

Notes on Alchemy the Cosmological "Yoga" of Medieval Christianity

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- **By Maurice Aniane**
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- **Article appeared in "Material for Thought" Magazine, San Francisco, California, Spring 1976, which we consider as the most detailed and clear explanation of Alchemy work**
- **(Opus Alchimicum).**
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- Alchemy in most "traditional" civilizations is none other than the science of the sacrifice of terrestrial substances, the liturgy for transfiguring those crafts which deal with "inanimate" matter. We find it everywhere from archaic Mesopotamia to ancient China and in India throughout the ages. In these traditions, "mythological" in form, alchemy is not restricted to any particular place: if the Spirit is everywhere, obviously it is also in a stone; when the one and only light, that of Divine Intelligence, is manifest in the sun, in an eagle, and in honey, it is surprising that it is also manifest in gold, that every metal is gold which does not know itself, and even in its ignorance is a "state" of gold? If man has no other role than to worship in the undivided sanctuary of his body and of nature, is it surprising that he should "transmute" lead into gold? Neither can sanctity be divided, and the "miracle" of transmutation reveals its omnipresence.
- Alchemy in the metaphysical and mythological traditions had no more importance than the dance which expressed the sacred nature of rhythm, showed the worshipful circling of the dancers to be the same as that of the stars, and, in the sudden immobility of the body, "transmuted" time, the sleep of lead, into the pure gold of a moment of eternity.
- However, alchemy was destined to have a special significance in the real of the "monotheistic" traditions, and particularly in Christianity. Apart from traces of folklore which still exists in some rural communities of Europe, alchemy, or, more generally, Hermeticism, seems to have been the only cosmological doctrine to survive in the Christian world. It has therefore been called upon to play a major role "beneath" a religion which stressed "contempt of the flesh" and shunned cosmology.
- In fact, during the early middle Ages and up to the beginning of Gothic Art, alchemy was not opposed to Christianity but completed it. Through it the Eucharistic effusion radiated even into the heaviest states of matter. It was no longer only bread and wine that were transubstantiated, but stone, lead, the lime of bones and rocks. Vivified by Christianity, alchemy gave the latter a "technical" application in the "psych cosmic" realm, which Christianity had neglected because its aim was not to establish man in the world, but to lead him out of it.
- So alchemy could not have survived in the West without the tremendous initiatic effusion of Christianity: just as the archaic house only exists because of the chimney by which it communicates with "heaven", so there is no possible cosmology except around the "central" state, through which one can find a way out of the cosmos.

- But without alchemy Christianity could not have been "incarnated" in a total order: there would have been monks and saints; there would not have been the sacred idea of a nature which could endow the arts and crafts, and heraldry, with their character of "lesser mysteries".
- In a time when we are weighed down by heaviness, it is perhaps urgent to remind Christianity that it not only accepted but, in the centuries of its noblest incarnation, animated a true "yoga" of heaviness.
- 1. Outline of the Doctrine

The meaning of Gold

- Despite the insistence of historians of science, alchemy was never, except in its degenerate aspects, a primitive chemistry. It was a "sacramental" science in which material phenomena were not autonomous, but represented only the "condensation" of psychic and spiritual realities. When the spontaneity and mystery of nature is penetrated, it becomes transparent: on the one hand it is transfigured under the lightning-flashes of divine energies, and on the other it incorporates and symbolizes those "angelic" states which fallen man can only glimpse for brief moments, when listening to music or when contemplating a human face. Symbols are not meant to be "stuck onto" things: they are the very structure, the presence, and the beauty of things such as they are in the process of perfection in God. For alchemy, the science of symbol, there was no question, as has sometimes been said, of a "material" unity of nature, but of a spiritual unity, one could almost say a spiritual Assumption of nature; for nature, ultimately, is none other than the place of a metaphysical principle: through man it becomes the body of the Word and, as it were, the bride of God.
- This Assumption of matter is the key to the alchemical work, which simply helps substances "to plunge into the Father-nature," that is, to incorporate, according to their mode of being, the greatest possible spiritual light. "Creatures must plunge into this Father-nature and become unity and only Son....," for "...nature, which is God, seeks only the image of God." "Copper, because of its nature, can become silver, and silver, by its nature, can become gold: so neither one nor the other stops or pauses until this identity is realized." For gold is the most perfect of metals, the one whose luminous density best expresses the divine presence in the mineral realm : through spiritual continuity each metal is virtually gold and each stone becomes precious in God.
- This transfiguration of nature-memory of Eden and expectation of the second coming (Parousia)- can at present only take effect in the heart of man, the central and conscious being of the creation. Indeed, that being so, "the eye of the heart" can see gold in lead and crystal in the mountain, because it can see the world in God.
- Alchemy, like all the "traditional" sciences, was therefore an immense effort to awaken man to the divine omnipresence. Its importance is to have emphasized this omnipresence in the darkest heaviness: there where the pseudo-mystical, "idealistic" perspective would be least likely to look for it; there, on the contrary, where, according to the analogical inversion of a "sacramental" vision, the divine omnipresence "contracts" and most strongly withdraws into itself.

- If the production of metallic gold has sometimes been achieved, then it was simply a **sign**. It was no more of a miracle than that of a saint whose look transforms a sinner. Just as the saint sees in the sinner the possibility of sanctity, so the alchemist-sage saw in the lead the possibility of metallic sanctity, that is, of gold. And this vision was "operative."
- But the alchemist did not seek to make gold. That was not the true meaning of his work. His purpose was to unite his soul so intimately with that of the metals that he could remind them that they are in God, that is, that they are gold. The medieval alchemist actualized the word of Christ to the letter: he proclaimed the good news to all creatures. "The stone is the Christ," all the Hermetic texts of the middle Ages hopefully repeat. Through his vision of Christic Gold, the alchemist could transmute every "imperfect metal": but he did it only rarely, for as a saint, he knew that the time for cosmic transfiguration had not yet come.
- The true role of the alchemist was twofold: on the one hand, he helped nature, suffocated by human decadence, to breathe the presence of God. Offering up to God the prayer of the universe, he anchored the universe in being and renewed its existence. The texts call him **king**; as secret king, he confirmed the order of time and of space, the fecundity of the earth producing grain and diamond, as did the kings of ancient societies, like the emperor of China up to the beginning of the twentieth century. In the second place, the alchemist, on the human plane, "awakening" substances and gold itself to their true nature, used them to prepare elixirs which gave "longevity" to the body and strength to the soul: "drinkable gold" was a gold **awakened** to its spiritual quality, and reflected in its order the "immortality medicine" as St. Ambrose said of the Eucharist.
- The true role of the alchemist was to celebrate analogically a mass whose species were not only bread and wine, but all of nature in its entirety.

The Logic of Alchemy

- The logic of alchemy implies a twofold movement: "vertically," it was a symbolic logic, leading manifestation back to its principle, appearance to reality, word to God: a logic of reintegration. "Horizontally," on the humano-cosmic plane, it was dialectic of complementaries which emphasizes everywhere the living tension of contraries: a logic of war and love.

A Logic of Reintegration

- Alchemy implied, in sensation itself, a peaceful and detached love of the world. For the world of alchemy, like that of the "mythological" traditions whose heritage is transmitted, was a world at once living and transparent, a great a sacred body, an immense Anthropos in all respects resembling the small one. Nature, it could be said, was at once the body of God and the body of man. Everywhere was life, everywhere soul, everywhere the holy breath of God. The blood of the sun made the golden embryo grow in the matrix of the mountains. The seven planets in the sky, the seven metals engendered by them on earth, the seven centers of life which, from the sex to the head, gravitate in man around the sun-heart, were so many

embodiments of the same structure of the word; and the seven notes of the scale manifest also that "music of the silence" which bathes creation, haloes the saints, and is immobilized in gold.

- That is why the alchemist, like the knight whose "proud kiss" delivers Melusine from her ambiguous condition, revealed in the nature which veils God the nature which makes Him manifest.
- "Learn that the aim of the science of the Ancients which elaborated simultaneously the sciences and the virtues is that from which all things proceed, God invisible and unmoving, whose Will arouses the Intelligence; through the Will and the Intelligence the Soul in its unity appears; through the Soul are born the distinct natures which, in their turn, generate all the compounds. **Thus one sees that a thing can only be known if one knows what is higher than it.** The soul is higher than nature, and through it, nature can be known; the Intelligence is higher than the Soul and by it the Soul can be known; finally, the Intelligence can no more than direct us back to what is higher than it, the One God, who encompasses the Intelligence and whose essence cannot be grasped."
- This text, which makes remarkably clear the metaphysical background of alchemy, proves that it was essentially "inner"; the "Science of Balance" weighs and satisfies at once the desire of the Soul of the World, which is concealed in each "nature", and the desire of the Divine Spirit which is concealed in the Soul of the World. The alchemist **reverses cosmogony**: dissolving material "hardenings" in pure life, he makes in himself, by meditating on natural beauty and on that "sympathy" which holds all things together, the unity of the Soul of the World, until, in its center, that is in his own heart, he causes the solar fire of the Spirit to rise. Then, the fire becomes incarnate, through a higher **cosmogony** in which the Spirit, instead of involving itself in matter, embraces and transforms it: transforms lead into gold, and the body of man into body of glory. Alchemy is performed, as Henry Corbin has said, in a "physics of resurrection."

A logic of war and love

- Therefore, the proper domain of alchemy is essentially that of the soul, that humano-cosmic environment psychic in nature which links the world of "sensory" appearances to that of "spiritual" realities. It is the "intermediate world" of all the traditions, the "mesocosmos" of the Iranian alchemy of Jabir (called Geber by the Latins). Now this "mesocosmos" is governed by a logic of war, by essentially "dual" forces whose never-ending struggle is that of the two serpents of the Caduceus. In this domain, the alchemical work is wholly one of mediation: it strives to transform war into love, so that it may culminate not in a sterile death but in a glorious birth.
- The "mode of operation" of Nature in the Universe of form consists of a continuous rhythm of "coagulations" and "dissolutions." Form is impressed on matter and matter dissolves it in order to offer itself to another form. Everything is alternation, evolution and involution, birth, life, death, and rebirth, ***solve et coagula***. "Nature disports itself with Nature" in a play of perpetually interacting tensions which neutralize each other at one moment by their very opposition, and then destroy each other only to arise again in a new guise. Nothing symbolizes this "world of

dissimilarity" better than the dragons, which devour each other on the pillars of certain Romanesque churches.

- This never-ending war which presides over the metamorphoses of nature as well as over the interactions between men is related by alchemy to the polarization of the two "subtle" forces analogous to the Chinese *yíng* and *yang* : Sulphur and Mercury.
- Common sulphur, by its igneous nature, and mercury, because it is elusive and cannot be grasped, indeed embody these forces in their dynamic aspect. Gold and silver "crystallize" them in their static aspect, just as do the sun and the moon." These two poles on either side of the "intermediate world" regarded as their "field of force," participate closely in the two divine poles which preside over "manifestation": Pure Action and Total Nature in Sufism, Shiva and his Shakti in Tantrism. Sulphur, relatively active or essential, represents Spirit in one way, while Mercury corresponds more directly to the passive and feminine nature of the Soul.
- To Sulphur are attributed two fundamental tendencies symbolized by "heat" and "dryness". Heat or sulphuric expansiveness affirms life, expands forms. Dryness or fixation incarnates in the vital flux the divine "signature," which gives every being its "face." Thus, the principle of Sulphur, of Gold, and of the Sun is a principle of stability and of measure: a heritage of Greek thought, it is the virile principle of the "limit." But, by itself, it is only a receptacle which tends to close up again over its emptiness: "...its aspect then is an acute and terrifying harshness, in which its binding, astringent quality affirms itself as excessive attraction, constricted and hard"; it becomes a force of individuation which transforms a necessary protection into a refusal of life. In the human being, it ends by breeding abstraction and egoism. Therefore, in order that the seed may die and the heart may melt, the intervention of the complementary force, of the feminine principle, Mercury, is needed.
- To Mercury-chemists also spoke of water, silver, and the moon- are attributed "cold" and "humidity." Cold or mercurial "contractivity" offers itself as a womb to the "fixing" will of Sulphur; it envelops form and gives them consistency and density. As for the humidity of Mercury, it is the power, which "dissolves" these forms once their virtualities have blossomed.
- Mercury is untamed and necessary life, as ambiguous as total Nature in which it intimately participates. It is the "burning thirst" which, if unappeased, flares up and destroys itself; it is the "viscous humidity" which is wasted or dissolved in amorphous stagnation. In the human body, it manifests variously as desire for pleasure, insatiable motherhood, dull laziness, and morbidity. But it is also the humble service of life, the creative submission of the "virgin of the world," who is always the servant of the Lord.
- "This water subsists throughout all eternity," writes Boehme. ***It is the water of Life which penetrates even death...*** It is also in the body of man and the body of the world. Nature, as seen by divided man, is thus basically nothing but an immense battlefield strewn with corpses: corpses "precipitated" endlessly, in the chemical sense, by the collision of the two great forces, which polarize the cosmic psychism. The sensory world in its opacity is then only a "sepulcher" in which the soul has buried itself.

- We now understand that alchemy is at the same time a "science of balance" and an art of marriages. It elucidates and utilizes the "cosmic sexuality" of Sulphur and Mercury, first "neutralized" in Salt. The alchemist begins by dissolving these imperfect coagulations and by reducing their matter to soul: then, between the Sun and the Moon appearing in their purity, the alchemist brings about a hierogamy which will cause them to crystallize in a perfect form: gold and the body of glory.
- Thus the stages of the work appear in outline: first "mortification," descent and dissolution in the waters, disappearance into the womb of the Mother, the *Anima Mundi*, who devours and kills her Son, that is, takes back into herself man who has gone astray in the individual condition. This is the domination of woman over man, of the Moon over the Sun, until the Soul, restored to its original virginity, the luminous center, the Spirit is manifested. Then the regenerated Sun, the solar hero, is born: in his turn, he subjugates the Moon to the Sun, woman to man, and through the consummation of "philosophical incest," he makes his Mother into his wife and also into his Daughter.
- "The Mother generates the Son and the Son generates the Mother and kills her."
- "The Female must be made to mount the Male, and then the Male to mount the Females."
- "Once the Little Child has become robust and strong enough to combat water and Fire, he will put the Mother who gave birth to him into his own belly."
- These drastic writings introduces us to the phases of the work.

II. The Phases of the Work

- The alchemical texts divide the work into three or four essential phases: "the work of blackening," *Nigredo* or *Melanosís*--"the work of whitening," *Albedo* or *Leucosis*--and finally "the work of reddening," which alchemists originally separated into two complementary moments, that of gold (*Citrínitas* or *Xantosís*) and that of purple or transmutation of venom (*Iosis*).

The work of Blackening

- "The work of blackening" is considered the most difficult of the operations, in comparison with which the other stages seem "woman's work" or "child's play." Through it man in fact separates himself from appearances and lets himself be drowned in the cosmic feminine nature, the full power of which he wishes to awaken and master. The work of blackening is thus at the same time a *death*, a *marriage* (or better, a parturition in reverse), and a *descent into hell*.
- "A being frees himself from death through an agony which is undergone in a vast impression of anguish, and this is the Mercurial way." The work of blackening, which prepares Mercury, that is, the world's subtle *materia*, presents itself as a death to cosmic illusion in which the Mercurial waters are so to say "congealed." This is why the texts call it "separation" or "division." Man detaches himself from his separate existence; he extracts his vital force from mental and bodily attractions, from dream and from agitation. Painfully, quietly, he re-collects it in himself as

still water. He brings Mercury back to its state of indeterminate possibility: this is the "return to *materia prima*."

- He does the same in the substances that he handles in his global perception of things: reversing the cosmogonic process of Genesis, he dissolves hardened earth into the unity of primordial water. Through *discretio intellectualis*, he distinguishes the presence of subtle forces and spiritual archetypes in the midst of the universe. He discovers the *naturae discretae*, the actual nature of things, that "latent inner basis" of which Geber speaks and which one could call the "quantity" of the World Soul that each thing has taken for itself.
- Then he perceives nature and his body as a cosmic interplay upon which the illusion of individuality is no longer projected.
- The discovery of this interplay is a marriage in which cosmic femininity prevails over masculine objectification. It is a liberating dissolution, which draws the virile force back from separative modes of action and of knowledge in order to bathe it in the baptismal water of universal life.
- In Gichtel's diagram of the subtle centres, Saturn has to be united to the Moon and Jupiter to Mercury. Saturn is lead, the concretion of the spirit of weight: it will thus be above all the symbol of a certain way of seeing the world, that particular vision which fixes appearances in their opacity and separation, and keeps man in his illusion of being awake, while he is only a sleep-walker possessed by a "leaden sleep." Gichtel clarifies this view by situating the Saturnian center in the brain and attributing to it, following Macrobius, the *ratio cinatio*. This is why Saturn has to be "dissolved" in the lunar center, situated in the sacral region and representing to *phusikon*, the totality of the vital energies. And Jupiter, ("Masculine" center of the will, localized in the frontal region.) to *praktikon*, the *vis agendi*, the will to power, must be "dissolved" in Mercury.
- ("Feminine" center of the imagination, situated in the umbilical region) that feminine "imagination" which sees nature as the scenery of a dream, perhaps the dream of God.
- This marriage in which the masculine is dissolved is often described as parturition in reverse. Just as in the cosmogonic process of generation the Soul is "coagulated" in the human mind, so in the process of regeneration that could be called "theogonic," the mental must be reabsorbed in the potentiality of the Soul. Man enters the uterus of Woman and is there dissolved.
- But this return to potentiality begins with a return to darkness, a descent into hell. The chaos of "matter" is dark so long as its virtual content has not opened: it blossoms spontaneously into the poisonous flower of the world; man has rejected the enchantment of this flower; he must now take into himself the force which made it bloom so as to make possible its fulfillment in a new flower, pure and noble, which will again collect the divine fire.
- The alchemist therefore descends into the depths of "Matter," that is into the depths of life. He proceeds to awaken the "inner Mercurial femininity" which lies asleep at the root of cosmic sexuality, so as to make it into a force of regeneration. In the desire, which gives birth to metals in the womb of the earth and to the child in the womb of a woman, a will for immortality is at work. But so long as this desire is oriented only toward the outside, immortality is fragmented in time, is objectified in the chain of

generations. Outer birth so to say "syncopates" eternal birth-cuts it up. As Evola writes: "Heterogenesis replaces autogenesis."

- The alchemist refuses to run away from this mystery: he enters into it. He comprehends it, that is, "takes in himself" the desire, which everywhere links, Sulphur to Mercury; he obliges it to wish for God.
- *Vísita Interiora Terrae Rectificando Occultum Lapidem*: to describe the "descent into hell," summed up in the word VITRIOL, alchemy has preserved some very ancient symbols: it speaks of a night journey below the sea in which the hero, often compared to Jonah, is swallowed by a monster. But the belly of Leviathan becomes a matrix: an egg forms around the imprisoned man; it is so extremely hot there that the hero loses all his hair; ejected by the monster he springs forth from the primordial sea, bald as a newborn babe.
- He is indeed reborn, and every detail of this symbolism is weighty with significance: the sea mingled with night is the dark *materia*, the humidity of Mercury. The monster is Ouroboros, the guardian of the latent energy, analogous to the serpent of Kundalini in Tantric doctrine. Finally, the heat is that of passion: the hero's victory will lie in making it into a heat of "self-incubation," a fervor of renewal; then the world is no longer a grave but a womb, fertilizing himself, becomes the egg from which he will be reborn.

The work of whitening

- In the "work of whitening," the alchemist deploys, by "elevating" them, the potentialities of the *materia* whose force he has just captured (one could say he opens up their "sattvic" dimension). He in fact discovers them not in their state of sensory obscurity, but in their subtle luminosity, in the transparency of a purified humano-cosmic psychism, through which the light of the Intellect filters more and more. Whereas ordinary man knows the elements only in their "telluric" aspect (since he knows them only through his earthly senses-themselves made of earth), the alchemist directly perceives their "ánimic" substance; once the "spirits" of earth, water, air, and fire have been revealed to him, he understands the "language of the birds." He "rectifies" these ambiguous "spirits," reabsorbs them into their angelic prototypes, turns them toward God. Within him, the passions and their corresponding instincts "are made cosmic," are pacified, and recover little by little their primordial innocence. Heaviness is melted in life; life is exalted and surpassed in pure adoration. Finally, cosmic "matter," becomes transparent, is enraptured in the virginity of the Soul of the World, eternally intoxicated with God. The alchemist whose soul is the place of this exaltation sees nature from within, so to say in its immaculate conception. "Paradise is still on earth, but man is far from it so long as he has not regenerated himself."
- In the vegetal symbolism frequently employed by alchemy, the work of whitening corresponds to the bursting forth of spring: after black winter, all the colors are manifested in a profusion of flowers, but blend little by little into the white offering of a lily.
- In animal symbolism, while the work of blackening corresponds to the "flight of the raven," the work of whitening begins with the unfolding of the "peacock's tail" (

pavonis) and is completed in the paradisiac vision of a white swan sailing on a silver sea.

- Finally, in the mineral real, which is properly that of the alchemist, the work of whitening is a "baptism," a "washing" which purifies the metallic substance and crystallizes it as silver, "our quicksilver, which is pure, subtle, luminous, clear, like spring water, transparent as crystal, and free from all blemish."
- Thus the work of whitening has led the alchemist from the black--which, according to the analysis of F. Schuon, properly represents "non-color," the root of all colored "forms"--to the white, which is "supra-color," the synthesis of all forms and the promise of spiritual "transformation."
- In Gichtel's symbolic representation, the *albedo* seems to correspond to the "marriage of Mars and Venus," that is, to the union of the masculine center situated immediately above the heart (in the region of the larynx), with the feminine center situated immediately below it (in the lumbar region). Here Venus is the goddess of Divine Love, not of the erotic; she is the "heavenly Venus," lovingly receptive to the spiritual presence. One begins to see the role which these concepts must have played in the medieval worship of the Lady, especially if we remember that alchemy often adopted the symbolism of the "Quest" which always culminates in a "feminine" image of the Soul of the World: the Golden Fleece or the Chalice of the Grail. We also see how these concepts are the opposite of any search for erotic pleasure, since they are above all concerned with the restoration, in nature as in man, of a state of virginity. Alchemy views the true hero, the "son of the cosmos" and "savior of the macrocosm," as man when he is able to offer a virgin soul to the embrace of the transcendent Spirit.

The work of Reddening

- In the perfect form of soul offered as a chalice, in the crystal flower where matter is in ecstasy, the Spirit suddenly bursts into flame. And gold appears, solar consciousness of the omnipresence, the *aurea apprehensio*.
- Let there be no mistake: the fire here spoken of in these texts is not (or is not only) one of the elements. It is the fire which is "*super omnia elementa*" and acts "*in eis*" --one of the tongues of the fire of the Pentecost. *Xantosís*--the appearance of the gold--which marks the beginning of the "red work," implies a direct intervention of a transcendent power, a contact between cosmic life and its supraformal pole.
- In Gichtel's illustration, the dragon which enfolded the heart and restricted its radiation to touch only objects of individual affirmation, is reborn after being "dissolved" in the virginal purity of the soul and transfigured by this contact with the divine: its own "rectified" energy gives birth to gold, the solar vision of unity.
- Then "philosophical incest" and the great hierogamy of the *nuptiae chymicae* are celebrated: the Sun is united with the Moon, the Sulphur "fixes" Mercury; in man, the Spirit restores life and makes it fruitful.
- This is the ceremonial meeting of the Red King and the White Queen. The King is crowned in gold, clothed in purple; he holds a red lily in his hand. The Queen is crowned in silver and holds a white lily. Near her a white eagle has alighted, a

symbol of Mercurial "sublimation" which is to be "fixed" by the now-beneficent force of Sulphur, symbolized by the golden lion, which walks close to the King.

- Alchemical realization in effect is essentially "flesh-making"; related to the sanctification of the craft and of the social authority, it does not escape from the world, but seeks to enlighten it: it is indeed a "royal" realization which demands "fidelity to the earth" and, after the ecstatic "ascent" of "the work of whitening," the "descent" which makes man the *Salvator macrocosmí*.
- The symbolism which emphasizes the necessity of this "return" is so profuse that it is bewildering. The vessel in which the work is accomplished must remain "hermetically" sealed, so that the subtle part of the compound, called the "angel," cannot escape, but will be forced to condense anew and to descend again and again until the residue is transformed. Within the visible body there resides a spiritual body which Boehme compares to an "oil" which must be set on fire so that it may become a "life of joy exalted by everything." Alchemy emphasized at length and above all the heroic virility, which the work must arouse. The alchemist is a "solar hero" who must make the *ios*, the poison of life, into an elixir of longevity; he is the "lord of the serpent and of the mother," "he binds the hands of the virgin, that elusive demon, "he transforms torrential waters into vivifying stone, he subordinates "nature which delights in itself" to "nature which is able to surpass itself." Through the accomplishment, as we have said, of a higher cosmogony, he confers on cosmic sexuality the nobility of a liberating love: love of man for the woman whom he wishes to guide toward her perfection; of the craftsman for the matters whose secret beauty he releases; of the king for his people whom he supports in the performance of the "lesser mysteries," that is, in the transmutation, through all human activity, of the cosmic order into a liturgy.
- That is why it would be better to translate *rubedo* as "work in the purple" rather than "work in the red." The purple results from the union of light and darkness, a union which marks the victory of light. Purple is the royal color. It is also, according to Suhrawardí, the color of the wings of the archangel who presides over the fate of humanity, whenever a wise man discovers the sacredness of all things; the archangel has soiled one of his wings with shadow; the "Silent One," by his presence alone, brings together the white wing with the black wing and unites them in the purple.
- In Gichtel's design, an inverse movement of outer unification succeeds the first movement toward the heart, which is realized as an inner purification. And this time the masculine centers absorb the feminine centers.
- The Sun is projected onto Venus and transforms her into Mars, penetrating animal energy and turning it toward holy inner warfare. Mars in its turn fixes Mercury so as to extract Jupiter from it, Jupiter the King who dispenses justice under the tree of peace: the Spirit penetrates vegetal dream and transforms the nightmare of the world into a Dream of God. Through Jupiter, the Sun descends into the root force of the Water, of the Moon, and of Sex, in the night in which it is wrapped so that it may be received by creatures. Fecundity is transfigured: it no longer transmits anything but life. This is an eternalized autumn, the appearance of man-frutified. Finally, there arises a regenerated Saturn, henceforth the God of The Golden Age: lead is transformed into gold, the consciousness of the alchemist penetrates mineral

sleep, in stones as well as bones; returning to the Kabbalistic teaching relating to the *luz*, to the "tiny bone" which "resists the fire, "and whose body by wakening from his sleep in death the God who sleeps in the stone of bones. "Such is the secret as it concerns chalk, the all-powerful limestone, the titanic element: it is the incorruptible body, the only useful one.... Whoever has found it triumphs over privation," that is, over the absence of God. As the *apokatastasis* of heaviness, the transfiguration of Saturn is also the transfiguration of the Titans.

- From now on the silent presence of the alchemist is a benediction on all beings. He is the secret king, the consciously central being who relates heaven and earth and ensures the good order of things. *unum ego sum et multi in me*: He is a dead man bringing life. Dead to himself, become inexhaustible nourishment, in him there operates the mystery of "multiplication" and "increase." He is the "panacea," the "elixir of life." "Drinkable gold." From the Christic stone with which it is identified there flows a red and white tincture which comforts the soul and the body. He is the phoenix from whose ashes a vast flock of golden birds take flight.

The "Humid way" and the "Dry way"

- The way which we have just described draws natural energy into itself in order to transform it into fervor: this is the "humid way." The alchemists speak in hidden terms--even more hidden than usually--of a rapid and dangerous way, the "dry way." This uses a "contra-natural" fire analogous, in the cosmological real, to the vedantic "Yoga of knowledge, "or, even better, to the "direct path" of Tantrism. It goes "directly" from the "ego" to the "Inner Man" without passing through the cosmic mediation, by slowly taking into itself the Soul of the World. It seems to start from a still more radical "descent into hell," doubtless from an immediate becoming conscious of the formidable energy which is asleep in stones and bony systems (underline is ours); as in Tantrism immediately before the awakening of Kundalini, this consciousness takes on the appearance of a torrid heat linked to the affirmation "I AM" which is no longer individuated. This heat, that of "quicklime," devours the psycho-vital objectivation of Mercury to allow only the certitude of gold to subsist.
- The "dry way," which no longer operates "with the slow fire of nature," seems to have employed--in order to facilitate the traumas of "disidentification" which dislocate appearances--intoxicating potions, perhaps organic liquids mixed with alcohol like the "urine of a drunkard." Urine, the symbolism of which is to be found in Tantric alchemy, designated above all for the alchemists, "the fire of lower nature," "UR inferioris Naturae."

III. Methods

- The ancient character of alchemical ascetism explains why it has less to do with renunciation than with detachment, less with escape from the world than with a purified participation in its divine celebration. It can be said that its aim is in fact the penetration of the cosmic ambiance, a "cosmicization" of the soul, to use the expression of Mircéa Eliade. Like the *vas Hermetis* which is its support for

meditation and in a way its symbol, the soul of the alchemist must become "round" so as to "imitate" the spherical perfection of the cosmos; it must contain the earth and its lower fire, heaven with its sun and moon. It must "be homologized" to the world, so as to become, with it, the "womb" and the "egg" from which the *Filius philosophorum*, the miraculous stone, will be born.

- Since, according to the proverb, "one cannot make gold except with gold," the alchemist will begin from the grains scattered in ordinary life, "moments of suspension" or "golden instants," which will sometimes rend our sleep and allow a glimmer of the inner gold to filter through to us, through the mountain of our ignorance.

True Imagination

- To collect these grains of gold, the major practice of alchemy seems to have been "imagination": not imagination in the ordinary sense, but "true imagination" which the texts carefully oppose to "fantasy." *"Et vide secundum naturam, de qua regenerantur corpora in visceris terrae. Et hoc imaginare per veram imaginationem ET non phantasticam."*
- True imagination actually "sees" the "subtle" processes of nature and their angelic prototypes. It is the capacity to reproduce in oneself the cosmogonic unfolding, the permanent creation of the world in the sense in which all creation, finally, is only a Divine Imagination. It is also the faculty of interpreting Biblical tales and Greco-Roman myths as ever-present realities which lead the universe back to God through the mediation of sacred time in which there then exists but one Man.
- The true imagination of alchemy is a vision: it sees space as a symbol and time as a liturgy.
- "Horizontally," it penetrates the subtle ambience, it is "the star in man, the celestial body," the *astrum* being in this case an expression derived from Paracelsus which signifies the Soul of the World.
- "Vertically," this imagination leads cosmic life thus deciphered back to spiritual reality: it then takes the name of "*meditation*," "*immensa diuturnitas meditationis*," and consists of the prolonged and silent invocation of God or rather of the "inner angel," of the "good angel": indeed, the aim of alchemy, whose role must remain cosmological, is not union with transcendence, but the establishment of a contact with it through the "angelic" ray which unites the supraformal with the world of forms.
- Thus, when Hermetic authors speak of "seeing with the eyes of the spirit," it is not a question, as Jung believed, of a hallucinatory projection of the individual (or collective) psyche on chemical substances whose true nature would remain basically unknown; it is a question of a "divination" of the mystery of things, first of the still ambiguous mystery of the Soul of the Worlds, then of the luminous mystery of the Spirit. It is a question of no longer seeing things as humanity-hereditarily and collectively-dreams them, that is, in their sensory outerness, but rather as God dreams them, that is, in their spiritual innerness.

- "God allows the intelligent philosopher, through the mediation of nature, to make hidden things appear, and to free them from darkness...These hidden realities are always present, but the eyes of ordinary men do not see them--only the eyes of the intellect and the force of the imagination, which perceive with true vision."
- The fallen soul dreams so as to forget the absence of God, that is, death; it dreams so as to make itself a substitute for paradise: it dreams the individual condition, the sensory universe and the thousand forms in which they meet and seeks to turn them for its pleasure, into the arts, sciences, and techniques of the profane world. (underline is ours). The soul must die to its dream in order to rediscover God. That is why the properly spiritual methods seek to kill the dream of the soul, whether through the implacable question: "Who am I ?" or rather, in our time, by the invocation of the Divine Name. Alchemy on the contrary, whose method is less spiritual than "psycho-cosmic," makes use of the soul's need for dream; instead of "violating the soul" by the drastic question or the invocation, it expands its dream to the magnitude of the universe and dissolves its individual prison through love for the beauty of the world. When the place of the dream is no longer the separated soul but the soul of the world, when the dream is no longer the "viscosity" of appearances, but instead the virgin nature in its secret purity, then for the awakening of the Gold, the appropriate spiritual methods can intervene: "Who dreams?" it is asked; and the stone itself proclaims the Divine Name.

The Breath

- This "true poetry" seems to have become incarnate through meditation on the great bodily rhythms.
- The texts suggest methodic use of the respiratory rhythm. After the manner of Galen and Averroes, they liken the "vital spirit" to a substance of psychic nature permeating the cosmic atmosphere and assimilated by man following a rhythm parallel to that of breath. This concept is too close to the concept of **prana** for us to doubt that the alchemists knew breathing exercises analogous to those of Yoga, and, more precisely, of Tantric *Laya-Yoga*. In the symbolism of the latter, so ancient that we realize why it should often be the same as the symbolism of alchemy, bodily life is found to be partially conditioned by the contrary action of two "subtle breaths," **prana** and **apana**: the first linked to the respiratory function, the second to the sexual function. **Prana** tends upward, toward an escape from the body; while **apana** acts upon it "like a cord which stays a falcon in its flight"; and **apana** which always fall back downward, has to "rebound" under the action of **prana**, "like a ball when it strikes the earth." If one adds that **prana** is related to the sun and **apana** to the moon, it is not difficult to see their opposition as an aspect of the duality Sulphur-Mercury, and particularly of the two birds one of which, being "volatile," has wings, and the other, being "fixed," does not, and whose perpetual interaction must be utilized and conciliated by Art. But it is not so easy to say exactly what the texts refer to in speaking about the "fixed" and the "winged" which, in the real of human alchemy, might be transposed into respiratory techniques.
- It is easier to decipher the hyperborean symbol of the swan which has come down to us both in alchemy and in Tantrism. In *Laya Yoga*, the respiration "made cosmic"

is symbolized by the calm movement of the swan; we find this swan gliding over the silver sea of the pacified *Anima Mundi*, at the zenith of the "work of whitening" : no doubt it refers to the state which the alchemists, after the initiates of ancient Greece, prayed for: "May the sacred breathing breath inb me !" Thus nature as a rhythm of the Divine Respiration corresponds to nature as a reflection of the Divine Imagination.

The Blood

- "The imaginative soul "is the "spirit of life, "say the texts, and "it dwells in the blood." Concentration on the blood through the circulatory rhythm and the sensation of bodily heat seems to have played a major role in the ascetism of alchemy. (underline is ours) The blood is the "lamp of life," the support of the soul, Mercury in its modality closes to Sulphur, with which it is united in the heart. In a certain way, the alchemical work can be brought back to transmutation of the blood, which, initially colored by the dark sun of the *ego* , is illuminated by the radiation from the heart of the world.
- The Arabic authors already spoke of a "decomposition which, by means of a gentle fire, transforms nature into blood." And, at the other end of the history of alchemy, Pernety affirms that dissolution, according to the philosophers, takes place nowhere else but in their blood.
- The entire first half of the work, which reabsorbs the sensory in the soul, is therefore transcribed as an inner experience of dissolution of the body in the blood; then man feels himself only as heat and pulsation, fervor and rhythm, that is as pure life.
- "Male and female, the body and its vital spirit are none other than the body and the blood...The dissolving of the body in its own blood is the dissolving of the male by the female, it is the dissolving of the body in its own spirit of life.... You will try in vain to obtain a perfect dissolution of the body if you do not increase in it the influx of the blood which is its natural menstruation, its femininity and its [vital] spirit all in one, and with which it must unite so closely that they constitute but one and the same substance."
- In Biblical symbolism interpreted by alchemy, the blood is the Red Sea which has to be crossed in order to leave Egypt, that is to leave the body. In a deeper sense, "blood is the fiery sword which bars the way to the Tree of Life": its rhythm creates space-time. To penetrate the mystery of the blood means to unite the heart of man with the heart of the world, in which a non-spatial ray "pierces" space and permits escape from it.

Sex

- Finally, alchemy seems to have known a sacred eroticism curiously similar to that of Tantrism. Hermetic cosmology is in this realm closely linked, but in a way that is quite difficult to state precisely, to the practices in "courtly love," to provençal love, and finally to conceptions chivalry inherited from the old peasant societies of the west through the channel of initiations of young men and which implied a "chthonic" and "feminine" symbolism of divinity.

- Thus, apart from the patriarchal society of the Middle Ages which chiefly emphasized the biological function of marriage and saw in the perpetuation of the species the excuse for sins of the flesh, another, more primordial tradition has survived: one which emphasizes the positive symbolism of love and endows it with the aim of spiritual regeneration.
- It seems that there must have existed an alchemical marriage consecrated to the pursuit of the great work and similar to the Tantric marriage of Tibet whose acknowledged aim is not the procreation of children but illumination. Allusions to the *sonor mystica*, to the "consort in service," are frequent in the alchemical texts; all the operations represented in the *Mutus Liber* are performed by a couple who in end are transfigured into the *hierós gamos* of the Sun and the Moon; moreover, several texts specifically state that the combined effort of a man and a woman is necessary for the completion of the work; finally the almost mythical renown of Nicholas Flamel and of Dame Pernelle emphasizes the importance accorded by the alchemists to the spiritual marriage. In fact, it is clear that human love could be expanded by alchemical ideas about cosmic sexuality (and perhaps, secretly, about divine "sexuality"). It is also clear that desire, experienced in detachment and innocence, could help the "red man" and the "white woman" to capture at its very source the femininity of "matter." For western Christianity, love can at best be sanctified. For alchemy, it could become sanctifying.
- This union in the service of the work was not easy. It implied at least three requirements.
- The first seems to have been an uncompromising purity and an extreme "spiritual sensitivity," so that pleasure might never close up on itself, but might awaken an ever-expanding love, become less and less individual. Following the Platonic schema often used by alchemy as well as by the troubadours, such love leads from the beauty of the body to that of the soul and finally is reabsorbed in "the love of God who created beauty." Thus the unity of all the states of love could lead from the embrace which blindly transmits *mort* (death) to the *a-mors* (deathless), which, following the deep play on words of "the courts of love," awakens the sense of eternity.
- The second requirement was therefore to transpose this love into cosmic love. In the end, it was no longer this man or that woman but the Sun and the Moon which were united "to give birth to God."
- "In this second operation," wrote Flamel to a painter who had illustrated one of his works, "you have to put together two natures, the masculine and the feminine, and you have married them....that is, they form but one single body, which is the Androgyne or Hermaphrodite of the ancients. The man as outlined here certainly resembles me down to the last detail, and the woman depicts Pernelle in a lively manner. The painter had only to represent the Masculine and the Feminine, but it pleased him to draw us, here as them."
- Thus "the hermaphrodite" is the aim, that is, the secret origin which impels man and woman toward one another, just as in Eastern doctrines the child wishing to be born reunites them in a purely carnal union. In order to prepare this "passage to the end" the alchemical marriage was not presented as a vague fusion, but as a meeting face to face slowly transformed by the "Art" in a union of complementaries.

- The third requirement of this love, the union of complementaries, relates the steps of the alchemical work to the relation of man and woman: the "dissolving" of the negative masculine in the positive feminine, the "fixation" of the negative feminine by the positive masculine. However, it is less a question here of successive phases than of a constant interaction that brings about more and more noble "crystallizations" of love, until the final transmutation is achieved. This interaction is the key to the "operation with two vessels," between which a vivifying and perfectly circulation has to take place: these "twins" (Gemini) were so arranged that the product distilled from each, its "angel," might pour in order to purify it into the opaque part of the other. A creative exchange which also seems to have constituted one of the foundations of Provençal love:
- "Everything takes place," writes R. Nelli, "as if Provençal Erotica had tried to graft onto man the dominant 'quality' of woman: compassion for the body, 'mercy'; and onto woman courage and masculine virtue."
- This graft, which seeks to actualize the Androgyne in each partner, is wonderfully symbolized by two miniatures in a fifteenth century manuscript which Jung has reproduced in his work, *Psychology and Alchemy*: during the "mortification" which is a preparation for the marriage and which **strikes both sexes simultaneously, the Tree of Life is seen to grow out of the belly of the man and out of the head of the woman**; as if man, in order to become worthy of an authentic union, had to awaken the feminine part in himself, has to renounce the reasoning of the head in order to **feel the motion of his entrails**; and as a woman had to awaken her masculine part by freeing herself from the sensual and maternal despotism of her belly **to take part lucidly in the vocation of man**.
- Finally, it may be that alchemists knew, not only of the marriage properly so-called, but of certain erotic "techniques" similar to those of Tantrism and intended to awaken the energy of sex without allowing to be wasted in seminal emission. The texts often present the Greco-Roman symbol of the : naked Diana"which they liken to the Soul of the World, **the vision of which** is the goal of "the work in the whitening." Now we know that the medieval **"pure love,"** that is love without carnal union, included the contemplation of the Lady in the nude. As in Tantrism, where the "denudation of the virgin" symbolizes "purification," the garments here represented the **outer appearances**. This practice implied a complete sublimation: the texts predicted that the profane who dare to gaze lustfully at the "naked Diana" would share the fate of Acteon-transformation into an animal which would be devoured by the dogs.
- Finally alchemy may have employed a *maithuna*, that is a ritual sexual union in which the sperm, in the moment of emission, is abruptly stopped and must "reascend," so that the highest concentration of life which it embodies might immediately enter into movement on the psychic plane and provoke a liberating shock.
- In a Hermetico-Kabbalist text, the *Asch-Mézareph*, we find a hint of a procedure of this kind in the reference to the biblical symbolism of the thrust of Phineas's spear: "The lance pierces at the same time the solar Israelite and the lunar Medianite at their moment of their union and *in locis genitalibus*...The point of force of the iron, acting on Matter, cleanses it of all its defilement. Here the Israelite is nothing other

than masculine Sulphur and the Medianite should be understood as water...Phineas's Lancelot only kills the masculine Sulphur, but also mortifies his wife; and together they are transmuted by mingling their blood in a single act of generation: it is then in fact that the miracles of Phineas begin.

"Tantrism and Alchemy

- As we have frequently noted, the resemblances between Tantrism and alchemy are striking. This should not be surprising if it is borne in mind that these two traditions revitalize the same ancient symbolism, mytho-cosmic in nature, and make "identification" with the world in its positive aspect the first and necessary step of liberation. Just as alchemy has allowed the sacred character of the flesh of the world to be maintained beneath the lofty asceticism of Christianity, so Tantrism seems to have been born from a lucid systematization of the concepts which underlie the deeply poetic and chastely carnal rites (and myths) of Hindu daily life, but which Vedantic speculation neglected more and more in favor of an apparently discursive and discarnate expression of the mystery of unity. These common roots, this partly analogous role, explain why the attitudes of Tantrism and alchemy converge. Both take the material body as their point of departure in order to transfigure it, since it is nothing other than the spiritual body identified with its own objectification by the process of cosmogonic "desire". Thus the "diamond body" of Tantrism corresponds to the *corpus glorificationis* of Latin alchemy, and the symbol of the diamond is identical to that of the "stone," which is also a diamond. It is because the two traditions have a similar conception of Nature: alchemy is clearly a "Shaktism" which assumes, even in its final obscuration, the immanent power of the Principle so as to save man--according to the Tantric saying--through the same means that habitually cause his downfall. Finally in both cases it is the same assumption of positive sexuality, which stops, explicitly at least, on the cosmic plane in alchemy, whereas it begins in *divinis* for Tantrism: the opposition of Sulphur and Mercury thus appears as a relatively contingent application of the metaphysical polarization between Shiva and his Shakti. (*)
- Under these conditions, it is normal to observe the very great resemblances between the subtle "physiology" of Tantrism and that of alchemy. The multiplicity of *nadís*, those currents of subtle force which furrow and "animate" the organism, culminate in a duality, that of two opposed arteries called *píngalâ* and *ídâ*. *Idâ*, whose symbolic color is a very pale white, represents a "lunar" current linked to the Shakti principle; *píngalâ*, a brilliant red in color, is a "solar" Shivaic current. These two *nadís*, which emerge from the sacral region and intertwine around the vertebral column, correspond in alchemical language to the two serpents of the caduceus, opposed to each other as are the white, lunar Mercury and the red, solar Sulphur. Just as the duality of *ídâ* and *píngalâ* is resolved at the moment of spiritual realization in the unity of the central artery, hitherto virtual of the *sushûmna*, so the two serpents which were fighting each other, now having been struck by the staff of Hermes, entwine themselves around it, and henceforth tame, bring to the god of twofold theurgical power to "bind" and "unbind." Cosmic nature in its latent state,

needing to be awakened and mastered, is symbolized, in alchemy as in Tantrism, by a serpent coiled around itself: *Ouroboros* and *Kundalini*. Both traditions relate this serpent with heaviness, sleep, and earth: to the Hermetic *visita interiora terrae* corresponds the "descent" to the *mulâdhâra-chakra*, the subtle center which is at the root of bodily existence and which corresponds to the *tattva* of the "earth": Tantrism locates this *chakra* at the base of the spinal column, and one might suppose that an analogous localization was known to alchemy, since it, like Tantras, relates the earth force to the sexual function, and often situates the lunar center--which corresponds, as we have seen to *phusikon*, the totality of the vital energies--at the base of the spinal column.

- There remains, in order to complete this brief comparison of two subtle "physiologies, "the problem of the "centers of life."
- "The quality of freedom passes through the astringent quality [which can be likened to imprisonment in the hard earth], rends the Body and emerges from the Body, outside and above the earth [the Body and the Earth seem analogous here to the *mulâdhâra-chakra*] and thus advances persistently until a long stem has grown. The qualities [the union of *id_* and *píngalâ*] ascend through this stem [*sushûmna*]. There they generate the colors... A bud of flowers on the stem later, which is a new body, resembling the one which originally had its roots in the Earth, and from then on assuming a more subtle form."
- It seems, nevertheless, that a true correspondence cannot be established between the subtle centres of alchemy and those of Tantrism, except for the four centers rising by steps from the sacral region to the heart. Or rather, it is only in the case of the heart that the correspondence is complete; the three lower alchemical centers represent only the *Shaktic*, Mercurial modality of the corresponding *chakras*, their *Shivaic* or Sulphurous modality being found in the alchemical centers situated above the heart: for example, the *mulâdhâra-chakra* is identified, not with Gichtel's single lunar center, but with the union between the lunar center and the Saturnian center, which is localized in the brain; this *chakra* is in fact not only related to the vital force of the *Kundalini*, but also to the "god of the earth" symbolized by the massiveness of the elephant and which corresponds most clearly to Saturn and the heaviness of lead. The centers which alchemy places above the heart consequently have nothing to do with the *chakras* whose localization is approximately the same. In Tantric terms, the alchemical realization stops at the heart. This difference is easy to understand: Tantrism is an integral spiritual way, the last "adaptation" of the Hindu tradition: the conquest of the heart, that is, of the center of the human being in which the supreme center is reflected, is thus in that context no more than a stage leading to the "ascent" toward higher states of being. The heart marks the moment where the man who has discovered his center "is made cosmic"; above, the highest *chakras* symbolize the supraformal "heavens," and the passage to the fontanel, union with the transcendent.
- Alchemy, on the contrary, is a cosmological science, which has never claimed to be self-sufficient. It has always been subordinate to a spiritual way of union properly speaking, whether one is considering the "sacerdotal" part of the Egyptian tradition, of Sufism, of Byzantine Hesychasm, or of the great Western "intellectual"

mystical tradition up to Meister Eckhart and even Angelicus Silesius. That is why it limits itself to establishing a contact in the heart with the "solar" ray of transcendence and sees the dissolving of the world in its center as subsequent to an equally important restoration.

- The alchemical realization is a "horizontal" realization in the direction of cosmic breath. The Tantric realization assumes thinks breath and absorbs it in a vertical, which no longer has to do with space. What finally corresponds to Tantrism is not medieval alchemy by itself alone, but medieval spirituality complete with its alchemical underpinnings and its purely Christian achievement.
- Thus the alchemical hollow Tree is no identical with the Tantric Tre of Life: one could say that it is the undoubled reflection in the cosmic environment of the root of the latter, since the trunk which is lost in the heavens leaves no other trace than the luminous center of the heart.
- Profoundly Christianized, situated at the point where the initiations of the Guilds and of the order of Chivalry come together, alchemy constituted in medieval Christianity the central doctrine of the cosmic "lesser mysteries." Son of God through the mediation of Christ, the craftsman or the emperor was equally father and mediator in relation to the world, through the archetype of Hermes, always represented as an aged king.
- This alliance was broken by certain internal disasters which need not to be assessed here and which took place from the end of the twelfth century to the end of the fourteenth. **"Metacosmic" in essence, Christianity became, in the West at least, more and more "anticosmic": the faithful forbidden to receive the wine, that is, blood, in the communion; the long battle of moralizing usurpation waged by the papacy against the sacred function of the Emperors; the autonomous and profane character ascribed to nature by Thomism--all of them are aspect of this gradual divorce of the sacred from life.**
- For its part, alchemy became more and more enclosed in a divinized cosmos: the disappearance from the texts of *citrinitas* (the Greek *xantosís*), that is, the disappearance of the intervention of a transcendent influence in the formation of gold, emphasizes this triumph of immanentism.
- The opposition between the *Filius Macrocosmí* and the Son of God has made the modern world possible. Their reconciliation may perhaps be foreshadowed by the rediscovery of the profound meaning of alchemy and of the whole body of "mythological" traditions.
- For "The Stone is the Christ
- " And I tell you that, if these I the disciples I hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.
-