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Conscious Awakening of an Intuitive Mind: The Western Esoteric Method of Seeing Wonder in Reality

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“You see, my dears, you descended from the moon.”

What in the world does this quote mean? Could it be a reference to scientific discovery? It certainly doesn't seem to be a religious reference for the Christian soul. Is the moon really the moon, or is something else intended? Though I can only guess at its intent, I would say that the reference to the moon here is as a symbol for something else used to reflect some sort of hidden meaning, opening the listeners senses to unseen possibilities. It would help to have some idea of what the moon represents. (Goodrick-Clarke, 2008, p. 8) Even so, the speaker is quite successful in creating a mysterious sense of wonder if the listener is open to following the thought.

In my own experience of consciousness study, which Goethe might call a phenomenological investigation of consciousness, (Zajonc, 1999, p. 1) the hard work of obtaining knowledge and opening the senses to the unknown I think might have something to do with conscious awakening. In this paper I wish to show how certain kinds of knowledge that I was not exposed to previously could affect my consciousness or sense of awakening. At the same time, while exploring new sources of knowledge seems straightforward and doable, I also think there is more to it than absorbing ideas and information. Stretching the mind requires something else to be at play. It is my view that how far we go in awaking consciousness in the end, depends on our personal intuitive abilities to perceive reality that is not of our everyday experience.

The sort of knowledge I am proposing to explore is that which offers insights about the unknown. There is one such body of knowledge, a vast and varied body, in fact, called Western Esotericism. One could spend many lifetimes learning all there is to know of Western Esotericism. In this paper I will relate some ideas that have resonated with me, and introduce people I have encountered along the way. I will begin with some introductory and historic information about Western Esotericism and then introduce P.D. Ouspensky, the esoteric humanist teacher, and Jacob Boehme, a significant Western Esoteric visionary. Through these two and some others I encountered I will look at Western Esoteric learning. I will also look at intuition and perceptions of reality from several viewpoints, the Pragmatism and Pluralism of William James and Metaphysics. My hope is I will find that connections between the artistic creativity of Western Esotericism and the intuitive capacity to perceive reality have the combined potential to effect consciousness awakening. I am hoping it will help me understand some of my own particular experiences that I have come to consider soul seeing.

Perhaps, along the way I may discover more about the meaning of the moon in Western Esotericism's use of symbolism – and the meaning of my opening quote, a personal family saying passed down through the generations of my Hudson Valley Dutch family. According to my great aunt, Ellen Schutt, her great, great grandfather and teacher, John Schutt would often say this to his own children and grand children in the early years of the 19th century.

But first, why is it important to consider Western Esoteric studies in this day and age? The postmodern era is a time when all givens about what is true comes into question. Now all forms of thought, including many from the West's past, are experiencing resurgence; from Greek mythology and mystery religions to modern religions, major historical esoteric traditions and indigenous traditions. These complexities of thought reflect perhaps the general sense of chaos that is a characteristic of the postmodern era. (Tarnas, 1991, p. 402-403). Keeping in mind the potentially dire situation man has created for himself in this post modern era, Western Esotericism needs to be considered along with science, technology and the many disciplines that seek to understand the meaning of life and a changed relationship between humankind and the Universe. An overview of Western Esotericism will be the background for my focus on the esoteric activity of seeking understanding of the unknown, the hard work some take on to seek answers to the mysteries we live with. I will explore Western Esotericism's value as a guide to finding our ability to make intuitive connections to a reality where our ordinary minds cannot go and where, I believe, conscious awakening lies

WHAT IS WESTERN ESOTERICISM?

Western Esotericism is an academic field of inquiry that began its revival during the Renaissance with the rediscovery of ancient texts. It is a broad field of study with recently established academic departments at The Sorbonne, The University of Amsterdam and The University of Exeter (Goodrick-Clarke, 2008, p. 6). Michigan State University houses The American Association for the Study of Esotericism.

Western Esotericism can be defined as the quest for the hidden knowledge of spirituality or the divine, a godlike force that is universal, and transcends humankind understanding (Encyclopaedia Britannica, Sacred). It combines the knowledge of our inner selves with the knowledge of the cosmos into a complete unified whole. Western Esotericism is not about acquiring more information. It is about consciousness in that it is the experience of creating understanding from writings about our and the cosmos secrets, specifically the secrets about who we are, where we are from and where we are going (Versluis, 2004 p. 153). Influenced by both Western and Eastern ancient wisdoms, Western Esoteric imagery may reflect the world of creative imagination where intermediaries thrive as visions, angels and hierarchies. Until recently, ancient esoteric traditions such as magic, astrology and occultism were considered mere superstitions predating the illumination of the modern era. Since the time of the Reformation, though, new Western Esoteric traditions evolved including Theosophy, Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism, and lay claim to the origins of Carl Jung's archetype psychology (Goodrick-Clarke, 2008 ps. 3-6).

In defining Western Esotericism for the purpose of establishing criteria for the academic study of it, Antoine Faivre, emeritus professor at the Sorbonne, describes four primary characteristics of the field.

1. **Correspondences or analogies.** The universe is conceived as a cosmic hall of mirrors, where everything reflects something else. Using symbolism, Esotericism links all levels of nature, with the universe reflected in the human and the human reflected in the universe. These symbols are meant to reflect the divine origin of all things, including the planets, minerals, animals, humans, plants, and states of mind. They are meant to be interpreted by humans as signatures of the divine. These symbolic links form the basis of astrology, alchemy and magic and can be found in the text of the mystical traditions of both Jewish Kabbalah, and Christian Cabbala. (Goodrich-Clarke, 2008, ps. 8-9) Kabbalah teachings are meant to explain the origin of the universe and the relationships humans have with the universe and the divine originating in the Jewish tradition and later adopted by Christian movements. The word kabbalah means oral tradition (Learn Kabaalah, Kabbalah).



The mind of the microcosm, 1619

2. **Living nature:** The Universe is a living, animated cosmos. It is a complex hierarchical entity with a living soul experienced as energy. The practice of magic, for instance, uses natural materials such as herbs, stones and substances to access the vitality of the powers of nature.
Example from Llewellyn's Witches Datebook:
Sage – considered the main fertility remedy, it also promotes long and healthy life. It can attract prosperity and the wisdom to spend wealth wisely. Dried leaves of the sage plant may be burned as incense to purify an area or a person. The elemental correspondence

for sage is air and in the language of flowers it signifies wisdom, skill and virtue. Its planetary correspondence is Jupiter (Dugan 2010 p.31).

3. **Imagination and Mediations:** Mesocosms, which are spiritual intermediaries, link the macrocosm of the universe with the microcosm of the human. The intermediaries are the preferred form of connecting with the divine rather than the direct interaction with the divine of a mystical experience. Here the rich and varied imagery of esotericism come to life.
4. **The experience of transmutation:** The esoteric experience manifested through the active engagement of intermediaries can result in the illumination of spiritual knowledge (gnosis).

In contrast with the modern era that seeks to objectify and manipulate the natural world, Western Esotericism is a search for connection and union toward a deeper understanding of nature and the divine. The reader of Western Esoteric writing has the opportunity for personal awakening by choosing to read such long ago works that are designed for that purpose (Versluis, 2004, ps. 6 & 14). In fact, though, Western Esotericism lives on in modern movie making, art and story telling.

Underneath all Western Esoteric tradition lies the myth of the fall from paradise and its aim is spiritual illumination. As in the story of Adam and Eve, humanity was tempted to look outside of itself for knowledge and in so doing was separated from paradise and into an ever increasing objectifying of nature. The purpose of the esoteric practitioner is to reunite humanity with nature through the divine. Through the divine we can access the universal inner language of creation (Versluis, 2004, p. 86).

Esotericism may involve some sort of initiation, which does not necessarily mean a ritualistic joining of a secret group as in the case of Freemasonry. Initiation can also take form through the act of reading esoteric literature by experiencing esoteric visual art. In reading esoteric literature one engages imaginatively with the mystic writer who is engaged with divine powers. The writer guides the reader to experience the awakening process through the co-creativity of the writer's personal spiritual experience (Gnostic experience). The reader may witness that process and perhaps experience that same imaginative awakening. This guiding process is a form of initiation. A reader of Western Esoteric traditions may find a particular book or perspective that resonates with him or her, and which can effect a change of consciousness by joining with the author's particular means of accessing the divine (Versluis, 2004, p. 15).

P.D. Ouspensky

“The meaning of life is in eternal search. And only in that search can we find something truly new.” P.D. Ouspensky

My first encounter with Western Esotericism began before I understood what it was or had ever heard the name. I was following my nose, so to speak, and landed on Petre D. Ouspensky, who was someone whose writing I could understand and that excited me. He exposed me to many new ideas about the esoteric origins of things, igniting my curiosity about Western Esotericism. I fought him off at first, thinking he was just some obscure writer of now out of date ideas. But

his name kept re-emerging and when I discovered that Yale University Beinecke Rare Book Library is the holder of his entire original body of work, the snob inside me agreed to pay attention. I have Ouspensky to thank that I no longer think that Alchemy, Astrology, and Tarot are merely superstitions steeped in meaningless mythology (Goodrick-Clarke, 2008, p. 4).

In this section and the following on Jacob Boehme, I will introduce the individuals, sight examples of their work that I think are of significance to Western Esotericism and relevant to today. In subsequent sections of this paper I will elaborate on ideas about intuition and the notion of reality. I hope to connect these concepts with Western Esotericism and to conscious evolution.

Petre Ouspensky, a Russian thinker of the early 20th century seems to have spent his life examining what it means to live in a world filled with what he called “hidden knowledge”. His gift was the ability to explain complex subjects well. He looked at the theories and philosophies of great scientists, theologians and philosophers, examining them for truth or bias. His writings begin before Einstein’s theories of relativity, before psychology’s stages of consciousness and before quantum states. There is much to learn from *Tertium Organum*, his first major work and his later *New Model of the Universe*, in which he goes over and amends some of his earlier reflections, sometimes making revisions to his thinking, and sometimes not. In the end his personal experience and his writings are his attempts at explaining hidden knowledge. Few are as captivating and clear in writing on esoteric ideas as is Ouspensky. There is much to learn from him (Lachman, 2004 p. 3-5).

Ouspensky on Knowledge: All belief systems have their foundation in the recognition of a superior knowledge we do not possess. Our attempts to secure the content of hidden knowledge always end the same – reflecting the “poverty of human imagination in the face of this idea.” The idea of hidden knowledge is symbolized in many ways through myth and folklore. The Holy Grail, the Golden Fleece, Aladdin’s lamp, and the philosopher’s stone, are a few examples. Man is conscious of being surrounded by the Wall of the Unknown and at the same time he believes that he can get through the Wall and that others have gotten through it. He cannot imagine what there may be behind this Wall. It does not occur to him that a man can be in a different relation to the Unknown (Ouspensky, 1997, p. 12-14).

On The Fourth Dimension: Through the exercise of imagining the fourth dimension, Ouspensky helps us use reason to find the insight to transcend reason and once we transcend those limits, the invisible, as represented by the fourth dimension, is suddenly found everywhere in life (Lachman, 2004, p. 58). Ouspensky calls this sense of an entire other world as the world of the wondrous (Ouspensky, 1927 p. 269).

On Artistic Expression: Through art we can come in contact with the real world. It is our only means of perceiving it. The artist must be a magician and make us see that which others do not see and what they would otherwise ignore. Artistic expression can reveal a level of emotion necessary for increasing consciousness, a yearning for the unknown (Lachman, 2004, p. 59-60).

On Jacob Boehme: Although his writings are strong with tones of Christian morality, Boehme writes with clear comprehensions of the wonders of the mysteries he confronted in his own illuminations (Ouspensky, 1927, p. 281-284).

Jacob Boehme

“The whole outward visible world...is a signature, or figure of the inward spiritual world” J. Boehme

To understand the value of Western Esotericism, and to get at its meaning requires one to have a knowledge of different times and world views that may very likely help us of the scientific age to create inside ourselves other perspectives from which our own sensitivities can flower. Jacob Boehme provides one such perspective. His prolific writings of a complete realm of the whole of creation were written during the early 1600s in what is now the eastern edge of Germany (Waterfield, 2001, p 15). A family man trained and living as a shoemaker, Boehme was exposed to alchemy, astrology and Christian Cabala. He was a devout Christian who lived in the time and place where the Lutheran Church took over the role of church authority from the Roman Catholic Church. Boehme was part of an undercurrent of revolt against that new authority. Boehme influenced many including Henry More, John Milton, and Hegel, and his ideas are evident in the beginnings of the Quaker movement. His writings are considered to be among the origins of Theosophy (Waterfield, 2001, ps. 17-19).

Boehme said in the span of fifteen minutes he saw and knew the Being of all beings. He saw the Divine Wisdom of God in the creation of all things. He saw the Byss and the Abyss and what he described as the three worlds (the divine angelical paradisiacal world, the dark world (the nature of fire), and the external visible world). The external world took form from the external birth of the internal and spiritual worlds. For Boehme this experience was a moment of great wonder in which he also felt intense joy (Goodrick-Clarke, 2008, p. 91).

Abyss can be defined as a bottomless pit. Looking online for the meaning of Byss the only plausible reference I found was its use as the name of a planet in the Star Wars movies. This planet was considered the perfect place to live (Wookieepedia, Byss). I suspect that whoever named the planet might have been influenced by Boehme.

In a letter to a friend many years later, Boehme described how he came to be able to express his vision in written form. He said he was like a child in school. He had seen a view of the universe – wrapped up in chaos that he gradually and from time to time could unravel. Likening himself to a young planet, over the span of twelve years, in spurts like a sudden meteor shower his writing came forth as if not of his own mind. After these moments of clarity he felt a shining of light, but not always and never constantly. There were other times when such thoughts did not reveal themselves and even he could not comprehend his own writings. For this reason he believed his writing was not his own (Waterfield, 2001, ps. 64-68).

To have any hope of understanding Boehme in the 21st century requires two things. It requires a contextual understanding as I have stated, and a true desire to read and understand what Boehme, the writer, is conveying. What he is conveying is only for those who want to know and

understand him (Versluis, 2004, p. 143). That means stepping away from the current western worldview and the judgments about esoteric thinking that go along with it. Boehme himself warned readers that if they were not committed to the way of holiness the wrath of God would be put upon them (Waterfield, 2001, p. 56).

Before moving on, I want to share some of my experience reading Boehme. It is not easy and I am not able to relate to what he says very well. However, I think for the purpose of this paper it is important to experience him directly. In an attempt to simplify his writing, the following is my edited version of his description of the fall of Adam. Still, it may be difficult to understand.

“The desire of love is spirit, and is the heart of God, viz. the right divine understanding: In the love-essence Mercury is God’s word, and in the fiery nature he is the wrath of God,” J. Boehme

From “Of the Inward and Outward Cure of Man”, Chapter X, *Signatura Rerum*



The spirit of the divine was lost to Adam because he imagined the serpent’s property – good and evil - causing poison of death to work in Mercury. The anger flamed up in the eternal Mars and the dark side of eternal nature’s property took possession of Adam. He was undone. His body became earth in the dark impression of the poison igniting Mercury against God. There was no remedy for him in heaven or in this world. Death captivated his body and soul. How did God cure him? Was it with some strange tincture? No, he took the likeness and cured him with what corrupted him, with the divine Mercury, the divine Venus and the divine Jupiter. In Adam was the expressed word, what I call the eternal Mercury in man. It was spoken into man’s image, created by God’s essence with the soul of all three worlds, the world of light and understanding, which is God; the fire world, which is the eternal nature of the Father of all beings; and the love world, which is heavenly corporality. In the love-essence Mercury is God’s word and the fiery nature is His wrath. Adam imagined after good and evil, after earthliness and made manifest the

abyss and the byss. This he should not do because God created Adam in his image. He should have tintured the fire-world and outward world with the word of love so the earthliness would not have shown itself – like as the day holds the night swallowed up in itself. In the cure of the enflamed Mercury He inflamed the human property with love so the human Jupiter of divine understanding would manifest. So, physician (alchemist?) to cure enkindled Mercury first Venus and Jupiter must be enkindled and not with the dark impression of Saturn. The doctor must study the whole process of how God restored the universal in man in the person of Christ. But it is Mercury – the living speaking Mercury in Christ that can cure. The artist cannot do it. All the seven forms of nature must be crystallized and purified, if the universal shall be revealed. Each must separately be brought from the property of wrath into the pure and clear life. The artist must open the mouth of the seven forms and make them alive so they can eat together. When Mercury awakens from the death of the impression of Saturn then arises the kingdom of joy, and if he glimpses love in Mars then the angelical properties appear in view (Boehme, 1912, ps. 108-113).

“For love enters even into that where the Godhead is not manifested. And entering therefore into, love begins to manifest to the soul the light of the Godhead; and thus is the darkness broken through and the wonders of the new creation successively manifested.” J. Boehme

Considered the last of the great European mystics, Boehme understood how little the human personality meant, having himself come to imagine a universe pervaded with Spirit. He genuinely understood the essential nature of trees and flowers and mountains and all living creatures in the world. He saw man as angels burdened with their own mundane lives, understanding how little of value are the things we place so much importance upon. As it is hard to understand what love is if we have not experienced it ourselves, so it is extremely difficult to comprehend a mystic who lives with Spirit, as Boehme did. Boehme wrote in hopes that he could lead us toward paths away from our worldly associations – the reality of our own making (Boehme, 1912, ps. vii-xi).

INTUITION

*“The intuitive mind is a sacred gift
and the rational mind is a faithful servant.
We have created a society that honors the servant
and has forgotten the gift” Albert Einstein*

Definitions of Intuition

Intuition means a way of knowing directly. It is an awareness one comes to without involving logic or any sort of rational process. Some say the awareness comes from some outside source. Others view it as coming from within ones own subconscious (Davis-Floyd, 1997, ps. 6-8).

From the beginning of philosophical thinking of wide ranging origins, intuition was perceived as having great potential for the individual, benefit for the community and for the evolution of mankind. Socrates described it as a presence, a voice, a passion, a something that compels one

to take action. He called it daemon. For the writer and poet it became the Muses. During the nineteenth century and the rise of external, empirical knowing, daemon became demon, the evil influence (Davis Floyd, 1997, p. 5).

Intuition can also be described as a cognitive process in which unconscious pattern matching may become conscious when a conscious perception matches a pattern held in the subconscious. Science examines intuition using this model. Such patterns, taking many forms, are stored somewhere in the mind in a hierarchical ordering that build upon themselves (Rosenblatt, 1994, p. 1). This building process could possibly correspond to the structure of an evolving consciousness.

In the field of Mathematics the work or challenge of dimensional thinking expands one's intuition and the limits of the senses. For example, mathematicians employ spatial intuition to expand the perception of higher dimensions. Analogy is what pushes this expansion (Pesic, 2005, ps. 3-6). This use of analogy is not unlike the use of correspondences by the esoteric writer in accessing the divine.

Philosophy describes intuition as immediate knowledge. An intuitive moment combines the object of thought with the thinker of the thought. This moment is a relationship that can only be a personal experience and is an attempt to bring order and unity to reality (Iwersen, 2007, pp. 33-34). In understanding consciousness, Goethe would describe the experience of intuition as a perceptual encounter with Intelligence that is the pattern of nature (Zajone, 1999, p. 3).

Ouspensky, Boehme, and Intuition

“What nature denies to human sight she gives to the eyes of the soul”
Ovid (early Roman Poet)

Boehme said he could unwrap chaos from the universe, in other words creating sense, creating a pattern out of the chaos, just as described in chaos theory today (Haught, 1994, ps. 190-191).

Goethe would describe Boehme's unwrapping of chaos as seeing the pattern in experience, something he called archetypal phenomenology. He said this seeing is the point where the human mind comes the closest to seeing things as they are. (Zajone, 1999, p. 3). This seeing experience is a moment of intuition, which is grasping a particular thing and seeing it as part of a wholeness or pattern. The truth of an esoteric vision is the realization of the Oneness of the human with the universe, manifesting out of intuition.

Though often mistaken for conscious awakening, feeling a sense of oneness and simplicity of the whole of the universe is not in essence an awakening. A mystical experience as that of Boehme's was a beginning of an understanding. Boehme, there is no doubt, a learned man of his times, experienced immediate knowledge on several occasions. He went on to write prolifically about his visions and new understanding of a complete pattern of reality emerging from his intuition.

Ouspensky was probably denied the experience of the intuitively manifested vision he so wished for. As with so many things though, he understood intuition, defining it as the ability to see what we cannot see, perhaps meaning the fourth dimension of reality, which he wrote about extensively. He held artists in highest esteem for possessing the intuitive ability to reveal the mysteries of reality (Ouspensky, 1927, ps. 161-162).

What does the scientific community have to say about Intuition?

Within the field of Psychology one study sought to address the problem of intuitive errors by examining it in the context of discovery rather than judgment. The study contends that intuitive insight is an instantaneous cognitive process involving the activation of a pattern. This is consistent with empirical science's concept of intuition. Through its development in the subconscious, intuition reaches across into consciousness and is experienced as a hunch – an insight. This pattern thinking process involves a mnemonic network, a kind of memory aid or linking process that the mind uses to assist with making associations between what we understand and what we do not (Encyclopaedia Britannica, mnemonic network). The individual difference here involves specifically what and how much memory is stored and available to a person's mnemonic network and how affectively it can be accessed (Bowers, 1990, ps. 72-75).

A mnemonic network, I suggest, is another way of describing The Western Esoteric characteristic, correspondence – those symbols used to trigger intuitive insight. It also reflects Boehme's vision in which he saw the pattern of all things emerge from chaos. In addition, it shows the significance of the need for a continued learning endeavor as an important part of consciousness evolution. The learning process increases the quantity of memories that are stored in the mind and available for the creation of patterns.

This research study associates intuitive insight that it describes as an activation process, with discovery that is then examined for validity. Through experiments using word association and partial picture clues, the researchers examined the criteria of "goodness of fit" of a hunch. The hunch represents a new alignment of knowledge. In the context of discovery, "goodness of fit" associations allow for intuition to guide the mind without knowing where it is going or what it will find (Bowers, 1990, ps. 90-97). This is another way of saying trust your gut, and gives value to intuitive thinking even though it may be wrong as often as it is right, perhaps.

A related problem with intuition is its tendency to lead the mind in many directions. It is not disciplined. It is not focused. Intuition rambles (Budnik, 2006, ps. 118-120). As a personal example I am reminded that the response I received to my proposal for this project was that it was too broad. I was advised to narrow my focus. I recognized early on I had no idea what direction my project would ultimately take. However, by allowing myself to branch off along the way I feel I am making connections. At times though, it does feel like I am headed down a road weaving things together as I go.

Is intuition pattern matching?

The idea of pattern matching involves making connections and seeing possibilities that in the end can be meaningless or even silly. Such a thinking process might improve with use. Computers

offer opportunities for endless intuitive play. Playing with relationships between operations can lead to moments of insight – insights the computer can verify the truth of. A computer is able to grasp a series of complex operations, make patterns with them, and know whether they are correct or not much like intuitive thinking tries to understand connections (Budnik, 2006, ps. 114-116).

As a form of pattern matching, intuitive understanding could develop through the effort of knowing more about the patterns in life. Much that we encounter is similar to previous situations. Linking these encounters is a process that can evolve within the individual and collectively as archetypes. Intuitive thinking could strengthen our ability to recognize patterns. In Western culture finding truth in such a fashion is not highly regarded compared to the empirical scientific method. Yet Einstein's work, considered the most important in 20th century physics, was intuitively conceived. He is considered an intuitive genius. In general though, Western culture equates intuitive thinking with inspiration and creativity, positive qualities but none-the-less not to be taken seriously in the quest for knowledge.

I wonder if Ouspensky would be intrigued by the value of computer intelligence as an aid in developing intuitive thinking. Would he see it as creative play? Perhaps he would have become obsessed with playing on a computer as so many are today.

How does the mind make instant decisions? How does intuition create specific links that seem to fit together?

One explanation considers intuition as an elimination algorithm. An algorithm is a series of steps that are necessary to solve a problem or answer a question. Algorithms are used in mathematical calculation, data processing, and are the foundation of the field of Computer Science (Encyclopaedia Britannica, Algorithm)

“When you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.” Sherlock Holmes

Through the act of eliminating, as opposed to the computer activity of on- off switching, intuition could be described as a process that uses elimination to proceed to the recognition of an insight. Thinking of a nerve cell as like a spreadsheet allows for infinite sorting of possible combinations. The mind then could be a series of interactive intelligences made up of nerve cells that can sort into recognizable combinations. This system of intelligences could be like a massive data base system that allows for the combining of infinite amounts of memory that is stored in nerve cells. When a group of related nerve cells combine to form meaning they could form a nerve association channel through which meaning could be transferred in the form of a picture or symbol representing an object, a sentence, or an event. Thoughts of many lengths could be represented by one symbol, and many symbols could be linked together (Thomas, 2004, 125-132). Such a channeling process does offer an explanation for the speed with which intuitive insights seem to happen and how they seem to materialize with very little mental effort.

An example of such a process is Mozart's description of the process of composing – a description some say is myth associated with Mozart's genius. From a collection of melodies

(event symbols) crowded in his mind he would begin to select those that fit a theme he chose. Each new addition fit together with the others to form a complete composition at which point he would stop. He could see the entire piece in his head at a glance. This same recognition process offers an explanation for how someone like Boehme, might see a complete pattern of the universe in an instant.

This perception of intuitive thinking as like a database system sorting process allows for infinite ways to access what we know. The system's weakness though, lies in its ability to latch on too quickly to a symbol because of highly influential human emotions that can send perception down the wrong association channel and distort the truth. However, because the intuitive process of event recognition is based on experience and not logic, it is also possible that an event pattern could be linked to another that opens a door to the discovering of wisdom (Thomas, 2004, ps. 135-142).

These are some examples of science's attempts to understand what empirical science on its own cannot do. Consistent with science's primary role of describing nature, by recognizing the importance of intuition to scientific advancement, it makes sense that science should attempt to describe intuition. In so doing, science is validating intuition's existence, acknowledging it, which is culturally a step forward. Science's attempt to understand intuition is intriguing and curious. It is not rich in the symbolism that sparks imaginative wandering into realms that invoke spiritual connection or the awakening of the soul through intuitive moments of insight. In fact, writing about science's viewpoint affects the tone of this paper, presenting another contrast between reasoned and intuitively based knowledge. This contrast in understanding is not completely lost to members of the scientific community though:

"If the evolution of consciousness is allowed to expand without limit, then whatever ecstatic wondrous experience any being ever experiences is the merest hint of a shadow of what can be and that will always be the case."

Paul Budnik, U. of Illinois, Computer Science

Can we get to the truth through intuition? If so, do we have the capacity?

The answer to these questions could be no, at least not without some help from other sources. Math and logic are the systems that define the truth in human deductive reasoning and science is the source for truth of the senses. While our Western culture views these two sources of truth as valid, and intuition a sort of truth of faith, none of the three on their own reliably present the truth. Each depends upon the other and the three together represent an integral truth. The creativity of bringing something out of the unknown that intuitive knowledge represents, is in actuality the starting point for sensory and rational ideas. It is intuition that is responsible for all of the riches that make up human creativity in every field of human endeavor (Sorokin, 1998, ps. 1-6).

If such immense value is attributed to intuition, it in turn validates the enormous potential Western Esotericism has for reclaiming intuition's role in our postmodern culture. Perhaps it is better to explore the world of wonder our intuition can access without analyzing it as a mental activity, without validation by experiment. Culturally we almost instinctively dismiss moments

of intuition. We need to relearn how to access intuition and become familiar with its manifestations. Learn to let it be our guide. As with feelings, paying attention to intuition makes it more available. Thinking about coming to know something in a different way than reason allows encourages the process, leading the mind past what we already know to where we can explore the unknown and find new possibilities (Mishlove, ps.1-5). Retraining our ability to be attuned to our intuition and to actually increase our intuitive capacity is possible. It involves:

- Clutter - focusing attention by quieting the mind of internal distraction.
- Trust - removing emotional reactions and judgment from perceptions.
- Being centered - having a sense of certainty and inner peace.
- Way of knowing - identify with an object rather than obtaining information about that object.
- Vision - employing mental imagery to get below reasoning (Mishlove).

Intuition may be experienced in four types of awareness –

physical (bodily)

emotional (feelings)

mental (thoughts)

spiritual or metaphysical (mystical)

(Mishlove, p 3) and ((Davis-Floyd, 1997, ps. 8-9).

It is the spiritual realm where intuition offers access to reality beyond our ordinary state of consciousness, to sees things as they are. It is the realm where we can seek the unknown (the divine), make sense of the universe and know who we are. It is where we break free of our time and space perspective and come to know our relationship with the earth. This knowing is what Native American cultures describe as earthmind, know that everything is connected to everything else (Davis Floyd, 1997, ps. 63 &77). With earthmind we resolve the pain of separateness and get back to the things themselves (Bergson, 1947, p. 146). This is a hint of the reality we do not see.

The Native American cultures understand intuition as coming from a sense of place, the sacredness of the land, where spirituality will manifest through symbols that unfold the story of creation. Conscious awakening happens best in the natural world (Davis-Floyd, 1997, ps. 61 &74). Getting to know the place where we live in the way we come to know another person, opens wide a sense of reverence and respect, a centering of our being in place (Wessels, 1997, p21). Here is where spiritual intuition will flourish and creative expression of the imagination, acting somewhat like a struck tuning fork, opens consciousness to its vast potential in alignment with the consciousness of the universe. For the Western mind, the riches of esoteric creativity offer access to our earthmind through what I describe as soul seeing. It is through our soul that we can see the wonder of the universe and know reality we do not see. At least, this is what I believe best describes my own personal experience.

PERSPECTIVES ON REALITY

*“To see a world in a grain of sand
And a heaven in a wild flower
Keeps the human soul from care”*

William Blake
"I am hanging in the balance of the reality of Man
Like every sparrow falling, like every grain of sand"
Bob Dylan

William James, Pragmatism and Reality

"Most people live, whether physically, intellectually or morally, in a very restricted circle of their potential being. They make very small use of their possible consciousness, and of their soul's resources in general, much like a man who, out of his whole bodily organism, should get into a habit of using and moving only his little finger."

William James

It is our natural tendency to see simplicity in our everyday reality. We look to explain in simple terms our experiences in the world. This provides a great deal of satisfaction and comfort, and makes us feel we know our world and are in control of it (Bergson, 1946. ps. 248-249). We have our three dimensional framework, our number system, our codes of ethics and our truths that we see no reason to question.

A pragmatist philosopher, such as William James (1842-1910), would say these concepts are real, but they do not exist. Pragmatism, whose origins lie in the late nineteenth century, attempts to explain all that is given as experience including connections and meaning. It says that the truth of something needs to be tested by experience to prove its validity. Essentially truth is what works (Encyclopaedia Britannica, Pragmatism). If we define our world of experience through the lens of Pragmatism we do not see a simple reality. Everything that happens isn't necessarily for a reason that can be linked to a coordinated whole of established truths. There are however, relationships between things and connections between facts. These connections are as real as the things themselves. From this perspective reality is not finite or even infinite, but more like indefinite, flowing not in a particular direction at all (Bergson, 1946, p. 251). This perspective defines the world of ours as a human world filled with experience, not finite laws and truths. However, rather than perceiving experience as defining truth or as copies of external absolute truth, this perspective considers experience as a flow, movement in an indefinite reality. Truth is more like a guide to the flow of our experience of reality that prepares us for what will be. For us, truth is something we invent to make use of reality rather than something we come to know. James says that our truths are instead, paths we take based on our experience of reality. They are arbitrary in that they are particular paths in a reality that is much more than our experience of it (Bergson, 1946, ps. 252-256).

Related to James' pragmatism is the concept of a pluralistic universe that is always in a state of incompleteness. Each thing is with another thing in many ways, but never in an entirety of completeness. There is always something inconclusive between things. This contrasts with our view of the universe as a vast completeness or of an absolute truth. James said the notion of one creates distinction or separateness that feels foreign or other. Whereas if, for instance, we think of the notion of God as being part of a universe system that is an each form, semi connected to another form, we have a sense of many-ness that can be a reality less intimidating and something to feel an affinity with. Each moment of

life we experience is a temporary coming together with another moment. When we think to isolate a moment of feeling we are creating an artificial disconnected sense of reality. A pluralistic reality is messy and tangled with no one thing in dominance, but in which things are related in some ways and not in others. In such a world things happen, things are not controlled. Whether we view our world as a tangled coming and going of relatedness or one of controlled isolated moments will greatly effect our perception of the world we live in (James, 1912, ps. 316-330).

According to James and Pragmatism, there are certain paths taken that are closer to reality outside of our human experience (reality we do not see). Paths that are drawn out by feeling have the potential to take a course that is not based on the rational mind. Feelings that seem to come from our soul, if paid attention to and considered as real as our experience in our everyday world, might create paths along what James refers to as spiritual currents of reality we do not see. There are some souls he says who are less inclined to resist riding a current outside of our restricted human reality, and glide along on experience of feeling. These souls find pathways of truth that are not of the minds making. These are mystical souls, souls like Jacob Boehme.

In our everyday human understanding of reality we perceive reality as something that is useful to us. It is a reality with structures and systems. Reality that is instead felt by being in contact with an indefinite flow of a Universe with rivers and streams with cross currents flowing every which way is capable of penetrating human consciousness, awakening it to a sense of wonder (Bergson, 1946, ps. 256-259). Living in a felt reality would completely change our understanding of life's meaning, completely change our perspective on what is important and would dramatically effect the decisions we make day-to-day, moment-to-moment.

Charles Hinton, the mathematician that saw reality as the 4th dimension we cannot see in our constructed three dimensional human reality, thought of knowledge (experience) as a flowing river system with mountain streams and slow moving rivers winding through valleys all going in many directions. The work that he did to attempt to express higher consciousness using mathematical constructs of dimensions he felt held importance for the future, though he could not himself, imagine how (Rucker, 1980, p 22). His work is a visual version of perceiving that there is reality we do not see. It is another way of sensing there is something beyond what we know – something outside of that Wall of the Unknown where lies the divine, paradise.

Metaphysics: Intuition, Reality and the use of Symbolism

*“A human being is a part of the whole called by us
'Universe,' a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and
feelings as something separated from the rest – a
kind of optical delusion of his consciousness” Albert Einstein*

Metaphysics is a branch of philosophy concerned with explaining the fundamental nature of being and of the world. Traditionally, metaphysics seeks to know things that are – what really exists (Encyclopaedia Britannica, Metaphysics). It is practically impossible to define and is

essentially an impossible undertaking. It is about things in the world that do not change that we think of as givens (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Metaphysics).

According to Metaphysics, intuition involves the study of the absolute vs. the use of symbols that translates what an object is into our understanding. In the absolute, knowing comes to us directly from the object itself. This is intuitive knowing. Symbolic expression, according to Metaphysics, is analysis that translates, represents and compares yet in the end is always imperfect knowing. Analysis creates concepts and generalizations about the symbolic expressions of something. Intuition is direct and transcends generalizations. Metaphysics says our own inner life of consciousness – our sense of the flowing of the self, its qualities, continuity and duration, meaning a sense of the flowing of life. Looking inside ourselves we cannot represent what is there with descriptive symbols. We are to Metaphysics duration conceived through intuition.

When we extract a characteristic or a piece from a whole thing, it is really more like a note or expression of a thing -- not an actual piece of it. This note is extracted by our intuitive seeing of the whole thing. If we instead see only the note as a descriptive symbol, we will not be able to intuitively know the whole thing. Scientific empiricism operates within the analytical process of finding the whole from what is perceived as a thing's parts ($A + B = C$). This is how we create illusion that is our reality. It is like perceiving the shadow of ourselves as if it were our whole selves or seeing a form that has no matter and thinking that it does (Bergson, 1946 ps. 187-202). Another analogy for empirical knowing is in attempting to draw another's portrait, no matter how closely we observe the facial features, the portrait does not look like the person. The artist who is successful in revealing the person's likeness has intuitively known the person – in a way, come to fall in love with the person. The line, the shading and the color are the notes derived intuitively from the person the artist paints.

Using our analytical thinking we come to understand a thing through our observation of it creating layers of complexity based on these observations. This is what we do in our day-to-day lives. If, instead, we know a thing intuitively we understand it as duration, which we can abstract from with analysis. We cannot do the reverse. We cannot take abstracted concepts about something we have observed and come to intuitively know it. We cannot come to know its concrete self, that is, with a sense of it having mobility – a continuing flow of present, past and future. Our problem is that we think that we can. Metaphysics knows that we cannot. So, in this sense Metaphysics is intuitive knowing.

Take, for example, an apple. To purchase an apple at the grocery store we use analysis of an immobile object. We see a display of many types of apples piled in bins. We select apples to purchase by their color, name, price, ripeness and we examine them for blemishes. If instead we have our own apple tree or we visit an apple orchard instead of focusing only on the apple as an isolated object we eat, we experience more than apple. If we want we can hold an apple and think of it in terms of its growth beginning with the bud of a flower from a tree many years old. The tree nourishes the apple from its roots in the earth.

Thinking of something as immobile – as we do using the concept of time - is thinking with symbols. By understanding something as first moving and then not moving we establish

relationships between parts of wholes. In this way knowing as instant to instant a thing is always in a fixed state of immobility. This is what we call point of view in which we see things as immobile objects in various states of time. Intuitive knowing is the reverse – the whole of mobility – duration – brings forth the notes that are immobile. Through the notes we can establish a relationship with a thing. With the effort of intuition we sense concrete duration – a perception of things as things in the making, like our own consciousness of ourselves (Bergson (1947, ps. 187-207). This is what some refer to as a living sense of the now. It is also where wonder can be found and where the symbolism of Western Esoteric writing and art attempt to take us.



Robert Fludd's picture of the creation of the Primum mobile, 1626

Metaphysical intuitive thinking

To find reality with intuition we must reverse our order of thinking. This is the goal of the study of metaphysics – to reverse the direction of thoughts and not attach or convert the thinking into symbol (or result). The goal is to think intuitively. As the writer of literature understands, preparation for writing includes the almost painful effort of collecting information and studying a subject. But to actually begin to compose, the writer must find a way into the heart of the subject. Once the writer finds the heart of the subject the writing flows down a path filled with the details painstakingly gathered previously. This flow cannot be looked back at or it will evaporate because it is not a thing, but an urge – of free flowing movement that is simplicity itself. Discovery of knowledge intuitively can be compared to going to the bottom of the ocean repeatedly and each time bringing back to the surface some very different object. Just as the ocean floor is not a summary of the objects brought to the surface and examined as facts by science, intuition is not the summation of experience. Rather it is an urge to movement from the whole of experience (Bergson, 1947, ps. 233-235).

By tapping into the whole of human experience the Western Esoteric artist and writer uses creative symbolism to illuminate what it means to be a human being. By perceiving our

everyday reality within the context of a greater reality that we cannot actually function within we broaden our sense of what it means to be human all the same.

What the artist sees that we do not.

Is soul seeing possible? Can we somehow, through intuitive thinking see more than we do with ordinary seeing? Looking at the example of the artist the answer is clearly yes. In the artist intuitive thinking is not hindered by cognition (processing information) and so the artist can see things as they are without the blinders of reason. The difference between the artist and the rest of us is how we go about living our daily lives. The artist does not share our need to make sense of the world. The artist is less inclined to narrowly view the world. He is more of an idealist who sees things as they are without the filters we employ daily to act upon something or make use of it. While the philosopher, with language, attempts to find the truth of reality, the artist gets to it through expression in a medium honed through craft and technique. The artist can see what we do not naturally see in our self imposed limited view of reality. We do recognize and give value to the truth we learn from the artist, from what the artist sees and expresses in some way. We recognize that the artist sees in nature something we do not see, details we do not notice. The artist provides us with a window through which we can perceive a reality we sense but cannot see clearly.

Unfortunately it is the scientist's method of taking nature apart through experimental measurement that we listen to more than we should. So, if we turn our attention to perceiving through intuition in the manner of an artist it might be possible to find our own inner vision, soul seeing.

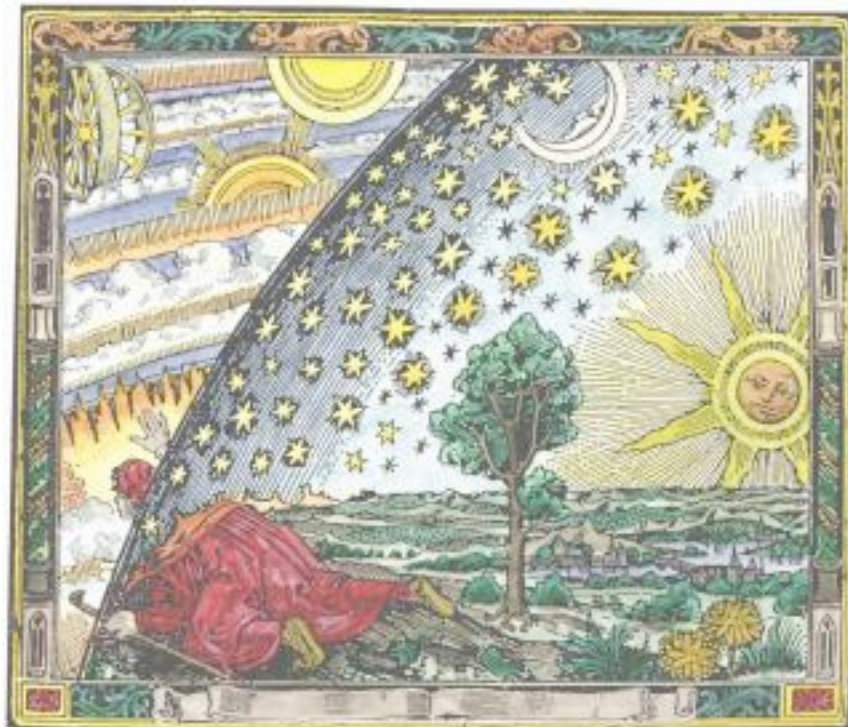
Our brain allows us to narrow the focus of what we perceive in order to act upon the things we encounter. This selectivity process is what the mind does with the whole of a perception preserved in our memory. We then make use of the selected aspects of our perception in order to respond to situations we encounter in our day-to-day existence. We ignore what is not of use to us, but it is there in our perception of things, just not in the consciousness we choose to activate. We see less of things themselves as we focus on how to make use of them. As we go about this busy process there is the exceptional artist who does not attach perceiving something to acting upon the something perceived. The artist lives a detached existence and is less inclined to automatically isolate for the purpose of action. Because they are less intent on seeing things through eyes of action, they see more of things and hence an unfiltered reality (Bergson, 1946, ps. 153 – 163).

Philosophy and Western Esotericism, our artistic guides to intuitive knowing

How do we go about removing the filters we use all of the time? The role of Philosophy could be to guide us in placing our attention on that which we think serves no practical purpose. It has offered to do so since at least the days of Plato and Plotinus. But how could we possibly go about living in an intuitively constructed experiential and lived reality that is not of our own filtered making? Metaphysics tells us that in our filtered world we think of reality as immobile – consisting of a past, present and future in which action takes place and change is made. We think of movement as a series of positions that are immobile and change as a series of states that

happen over time resulting from our actions. These are the filters we use to create appearances that shut us off from a flowing reality. Metaphysics says that if we remove our filters we may sense that change and movement happen but there is no thing that changes or moves. In this view we do not have the stability we are familiar with in our daily life of actions. We have instead something more like a melody – a duration that is not broken down into successions of time and distinct events. In this way there is change and mobility but no thing is involved. Change and movement is what is real. Like the melody our past becomes connected to our present – continually present and continually moving. It is something that endures and yet is always new. In this continually creating present, the distinctions we make between us and everything else we think of as the universe will become, instead a relationship that is always new (Bergson, 1946, ps. 176-185). From our filtered world such a view is not unlike flying down a hill on an out of control skateboard. It is more than a little scary and so our tendency is to stay where we are safe, inside our filtered world.

Artistic expression provides us with a tool to discover more details about the reality we do not see. It allows us to call up from our own perceptions what we chose to ignore that links our past with our present into one sense of duration. This sense that we can tap into through our intuitive capacity, along with experience and attention, can make for a whole new understanding of life and relationship. Herein is the key to the value of Western Esotericism – a catalyst for the conscious awakening of each of us using our intuition to provide a window through which we see reality beyond that of our own making. We will be in relationship to our universe that is perpetually new. Our lives and sense of our role and place in the universe will make sense. Understanding this will allow us to leave behind the safety of our filtered world.



Peering through the cosmic sphere , 1888

Finding the artist in ourselves – through our experience of the wonder in reality

Many of us of Western cultural heritage are grossly misguided in our quest to understand ourselves, and the world around us. The farther along we go the unhappier we become and the more destructive we are of ultimately what is most important to us and our future – the world we live in. None of us do this intentionally. We are cut off from understanding our world and our place in it and simply do not perceive the consequences of our actions. At the same time anyone of us has the capacity to find within ourselves an artist with the ability to know a thing directly. First we must realize there is an artist in each of us whose intuitive talents are a seed in desperate but simple need of some water and attention. Here lies our soul seeing.

All people are capable of being artists, as long as they surrender themselves to the intuitive understanding of life around them and then school themselves to represent the experience in a viable art form. The writer, the painter, the poet use their sense of reality to express what they see in their soul. Jean Ravaisson-Mollien, the 19th Century French philosopher and educator, described what the artist sees as beauty in form created by nature. This form is arrested movement (mobility). The great artist he said, sees and expresses arrested grace in movement (Bergson, 1946, ps. 288-9). We need to broaden our sense of the artist. All of us have known someone who seems so naturally good at what they do, so at one with what they are engaged in that we say they are a true artist. They may be a cook, a farmer, a teacher, surgeon, social worker or even a salesman. Usually this person is also happy in their enterprise, whatever it is. However, this does not mean the person is necessarily successful in the modern worldview. We can sense the person is engaged intuitively, with care and thoughtfulness that is beautiful to observe.

Western Esotericism, intuition and conscious evolution

*“For whereas the mind works in possibilities,
the intuitions work in actualities,
and what you intuitively desire, that is possible to you.
Whereas what you mentally or "consciously" desire
is nine times out of ten impossible;
hitch your wagon to a star,
or you will just stay where you are.”*
D. H. Lawrence

Western Esoteric intermediaries or symbols are the notes derived from intuitive knowing. Metaphysics though, says we cannot get to intuitive knowing by the notes, by the intermediaries of Western Esotericism. The point of the Western Esoteric riches is to offer the experience of intuitive knowing so that we can bring forth the notes ourselves. By bringing our attention to our intuition we shed light on the distinction between it and analytical knowing. The distinction is knowing directly. Western Esotericism teaches us there is reality we do not know and that our ordinary seeing is illusion. For most of us, we need to be taught this before we can begin to find our way to discovering reality behind the illusion of the one we live in. This is how we find a new relationship with the unknown, as Ouspensky would say, and awaken our consciousness to a new understanding of the Universe and our place in it.

*“What have they done to the earth?
What have they done to our fair sister?
Ravaged and plundered and ripped her and bit her.
Stuck her with knives in the side of the dawn.
Tied her with fences and dragged her down”
When the Music’s Over, The Doors,
“Everything that lives is holy”
William Blake*

Just as at the dawning of the modern era when Copernicus stepped out of an earth centered worldview and saw with new eyes the earth revolving around the sun, by evolving we will see nature again with new eyes. The Doors sang of the need for a paradigm shift forty years ago. Blake expressed it, over 200 years ago. What we see is not real. We are Jim Morrison’s “they”. Still. How do we see - imagine new possibilities? Science now tells us the Universe is growing, expanding as a living thing. This truth reflects back on the truth of The Tarot, Alchemy, Astrology, and all of the wonderfully esoteric expressions throughout the history of Western humankind. If the core of spiritual intuition is like the Native American earthmind, then the expression of creativity of that core is Western Esotericism. Its use of symbolism is in common with the Native American traditions as well as the teachings of the Eastern philosophies. There are many sources of rich imagery in which to find something that resonates with each of us. These sources are what in literature, J. R. Tolkien referred to as magical fiction – not just imaginative expressions of creativity. Western Esoteric symbols offer us, the readers, viewers or listeners profound ways of seeing the cosmos and humanity in an otherwise unimaginable way (Versluis, 2004, ps 128-129). This is soul seeing or earthmind and it is conscious evolution. With it we can find the capacity to awakening a sense of the possible where conscious evolution awaits us as individuals and in our collective culture. We can, in Western Esoteric language, find our way back to paradise.

WESTERN ESOTERIC PATHWAYS TO REALITY WE DO NOT SEE

During the time of Jacob Boehme science was considered sacred and God’s word was received through nature directly into the heart. He made use of the Western Esoteric correspondences of alchemy, astronomy and Christian Cabala in particular to access knowledge of the Divine. For instance, according to the medieval book of the world, The Liber Mundi, The Holy Spirit could interpret the glory of God with signs in nature. Sacred science interprets the objects of the material world differently than modern science. It is looking for messages. This is why the writing of a pre-modern mystic such as Boehme is so difficult to understand and his ideas difficult to imagine. What is intriguing about his writing is that it is free of the mechanistic influence of how things work (Waterfield, 2001 ps. 31-33). If we keep this in mind it is easier to relate to the instructions and explanations offered by Western Esotericism.

Tarot – linking God, Man and Universe with Magical Symbols



Spanish gypsies introduced Europe to the 78 cards of the Tarot in the fourteenth century. They are said to represent the 78 tablets of Egyptian hieroglyphics preserved and rediscovered in the libraries of Alexandria. Though in card form, they represent a book with many ways of interpreting philosophical meaning. Of the 78 cards, 52 are playing cards we are familiar with. The four suits are wands, cups, swords and pentacles. Each represents a class of spirits – elves (fire), water-sprites (water), sylphs (air) and gnomes (earth). An additional 14th suite card is the Knight card which sits between the knave (jack) and queen. The 22 other cards are not related to any of the four suits. They include The Juggler, The Sun, The Moon, The Wheel of Life, The Devil and Justice. They represent the 22 principals of the Tarot. The cards are arranged in certain ways to create relationships. The triangle represents God or the noumenal world of spirit. The square is the four elements of the physical world. Placing the triangle of cards (7 cards per side) inside the square (14 cards per side), and putting a point (the zero card) in the center of the square to symbolize man's soul creates a relationship among all of the cards. In this representation the cards mean that both the physical world and psychic world are reflected in man's soul and represent his consciousness. The Tarot have the capacity to represent ideas that are difficult or impossible to express in language, offering opportunities for the mind to stretch out toward infinite possibilities that reflect reality we do not see (Ouspensky, 1997, ps. 210-212).

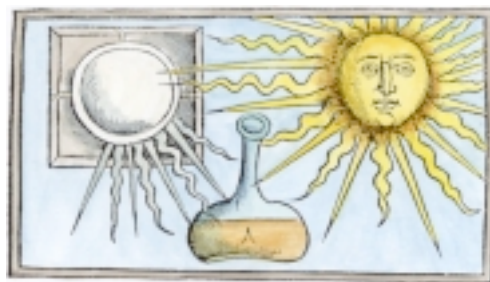
The Hermetic Sciences – The Symbols of Alchemy, Astrology, Cabala and Magic



Hermetic silence, 1574

The Tarot is a system that attempts to synthesize the hidden language of Cabala, Alchemy, Magic and Astrology – the four principles or four letters of the Name of God, the holy sciences. Hermes, the originator of these symbolic mysteries penetrated the secrets of Nature through deep meditation. Here the holy ancient sciences, the study of man and metaphysics formed and were passed on by Egyptian Hierophants (priest of the holy mysteries) to Plato and Pythagoras. They are quietly alive behind empirical science and Western religion, revealed through symbolism that expresses transcendental ideas, the inner side of thoughts that elude expression in direct language. They speak to the seeker of the truth of all things in a way that is real and understandable. The aim of the ancient sciences is to study the world as it is – not a perception of it in just the same way as Metaphysics. The symbols of the ancient sciences though, are vague or ambiguous by design to unveil mysteries we are free to then explore on our own if we chose to (Ouspensky, 1997, p. 212).

Alchemy



Alchemy woodcut, 1526

The ultimate objective of alchemical work was expressed as the discovery of Elixer Vitae or the transmutation of base metals into the highest and purest of metals, gold. Gold was a symbol for spiritual transformation. For successful transmutation the attitude and intention of the alchemist were of utmost importance. Interpreting the alchemist's intent is difficult in our times. All

metals were composed of Mercury, Sulphur, and Salt. These ingredients became rich metaphors for spiritual analogy – Mercury as spirit, Sulphur as soul and Salt as the body. In those times the alchemist believed that metals grew in the earth just like a plant. The alchemist's aim was to reproduce stages of this growth in the laboratory, symbolizing universal growth and transformation. This transformation corresponds to the transformation of self by uncovering one's essential nature and realizing one's potential. The alchemist's work was considered the work of God. The nature of the planets was also of paramount importance to the alchemist because of the belief that all things were related. The aim of the Great Work of the alchemy process was to combine knowledge of the self with knowledge of the world, making one the inward and the external, the spirit and human (Waterfield, 2001, ps. 34-35).

Astrology



Reflecting the doctrine of microcosm and macrocosm, as above so below, the position of the stars and planets reflects what will happen to the individual and to Nature. How the planets align effect each person in a different way. These alignments are open to many unique interpretations (Waterfield, 2001, ps. 35-36).

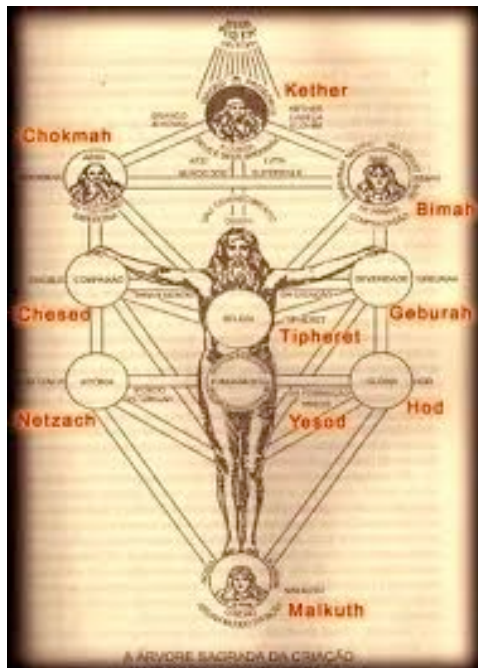
The Four Principles



Ora et labora, 1755

In Alchemy the four principles of which the world consists are the four elements of fire, water, air and earth. The search for gold symbolizes the search for man's soul. In magic the four principles are the four spirits of the Tarot, representing the different desires of the I's of man. In Astronomy they are the four directions – north, east, south and west. The astronomer spoke of constellations and planets as properties of the soul of man in relationship with God and the world (Ouspensky, 1997, p. 210).

Christian Cabala



The Cabalist seeks the Name of God in the soul of man and reflected in nature through the study of the four principles (the Hebrew letters of Jehovah symbolizes the four principles. They are initiative - Yod, inertia - He, form – Vau and latent energy -He). Through this study the Cabalist sees that all things are created in accordance with the same laws or plan. Using analogies the Cabalist finds the Divine Name (the four principles) in every thing and every action, revealing the world as it is, not the one we perceive. The Divine Name is the world where God, or spirit, is in everything (Ouspensky, 1997, p. 212).

According to Cabala the Bible, the teachings of Jesus, are esoteric analogies for interpretation by the few, reflecting meanings altogether different from modern religious literal interpretation. These few are referred to in the Bible as the Kingdom of God who Jesus spoke to in parables, the language of esotericism. According to esoteric interpretations Jesus taught that the truth divides men more than anything else, and only a few can know and understand truth (Ouspensky, 1997, p. 186).

The mystical Cabalist interprets systems that reflected the divine relationship between human and God. For instance, the left hand of God symbolized the Wrath of God, the right hand, God's mercy and love. The right hand tempers the left unless the great fire of Wrath brakes loose and transforms into the evil of Satan. Another important teaching of Cabalism is Tsim Tsum, meaning withdrawal, making space within God. The first act of creation is an inward inhale of divine breath and the outward exhale the manifestation of the world thus revealing the cosmic creation as a two-fold process (Waterfield, 2001, ps. 37-38).

The true practitioner of these ancient sciences is also studying Metaphysics evoking intuition to make manifest a sense of the unknown (Ouspensky, 1997, p. 211).

Western Esoteric Influence on D. H. Lawrence

The twentieth century author, D. H. Lawrence opened his imagination to the imagery of ancient esotericism. Through it he discovered what he said was a new vision in harmony with the distant memories of experience that are within us. Lawrence described a kind of knowing as togetherness that is religious and poetic. As opposed to the knowing of apartness, he said, it provides us with the clues to understanding the mysteries of the universe and gives meaning to day-to-day living. Knowing as togetherness is an attempt at understanding nature through our affinity with it, not by breaking it down into its parts. Lawrence came to feel imagination is key to this understanding and that the images springing forth from imagination are organically connected to nature – correspondences connecting microcosm with macrocosm.

Research of Lawrence's life reveals he was exposed to Theosophy through the writings of Helen Blavatsky and that he read extensively about occultism. He wrote that the science of the ancients was the great wisdom and perhaps the perfect science that in our world became magic and superstition. There is evidence his use of myth and symbols has origins in alchemy and that Jacob Boehme influenced him as well. Both *Women in Love* and *The Plumed Serpent* show these influences.

In his own attempt at describing the creation of the universe in *The Two Principles*, taking a page from Boehme he says “the waters “ refer to “the mystic Earth,” and Heaven is “the dark cosmic fire” from which Light is born. Much like Boehme, he goes on at length symbolically describing his version of an ordered universe. For instance, Lawrence believed “Individual life is oneness accomplished out of the twoness of Sun/Moon or Fire/Water, and the Holy Ghost is the ideal quintessence of individual life, drawing the Fire-force and Water-force together to make a new being.

Lawrence’s’ fictional works are exercises in “knowing in terms of togetherness.” These exercises are purposely meant to stir readers and make them see things in a new way. Lawrence is an example of someone whose consciousness was altered or influenced intuitively by teachers of Western Esotericism and who then used his own intuitive imagination to create art rich with esoteric meaning.

Lawrence wrote both fiction and non-fiction that is influenced by Western Esotericism. First ideas sprang up from his imagination into his fiction. Later he developed his own unique philosophy, which permeated his nonfiction works. Though he held strong negative views of G. I. Gurdjieff, in “Fantasia” Lawrence’s view of knowledge and being are particularly similar to Ouspensky’s quoting of Gurdjieff, and so clearly also an influence.

“There may be great knowledge of chemistry in a man who is a rather poor being: and those who know, even in wisdom like Solomon, are often at the end of the matter of living, not the beginning.” D. H. Lawrence

*“People of Western culture put great value on the level of a man’s knowledge but they do not value the level of a man’s being and are not ashamed of the low level of their own being.”
G. I. Gurdjieff*

(Magee, 2008, ps. 204-221)

Attempting to completely explain an understanding of the universe, as Boehme did in *Signature Rerum* and his other writings, and DH Lawrence, in *The Two Principles* it may not ultimately be possible to exactly get at the reality we do not see through symbolism. The extraordinary length to which Boehme and Lawrence went to make sense of the world for us shows how difficult it is to explain in words. It is also possible they themselves were frustrated with their results.

A personal experience influenced by Western Esotericism

Recently, while at work, I was sitting at a table in a hotel watching a hundred or so people milling around, talking in groups, drinking coffee, looking at books, separating and going from here to there along a wide hallway, I became aware of the noise of many voices becoming one sound. At that moment I became conscious of space relationships. I became less conscious of people going somewhere and doing something, and more aware of the changing relationship between them and the space around them as they moved. It was like a constant flowing of directed movement. Wondering what this sensation reminded me of, I thought of Ouspensky’s experience watching a Whirling Dervish. This seemed like a clue (Ouspensky, 1997, ps. 385-389).

A dervish is a Persian term meaning someone who is treading a Sufi Muslim ascetic path. It is also described as he who opens doors. Whirling is part of a Sufi ceremony from the 14th Century that represents the human being's spiritual journey, embracing all humanity with love that is a bridge to divine love (Whirling Dervishes of Rumi, Whirling Dervish). My experience of the crowd of people milling around was not something I would describe as religious or spiritual, but the sense of motion as like the opening of doors seems right. There was a flow and a sense of organization to what I perceived, but with no a particular purpose. Whirling motion describes best what I perceived, I think. I think the whirling dervish ceremony might be an expression of non-ordinary reality. I think my moment in the hotel hallway might have been too. I think it is quite possible there is a link between reading Ouspensky's account of a Whirling Dervish and how I came to have what I consider my own glimpse of reality that is not my ordinary experience of it. Even further, I would say my mind is stretched from reading Ouspensky and I did, for a moment perceive reality differently. It was an unexpected experience, caught in a brief moment of observing something I was not involved in directly. I was just watching from outside – an observer.

The moon as symbol in Western Esotericism

Hidden Knowledge conveyed through the symbols of Western Esotericism reflects the soul of man. To reveal a little of the riches of Western Esotericism following are examples from the Internet of its symbolic use of the moon. These are a few of the various forms that Western Esotericism takes. My hope, through these quotations, is to convey, one example of the intermediaries out there waiting for us to discover.

Jacob Boehme: In his table of correspondences he aligns the moon with virtue as the incarnation of Christ, with vice as the flesh, the metal of silver and the quality of corporeity (physical existence, The Free Dictionary – corporeity).

Christian Cabalism: “Christian Cabalism teaches that the moon is the mystical vessel in which souls are gathered before they are released to the world. The moon in Cabala represents receptivity... the mystical implication is that souls are influenced by the phases of the moon when they become associated with bodies, each having different levels of expansiveness or contraction. This describes why some of us are more extroverted and others more introverted” (Slick, 2010).

Theosophy: “In a sense, the whole of nature is a symbol made up of complex symbolic aspects, each of which offers a pregnant clue to the understanding of the whole. Such symbolic aspects project themselves upon human consciousness. We do not choose them any more than we choose our gods. Whatever fascinates us and holds our attention has within it the power that the Polynesians call *mana*. The values we attach to symbols may lose their mystery as we settle various levels of their definition, but the symbol remains a representative of a deeper truth. Men who worship the moon, for instance, fear it or measure their lives by it. These men may be closer to sensing its hidden truth than those empiricists who have set conceptual limits upon its function in the physical solar system. For both, it remains an enigma largely understood in terms

of its effects. Others may intuit its deeper role in the scheme of things and trace out its secrets in the workings of nature itself“ (Theosophy Trust, 2010).

Astrology: “ The Moon, in Astrology, is the ruler of Cancer. The Moon represents our deepest personal needs, our basic habits and reactions, and our unconscious. Where the Sun acts, the Moon reacts.

The Moon (☾) is associated with the mother and with feminine energy in general. The Moon is both our inner child and our inner mother. Just as the Moon circles the Sun, in a symbolically protective manner, and reflects the Sun's light, the Moon in our chart shows how we protect ourselves, as well as make ourselves feel secure, comfortable, and safe.

We can also think of the Moon as that which gives us *animation*. It rules rhythmic ebb and flow of activity and energy. The Moon is a mediator between the inner world and the outer world. While the Sun is rational, the Moon is irrational. For some of us, our Moon seems to drive our personalities more than the Sun does.

Grant Lewi, in *Astrology for the Millions*, offered the most evocative description of the Moon when he wrote the following: "When you "know what you mean but you can't say it," it is your Moon that knows it and your Sun that can't say it." "Thoughts that often lie too deep for tears" are the thoughts of your Moon's nature. The wordless ecstasy, the mute sorrow, the secret dream, the esoteric picture of yourself that you can't get across to the world, or which the world doesn't comprehend or value - these are the products of the Moon in your horoscope. Things you know without thought - intuitions, hunches, and instincts - are the products of the Moon. Modes of expression that you feel are truly your deepest self belong to the Moon: art, letters, creative work of any kind; sometimes love; sometimes business. Whatever you feel is most deeply yourself, whether or not you are able to do anything about it in the outer world, is the product of your Moon and of the sign your Moon occupies at birth." (Astrology Café, 2010).

With respect to the other luminary (the Sun), the Moon infuses the *past* into our lives through the feelings, while the Sun reflects the present or the "here and now".

When we are "acting out" our Moon, we are imaginative, creative, intuitive, sentimental, adaptable, introspective, and protective. On the negative side, we can be moody, restless, and irrational” (Astrology Café, 2010).

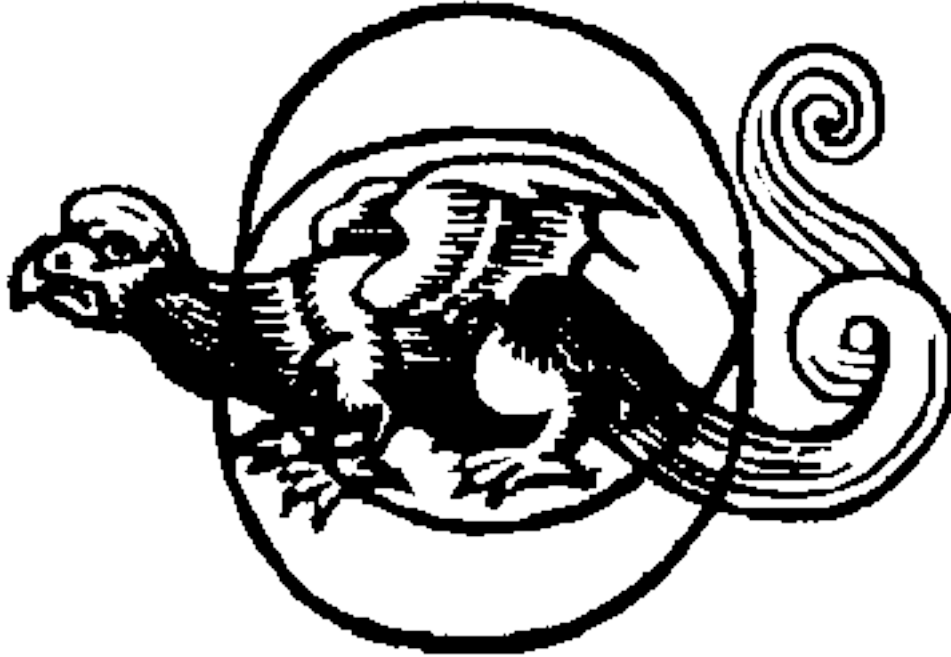
“The hour of the Moon” From The Second Book of the Occult:

“For travelers against weariness, at the hour of the Moon, the Moon image is ascending in its exaltation; the figure of which is a man leaning on a staffe, having a bird on his head, and a flourishing tree before him;

Another Image of the Moon is for the increase of the fruits of the earth, and against poysons [poisons], and infirmities of children. At the hour of the Moon, shows it ascending in the first face of Cancer, the figure of which is a woman cornuted, riding on a Bull, or a Dragon with seven heads, or a Crab; and she hath in her right hand a dart, in her left a looking glass, clothed

in white or green, and having on her head two Serpents with horns twined together, and to each arm a Serpent twined about, and to each foot one in like manner.

The Dragon of the Moon. Another occult image of the head and taile of the Dragon of the Moon, namely betwixt an Aeriall and fiery circle, was the likeness of a Serpent, with the head of an Hawke tyed about them, after the manner of the great letter Theta.



It would signifie by this Image a good and fortunate Genius, which was represented by this Image of the Serpent; for the Egyptians and Phenicians [Phoenicians] do extoll this creature above all others, and say it is a divine creature and hath a divine nature; for in this is a more acute spirit, and a greater fire than in any other, which thing is manifested both by his swift motion without feet, hands or any other instruments; and also that it often reneweth his age with his skin, and becometh young again. The Image of the taile was like as when the Moon Ecclipsed [eclipsed], in the Taile” (Agrippa, 1651).



Tarot: “Following the star the Fool travels through the night. The full Moon rises, illuminating for him a watery path. And he begins to feel disoriented, as if walking in his sleep. He passes under the moon, between two pillars ancient and strange. Suddenly, he looks around to find himself in another land entirely. When he was in the presence of the High Priestess, he saw hints of this dark land through the sheer veil draped behind her throne. And later, when he hung from the tree, he felt himself between the physical world and this one. Now, he has at last passed behind the veil. Here are the mysteries he sought, at least, here are the dark mysteries, ones that have to do with the most primal and ancient powers; powers of nature, not of civilization. It is a land poets, artists, musicians and madmen know well, a terrifying, alluring place, with very different rules. Wolves, howling in homage to the moon, run wild across this land, hunting along side maidens with bow and arrows; and creatures from childhood nightmares and fantasies peer from shadows, eyes glowing.

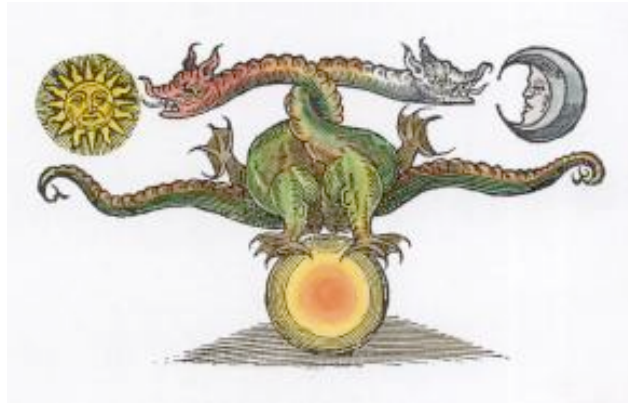
The path the Fool was walking is now a river, and he stands hip-deep in the powerful pull of its salty, moonlit waters. There is, on the nearby shore, a small boat, but it has no rudder, no oar. The Fool realizes he has only two choices. He can lose himself in this desolate, primal land of madness and illusion, howl with the wolves, be hunted down, or he can get into the boat, and trust himself to the river. The moon will be in control either way, but in the boat, his surrender to the powers of the unconscious and the natural world will at least take him somewhere. As the artists and poets and magicians know, inspiration, visions, genius, Moon magic, are the rewards of such surrender. The Fool gets into the boat, and shoves off. As the waters sweep him away, moon beams light his "path" and he feels the Mistress of this dark land gazing down at him with the High Priestess's approving eyes. “ (Aeclectic, The Moon (Tarot Card)).

Alchemy: “In alchemy the moon (Luna) is a symbol representing the King and Queen in their chemical wedding. The moon also represents silver. Since the moon is illuminated by the sun rays it is also considered feminine.

In ancient tradition, Luna was regarded as a giver of moisture and ruler of the water-sign Cancer, since Cancer is the house of Luna, which gives moisture. Furthermore, Luna, having strong influence in alchemical allegory, secretes dew or the sap of life: this Luna is the sap of the water of life, which is hidden in the *Mercurius*. Although the influence of the moon is very much stressed since antiquity, it occurs in alchemy as expressing a different subtlety. The allegory of dew coming from the moon is still present, but the moon is also the *aqua mirifica*, that which extracts the souls from the bodies or gives the bodies life and soul. Together with *Mercurius* Luna sprinkles the dismembered dragon with her water and restores him to life. Considered the water of ablution, the dew falls from heaven and purifies the body making it ready to receive the soul; it produces the albedo, the whitening stage believed synonymous with the philosopher's stone

Since many alchemists were physicians too, the Greek physician Galen's views concerning the moon no doubt greatly influenced them and left a mark. Galen called Luna the "princeps" who "rightly governs this earthly realm, surpassing the other planets not in potency, but in proximity." He also claimed the moon was responsible for all physical changes in sickness and health, and regarded its aspects as decisive for prognosis" (Hefner, 2010).

D. H. Lawrence: "The moon is not water but it is the soul of water, the invisible clue to all the waters. We begin to realize our visible universe as a vast duality between sun and moon. Together they are the sources of fire and water. The sun is not a thing but an intense pole of cosmic energy, forcing us to think of the sun in an old pre-modern physics way. The moon is an immense magnetic center. It is not dead matter but composed of some very intense element like phosphorus or radium and the source of watery forces. Moon is feminine and Sun is masculine" (Magee, 2008, p. 216).



"There is the sun polarity and the moon polarity." D.H.Lawrence

G. I. Gurdjieff: "Organic life on earth feeds the moon. The moon is a huge living being feeding upon all that lives and grows on the earth. The process of the growth and the warming of the moon are connected with life and death on the earth. Everything living sets free at its death a certain amount of the energy that has animated it. This energy, or the souls of everything living – plants, animals, people – is attracted to the moon as though by a huge electromagnet, and

brings to it the warmth and the life upon which its growth depends. That is the growth of the ray of creation” (Ouspensky, 1997).



Finding what Resonates

Whatever our vocation, our gifts can be applied in a different way towards a different purpose within a reality that could be more cohesive for us – reality where we could float in and out of the ordinary and extraordinary with ease. Who knows? I have a neighbor who drives a truck and works in concrete. He knows the names of the birds that fly through our neighborhood and he knows the names of the trees. In him, though, knowing the name is synonymous with knowing the bird and the tree. These are things he knows directly. I sense it when I am with him in our yards enjoying our surroundings together. He has the intuitive knowing of an artist. He is an artist. I think he might understand Boehme better than I do, or more accurately he knows some of what Boehme knew.

I will continue my own esoteric family tradition of feeling wonderment that I descended from the moon. It will serve to remind me there is reality I have only glimpsed. I can't say exactly the meaning of the moon in this case, nor do I think that it matters. It is a symbol, a symbol for wonder, I think. What it does is create pathways I can choose to wander down without fear and perhaps, find my ancestors. While writing this paper, one night I had a dream in which my daughter and I found ourselves in the home of my grandmother I never knew, surrounded by family I never knew. It was a lively place filled with music and celebration and we were so happy to feel we belonged there. The things in this home in my dreams all had meaning – the eating table, the old mirror, the rooms themselves. They were all part of my sense of me, living breathing, with purpose and sense of the past present and future in one moment. It was a dream in which I had a different sense of me than I do in my day-to-day routine. This was a dream I would like to be in all of the time and my feeling of it is that it is real. I need to find out how to bring this sense of myself out of my dream. I think it is another glimpse of reality as it is.

The path of Western Esoteric teaching is not to be taken lightly. Once begun, such a path requires commitment to the search for truth. It is a life commitment and a daily practice of lessons revealed and paying attention to what Nature says to us. There is reality we do not see. The danger of living in our world is we are paving the way for our own Armageddon. Yet the thread of intuitive knowing, understanding the truth of life's meaning is woven within the fabric of Western culture and is saying the same as the indigenous cultures, who are more directly connected to earth understanding, and the Eastern understanding of enlightenment. I hope that

the reader of this paper and I will one day understand what follows, by Jacob Boehme, the humble shoemaker. Perhaps not written clearly and in a style of another time, here Boehme attempts to reveal a sense of wonder in reality that I think reflects his conscious evolution.

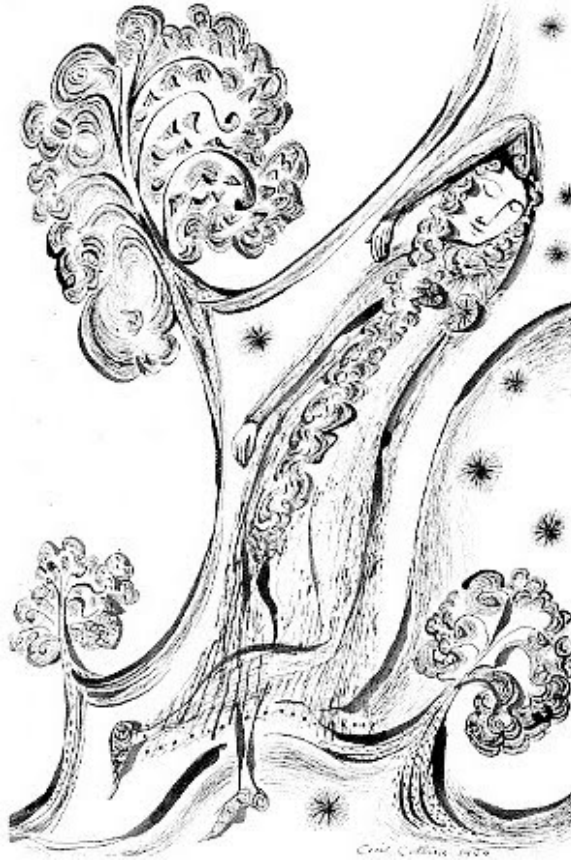
Jacob Boehme on Divine Love - The Wonder of Creation:

“when thou shalt be clothed upon with the heavenly wisdom, then thou wilt see that all the wisdom of the world is folly.” “In loving thyself, thou lovest not thyself as thine own; but as given thee from the love of God, thou lovest the divine ground in thee: By which and in which thou lovest the divine wisdom... and in this ground thou lovest likewise thy brethren.” “Love that is divine love hates all Egoity, hates all that which we call I, or IHOOD; hates all such restrictions and confinement.” “Love being the greatest magistry, is the power of all powers... Whosoever finds it finds nothing and all things.” “How finds thee nothing?” “It is deeper than anything and is as nothing with respect to all things, forasmuch as it is not comprehensible by any of them. And because it is nothing respectively, it is therefore free from all things.” “Whosoever finds (divine love) finds all things.” “If thou findest it, thou comest into that ground from whence all things are proceeded, and wherein they subsist; and thou art in it a King over all the works of God.”

“And entering there-into, love begins to manifest to the soul the light of the Godhead; and thus is the darkness broken through, and the wonders of the new creation successively manifested” (Boehme, 1912, p 241-244). At death the soul “has no need to go; it has heaven and hell within itself. The Kingdom of God is within you – Heaven and Hell are within one another and are to one another as a nothing” (Waterfield, 2001, p. 31).

Should Boehme not be the one to open a pathway for you or I along the reality we do not see, perhaps C. S. Lewis’s *That Hideous Strength* may. Maybe *The Music of Dawn* by the artist Cecil Collins might initiate a new way of seeing for you, or perhaps Philip Pullman’s trilogy, *The Dark Materials* will reflect microcosm on macrocosm in a new way that sparks your or my own intuitive understanding of the cosmos with the help of our own personal daemon companion that he provides. These are just a few more recent examples of what is out there that is prepared to reveal hidden knowledge of the divine, to spark intuitive knowing. We are invited to participate in the possibilities - of a sense wonder.

Another Cecil Collins drawing, *Sleeping Figure* is one that resonates with me personally. In it there is no sense of three-dimensional reality. The trees seem to emerge from the earth rather than sit on top of it and the sleeping woman is part of the landscape – flowing as energy in a stream or in the earth. I don’t know Collin’s intent but the message I receive is one of pervasive energy, spirit of earth and woman, me in particular, at peace.



Sleeping Figure – 1942, Cecil Collins

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