related these to cosmos influences.

Steiner also absorbed Goethe's approach to Art. Art belonged to a kingdom yet to be born. This future creation was also part of the One and subject to scientific investigation. Art creation also introduced a teleological aspect to scientific investigation.

Steiner gave Goethe's holistic approach to scientific investigation a whole new dimension. He pictured man as a miniature cosmos with influences impacting and shaping him from the moon and planets, the sun and the distant stars.

### **Some Specific Examples of Goethe's Influence**

The following three examples illustrate some of the more direct ways in which Goethe influenced Steiner's thinking:

- Steiner drew inspiration from Goethe's fairy tale: *The Green Snake and The Beautiful Lily* and lectured about its hidden meaning.
- Steiner developed the application of Goethe's botanical insights into the principles of metamorphosis (*Anschauende Urteilskraft*, *Steigerung* and *Urflanze*) and applied them to Zoology, Social Theory and Reincarnation Doctrine.
- He applied the principles of metamorphosis to the architectural ideas incorporated into the Goetheanum.

### **The Goetheanum at Dornach, Switzerland**

Rudolf Steiner's spiritual movement is known as Anthroposophy. Steiner had the headquarters of this movement built at Dornach, Switzerland. In his earlier years he called the building the 'House of the Word' or the 'Johannes Blau' building. It was designed by him to be both an International centre for the General Anthroposophical Society and a Performing Arts Centre. Steiner eventually named the headquarters after the person who was most influential in his life.

**The Goetheanum as an International Centre of the Anthroposophical Society.** The Goetheanum honours Goethe in its name and as the heart of the Anthroposophical Society it is the home of the School of Spiritual Science.

This school is divided into eleven sections:

General Anthroposophical Section

Section for Mathematics and Astronomy

Medical Section

Natural Science Section

Section for Agriculture

Pedagogical Section



Art Section

Section for the Spiritual Striving of Youth

Section for the Art of Eurythmy, Speech, Drama and Music

Section for the Literary Arts and Humanities

Section for the Social Sciences

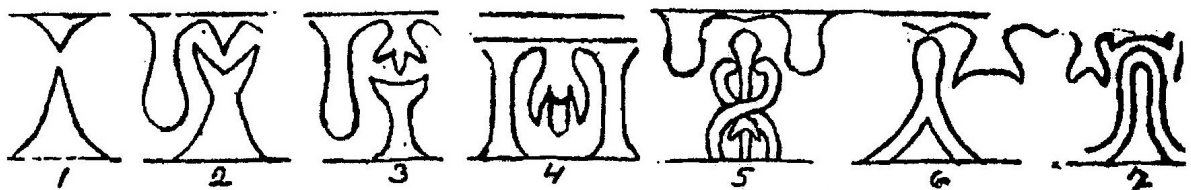
**The Goetheanum as a Performing Arts Centre.** The Goetheanum is, in a special sense, a modern temple to take the place of the ancient temples once used by those who enacted the Pythagorean mysteries, the Elusinian mysteries, the Sun mysteries of the Palladium and so on. Steiner wrote four Mystery Plays. These, and Goethe's Faust (Parts 1 and 2), are enacted in the Goetheanum on a calendar basis. The 'House of the Word' is also a natural home for regular productions of Eurythmy. Eurythmy is an original art form created by Steiner. He called it 'visible speech'. It applies specific gestural forms to vowels and consonants. It requires choreographic skills to describe the principles of movements, the special postural effects, the rod exercises, the maintenance of rhythm and the incorporation of coloured costume into the depiction of meaning through movement. The arts of declamation, theatre production of drama and music, add an artistic flavour to the countless courses and lectures offered in the theatre or main auditorium.

**Steiner's Application of Goethe's Principle of Metamorphosis to Architecture.** The concept of metamorphosis is normally applied to plant life and insect development. Steiner, however, applied the concept widely into social theory and, surprisingly, to architecture. The plant begins as a seed which sends out roots to the earth and a stalk to the sun. It sprouts leaves then buds into blossom and fruit. This rhythmic process is also paralleled in the life cycle of the butterfly. It begins with the seed which transforms into a pupa. The pupa encases itself in a bud-like cocoon and finally emerges as a flower-like butterfly. These transformations occur in **time**. With Steiner's Goetheanum there is an attempt to give expression to transformations of form in **space**.

**Metamorphosis in the Interior.** The inside of the main auditorium is an artistic description of creation. It tells the story of cosmic evolution, of human evolution and of individual evolution in three different architectural expressions.

- **The seven pillars, capitals and architraves** symbolise seven stages of cosmic evolution as outlined by Steiner.
- **The painted ceiling** represents motifs of human evolution as understood by Anthroposophists.
- **The stained glass windows** tell the story of the striving individual for knowledge and self-development. The red window is in the west, the green, blue, purple and rose windows are along the north and south walls of the auditorium. The principle of metamorphosis is applied to the treatment of these three architectural features.

*'The capitals of the seven auditorium columns were Steiner's most significant manifestations of metamorphosis. They were not just a series of variations on a theme. In each was seen the working of the threefold element to which we have already referred in various contexts – forces at work from below and from above with the balance between. The first 'Saturn' capital was a very simple form of this motif, but from west to east they became more complex, each emerging from the previous one, and finally becoming simpler again but at a deeper level – the rhythm of all true development. Metamorphosis, but of a somewhat different kind, was also seen in the column bases and in the architraves'. Living Architecture by Kenneth Bayes, pps. 72-73.*

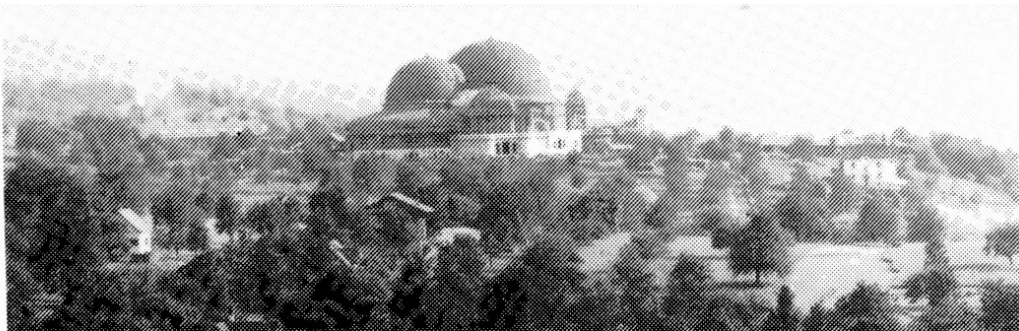


*Drawings of motifs of seven capitals.*

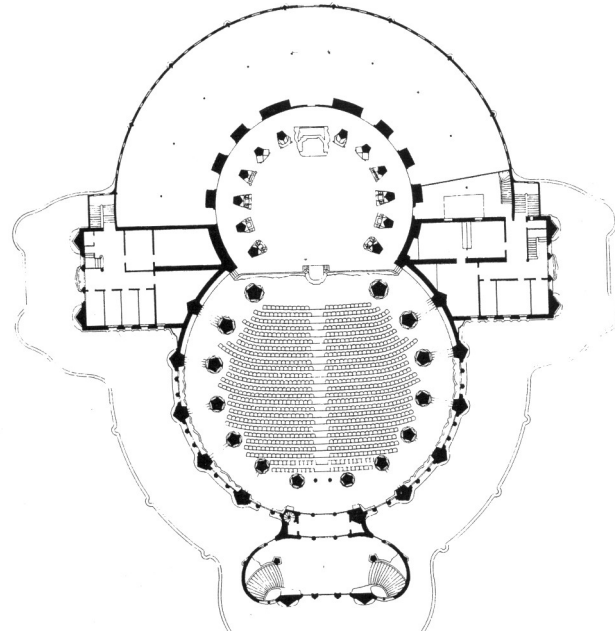
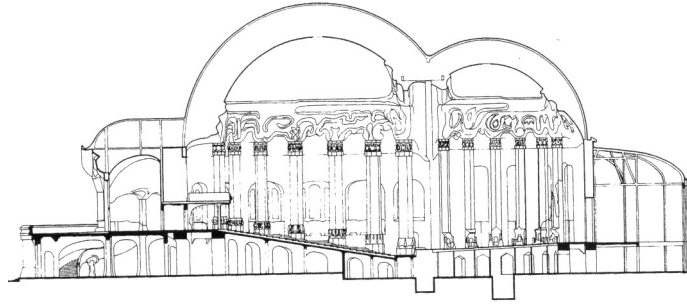
**The Transmutation of Form.** A building can gain organic unity through the repetition of a design element. Steiner's second Goetheanum design makes extensive use of the forms of a 'trapezium' and 'square' to 'tie' the **interior** design together. The design of the **exterior** is unified by the repetition of the 'pilaster' shape with slight variations. These variations create an illusion of movement even though the building is static! Another one of Steiner's applications of metamorphosis to the building design can be observed in the shapes he has introduced into the framing of windows. The windows seldom have a rectilinear shape and they give the impression of being wave-like when viewed laterally in sequence.

**Non-Cartesian in Concept.** Steiner's architecture strikes the viewer as non-rectilinear with roofing lines in flowing waves. It appears to be non-Cartesian with the three co-ordinates of rectilinear space suppressed. The second Goetheanum is almost non-Euclidean. Its roofing is an assemblage of tangential planar surfaces striking an invisible hemisphere. This unusual appearance contrasts markedly with the first Goetheanum whose helmeted roofing featured intersecting domes of unequal size. The sphere motif is openly declared in the first Goetheanum but it is suppressed in the second.

**Building in Form, Tone and Colour.** One gets the impression that Steiner was more concerned with spatial configurations rather than with building materials, yet this is not actually true. He gave attention to both but endeavoured to create more plastic formations of space with traditional materials. The second Goetheanum was really an early essay in moulded concrete. Steiner's architecture is organic architecture without the decorative fantasy of Gaudi. Again, Steiner gave great attention to a building's acoustical properties. His two Goetheanums were 'Houses of the Word'. Steiner also built in colour. His stained-glass windows helped to bathe his two temples in coloured light. Thus it may be said that Steiner's building materials were form, tone and colour.



*The first Goetheanum on its hilltop at Dornach, Switzerland*

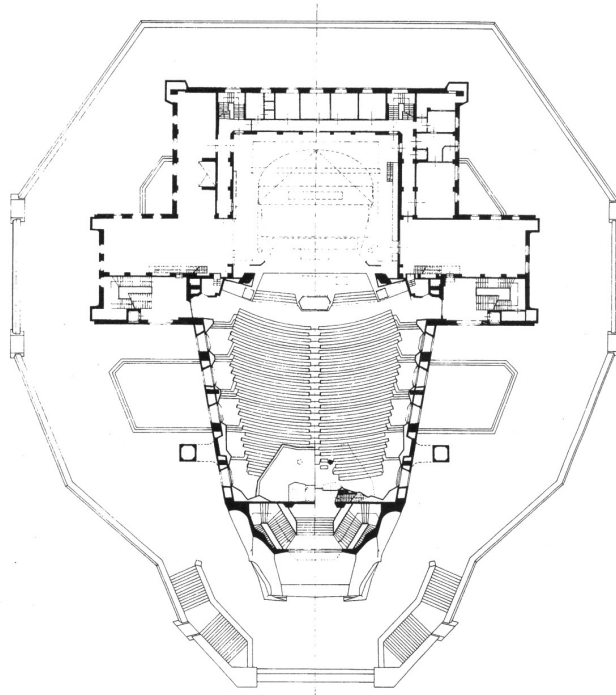
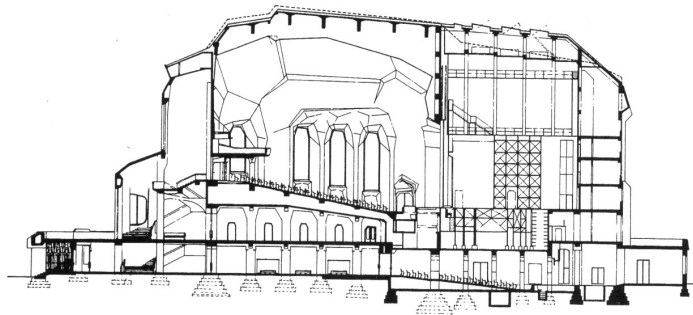


*First Goetheanum plan and section*

**LIVING ARCHITECTURE – K. BAYES**



*The second Goetheanum - Dornach*



**LIVING ARCHITECTURE – K. BAYES**

## Part 2 The Philosophy of Freedom (1894)

### Doctoral Dissertation (1892)

Steiner's doctoral dissertation, *Truth and Knowledge* was subtitled *Prelude to a Philosophy of Freedom*. This dissertation was published in 1892 and its ideas were later elaborated and developed into Steiner's major philosophical work *The Philosophy of Freedom* (1894).

*By starting ... from the spiritual nature of thinking. Steiner was able to form ideas that bear upon the spiritual world in the same way that the ideas of natural science bear upon the physical.*

(Introduction to *The Philosophy of Freedom*, p. viii).

### The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity

Steiner suggested that his major work be called *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity* for English readers. Such a title draws attention to the central claim of Steiner, viz, THAT THOUGHTS ARE THE PRODUCTS OF AN ACTIVITY THAT PRECEDES THEM. It is this ACTIVITY that links the percept and the concept. According to Anne Bancroft, Steiner regarded thinking as the road to freedom. Before any ideas can be formed at all, the THINKING PROCESS must be there. Thinking comes even before the distinction between subject and object. Thinking actually produces the ideas of inner and outer, I and you, just as it produces all other concepts. The real starting point for knowledge and understanding was **not the idea but THE PROCESS OF RECOGNITION AND THINKING by which the idea arises.**

**Primacy of Thinking.** In Christopher Bamford's collection of selected lectures and writings by Rudolf Steiner *Isis Mary Sophia* (2003) the following extracts can be found:

- 'We must first consider thinking completely neutrally, without reference to a thinking subject or a thought object. For in subject and object we already have concepts that are formed by thinking.' (p. 47)
- 'Unprejudiced observation shows that nothing can be attributed to the essence of thinking that is not found within thinking itself.' (p. 47)

- 'It is through the thinker that thinking is linked to observation. Human consciousness is the stage where concept and observation meet and are connected to one another. It is the mediator between thinking and observation.' (p. 47)
- 'Thinking is beyond subject and object. It is not the subject who introduces the relationship but thinking.' (p. 48).

**Goethe's Philosophical Influence on Steiner.** Although Steiner was profoundly influenced by Goethe a great deal of this influence confirmed Steiner's independent thoughts. Before Steiner had worked on the scientific studies of Goethe, he had enunciated his own epistemology and subsequently found much confirmation in Goethe. Steiner criticised the methodology of modern scientists mainly because of what they omitted from their assumptions about the nature of 'matter' and 'life'. In studying a plant under a microscope the modern biologist committed a grave and fundamental error. By removing the plant from the earth in order to study it, the scientist altered the essential nature of the plant. The plant belonged to the earth and it had to be studied in relation to the whole earth. It also had 'life' which was either ignored by modern biology or reduced to a study of the plant's physical and chemical properties. Modern biology has become a branch of mechanics and was 'lifeless'.

**Steiner's Epistemology.** Steiner's epistemological underpinnings agreed with Goethe. He and Goethe challenged the scepticism of Kant's claim that we cannot get beyond man's perceptions to know 'the thing in itself'. Goethe and Steiner regarded man as spirit and part of nature as spirit. They did not separate object and idea. The idea is expressed in the object. For them 'truth' was a revelation emerging where the inner world of man meets external reality. Truth was a synthesis of world and mind. Truth was not 'out there' but 'in here'. It was revealed when the mind and the outer world were brought together in harmony. Thought was in man as well as in nature. When man contemplated the natural world it thought in him because man shared the same 'substance' as nature.



**Thinking as an Organ of Perception.** In *Goethe the Scientist*, Steiner explains: -

*As colour is to the eye and sound is to the ear, so are concepts and ideas to thinking. THINKING IS AN ORGAN OF PERCEPTION.*

(see Page ix)

He illustrates his meaning by an explanation:

*One need only recall how, after a strenuous bout of thinking, when the concept for which we are searching at last appears, we invariably say, "Ah, Now I see!" to realise that perceiving (in this case perceiving concepts) is closely interwoven with thinking.*

(Quoted from *The Essential Steiner*, p. 370).

'Rudolf Steiner attained the realisation that the outer world does not hold the entire contents of reality.' Man is born to unite the contents of his own thinking to the thought content of the outer world. Man's own thought is part of the evolutionary processes of creation.

(see *Fruits of Anthroposophy* trans. by A. Meuss and Introduced by R.G. Seddon, p. 9 and 10).

### **Steiner's Criticism of Modern Scientific Methodology**

Steiner came to the realisation that natural science was based on an erroneous idea of 'matter'. For Steiner matter was visible spirit and form was frozen process. He not only understood that space was polaric but that time itself had three modalities, viz. causal, teleological and an in-between modality of reciprocal causality. For Steiner thoughts were not the products of matter but rather their moulders. Life was a property of form and modern biology had attempted to erect a science by ignoring the 'livingness' of the organic world. Moreover, man was not at the apex of the evolutionary order, he was the compendium of the animal kingdom.

### **Re-examining Sensation, Perception and Ideation**

Steiner's scientific investigations began with distinguishing between percept and concept and the part played by the activity of thinking. He deviated from British Empiricism by positing twelve senses arranged in six polarities. These included four

physical sense, four soul senses and four spiritual senses. The insights that Steinerian science developed were based on a distinctive epistemological foundation. They also embraced a Goethean respect for art and imagination. Steiner also believed that a different methodology had to be used for the investigation of the physical world, the biological world and the psychological world.

### The Twelve Senses as Six Polarities

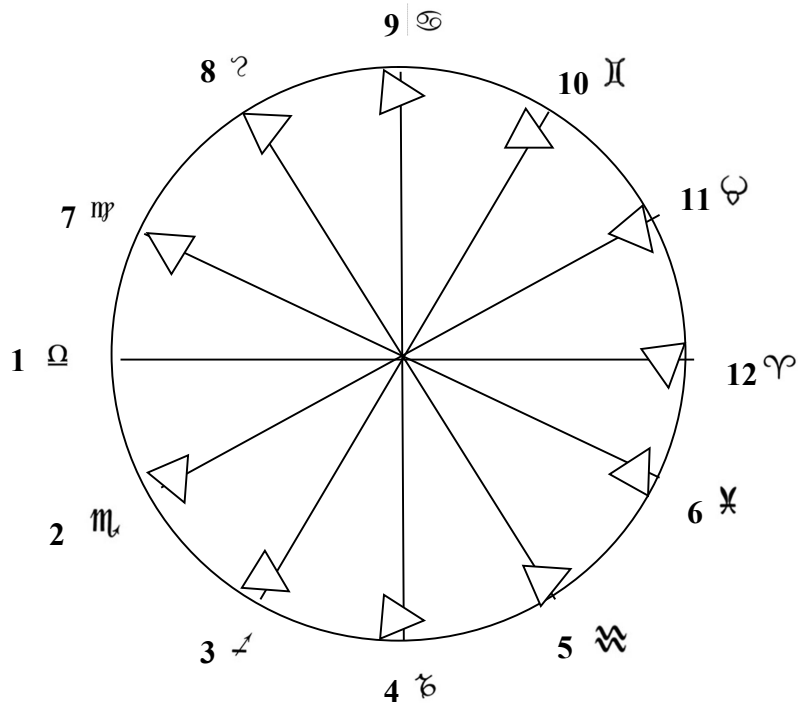
(i)

<b>THE TWELVE SENSES AS SIX POLARITIES</b>			
<b>THE FOUR PHYSICAL SENSES</b>		<b>THE FOUR SPIRITUAL SENSES</b>	
<b>1.</b>	<b>TOUCH</b> Determining one's boundaries	<b>12.</b>	<b>EGO SENSE</b> Breaking through another's boundaries
<b>2.</b>	<b>LIFE SENSE</b> Growth and decay of one's constitution	<b>11.</b>	<b>CONCEPTUAL SENSE</b> Truth/ Falsehood in spirit of another
<b>3.</b>	<b>SELF-MOVEMENT SENSE</b> Handling/ expressing oneself through body	<b>10.</b>	<b>LANGUAGE SENSE</b> How another handles/ expresses the spirit: through speech
<b>4.</b>	<b>BALANCE</b> Gravitational orientation	<b>9.</b>	<b>HEARING</b> Rising to the spirit of matter
<b>THE FOUR SOUL SENSES</b>			
<b>5.</b>	<b>SMELL</b> Emptying oneself and being filled (materially)	<b>8.</b>	<b>TEMPERATURE SENSE</b> Pouring out into the world with one's interest (non-materially)
<b>6.</b>	<b>TASTE</b> Controlling the ponderable: what forms my body (microcosm)	<b>7.</b>	<b>VISION</b> Experiencing the imponderable (effect of sunlight) in the macrocosm)

(ii)

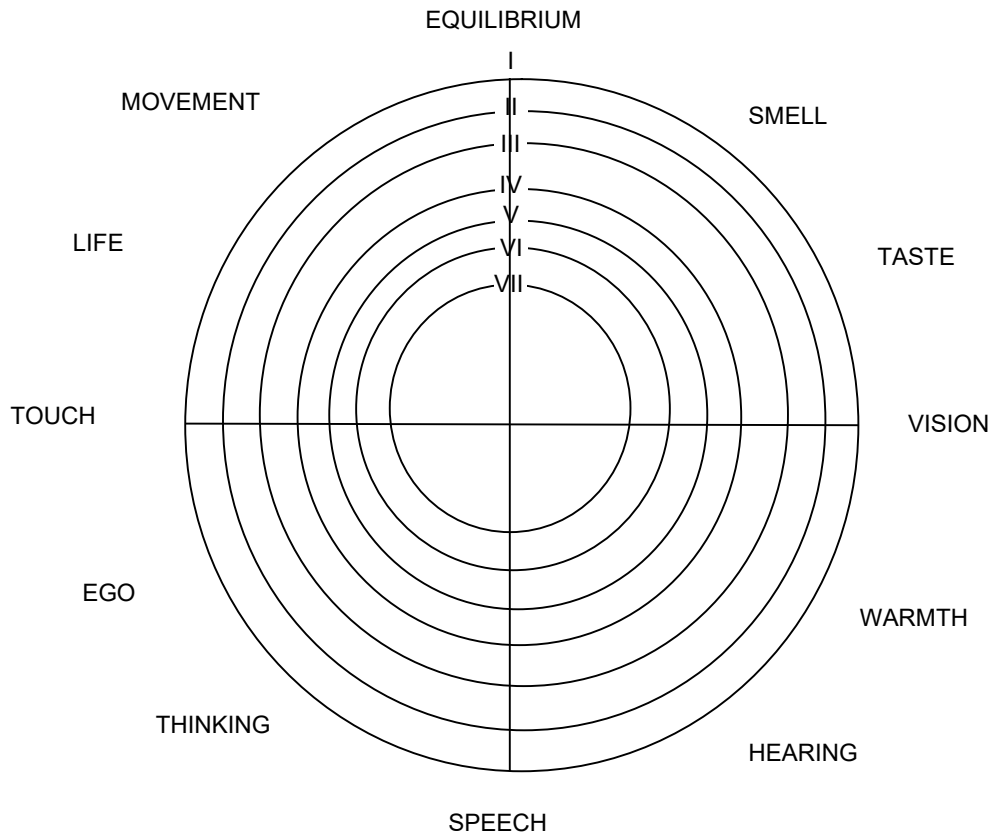
Zodiacal Representation

(From Beiträge zur Rudolf Steiner Gesamtausgabe)



## Anthropos and Cosmos

(Metamorphosis of the Sense-system and the Life Functions)



I	Breathing	V	Conservation
II	Warming	VI	Growth
III	Nutrition	VII	Reproduction
IV	Elimination		

Steiner accepted the relationship between microcosm and macrocosm very literally. This diagram represents his effort to depict the cosmos of man's life-functions and his sense systems.

### The Perception of Spirit Realities

A.P. Shepherd comments on the way in which Steiner's thinking went beyond that of Goethe:

*In his investigation of Goethe's scientific writings, Steiner followed him in his spiritual – scientific approach to the world of sense, until at length his own wider powers of spirit – perception became able to take the*

*same path, and to pursue it much further. Steiner's consciousness began to break through to spirit realities behind the world of minerals, plants, animals, and men, in a knowledge in which his whole being – thought, feeling and will – participated. It was still thought that was leading him to the world of spirit, but in the process thought itself was transformed into a higher form of perception.*

*A Scientist of the Invisible*

pp. 53-54

### **The Redemption of Thinking**

Steiner taught that at one time man had a direct sense-bound apprehension of the spiritual world. It was the destiny of man to perceive the same understanding by thought processes, i.e. through the consciousness of his higher self. However epistemological errors were being made in understanding the role of thinking. Modern scientists had assumed that the scientist was simply an 'onlooker' whose thought processes were the passive receivers of sense impressions. Steiner asserted that man's thought processes (his thinking) were 'part and parcel' of the reality being observed. Because of these errors the thinking of man had to be redeemed and it had to become more active if man wanted to attain a true science. This redemption would take place when a moral and artistic quality also infused man's judgement.

### **Part 3**

### **The Berlin Years and Early Esoteric Influences**


#### **Magazin für Literatur**

While still at Weimar, Steiner wrote two more books, *Friedrich Nietzsche Fighter for Freedom* (1895) AND *Goethe's Conception of the World* (1897). He then moved to Berlin to take over the editing of a literary magazine. While living in Berlin, Steiner began to expand his understanding of esoteric matters and began to lecture on how such matters were hidden in the Christian tradition.

## **Theosophy and Freemasonry**

In 1900 Steiner gave a lecture series to the Berlin members of the **Theosophical Society**. These lectures were published in 1901 as *Mysticism at the Dawn of the Modern Age*. In 1902 Steiner was installed as General Secretary of the German Section of the Theosophical Society. Mrs Annie Besant, the World President, officiated. Also in 1902, three German occultists: Theodor Reuss, Joshua Klein and Franz Hartmann, obtained a Charter from John Yarker to practice a form of Freemasonry. John Yarker was the Grand Master of the Rite of Swedenborg in England (according to A.E. Waite – *The Unknown Philosopher*, p. 462). This same John Yarker sold obscure charters which were affiliated to his Lodge of **Memphis and Misraim**. The Berlin Chapter of the Lodge called itself the **Ordens Tempel der Ostens**, the **Order of Oriental Templars**. It was from the Berlin Lodge (O.T.O.) that Steiner obtained a charter to operate under the name of **Mysteria Mystica Aeterna**. This chapter commenced in 1906 and ceased in the summer of 1914. Steiner claimed that ‘he never thought of working in the spirit of such a society (i.e. the O.T.O.). Francis X. King concludes that: ‘It was an unwise move, however, and while one can be confident that Steiner never practised sexual magic one can understand how it was that he came to be accused of so doing.’ (*Rudolf Steiner and Holistic Medicine* by Francis X. King, p. 28). It is interesting to note that Lynn Picknett and Clive Prince report that when Rudolf Steiner died he was buried in the robes of a Knight Templar (see *The Templar Revelation* – Corgi Books 1998).

## **Hermetic Thought and Rosicrucianism**

In his lecturing activity Steiner provided ample evidence that he was well acquainted with other traditions apart from Theosophy and Freemasonry. He displayed a thorough acquaintance with the teachings of Raimund Lull (1235-1315), Raimund of Sabunda (b. 1430 ) , Agrippa von Netteshein (1486-1535) and Paracelsus (1493-1541). These Hermetic philosophers were remarkably influential scientists and seers, even though today their teachings about astrology, alchemy, the Kabbalah, magic and mysticism would not receive the same respect that Steiner accorded them. Steiner also treated the Rosicrucian Brotherhood with considerable respect. His treatment of Hermetic and Rosicrucian thought was not only respectful but also insightful. Steiner’s understanding of these streams provided a new and interesting bridge to esoteric Christianity.

## **Steiner's Departure from the Theosophical Society**

In his lectures to members of the Theosophical Society Steiner made frequent references to Christian mystics such as Meister Eckhart, Jacob Boehme, Christian Rosenkrantz, Emmanuel Swedenborg, Martines Pasqually and Louis Claude de Saint Martin. He also spoke knowledgeably about renaissance mystics and natural philosophers such as Giordano Bruno, Paracelsus and Kepler. His teachings and commentary on Emmanuel Swedenborg drew his audience away from the Eastern leanings of the Theosophical Society. He emphasised the primacy of Christian and European thought. Steiner broke with the Theosophical Society in January 1913 and in February of that year the Anthroposophical Society was formed. Steiner did not, at that time, become a member but accepted the title of Honorary President.

## **Ancient Mystery Schools**

In addition to his reading in conventional and orthodox subjects, Steiner was, at the same time, thoroughly conversant with the literature of esoteric thought. Indeed, he both wrote and lectured on the importance of mystery schools such as those in Greece, Rome, Egypt, Chaldea, Scandinavia, Wales and Ireland. Steiner understood Christianity through the eyes of an initiate of a mystery School, and not from a biblical tradition. He outlined exercises to assist would-be initiates in either the Christian or the Rosicrucian pathway to higher knowledge.

## **Mystery Schools as Transitional Stages**

Bellah understands the mystery religions as transition stages between 'archaic' and 'historic' religions<sup>\*</sup>. They flourished throughout the Mediterranean region during the ascendancy of Egyptian, Greek and Roman eras before Christianity and at the time of its formation.

*At the heart of the Mysteries were myths concerning a dying and resurrecting godman, who was known by many different names' although 'fundamentally all these godmen are the same mythical being.' 'In Egypt he was Osiris, in Greece Dionysus, in Asia Minor Attis, in Syria Adonis, in Italy Bacchus, in Persia Mithras.*

*The Jesus Mysteries*, T. Freke and P. Gandy, p. 5.

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<sup>\*</sup> Referred to by Geoffrey Ahern in *Sun at Midnight* (see p. 190).

## **Early Greek Mysteries**

Steiner lectured extensively on Greek Mystery religions including Platonism, Pythagoreanism, Orphism and the Eleusinian Mystery rites.

## **Edouard Schuré**

In 1906 Steiner was introduced to the noted French authority on the ancient Mysteries. Edouard Schuré was greatly impressed by Steiner's grasp: 'Listening to him one could not doubt the reality of his spiritual vision'. In 1907 Steiner and Marie von Sievers produced a dramatic representation of Schuré's account of the Eleusinian mystery.

*The Children of Lucifer* written by Schuré was also performed that year at Munich. Marie von Sievers translated the play while Steiner designed the sets and the costumes. On this occasion the first of Steiner's mystery plays was staged.

## **Part 4 Scientist of the Invisible**

### **Unorthodox Methodology**

One commentator described Steiner as a 'scientist of the invisible'. This is a title which certainly reflects the message of his major work – *An Occult Science*. However, this reference to 'science' is somewhat ironic and paradoxical since most of Steiner's findings and teachings stem from a clairvoyant methodology which even his followers have not been able to verify through replication. This shortcoming did not seem to bother Steiner because he maintained that a healthy reasoning would also be able to find its way to his 'scientific' conclusions.

### **Orthodox Subject Matter from Unorthodox Perspective**

There are, however, a number of lecture series given by Steiner which treat scientific topics from a more orthodox perspective. The two series, in particular, are the ten lectures known as the *First Scientific Lecture Course on Light* delivered at Stuttgart from 23 December 1919 to 3 January 1920; and the fourteen lectures known as the *Second Scientific Lecture Course on Warmth*. This second course was also



delivered in the Waldorf School at Stuttgart in 1920 (1 March – 14 March). In these two courses Steiner gives ample evidence that he was well acquainted with the science of his day even if he did not agree with a great deal of its findings.

### **Differences About Axioms and Assumptions**

Steiner's disagreements with much of the orthodox science of his day stem not so much from any disagreement on methodological grounds but rather on differences about axioms and assumptions upon which investigations are based. For example when undertaking his investigation of the nature of light Steiner assumes the Goethean approach. Goethe regarded 'light' in polaric terms, 'lightness-darkness', where darkness was not the mere absence of light but, rather, its polaric equivalent. Whereas Newton saw the colours of the spectrum emanating only from light, Goethe saw them as issuing forth from the struggles of lightness and darkness. Similarly with the concept of 'gravity' Steiner treated the concept as polaric. Rather than 'gravity' he spoke of 'pressure-suction' or 'centripetal-centrifugal' forces of 'gravitation and levitation'.

### **Ponderable and Imponderable Matter**

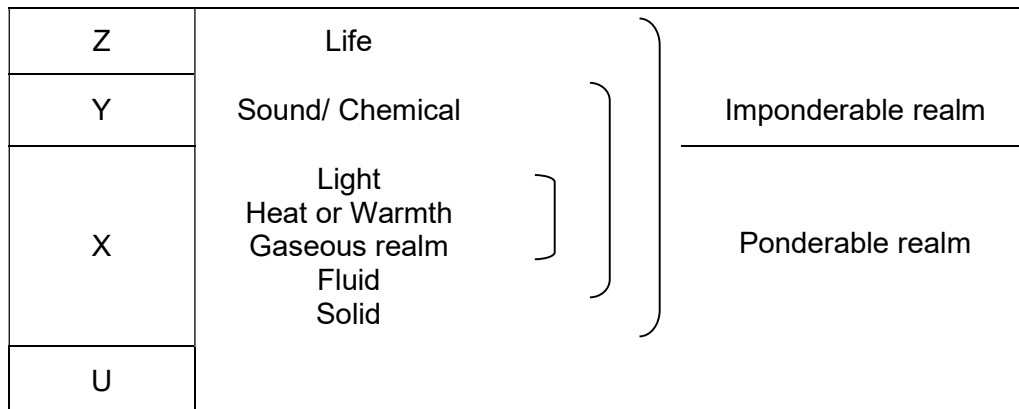
There is little wonder that Steiner reached many different conclusions from the science of his day. It was basically that his starting points were different from orthodox science. One different starting point was Steiner's adoption of the term 'ether' and 'ethereal' spaces. "Ponderable matter represents only one pole in a polar process ... there is [also] a negative imponderable, – anti-ponderable – ether-substance on the other" (*The Plant Between Sun and Earth*, George Adams and Oliver Whicher, p. 101). Steiner was helped in his understanding of the concepts of 'space' and 'anti-space' through his grasp of the principles of projective geometry. He applied many key concepts from this planar geometry to his treatment of physics. These applications led him to many conclusions that modern quantum physics is only now discovering.

### **The Four Ethers**

In his lecture series on 'warmth' Steiner introduces the student to his understanding of the different 'ethers'. He differentiates four 'ethers' which are combined in light:

- i. Life ether;
- ii. Sound ether;
- iii. Light ether; and
- iv. Warmth ether.

These ethers are counterparts to ponderable substances and can be arranged diagrammatically as follows:



Notes:

- i. The heat or warmth zone has an intermediate position between the etheric or imponderable realm and the material or ponderable realm. It is ether and matter at the same time;
- ii. The light ether and the gaseous realm were once united as also the sound ether and the gaseous realm and the life ether and the realm of solids;
- iii. The U realm lies below that even of solids and permeates them.

There is much in Steiner’s scientific approach that challenges the one-sided, one-dimensional reductionism of modern scientific inquiry. If taken seriously one can only conclude that it would not only lead to a new science but it would lead to an entirely new culture.

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**NOVA HERMETICA  
AND ITS  
THREE MAGI**

**CHAPTER 5  
Carl Gustav Jung  
(1875 – 1961)  
Modern Gnostic and Alchemical Psychologist**



Jung in 1910

*His lifetime output of works is a magnum opus of such magnitude and depth that Jung must be considered one of the giant minds (and souls) of the twentieth century.*

*Cosmic Consciousness Revisited*  
Robert M. May (p. 193)

*Whatever is born to a particular moment in time takes on the quality of that moment in time. The meaningful co-incidence we are looking for is immediately apparent in astrology.*

C.G. Jung

*Just as the physical brain contains anatomical remnants of its evolutionary origins so, the dream indicated, the mind itself contains primitive, hidden memory of its remote past.*

*Synchronicity*  
F. David Peat (p. 101)

*Through his travels and researches Jung discovered that the images of the hero, the twin brothers, the sun, the eternal feminine, the underground journey, the serpent, the mandala of wholeness, and the dynamism of opposites occurred again and again, each time clothed in the particularities of a local culture yet exhibiting the same underlying form.*

Ibid (p. 102)

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**Seven Sermons to the Dead**

**The Pleroma and Elements of Jung's Cosmogony**

**Gnostic Thought**

**Ptolemaic Gnosticism**

**The Eight Principal Aeons**

**Levels of Reality and Human Identity**

**Dualities and Polarities**

**The Psychoid**

**Part 2**  
**The Unconscious**

**Understanding Jung's Key Concepts**

- Individuation
- The Self
- The Human Psyche is Essentially Religious

**Bischof's Diagrammatic Summary**

**Our Psychic Inheritance**

**Unconscious State**

- The Personal Unconscious
- The Collective Unconscious

**Archetypes**

**Understanding Dreams as Intelligent and Purposeful**

**Myths as Links to the Ancestral Past**

**Dodd's Definition of Myth**

**Self-Actualising Principle**

- Mechanisms of Self-Actualisation

**Jung and Paranormal Phenomena**

**Part 3**  
**Destiny, Synchronicity, Alchemy**

**(i)**  
**Destiny**

**A Mephistophelian Magi**  
**Destiny**  
**The Polarity of Causality and Teleology**  
**Other Polarities**  
**'The Soul's Code' by James Hillman**  
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**Synchronicity**

**A Definition of Synchronicity**  
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**(iii)**  
**Alchemy**

**The Royal Art**  
**A Spritual Art**  
**The Nigredo, the Albedo, the Rubedo**  
**C.G. Jung and the Alchemical Renewal**  
**Dr Faustus to Dr Jung**  
**Jung's Remarkable Dream (1926)**  
**Alchemy – the Link between Gnosticism and Psychology**  
**The Alchemical Sophia or Unis Mundi**  
**The Psychological Wizard of Küssnacht**

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**Human Psyche Essentially Religious**

Carl Jung is generally known as the founder of Analytical Psychology. This is ironical since his later teachings were so syncretic and inclusive. Although he was a Psychiatrist and a Psychologist he wrote voluminously on subjects which were oblique and tangential to personality theory. This was because he saw that the essential nature of the human psyche as religious. Anything that was related to 'religiosity' was admitted into his purview. This included mysticism, symbology, alchemy, astrology, synchronicity, paranormal events, eastern and western philosophy, gnostic thought, hermeticism and dream analysis. Jung did not strait-jacket the scope of psychological investigation. Like Goethe he wanted the evidence to speak to him no matter from what source it came.

**Biographical Detail**

Carl Gustav Jung was born on 26 July 1875 of Swiss parents. His father was a practising Lutheran minister and his mother was the daughter of a pastor. However his home life was far from idyllic. His father was plagued by doubts and this caused ructions with his mother. In his adolescence Jung separated from his protestant heritage and embraced a form of gnosticism.

He trained as a medical doctor and took his first post in psychiatry at the age of twenty-five in 1900 as an assistant at Burghölzli Mental Hospital in Zurich. He met Freud when he was thirty-two (1907). Their friendship only lasted seven years. Jung's doctoral dissertation indicated a direction in Jung's thought that Freud did not like – *On the Psychology and Pathology of So-called Occult Phenomena* (1903). Jung had no desire to place limitations on the scope of psychological investigation. It is generally believed that Jung suffered a complete breakdown in the early 1920s

when he experienced conversations with entities (see below). The subsequent development of his thought sprang from many of his hallucinatory and dissociative experiences of this 'break-down' period. Rather than understanding these experiences as negative Jung used them to provide useful insights into the nature of man's psyche.

## **Writings**

### **The Collected Works (20 vols)**

Jung wrote voluminously on personality, religion, mysticism, symbology and alchemy – to name just a few of his studies. Most of his works have now been gathered together in *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung* (20 vols), edited by Sir Herbert Read et al, Princeton University Press (Bollingen Series XX); London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

The Wikipedia lists two and a half pages of his books beginning with: Jung, C.G. (1902) *Psychiatric Studies*. This was the first of 18 volumes plus a separate bibliography and index. Not including revisions the whole set was completed in 1967. (Presumably this entry is the same collection edited by Sir Herbert Read – above).

### **Robert May's Review**

Robert May's *Cosmic Consciousness Revisited*. Robert May devotes Chapter 6 to *Carl Jung's Recognition of the Imago Dei*. May briefly examines four of Jung's works:

- Psychology and Religion (1938)
- A Psychological Approach to the Dogma of the Trinity (1942)
- Transformation Symbolism in the Mass (1942)
- The Secret of the Golden Flower (1929)

In these four works Jung 'finds corroboration of religious dogmas in the natural dream symbolism of his patients' (p. 201).

### **Memories, Dreams and Reflections (1960)**

In 1960 published his autobiography *Memories, Dreams and Reflections*. In it he revealed how much his personal dream-life was self-analysed. He also revealed other aspects of his personal unconscious. One of these aspects concerned *Philemon*, his psychic dream-time 'mentor'

*I held conversations with him and he said things which I had not consciously thought. For I observed clearly that it was he who spoke, not I. It was he who taught me psychic objectivity, the reality of the psyche.*

Jung also met 'Elijah' and 'Salome'. Jung believed that Philemon, Elijah and Salome were 'intelligent entities' who had their own independent existence. He had walked out of his own personal 'unconscious' and had met them in the common ground of the collective unconscious. He also met 'Ka' who was another entity more demonic than Philemon. After speaking to her Jung decided that she was an essential part of his own soul and christened her 'the anima' – the female component in men.

### **Seven Sermons to the Dead**

In 1916 Jung's 'entities' seemed to escape from his unconscious into the real world.

*The whole house was filled as if there were a crowd present, crammed full of spirit ... As for myself, I was all a-quiver ... 'For God's sake, what in the world is this?' Then they cried in chorus, 'We have come back from Jerusalem where we found not what we sought.'*

Jung put pen to paper and wrote the curiously titled work *Seven Sermons to the Dead*. According to David F. Peat:

*this work presents a whole cosmology of the universe of matter and mind ... The world of 'creatura' emerges out of an undifferentiated background, the pleroma. (p. 13, Synchronicity)*

Peat explains that the book itself becomes a metaphor for the emergence of consciousness out of the collective unconscious and ultimately from the psychoid which is prior to the distinction between matter and mind.

### **The Pleroma and Elements of Jung's Cosmogony**

Jung's psychological theory owes a great deal to Gnostic creation metaphysics. This metaphysics begins with the PLEROMA. The Pleroma is the 'ground' of being, from which creation springs. It is both empty and perfectly full. Out of this formless, infinite ground emerges the CREATURA – the world of created beings. Other elements of Jung's Cosmogony include:

#### **Gnostic Thought**

There are many schools of Gnostic thought. The two best known are those of Ptolemy and those related to Christianity which spawned the Simonians, Paulists and Ebionites.

#### **Ptolemaic Gnosticism**

In the Ptolemaic system the Pleroma are the 8 principal aeons or archetypes which give rise to two minor sub-sets of 10 aeons and 12 aeons, making 30 aeons in all.

#### **The Eight Principal Aeons**

The eight principal aeons are arranged in pairs of male ('ousia') and female ('hypostasis').

1. **Deep** (male) + **Silence** (female) when united produce the syzygy Deep – Silence. The syzygy of deep – silence gives birth to the next pair.
2. **Consciousness – Truth** and so on.
3. **Logos – Life**.
4. **Anthropos – Community** and so forth down. The last to arrive, unpaired, was **Sophia**, the youngest of the aeons. (In Valentinus' account of the fate of Sophia she met Horos (limitation) who separated her from her passion and exiled that passion (now called 'Achamoth', or Lower Sophia) from the spiritual world. Sophia brought forth Jesus

but he would not stay with her. This was before creation or the Fall.)  
 The Gnostics have much to say about Sophia (Wisdom).

### Levels of Reality and Human Identity

The following diagram depicts how the four archetypal syzygies structure existence.

Syzygies	Levels of Reality	Levels of Human Identity
Deep – Silence	Mystery	Mystery
Consciousness – Truth	Archetypes	Consciousness
Logos – Life	Psychic Heavens	Psyche
Anthropos – Community	Physical Cosmos	Body

(see Freke and Gandy *Jesus and the Goddess*, p. 199)

### Dualities and Polarities

Jung’s universe of mind and matter embraces the Gnostic concept of the pleroma which is **both empty and full** and where there are no distinctions. The distinction or (dualities) appear in the creatura not the eternal world. But even in the creatura the dualities cannot remain constant. They, too, must come together in a magical marriage in which all distinctions are resolved. ‘The pairs of opposites are qualities in the pleroma which are NOT because each **balanceth** each.’ (see Peats *Synchronicity*, p. 197).

### The Psychoid

Jung uses the term ‘Psychoid’ as denoting that state of balance where the polar struggle between the formative elements of mind and matter have cancelled themselves out. Synchronicity had its origins in this process.

## Part 2 The Unconscious

### Understanding Jung’s Key Concepts

There are many points of entry into the psychological theories of Jung. The diagram of Ledford Bishop (overleaf) provides a useful framework to gain a basic understanding of some key concepts in Jung’s theory of personality.

- **Individuation**

*Individuation is the central concept of analytical psychology. Jung considered individuation, the psychological process of integrating the opposites, including the conscious with the unconscious while still maintaining their relative autonomy, to be the central process of human development.*

Wikipedia

- **The Self**

The **Self** lies midway between the conscious and unconscious and it attempts to give equilibrium to the total psyche.

- **The Human Psyche is Essentially Religious**

*Jung saw the human psyche as “by nature religious”, and made this religiousness the focus of his explorations. Jung is one of the best known contemporary contributors to dream analysis and symbolisation.*

Wikipedia

## Bischof's Diagrammatic Summary

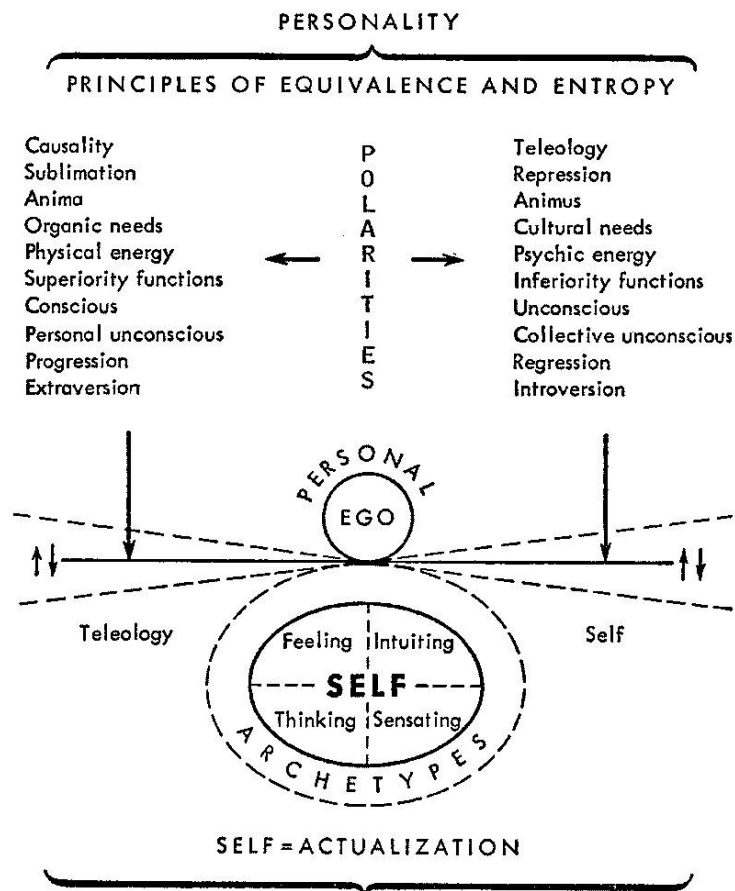


Figure 1. Diagrammatic Summary of Jung's Theory  
see p. 222 L. Bischof Interp. Per. Theories

### Our Psychic Inheritance

Jung contended that it was no more unreasonable to hold that the unconscious psyche inherits knowledge from one's ancestors than it was to hold that biological characteristics were genetically inherited. Jung found the evidence of this psychic inheritance from dream analysis and the study of psychopathologies. These contained recognisable and common features which he called 'archetypes'.

### Unconscious States

Jung placed great emphasis on the importance of the unconscious upon man's behaviour. He distinguished two categories, viz. the individual or personal

unconscious and the collective unconscious. These two states may operate singly or in harmony.

**The Personal Unconscious** maintains a complete record of an individual's life experiences. This storehouse may play into the conscious or be repressed. In due course, a person may aggregate experiences and the memories that associate with them and form **complexes**. Complexes may be obsessive and intrusive, they may devolve about power, they may be organised about the arts, athletics, health, outdoor living, travel, football, religion, political parties or Golf Clubs.

**The Collective Unconscious** according to Jung, is the record of the racial or folk memories. These ancestral memories provide each person with archetypal images that emerge in dreams, folklore and mythology. The Major Archetypal Images are:

- **the persona** or 'conformity self image' is the mask a person wears for the community;
- **the shadow** is the **repressed** and rejected part of our natural wholeness.
  - **the anima** is the repressed feminine aspect of man;
  - **the animus** is the repressed male aspect of women.

#### **Other Archetypal Images**

- **the Wise Old Man** takes many shapes as God the Father, King, Priest, Philosopher, Leonardo da Vinci, The Pope, the Dalai Lama;
- **the Magna Mater** or Great Mother has appeared as Ishtar of Babylon, Isis of Egypt, Demeter of Greece and the Madonna of Rome. In modern times she may be a Queen Elizabeth I or a Queen Victoria or a Mother Teresa;
- **the Miraculous Child** has an unusual birth history, overcomes extraordinary difficulties and is usually creative, beautiful, gifted or talented;
- **the Hero Saviour** may be like Orpheus, Ulysses, Jason, Caesar, Charlemagne, Gandhi, Mao-Tse-Tung or Churchill.
- **The Mandala** as a Symbol of Wholeness.



## **Archetypes**

Archetypes are 'primordial mental structures that cannot be explained in terms of the personal experience of the patient' (May, p. 180). They are universal patterns or motifs which come from the collective unconscious. According to Jung they are the basic content of religions, legends and fairy tales.

There are as many archetypes as there are typical situations in life. Objects such as trees, snakes and water may appear as **Ygdrasil** the world tree, **Urobos** the tail-biting serpent and **Holy Water** in church ritual. Perhaps the greatest symbol of wholeness is the **Mandala** which, remarkably, appears in the Celtic Cross.

## **Understanding Dreams as Intelligent and Purposeful**

Freud understood dreams as disguised wish-fulfillments with decided sexual connotations. Jung saw the unconscious mind as a creative guide which was sometimes even superior to actual conscious insight.

*The fact is that the ego is confronted with psychic powers which from ancient times have borne sacred names ... Analysis of the unconscious has long since demonstrated the existence of these powers in the form of archetypal images which, be it noted, are not identical with the corresponding intellectual concepts.*

(From a reply to Martin Buber. It is contained in Vol. 18 of the *Collected Works* and quoted by Robert M. May (p. 198)).

Some of these sacred names given to the unconscious include 'The Holy Ghost', 'Guardian Angel', Archangel Gabriel'.

## **Myths as Links to the Ancestral Past**

Jung taught that myths sprang from the deepest level of the unconscious.

*The man who thinks he can live without myth, or outside it, like one uprooted has no true link either with the past, or with the ancestral life which continues with him, or yet with contemporary human society. This plaything of reason never grips his vitals.*

## **Dodd's Definition of Myth**

The classicist E.R. Dodd proposed the following definition of myth:

*As the dream is to the individual unconscious so the myth is to the culture.*

Jung would probably have exchanged the word 'culture' in the quotation for 'the collective unconscious'.

## **Self-Actualising Principle**

Jung differentiates many aspects of the personality of **psyche**. These include the ego, the states of consciousness and unconsciousness, and the four fundamental mental functions of feeling, intuiting, sensing and thinking.

### **• Mechanisms of Self-Actualisation**

- All of the factors of polarity must have achieved equilibrium according to the principles of equivalence and entropy.
- Man must come to terms with his biological inheritance. This includes his racial inheritance of instincts and an awareness of his primordial, collective unconscious with its rich store of mythical archetypes.
- Man cannot be fully actualised unless his behaviour is purposive.
- Man cannot gain self-actualisation until his organic energy is transformed into psychic energy. The impulsivity of youth must be replaced by behaviour in conformity to values.
- Symbolism helps man to achieve a higher and more differentiated self than is possible in animals. In the use of literature, music, dance etc. man aspires to higher and higher levels of self-actualisation.

## **Jung and Paranormal Phenomena**

In his youth Jung had experiences concerned with poltergeistic phenomena and spiritistic phenomena. He added to these his experiences with Anima (Ka) who had once served as a spiritual guide to Simon Magus, Lao Tzu and Klingsor. With regard to Philemon Jung wrote:

*at times he seemed quite real, as if he were a living personality. I went walking up and down the garden with him and to me he was a guru. He said things which I have not consciously thought.*

Jung had no desire to exclude the paranormal from his field of investigating the psyche. In this regard he set himself apart from Freud and the psychoanalytic school of therapeutics. He became persona non grata in academic circles of psychology. He became ridiculed and labelled 'obscurantist' or 'mystical'. Notwithstanding these labels of denigration Jung continued to regard himself as an empirical scientist of the soul.

Jung not only investigated poltergeist he also took seriously the reports of visions (including UFOs), apparitions, hallucinations, pre-cognitive dreams, divination, synchronistic phenomena, the world of spirits, mediumship and shamanism. It is not that he was highly suggestible or too credulous. It is simply that he thought that it was more scientific to recognise such phenomena as having meaning. If the investigation of these areas stretched the boundaries of scientific methodology then he was prepared to re-examine the axioms of scientific investigation.

### **Part 3 Destiny, Synchronicity, Alchemy**

#### **(i) Destiny**

##### **A Mephistophelian Magi**

It is uncommon to find an author, let alone a scientist, who would dare to take even one of the concepts of 'destiny', 'synchronicity' or 'alchemy' as an integral part of his scientific investigation. In Jung we have a person who is 'at home' with all three concepts. Indeed he is comfortable with the 'scientific' treatment of many other 'fringe' elements of science, religion and magic. It has been claimed that Jung was a descendant of Goethe through one of the poet's dalliances. This could explain why he is such a Mephistophelian figure to Goethe's Faustus!

## **Destiny**

Destiny is not a concept included in the mental armour of many psychologists. Within Jung's framework the concept can be accommodated as a polar concept to fate. It is said that a person fulfils his destiny or, conversely, awaits his fate. Destiny is dependent on the individual's choice of action while fate is independent of what the individual may do. Choice implies freedom and individual agency and is a prerequisite of destiny. Fate on the other hand is ultimately subject to necessity. It may be said that 'fate is related to causality as destiny is to teleology'.

## **The Polarity of Causality and Teleology**

Causality conceives time as moving from the past to the present. Teleology conceives time as moving from the future to the present. 'Telos' means aim, end of fulfilment. Teleology asks about purpose and potentiality. The landscape gardener imagines the future oak tree when he examines the acorn. Jung would probably see growth being determined by the integration of the two times, viz. 'Causal Time' and 'Telic Time'. The present is determined by both causal and non-causal elements. Likewise space can be understood both point-wise and plane-wise.

## **Other Polarities**

Philosophically, Jung delineated three approaches to the resolution of conflict, viz. compensation, union and opposition. These three approaches each reflect the principles of equivalence and entropy. **Equivalence**, in physics, is the first law of thermodynamics or the law of conservation of energy principle and **entropy** is the second law of thermodynamics. 'Entropy' states that the properties of one body, when placed in juxtaposition to another that is similar in kind, will tend to assume the characteristics of the most highly charged body.

Some of Jung's polarities include:

- **Regression vs Progression.** For Jung the personality cannot remain still. It only goes forwards or backwards.
- **Personal Unconscious vs Collective Unconscious**
- **Conscious state vs Unconscious state**
- **Superior Functions vs Inferior Functions**

- **Physical Energy vs Psychic Energy** (both have a common source in the libido)
- **Organic Needs vs Cultural Needs**
- **Anima vs Animus** (each person is bi-sexual)
- **Sublimation vs Repression**
- **Causality vs Teleology**

### **‘The Soul’s Code’ by James Hillman**

James Hillman’s book is sub-titled *In Search of Character and Calling*. As a Neo-Jungian he has summarised Jung’s emphasis on teleology in the life of the individual

*In a nutshell, then, this book is about calling, about fate, about character, about innate image. Together they make up the ‘acorn theory’, which holds that each person bears a uniqueness that asks to be lived AND that it is already present before it can be lived.*

(see p. 6)

### **The Teleology Principle**

According to Jung, man’s behaviour is determined by much more than the satisfaction of immediate goals or year-to-year living. He may have a sense of responsibility towards future generations. Teleology maintains that humanity is moving towards a goal and has a long-range purpose. Although Jung acknowledged that the past was the cause of much of man’s present behaviour he was one of the very few psychoanalysts who gave appreciable weight to the impact of the possible future.

## (ii) **Synchronicity**

### **A Definition of Synchronicity**

Carl Jung was one of the first western thinkers to formulate a definition of synchronicity. Of course it was a concept well known to Chinese and Indian thought before it gained currency in modern western thought.

*This concept formulates a point of view diametrically opposed to that of causality ... Synchronicity takes the coincidence of events in space*

*and time as meaning something more than mere chance, viz. a peculiar interdependence of objective events among themselves, as well as with the subjective (psychic) state of the observer or observers.*

This statement originally appeared in Dr Jung's introduction to Wilhelm's translation of the *I Ching*. I found it quoted on p. 43 of Chapter 26 'Synchronicity' of *The Dramatic Universe* by John G. Bennett.

### **Acausality and the I Ching**

Jung's study of the Chinese book of 'oracles' known as the *I Ching* began in 1920 and continued secretly until 1950. His study raised many questions about meaningful coincidences which Jung chose not to ignore. Although Jung never provided a completely convincing theoretical framework for the emergency of coincidences and synchronicities others such as F. David Peat and J.G. Bennett have done so.

### **Synchronicity as a Bridge**

The central argument of F. David Peat is that synchronicity provides 'a bridge that spans the worlds of mind and matter, physics and psyche' (p. 2). Peat suggests 'that the time order of nature is in fact wider than suggested by Newton or Einstein. Time does not consist of a **single order of succession but of a whole spectrum of orders of which eternity and the mathematical order of succession, are but two particular aspects** (p. 229). (*Synchronicity – the Bridge Between Matter and Mind*, Bantam Books, 1987.)

### **Different Orders of Time and consciousness**

According to Peat, consciousness is not bound within any single one of the orders of time and is extremely sensitive to the **movement** of time. A person is only aware of movement not time. Synchronicities occur when creativity breaks through the barriers of the self and allows awareness to flood through the whole domain of consciousness. Synchronicity heralds the dawning of a greater reality where mind and matter are no longer different aspects of creation.

## **John Goldolphin Bennett and the Dramatic Universe**

### **Biographical Detail**

J.D. Bennett, like P.D. Ouspensky, was a one-time disciple of George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff (1873-1949). These three men developed complex systems of thought about the nature of man and reality. These thinkers are largely ignored by western academics because their thinking is based on assumptions that challenge traditional science. Each of these thinkers accept the claims of parapsychology and their thought teases out the implications that these pursuits would have on our understanding of reality. Thus P.D. Ouspensky wrote a book called *A New Model of the Universe*. In Bennett's case, his thought is largely contained in his three volumes of the *Dramatic Universe*. In volume two he outlines his theory of synchronicity and intersecting worlds.

### **J.G. Bennett's Theory of Intersecting Worlds**

J.G. Bennett proposed a model of the real world which consisted of a great number of intersecting worlds. With his three coordinates of space, time and hyperaxis he was able to develop a model of a 'dramatic universe' which included provision for 'synchronicity'.

Although Bennett's system appears complex, it is seeking to explain rather complex phenomena. Bennett proposed six universal laws of synchronicity to account for the reality of 'emergence' as a principle outside of the realm of the factual or real world. He used the symbols S, E and H to designate the emergent properties of space, time and hyperaxis where:

S (Space)	=	The influences of form, scale and proportion
E (Eternity)	=	The influences of potentiality, organisation and pattern
H (Hyperaxis)	=	The influence of recurrence, regulation and emergence

### **The Six Laws of Synchronicity**

Bennett formulated six laws which comprised all the possible combinations in which time is not explicit:

THE SIX LAWS OF SYNCHRONICITY				
	Symbol	Dominant	Subordinate	Intermediate
1st Law	S-E-H	Space	Eternity	Hyparxis
2nd Law	S-H-E	Space	Hyparxis	Eternity
3rd Law	E-S-H	Eternity	Space	Hyparxis
4th Law	E-H-S	Eternity	Hyparxis	Space
5th Law	H-S-E	Hyparxis	Space	Eternity
6th Law	H-E-S	Hyparxis	Eternity	Space

(Reference: *The Dramatic Universe*, Vol. II. The Foundations of Moral Philosophy, J.G. Bennett, Hodder and Stoughton, 1961, pps. 42-65)

### **Jung's Likely Reaction to Bennett's Theory**

Although there is no guarantee that Jung would have approved of Bennett's Six Laws there is little doubt he would have admired Bennett's attempt to include the realm of parapsychology in his exposition of the *Dramatic Universe*.

### (iii) **Alchemy**

#### **The Royal Art**

Alchemy was regarded as the Royal Art in esoteric endeavours. It stood above Astrology because it was considered to be a fusion of the spiritual and the material. While Astrology laid the foundations for modern Astronomy, Alchemy laid the foundations for modern Chemistry. It was considered a magical art which had its origins in ancient Egypt and Arabia. The medieval and Renaissance alchemists performed complex chemical operations and attempted to create the 'Philosopher's Stone'.

#### **A Spiritual Art**

In modern times there has been a tendency to belittle alchemical pursuits and dismiss them as pseudo-science. A more enlightened approach was taken by Jung. He saw alchemy not as the pursuit of turning base metal into gold but rather as a spiritual quest to refine the soul. It was not really about changes to metals. It was about the transformation of the alchemist himself!



### **The Nigredo, the Albedo, the Rubedo**

Jung saw the alchemist as a person seeking psychic equilibrium. He was attempting to attain the balancing of the unconscious darkening forces (nigredo) with the purificatory forces (albedo) to achieve harmony in the psyche (rubedo). This polar struggle is mirrored in the contra-sexual aspect of every man and woman. It is the attempt to balance the anima (maleness of man) or the animus (femaleness of woman). This continual struggle is a reflection of the archetypal tension of the syzygies of the Pleroma. The resolution of this struggle is in the conjunction as understood by Andrea's *Chemical Wedding* 'Men have an unconscious archetypal 'Eve' known as the 'anima'; women have a corresponding 'Adam' or 'animus'.' The philosopher's stone is, for Jungians, the achievement of 'self' in this polaric struggle. (See *Sun at Midnight* by Christopher Ahern, p. 176).

### **C.G. Jung and the Alchemical Renewal**

(These notes are reproduced from Stephan A. Hoeller's Wikipedia entry on Jung but with new paragraph headings).

#### **Dr Faustus to Dr Jung**

The lovely little town of Knittlingen, near the Black Forest in West Germany, is noted far-and-wide as the original residence of the famed Dr Johannes Faustus. A plaque in the small but exquisite museum devoted to the facts and legends concerning Dr Faust tells us that, although alchemy has often been considered a pseudo-science based on the pretence that gold could be made from other metals, it is now known that, in reality, it was a spiritual art having as its aim the psychological transformation of the alchemist himself. This public statement, viewed daily by large numbers of visitors, demonstrates most impressively the rehabilitated image alchemy has acquired in recent decades. This positive change is due in large measure to the work of one remarkable man: Carl Gustav Jung.

#### **Jung's Remarkable Dream (1926)**

In 1926 Jung had a remarkable dream. He felt himself transported back into the seventeenth century, and saw himself as an alchemist, engaged in the *opus*, or great work of alchemy. Prior to this time, Jung, along with other psychoanalysts, was intrigued and taken aback by the tragic fate of Herbert Silberer, a disciple of Freud,

who in 1914 published a work dealing largely with the psychoanalytic implications of alchemy. Silberer, who upon proudly presenting his book to his master Freud, was coldly rebuked by him, became despondent and ended his life by suicide, thus becoming what might be called the first martyr to the cause of a psychological view of alchemy.

### **Alchemy – the Link between Gnosticism and Psychology**

Now it all came together, as it were. The Gnostic Sophia was about to begin her triumphal return to the arena of modern thought, and the psychological link connecting her and her modern devotees would be the long despised, but about to be rehabilitated, symbolic discipline of alchemy. The recognition had come. Heralded by a dream, the role of alchemy as the link connecting ancient Gnosticism with modern psychology, as well as Jung's role in reviving this link, became apparent. As Jung was to recollect later:

*[Alchemy] represented the historical link with Gnosticism, and ... a continuity therefore existed between past and present. Grounded in the natural philosophy of the Middle Ages, alchemy formed the bridge on the one hand into the past, to Gnosticism, and on the other into the future, to the modern psychology of the unconscious.*

### **The Alchemical Sophia or Unis Mundi**

Jung's two greatest works on Alchemy are *Psychology and Alchemy* and *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, the latter representing his final summing up of the implications of his long preoccupation with alchemy. In this last summary of his insights on the subject, influenced in part by his collaboration with the Nobel Prize winning physicist Wolfgang Pauli, the old Jung envisions a great psycho-physical mystery to which the alchemists of old gave the name of *unus mundus* (one world). At the root of all being, so he intimates, there is a state wherein physicality and spirituality meet in a transgressive union. Synchronistic phenomena, and many more as yet unexplained mysteries of physical and psychological nature, appear to proceed from this unitive condition. It is more than likely that this mysterious condition is the true home of the archetypes as such, which merely project themselves into the realm of the psyche, but in reality abide elsewhere. While the tensional relationship of the opposites remains the great operational mechanism of manifest life and of transformation, this

relationship exists within the context of a unitary world-model wherein matter and spirit, King and Queen, appear as aspects of a psychoid realm of reality.

### **The Psychological Wizard of Küssnacht**

When Jung published his first major work on alchemy at the end of World War II, most reference books described this discipline as nothing more than a fraudulent and inefficient forerunner of modern chemistry. Today, more than twenty-five years after Jung's death, alchemy is once again a respected subject of both academic and popular interest, and alchemical terminology is used with great frequency in textbooks of depth -psychology and other disciplines. It may be said without exaggeration that the contemporary status of alchemy owes its very existence to the psychological wizard of Küssnacht.

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