

Selected Articles:

Metaphysics and Theology,

1989 - 2024

by

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HERMETIC ALCHEMY

1989

The writings of the Hermetic Alchemists have exercised a fascination upon the imaginations of scholars and casual seekers alike for centuries. On the one hand, the Hermetic writings have a well deserved reputation for being among the most obscure writings ever penned. But on the other hand, they have also managed to retain their status as some of the most authoritative original sources of ancient wisdom.

Hermetic Alchemy was one of the first branches of esoteric knowledge that I studied in my youth, drawn thither by my studies of Carl Jung, whose researches on Alchemy absorbed his attention throughout most of his later years. Something about the Alchemical symbols spoke to me very powerfully; I understood Jung's thesis that throughout the history of Alchemy, these symbols have welled up from the souls of sensitive people all over the earth, taken from the same ultimate source ~ the "collective unconscious" in the words of Jung.

Alchemy is Change. The Process of Change is the ultimate "Atom" of the ancient Greeks, the original building block of the Cosmos. All of the symbols of Alchemy emphasize the aspect of Change: the transmutation of

the baser metals into Gold through a process of *Solve et Coagula*, *Separatio et Coniunctio* (“disintegrate” and “unite”; “separate” and “join”). Alchemy is the “spagyric art,” from Greek words meaning “to tear apart” and “to bring together.”

Whenever I run across some path for personal growth that seems to suggest that the seeker need only sit on a shelf, meditate on his navel, and suddenly find himself rising ever upward on a linear path towards perfect clarity or Nirvana, I feel all the more strongly how much more power there is in the Alchemical symbols. (I should suggest here an appropriate way to study alchemical texts or any expressed idea of philosophy ~ rather than reading with your blue pencil, deciding what is right or wrong, it is better to try to figure out what true idea the author is trying to convey with his sometimes limited or misleading words. In the case of an exclusive emphasis on the journey inward, for example, the student must supply for himself the complementary ideas which are necessary for the true illumination of wisdom.)

Since the earliest times, Alchemists have been interested in applying their Hermetic wisdom towards the perfecting of the body and soul of Man ~ the quest for Gold being left to the “puffers.” For the Alchemist, the first stage of the *Great Work* is the *Nigredo*, the stage of Blackness, disintegration, chaos, where the material (metal, the soul of Man, or what have you) is reduced to the *prima materia* or formless original stuff, before it can proceed to the second stage, the *Albedo* (whiteness), where the material may be unified once again. The Alchemical process is circular, alternating between *Solve* and *Coagula* on its path towards perfection.

Originally, “Alexandrian Alchemy” had as its purpose the transmutation of the baser metals into Gold. Although this goal was quickly superseded by the loftier notions of the Alchemical Adepts, it is instructive to review the original understanding of the old *Masters of Fire*. Aristotle laid the groundwork with his famous dictum: *Nature strives towards Perfection*. This was an article of faith that defined for proponents of the ancient wisdom the source of the whole underlying pattern of order in the cosmos.

Next, it is necessary to understand that metals were considered to be alive in some sense, and already undergoing a very slow process of gradual evolutionary growth towards perfection. That is, the most primitive form of metal was considered to be Lead (Saturn). If left in the earth on its own, it would eventually evolve its way towards Tin (Jupiter). Centuries later it would grow to become Iron (Mars), followed by Copper (Venus), Quicksilver (Mercury), Silver (the Moon), and finally, at the end of a very long road, it would achieve the ultimate realization of Perfection: Gold (the Sun). This was already happening on its own; nothing at all needed to be done ~ if you had sufficient patience. Now the Alchemist comes along and decides to speed up the natural process: the Art of the Alchemist replaces the Time of Nature.

So Alchemy is not black magic. The Alchemist thought that, by diligent searching into the ways of Nature, he might be able to imitate the natural process in his laboratories in order to realize the perfection of gold in his own lifetime, instead of waiting centuries for the same thing to happen more slowly. So, from the point of view of Hermetic philosophy, it is a

matter of no consequence that the ancients were laboring under mistaken ideas about the nature of metals.

The Four Elements of Fire, Water, Air, and Earth (established by Aristotle) illustrate the four cardinal points of change, of which the four Seasons are the most common analogy. Since the process is circular, we can not really speak of first, but, to start with a new beginning, we start with Fire (“Young Yang” to students of the *I Ching*), corresponding to Spring. This is the stage of “Active Concentration.” At a pivotal point, the energy suddenly changes to “Active Expansion,” Air, Summer (“Old Yang”): COAGULA. The next change is very gradual, as both the activity and the expansion peter out, being followed by “Passive Contraction,” Water, Autumn (“Young Yin”). This accelerates until there is a sudden change at the point where the energy turns to “Passive Expansion,” Earth, Winter (“Old Yin”): SOLVE. The next change is very gradual, as the active yang energy re-asserts itself in a fresh “Active Concentration.”

The most famous theory of the composition of the metals held that all metals were some sort of compound (“marriage”) of Sulphur and Mercury (the King and the Queen, the Sun and the Moon, the Fixed and the Volatile, the Tiger and the Dragon, etc.). Then, along about the sixteenth century, Paracelsus, a famous Swiss Alchemist and Physician (the real father of holistic medicine) introduced Salt as a third essential ingredient in the work. Paracelsus was one of the most stunning Alchemical writers of all time. His ideas must have been rubbed fresh from the “collective unconscious” because they were immediately absorbed into the dogma of orthodox Alchemy.

The esoteric significance of the number three has impressed occult philosophers since time immemorial. The Sulphur and Mercury theory expressed the polarity of Yang and Yin, but the introduction of Salt elevated the theory to the heights of classic occult metaphysics.

The same fundamental ideas keep turning up in one's readings, but it is not all the same idea. There are many expressions for the most primary ideas of occult philosophy, but the numbers of mathematics suggest the most logical catalog of primary mysteries. According to this idea (dating from Pythagoras), the number "One" expresses the highest mystery, about which nothing more can be said. (Wittgenstein: "Whatever can be said at all can be said clearly; whereof one cannot speak, thereon must one be silent.") The number "Two" represents a mystery that can be spoken of: it is the Distinction between undifferentiated primal Unity expressed as Yang and Yin, Expansion and Contraction, Solve et Coagula, etc. But it is the number "Three" which suggests the point of perspective which separates the two complimentary illusions that are the consequence of every distinction.

Does this make any sense yet? Let me present one of my favorite analogies to occult metaphysics: the origin of the Cosmos *ex nihilo* as a consequence of God laughing at His original Joke: the Distinction between Zero and Infinity. First, I quote from the beginning of the *Tao Te Ching* by Lao Tzu (D. C. Lau translation):

"The Way that can be spoken of is not the constant Way; the Name that can be named is not the constant Name. The nameless was the beginning of Heaven and Earth; the named was the mother of the myriad creatures. Hence always rid yourself of desires in order to observe its Secrets, but always allow yourself to have desires in order to observe its

Manifestations. These two are the same, but diverge in Name as they issue forth. Being the same, they are called Mysteries. Mystery upon Mystery, the gateway of the manifold secrets.”

In order to understand how the Universe was created, it is necessary to have an understanding of the fundamental nature of Reality. We start with the Perfection of God, at rest, at a Point at the Center. The whole concept is meaningless, of course, until it is contrasted with the concept of Error, or movement away from the Center. This corresponds with old notions of the Devil as distance from God, moving away from the Perfection at the Center. Now, in order to maintain the existence of any deviation from the Center of Perfection, an alternate and complimentary deviation in another direction must be simultaneously sustained. There it is in a nutshell, the whole secret to the existence of the Manifest Cosmos as a Knot in the Æther composed of an intricate Field of Vibration of opposing concepts which, taken altogether suggests the illusion of our visible world. All of the energy of the Cosmos taken together adds up to Zero (or Infinity).

Zero and *Infinity* are examples of a Distinction created out of an undifferentiated sameness through the process of applying divergent names. Zero and Infinity both represent absolute states which can not even be imagined precisely, since they are beyond the consciousness of finite man. They seem to represent two different concepts only because we can only conceive of them at all by means of a process of movement between them. We can imagine a very large sphere which we expand mentally until our impoverished imagination fails us; likewise, we can imagine a dot vanishing towards nothing. But at the approach to the limit in each case, the last to go is nothing but location: the point where the dot is vanishing, or the center of

the sphere which is trying to become all-encompassing. So there is the Joke: you establish two Names which are really the same thing at the Limit, but then by alternating between them you set up a Field of Vibration which presents the Illusion of finite Manifestation (“the Gateway of the manifold Secrets”)! Hilarious. So when God made this Joke, the vibration alternating between *Zero* and *Infinity* was the *Laughter of God* which created the finite Universe.

The most famous original source of Hermetic Alchemy is the *Emerald Tablet* of Hermes Trismegistus. While there are lots of writings attributed to “Hermes,” there is little agreement about the actual authorship of any of these writings. However, the author of the *Emerald Tablet*, whoever he may have been, is the Hermes who has given his name to “Hermetic Philosophy.” The basic Hermetic axiom is expressed there: *As Above, So Below*. This line has more than one meaning. In the first place, it suggests that the laws of the Cosmos may be found mirrored in Man: as the Macrocosm, so the Microcosm. But many other ideas are linked by the doctrine of correspondence. For example, there is a plane of pure energy, magnetism, or electrical field “above” that corresponds to the physical body of Man “below.” Even Plato voiced a similar idea: the Form of the Good (for example) exists “above” in correspondence to some physical reality of some good thing “below.” We might go on: Astrology posits the movements of the Heavenly bodies to exert corresponding influences on earthly events.

Likewise, Sympathetic Magic is the art of establishing associative correspondence between objects not demonstrably connected (as in Tarot cards or Voodoo dolls).

“Alchemy” is usually understood as the Western Alchemical tradition which may have come from the Arabs of the Middle East and reached its highest development in the famous European Alchemists, but it is very interesting to notice that a parallel alchemical tradition has flourished in China with no perceivable connection to the Western Alchemical tradition, but which has symbols that are strikingly familiar. In *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, for example, there is described a process of evolution towards perfection featuring a “circulation of the light” that is practically a translation of the Emerald Tablet (from the Emerald Tablet: “It rises from Earth to Heaven, and then it descends again to the Earth, and receives Power from Above and from Below.”) But this is, finally, not really surprising. I quote from another Chinese philosopher, Ko Ch’ang:

. . . it may be objected that this method (Taoist Yoga) is practically the same as that of the Zen Buddhists. To this I reply that under Heaven there are no two ways, and the wise are ever of the same heart.

§

How to Measure Spiritual Growth

June, 2004

I remember reading about “Spiritual Materialism,” which refers to the pride that comes from spiritual growth and spiritual attainments. After practicing yoga for years, or working on your path of spiritual growth, there is a common tendency to feel a kind of satisfaction in your accomplishment. For some people, it even becomes impossible not to play the game of being “more spiritual than thou.” This, of course, is very funny, so I would like to share a true measure of spiritual growth that works magically and inexorably to transcend this problem.

First, I have to prepare the ground with some discussion of a fundamental principle of philosophy. There are basically two directions of energy flow ~ inwards, towards the center, and outwards, away from the center. The typical Western style (“the rat race”) is a movement reaching ever outward, grasping towards more and more. The Eastern wisdom, on the other hand, stresses the opposite direction ~ a movement back towards the center, within. It sounds simple enough ~ “Oh, yes, I get it ~ moving outward is bad; moving inward is good.” But it is not at all so simple. I am especially fond of the alchemical symbols for personal growth, because they stress a balance between both directions. The basic alchemical dictum which summarizes the whole art is “SOLVE ET COAGULA.” This means, literally, “to separate, and to unite.” Break apart, and bring together. It is the

alternation between these two directions which comprises the “process towards perfection” which the study of alchemy is all about.

Let's start with the movement towards the center. There is a point at the center which is a point of perfect balance, peace, and clarity. Moving away from this point goes towards, in the first place, greater novelty and complexity, but ultimately it leads to confusion and chaos. The movie *Bonnie and Clyde* is a perfect model of this process. Bonnie and Clyde pursue a career of violence and greed which leads to greater and greater confusion and chaos. As the movie progresses, they become crazier and crazier, moving faster and faster, and when they are finally blown apart, literally, in an explosion of chaos, it is inevitable and obvious. Is your life like that (even a little bit)? Then you need to see an Indian guru who will give you a calming mantra and help you to compose yourself and begin the long journey back to the center.

But the lesson of the alchemical symbols is that the fastest way to the center is not to attempt to go there all at once, in one non-stop instant ride (that, of course, is the Western model ~ we want it all NOW, so that we can attain Nirvana before lunch). No, the fastest way to the center is, like breathing, to alternate going in with going out. Both directions are meaningful and valuable.

Some people consider that God is this point of perfection and balance at the center and “the Devil is distance from God” (to use a famous definition). It gets complicated here, because I have to make a small digression, advising the reader always to look very carefully at an idea in order to discover the meaning of the idea, which may lie beneath the surface, rather than simply to judge an idea as right or wrong. There are many ways

to use words, and the same words may be used in different ways at different times to express the truth. So, that concept may be illuminating (that God is Perfection at the Center, and the Devil is movement away from that point), but I prefer to consider that both directions are aspects of “God.” The movement away from the center is the Creative aspect (Yang, if you like), while the movement towards the center is the Receptive aspect (Yin).

A good example of all of this may be found on the chess board. Those of you who play chess may understand the distinction between “Positional Chess” and “Combinational Chess.” Positional chess follows the direction towards the center, as the game simplifies towards the inertia inherent in the position, while combinational chess strives to throw the game outward again into chaos and confusion, out of which the player hopes to extract a new inertia favoring the pieces of his color. So the movement away from the center is the road to change, but it is only brought to completion when it returns back to the direction towards the center.

That’s enough philosophy ~ it’s almost lunch time, after all. So now that we are on this path towards the center, via *Solve et Coagula*, how can we tell which of us is approaching closest to the center? As we get closer and closer to the center, everything converges. The center is a point of clarity, balance, peace, and infinite love. So the closer one is to this point at the center, the more one will feel the spirit of infinite love. This is obvious ~ look at any spiritual teacher you can think of ~ all of the really advanced spiritual teachers radiate an energy of peace and love. You can feel it and you can see it.

Now for the funny part! Everyone is invited to play the game of being “more spiritual than thou” ! Everyone who wants to show how advanced

they are spiritually only has to work on radiating infinite love! The funny part is that it actually works. No matter where you are on the spiritual hierarchy, the more you practice infinite love, the closer you will come to perfect clarity. So go ahead; impress your friends; be the first on your block to manifest infinite love, and spread this measure of spiritual growth far and wide. And do it quickly, because this world needs all the peace and love it can get, and it needs it soon.

PATTERNS OF ILLUSION
AND CHANGE

by

John Roland Stahl



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Ever since the earliest times, philosophers have been searching for the underlying patterns of order that sustain our world. These efforts have resulted in a great many systems of symbolic expression purporting to illuminate the various mysteries of reality and life. Careful inspection of these different systems reveals that many of them are based on remarkably similar fundamentals. The numbers of mathematics, for example, have been almost universally regarded as indispensable keys to an understanding of the primary mysteries.

The Tree of Life from the Hebrew Kabbalah and the I Ching of Chinese philosophy are two of the most remarkable systems of analogy based upon numbers. A clear understanding of these systems will provide a powerful calculus whereby all of the complexities of contemporary life may be clearly understood by analogy. Symbols from Hermetic alchemy, astrology, and other sources are used throughout for the purposes of comparison because of their colorful effect and ingenious application. They provide a vivid contrast to the starkly abstract systems of the I Ching and the Tree of Life.

Once the vision has begun to clarify, the next step is to participate in the unfolding of the infinite universe by a more conscious awareness of the consequences of our actions. The same calculus which allows us passively to understand the intricate patterns of the movement of life allows us as well to influence the evolution of those same fields of energy at any level through the agency of the Philosophers' Stone at any one of the Points of Change. Once the fundamentals are understood, the benefits of application and analogy will quickly follow.

We present an arrangement of the Tree of Life which divides it into four parts, corresponding to the Tetragrammaton, the Hebrew name of God (Yod-He-Vau-He). YHVH, the four letters of the name of God, have long been considered to conceal Keys to the highest understanding of the ultimate mysteries of

the cosmos, showing the evolutionary progression from God to Man, although the knowledge of their meaning is said to have been lost. The first letter (Yod; Kether on the Tree of Life) represents the First Arcanum, or Mystery. Since this arcanum refers to the most primary mystery, efforts to define it are inevitably elusive. It has to do with Original Infinity (or Zero). The best way to understand this point is by contrast with all that follows.

The way that can be spoken of
 Is not the constant way;
 The name that can be named
 Is not the constant name.
 The nameless was the beginning of Heaven and Earth;
 The named was the mother of the myriad creatures.
 Hence always rid yourselves of desires
 In order to observe its secrets;
 But always allow yourself to have desires
 In order to observe its manifestations.
 These two are the same
 But diverge in name as they issue forth.
 Being the same they are called mysteries,
 Mystery upon mystery ~
 The gateway of the manifold secrets.

~ Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching
 (D. C. Lau translation)

The Second Arcanum represents the primordial Distinction which causes the previously undifferentiated Cosmos to split apart and come into being. This manifestation of a visible Cosmos is the Field of Vibration which has come into being as a consequence of the Distinction. The operation of this mystery provides the creative aspect for every idea or microcosm. Common symbols for this mystery

are Heaven and Earth, Light and Dark, Creative and Receptive, Active and Passive, Order and Chaos, Life and Death.

In the I Ching, the energy which causes this Distinction (SOLVE in the symbolism of Hermetic Alchemy) is called Yang (—). This Yang may also be viewed on another level as being itself composed of the distinction between the Creative and the Receptive. On the Tree of Life, this level of yang is Chokmah (the Sun) while yin is Binah (the Moon). Together they form the second part of the name of God: He.

The Third Arcanum (the letter Vau of the name of God; COAGULA; Yin - -) contains the unifying principle of the initial arcanum (Yod; the Original) added to the Distinction of the Second Arcanum to create a field of perspective unifying the opposite elements together. The rhythm of the vibration set up between them flows through the 'Philosophers' Stone as the focus of attention between Subject and Object through the present Moment, the infinite turning point of the process of change.

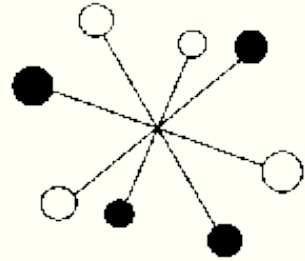
On the Tree of Life, Chesed and Geburah are balanced by Tiphereth. (We include the Indian terms Rajas, Tamas, and Satva for comparison.)

The Fourth Arcanum (the fourth letter of the name of God: the second He) moves beyond the pure abstraction of the first three arcana into the Illusions of Manifestation. The four spheres on the Tree of Life which apply to this position (Netzach, Hod, Yesod, and Malkuth) represent the four elements ~ Fire, Water, Air, and Earth ~ of Hermetic Alchemy. These four cardinal points represent the whole realm of Manifestation and Illusion. In the I Ching, these four elements are called (in the same sequence and with the same meaning) Young Yang (☯), Young Yin (☵), Old Yang (☰), and Old Yin (☷).

To further clarify this progression of primary ideas, compare the analogies of Pythagoras to the first four numbers: One: a point; Two: a line; Three: a plane (triangle); and Four: a solid (pyramid). In terms of the dimensions of physics, the point is dimension zero. A line extends as the first dimension. A plane triangle has two dimensions, and a solid has three dimensions. The fourth dimension of physics, time, is what we call Arcanum Five: Change. This progression of ideas continues out at different levels of perspective towards infinity. However, it is very useful to see the similarity in character of each of the odd numbered mysteries in contrast with another kind of idea for the even numbers. The terms which best express this contrast are Coagula for the odd numbers, and Solve for the even numbers.

§

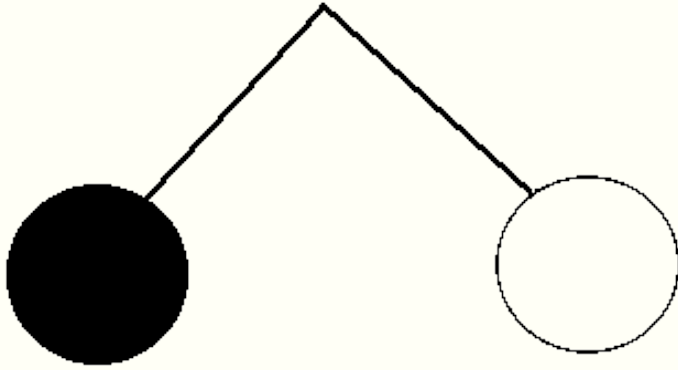
•



— —
 Yin
 Passive
 Contraction
 Apollo
 Reality
 Inertia
 Clarity
 COAGULA

———
 Yang
 Active
 Expansion
 Dionysus
 Illusion
 Novelty
 Confusion
 SOLVE

COAGULA

Yin**Yang**

SOLVE


“From Tao there comes One.

From One there come Two.

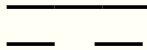
From Two there comes Three.

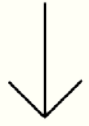
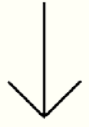
From Three there come all things.”


~ *Lao Tzu*

Yesod
Wands
Air
Old Yang





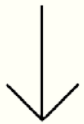
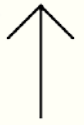
Hod
Cups
Water
Young Yin




Netzach
Swords
Fire
Young Yang




Malkuth
Pentacles
Earth
Old Yin




Yod Arcanum I.

Kether



He Arcanum II.

SOLVE

Binah

Moon



Chokmah

Sun



Vau Arcanum III.

COAGULA

Geburah

Tamas



Chesed

Rajas



Tiphereth

Satva

He Arcanum IV.

Manifestation

Hod

Water



Netzach

Fire



Yesod

Air

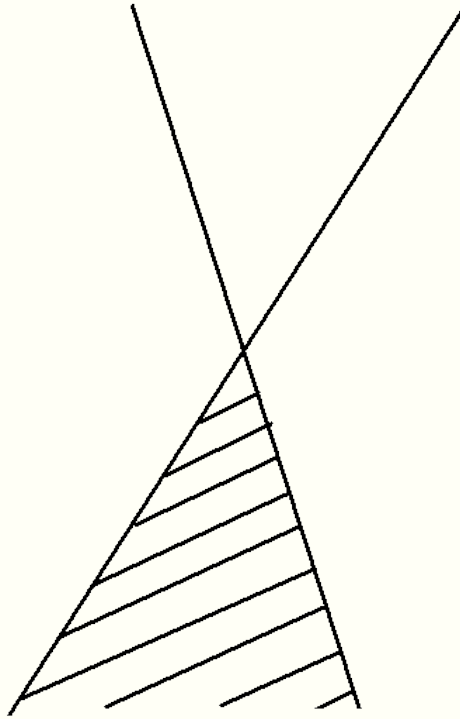


Malkuth

Earth



As Above,



So Below.

Arcanum V.

Change

PASSIVE
 COPPER
 VENUS
 GENTLE
 WIND, WOOD
 SUN



COAGULA
 GOLD
 SUN
 CREATIVE
 HEAVEN
 CH'ÏEN



PEACE
 SILVER
 MOON
 ABYSMAL
 WATER
 K'AN



LIGHT
 TIN
 JUPITER
 JOYOUS
 LAKE
 TUI

CONFLICT
 QUICKSILVER
 MERCURY
 CLINGING
 FIRE
 LI



HEAVY
 LEAD
 SATURN
 KEEPING STILL
 MOUNTAIN
 K'ËN

ACTIVE
 IRON
 MARS
 AROUSING
 THUNDER
 CH'ËN



SOLVE
 PRIMA MATERIA
 EARTH
 RECEPTIVE
 EARTH
 K'UN



The colored diagram illustrates every arcanum. The point in the center represents the First Arcanum, the Point of Origin. The same point, from a different level of perspective, represents each of the odd numbered arcana (COAGULA): Three ~ the Point of Balance; Five ~ the Point of Change, etc. The rest of the diagram represents the even numbered arcana (SOLVE): Two, the original Distinction, is clearly seen above and below the central point of balance (Light and Dark, Creative and Receptive, Heaven and Earth, etc.).

The four elements of the Fourth Arcanum are also clear: Young Yang (Fire, Spring, Active Contraction) begins out of the Chaos of Black (K'un, ☷) with the aggressive Red energy of new life (Chên, ☳). This continues, intensifying and concentrating its energy in Orange (Li, ☲). Suddenly a Change takes place and the energy "turns inside out" and begins to expand (Old Yang, Air, Summer, Active Expansion) upward through Yellow (Tui, ☱), and finally to White (Ch'ien, ☰), the height of integration and order. At this point, another Change takes place and the energy begins to contract again (Young Yin, Water, Autumn, Passive Contraction). This energy falls through Green (Sun, ☶) to Blue (K'an, ☵). At this point, another Change occurs as the energy falls through the balance point again on its way down to Old Yin (Earth, Winter, Passive Expansion), through Violet (Kên, ☶) and back again to Black (K'un, ☷).

The eight Primary Trigrams of the I Ching may be more particularly defined by assigning a precise meaning to each of the lines. The specific interpretation of each Trigram (or Hexagram ~ the traditional six lines) is

a very creative matter which depends upon the particular purposes of each analogy. The following abstract patterns may be more creatively interpreted whenever they are used to represent real situations.

According to traditional usage, the bottom line of each Trigram represents the Subject and the top line represents the Object of the analogy. Yang lines may be defined as Active, Yin lines as Passive. The center line may be taken to indicate the value of the conjunction, with Yang taken as positive, and Yin as negative. The directions of energy of each line may be variously interpreted due to the principle of enantiodromia where each energy reverses to its opposite at each extreme position. However, any consistent usage will reveal the same patterns. From these definitions, it is an easy matter to prepare a simple catalog of the eight Primary Trigrams:

The first Trigram of the sequence is Chên, ☳, Thunder, the Arousing. Here, the Subject is the source of an energy of distinction from the passive Object. This represents the birth of a new idea or microcosm: an Ego distinct from the whole. It is active and aggressive. Basically, it is the assertion of distinction and independence from the passive Earth (K'un, ☷) which produced it. It is represented in other symbols by the color Red, the planet Mars, and the metal Iron.

The second Trigram is Li, ☲, Fire, the Clinging. Here, the Subject is in conflict with an Object. The interpretations of this arrangement range from warfare, where each tries to overcome the other, to tension, energy, games, or social activity. The color is Orange, the planet Mercury, and the metal Quicksilver.

The next Trigram is Tui, ☱, the Lake, the Joyous. The solid center line indicates a change of state where the energy of the Subject seeks union with the passive Object. The color is Yellow, the planet Jupiter, and the metal Tin.

At the extremity of the Subject's Yang energy is the Trigram Ch'ien, ☰, Heaven, the Creative. It represents the attainment and perfection of balance and order which completes the synthesis into unity, COAGULA. It is the White light (the union of all light), and it is the Sun and Gold.

The following Trigram, Sun, ☳, Wind, Wood, the Gentle, represents the beginning of the path of the passive Subject as the Yin phase of the cycle begins the downward movement towards SOLVE. In this case, it is the activity of the Object which maintains the integration with the passive Subject. The color is Green, the planet Venus, and the metal Copper.

The next Trigram, K'an, ☵, Water, the Abyssal, represents the last stage of harmony. Both subject and Object are passive, and the integration of the two is maintained by inertia alone. The color is Blue, the planet the Moon, and the metal Silver.

The next Trigram is Kên, ☶, the Mountain, Keeping Still. The broken center line indicates that the separation has been made, the Object rejecting the Subject. The color is Violet, the planet Saturn, and the metal Lead.

At the end of the cycle is the point of complete liberation of finite Manifestation into Eternity represented by the Trigram K'un, ☷, Earth, the Receptive. This is the empty blackness of infinite night, cold, quiet, and still: the chaos of randomness, the complete SOLVE where not one stone is left upon another. The absence of light is Black; the planet is the Earth, and the metal is the Prima Materia of the Alchemists to which it was considered necessary to reduce all metals before they could be improved or perfected (transmuted).

Of course the process is endless, as it is precisely the infinite potential of the Solve from which a new point of Coagula may make an appearance into Manifestation.

If the eight primary Trigrams offer a view of eight possible arrangements of primary energy (Fixed Field Illusions), the sixty-four Hexagrams suggest all possible conjunctions of those eight patterns. There are a great variety of possible ways to correlate the lines of the I Ching to analogous situations in the outer world, but according to traditional usage, the upper Trigram refers to that which is "above, without, or in front," and the lower Trigram refers to that which is "below, within, or behind." For example, the analogy may be made that the upper Trigram refer to the external or visible aspect of a situation, while the lower Trigram refer to an internal (occult) aspect of the same situation.

Changing lines modify each Hexagram according to the significance of their position. A changing line (Old Yang or Old Yin) is considered to be unstable and liable to reverse its direction. Every time a line reaches its

Limit, a Change occurs and the Wheel of Manifestation rolls on to a new position. (Both possibilities of every changing line should be considered when preparing an I Ching analogy.)

Complex as they are, the sixty-four Hexagrams of the I Ching still comprise a starkly limited world, yet it is a true microcosm, representing all of the patterns with equal clarity. There are many other representations of these primary patterns of energy, such as the game of Chess which beautifully illuminates the Trigram Li, Conflict. Starting with the Separation into Black and White, each game of chess is a classic battle of Yang and Yin ~ the Irresistible Force (White, with the first move, should always be able to win) against the Immovable Object (Black, which responds, and should always be able to force a Draw, or better, if White should make a mistake).

But since the Macrocosm is infinite, and the unchanging Tao ineffable, particular perspectives are only possible at the expense of perfect clarity. That is, we may see "Reality" as a succession of Fixed Field Illusions ~ a sequence of static arrangements like the still frames of a "motion picture," whose motion or change only becomes apparent by the rapid succession of those still frames. (Here, too, the game of chess is an excellent analogy to this idea.) Or, on the other hand, we may see reality as a succession of changes. Of course, the only way we can view reality at all through either perspective is by means of the other. The succession of Fixed Field Illusions forms one perspective of reality, and the succession of Points of Change forms a complimentary perspective as a parallel universe.

The importance of retaining both perspectives simultaneously is illustrated by the dilemma of the physicists who can not agree on whether a photon of light is a point or a field. Of course it is both at once, and neither the one nor the other! It requires a larger vision of consciousness to perceive the ultimate balance where the entire Macrocosm finally becomes equivalent simultaneously to Zero and Infinity, only apparently existing as a field of manifestation between them by means of the distinction imagined to exist between infinite moments of eternity.



Postscriptum

As I prepare the second edition of Patterns of Illusion and Change, twenty years after its first publication, I see that some of the most important conclusions are not explicitly drawn. Of course, I have always considered this text to represent just the working notes to a series of classes which I would teach, expounding the principle points in greater detail, but I wanted to draw a few conclusions here, just to show the direction in which it can go, as well as to introduce some of my latest speculations on the nature of consciousness and its relationship with God.

The most glaring omission in the original text, it seems to me, is any mention of Love. I have tried to make the case that both directions of energy are essential and good, both the Going In as well as the Going Out. The alchemical symbols have always made this point very clear. It is not “God and the Devil”, but two different aspects of God. (Of course the meanings of words must be freshly defined for every usage in order to avoid misunderstanding. Many apparent contradictions are resolved by discovering a discrepancy of definition.) On the other hand, the relationship between the two directions is not a random one at all ~ that would belie the underlying order which informs it all. No, it is the Movement In which defines the center line of the path of the inertia of God. To make it simple, let us say that the Movement In goes towards a theoretical point of Perfection at the very Center, at which point all “good” things converge. For example,

if a person's life is out of balance, out into realms of confusion, if not to chaos, then there will be numerous problems all along the line. Everything will be out of adjustment. You will fight with your wife, shout at your children, and your business and personal affairs will come apart. But when your life is going towards that point of balance, then everything begins to get better. Things come into focus and clarity; your health will improve; your consciousness will improve; and your financial and personal affairs will prosper. Instead of finding yourself running faster and faster and barely being able to keep from slipping backwards (or, in fact, sliding backwards rapidly) you will find things easier all the time with less effort until, as Lao Tzu says, you will reach a point where "you do nothing at all, and yet there is nothing that is undone."

But that is just to define the point and the line, so that a pattern of perspective that encompasses the clarity of the cosmos may be seen. However, if that were all, the process would quickly achieve the identity of Zero or Infinity, and the manifestation of a particular cosmos, apart from the non-differentiated state of Perfection or Nonbeing, would not be possible. So now we come to this movement away from the point ~ that is easily seen and understood as the spark of Life, which is an important aspect of God. As I wrote in one of my earliest books, Jokes, "God is Perfect, but the Devil is looking for another way."

But now we come to the SOLVE ET COAGULA. This movement away from the center is only useful from the reference point of the center line. Movement away from the center line starts first with novelty, then moves

towards a state of greater complexity, then to states of confusion, and finally to states of chaos. So in order for SOLVE away from the center to be useful, it must be followed by COAGULA back to the center. This movement away may be variously viewed as Don Juan's "controlled folly," or art, or music, or literature, or even ornament. Deviations and variations around a point eventually modify the direction, and contribute to the refining of the center line itself. A good way to elucidate that thought is from another quotation from the same book of Jokes: " ~ But not very often. (Sometimes the Devil has a good idea.)"

An amusing idea I have had lately is that "a good measure of a person's spiritual growth is the degree to which they love everyone." What is funny about this is that everyone is welcome to play the game of "more spiritual than thou." This notion could save the world if it were widely understood. What happens, of course, is that as you approach the heights of spiritual growth, and all things start to converge into clarity and unity, then you will see God, and you will love everyone.

Now, what is actually going on in this convergence? It is really the presence of God. I started out in life as very much a skeptic. At the age of six I had a theological crisis because I couldn't understand the nature of God. I thought the concept of God were puerile and useless. (This was brought early to a head by my father's career as a Methodist minister.) I set out to discover for myself what was the nature of the universe, and how it had come into being. When I first started using the term "God" in my writings, I thought I were being clever and funny ~ it seemed to fit so perfectly, but, of

course, I thought my own peculiar definition of "God" were my own unique understanding. I gradually learned, however, that the fit was not coincidental. However, I continued to assume that my "God" were at least a metaphysical concept that bore no relationship at all to the old man in the sky. However, I have to anticipate my latest thoughts on the subject by saying that my current understanding of "God" is about as personal as any old man in the sky you could imagine.

How is this possible? Let me back up just a bit to tackle another serious and complicated theological paradox, usually called "the Problem of Evil." ~ How can we believe in an all powerful and merciful God, who is good, and just, and loving, in the face of the manifest evil that is present in the world? When we see innocent children mangled by accident or deliberate attack, when the good die young and villains prosper, when awful diseases waste away the bodies and lives of the nicest people (I don't even mention mosquitoes) ~ how, then, can we believe in this all powerful God who is merciful and loving? Either God is not all powerful, or God is not all that good, frankly! So which is it?

That's the problem; I didn't just make it up. And what is the answer? ~ No, God is not all powerful. What made you suppose that God were all powerful? We are just doing the best that we can. How? To be sure, this is going to involve a somewhat different concept about the nature of God. What? God is evolving, along with His universe, as we speak? What hope is there for us if God be not, finally, all powerful? I think the notion that God is all powerful is supposed to give us comfort, but it only makes me

nervous. If God be all powerful, what is going on in our world? I take greater comfort in the hope that the power of God be increasing, so that we may hope that the world may become a better place.

If you read the Old Testament Bible, it sounds like God actually started out on a very primitive level, but more recent conceptions of God are far more progressive. But to explain what I mean by all of this, let me drop that thread for the moment and take up a new one ~ the growth of consciousness. I remember being dazzled and amazed (at that first theological crisis at the age of six) by the whole idea of consciousness. What I couldn't figure out was how come I happened to be "me" instead of anybody else? What was this "consciousness" all about? It baffled me then, and only begins to make sense to me now. I have looked at the evolution of consciousness. I consider animals, and wonder to myself how much consciousness they have. It seems to be apparent that dogs and cats have more consciousness than chickens, for example. Does my amazing and wonderful cat Meander Polydactyl really have as much consciousness as he seems to have? ~ or am I just projecting this? To summarize my speculations, I postulate a continuum in which consciousness may range from "sub conscious" beginnings, through to ordinary human consciousness, and on to substantial and wide-ranging cosmic consciousness. There may easily be species overlap. I am quite sure, for example, that Meander's consciousness, while perhaps rudimentary, is nonetheless considerably more advanced than that of the average American President. (Wasn't it Mark Twain who proposed replacing kings with cats?) (And, as Joan Baez once said, "You should hear the verses I left out!")

So, here is where it gets interesting ~ if, in general, the consciousness of an organism is in direct correlation (more or less) with the complexity of the organism, then the more complex the organism, the loftier the consciousness. A human body is made up of many living parts, yet the person as a whole has a single consciousness. Now I consider group consciousness. There is a group consciousness about a beehive or an anthill. I have no trouble at all imagining a "real" consciousness pertaining to a beehive or an anthill. I do not think that each ant has so much consciousness, but I do credit the hive or hill as a whole with having a "real" consciousness, that is not so much different in kind from my own, or Meander's.

Then there are the 100 monkeys. Briefly, the observed phenomenon was that when a certain number of monkeys on an island learned a new trick, then suddenly it entered the group consciousness and all the monkeys knew it, even the monkeys on the other side of the island who had no contact with the monkeys who originated the new trick. Obviously, it is a clear case of shared consciousness.

By extension, I postulate a group consciousness at every level ~ there is a group consciousness to every family, town, school, city, state, nation, race, tribe, or sub-group. This consciousness is made up of the individual consciousness of the members of the group, but then it goes beyond to evolve a unique and single consciousness that, again, is not so very much different in kind from my own or Meander's. This conscious being would be the "god" of that group.

But just as we can break up the human race into as many different countries, races, religions, languages, or any of the other ways in which people differentiate themselves (so that they can go to war with each other), we can also go the other way and postulate a single, planetary human consciousness. But why stop there? This conscious Being of our planet must include the consciousness of animals as well as all of the trees and plants, too. This is the Gaia hypothesis ~ that the entire field of life energy on the planet Earth is a single living organism. ~ and, of course, it is fully conscious (which is just another way of saying the same thing, much like “being in the presence of God” is the same thing as “loving everyone.”)

It is this Consciousness of Gaia that I want to look at here. Since we are talking about levels of consciousness far above our own, that should mean that the nature of that consciousness should be more advanced than our own. That is, not only do I postulate the consciousness of Gaia to be a “real” conscious consciousness, but I suggest that it exists on a more fully developed level than our own. Mother Earth is very much aware, thank you, and struggling to stay alive.

Clearly all of the life energy of the entire Cosmos is co-extensive with the Mind of God, a fully conscious Being. But I think it is appropriate, at this point in time and space, to limit our present horizon to the planet Earth. Relevant to our situation, Gaia is the deity to whom we must pray! We must evolve the god of our little planet for, perhaps, many more millennia before it will be appropriate to look at a larger spiritual reality. For right now, though, Gaia needs all the help we can give her! Everyone who is

alive is partially responsible ~ we must all evolve our consciousness together. And when all of life is finally joined together in One Love, the Kingdom of God will come on Earth, and we can all live, once again, in the Garden, Mother Earth growing green again, instead of withering.

I thought that was a good “curtain line,” but I’m not done. I want to bring this back full circle to the abstractions of metaphysics that my book is all about. In spite of my “demotion” of God, there is still a sense that the fundamental nature of God is what created the Universe in the first place. The final solution to “the riddle of life,” or however you want to express it, may be contained in the equation:

$$0 = \infty$$

It is the constant possibility of the alternative or opposite to every idea that causes our cosmos to come into being in the first place, and the dynamic tension which keeps it forever going on, evolving God knows where. I’m glad Somebody knows.



Memoir of Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche

December, 2005

Recently I was reading a very entertaining book by Sam Kashner, *When I Was Cool*, a memoir of the author's days as a student of Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs, and the "School of Disembodied Poetics," which was contemporaneous with the Naropa Institute at Boulder, Colorado, headed by Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche. Since I had attended a class given by Rinpoche in 1972, I recognized many of the references, and it occurred to me to wonder what had become of that venerable teacher. To my dismay, I found that he had died in 1987. Now I want to add my own recollections of this very interesting man.

I first heard him speak in an interview with CKGM radio station in Montreal, Quebec, probably around 1971. There was a very talented DJ in those days (Doug Pringle, I think his name was) who made that radio station the "hippest" station anywhere. One program I very much enjoyed was his weekly Sunday night interview. Montreal was a large and exciting city, and there were always visiting gurus and holy men of every description, so it was never any problem finding some interesting "guru of the week" to interview on a Sunday night. I listened to these gurus with amusement ~ it seemed to me that most of them were using the interview for their career advancement.

Basically, they had the period of a one hour interview, complete with questions from the listening audience, in which to drum up business for their own particular path toward enlightenment, or whatever they were selling.

I should explain that I have always taken a very great interest in this kind of teaching. In fact, I have studied esoteric teachings of every description all of my life, and my major life's work has been to discover the central ideas which are common to just about every path, and to present them in a systematic and logical presentation.

It used to amuse me to hear these gurus sounding like used car salesmen, hawking their wares, speaking loud and fast about meditation and peace! Anyway, comes the turn of Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche. In most cases, it doesn't take much to get the guru being interviewed to launch into his spiel. The interviewer barely has a chance to get a word in edgewise. Usually, he just introduces the weekly guru, and then turns him loose. Rinpoche, however, had nothing to say. After the usual introductions, he just sat there, smiling. (I could easily hear him smiling, even though it was just a radio program.)

As I have said, the interviewer was very good, and very well versed in all manner of esoteric thought, so he would try to draw him out. "What do you think about the following idea? Would you say that blah, blah, blah, and blah, blah, blah?"

And Rinpoche would answer, "Yes."

The problem, of course, was that the interviewer was too good. "Well, what about this: do you think that blah, blah, blah, and blah, blah, blah?"

“Yes, that’s right.”

This went on for a while, with Rinpoche saying practically nothing at all. Finally, in despair, the interviewer turned to the telephone lines.

Since the callers were so much less erudite than the interviewer, their questions revealed errors of one sort or another, and I noticed with growing awe that Rinpoche took every question and identified the error in a very few well-chosen words, and then reduced the matter to brilliant clarity in a matter of moments. I could still hear him smiling. This continued for the duration of the interview ~ Rinpoche had nothing whatever to say, but if any caller had any question or any confusion, it was quickly and brilliantly reduced to clarity in a very efficient and incisive manner.

I was very impressed. I was so impressed, as a matter of fact, that I packed up my few possessions and went out to Boulder Colorado to attend Rinpoche’s class in Tibetan Buddhism.

His class met once a week for three hours. At the appointed time, the class was full. There were regularly enrolled students, along with a large number of un-enrolled persons “auditing” the class without academic credit. I was one of the latter category. However, Rinpoche was not there. He was late. Everyone waited patiently for him to arrive. We waited and waited. Finally, about forty-five minutes late, he arrived. Rinpoche’s lateness to his classes is legendary ~ you may be surprised to hear that he was only forty-five minutes late, but this was the first class of the semester. At each succeeding class, he was later and later, finally reaching as much as three hours late.

As soon as Rinpoche arrived, everyone rustled their papers, took out their pens and notebooks and adjusted their seating positions in readiness to begin. Rinpoche took a chair at the front of the class and sat there quietly and smiled at the class. He continued to sit there smiling for about another twenty minutes before beginning to speak.

Finally he began to speak. This was supposed to be a three hour class, but he only spoke for about twenty minutes. Those twenty minutes, however, were clear and brilliant expositions of the tenets of Tibetan Buddhism, and I was not disappointed. Then he allowed questions from the class, and he repeated his Montreal stunt ~ every question was very easily and brilliantly reduced to clarity in a very few well chosen words. This was the pattern of every one of his classes. He arrived later and later to his classes as the semester wore on. What I found surprising was that not one of the students ever missed a class or arrived a moment later than the posted starting time! No one wanted to miss a moment, and everyone seemed perfectly content to wait for two hours or more ~ as long as it might take ~ to hear the great man speak! There was never the slightest indication that anyone were restless or annoyed. Everyone sat in the classroom as patiently as you please, waiting for him to arrive. You might think that Rinpoche were returning from some special event in Denver, or at least he might be researching some point he wanted to make for his class, but this was not the case. It soon became common knowledge that he was simply sitting in some local bar, drinking. Of course, as the semester progressed, he would show up for his classes later and later, and more and more drunk.

Every time he finally arrived at the classroom, he would begin by sitting in his chair and smiling quietly for at least twenty minutes or half an hour before beginning to speak. No one seemed to mind his eccentricities in any way. He was non-attached to his ego to a fault! He seemed to live in a world in which he really didn't care what anyone thought about him.

His basic philosophical position was that there is no problem at all. Everything is clear, and he has nothing to say. But when a student has a problem, he is happy to point out the error and reduce the problem back to serene clarity, where he seemed to reside all the time, smiling, and fully at peace.

At one time I showed him some of my own writings, and I wondered what he would have to say. He looked at my writings very carefully for some minutes with close interest, and finally he said, with obvious surprise, "Yes, this is right!" There could be no higher praise from Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche than when he has nothing to say.



Speculations on Cosmology

September, 2007

I have spent most of my life working up a comprehensive outline of metaphysics (*vide: Patterns of Illusion and Change*). This is not intended to be a description of how everything works ~ it is merely an outline of the abstract principles which would form the prolegomena to any such description. Therefore, whenever I try to understand some aspect of how the world works, I try to follow the abstract principles for clues as to how the physical operations might proceed.

I have just been reading Bill Bryson's amusing little volume, *A Short History of Nearly Everything*, and I see that the scientific establishment hasn't yet quite achieved much clarity on two fronts ~ the microcosm and the macrocosm. There seems to be no consensus about what is actually going on, and nary a clue about why or how. So let me see what I can do about clearing up any loose ends.

I begin with the Macrocosm, although I want to start off by repeating the old Hermetic axiom that the Macrocosm is reflected in the microcosm, and that the solution of the obscurities of one will suggest the solutions to the obscurities of the other. Einstein was rightly convinced that it was way beyond "untidy" to have to deal with two entirely separate systems of theoretical physics, one for the macrocosm, and another one for the

microcosm. Surely there must be some “unified field theory” that can explain both of them with a single set of principles. I do not say “a single set of laws,” because one of my principles is that “anything” is either non-existent, or it is simultaneously either one thing, and/or it’s total opposite, and that potentiality is what allows the universe to exist at all in the first place. (0 = infinity) The universe is certainly not a wind-up clock.

According to this theory, the Universe itself sprang into being spontaneously as the alternation between the ideas (which of course are equivalent) of Zero and Infinity. It is only the “imaginary” field composed of the movement between the two “opposite” extremes which presents us with the illusion of an actual, manifest cosmos. I call this the Original Joke, God’s laughter to which constitutes the creation of His cosmos (*vide: Hermetic Alchemy*).

In the present paper, I want to take a closer look into the mechanics of all of that, venturing a little further out from the safety of abstract ideas to speculations which will touch upon some of the questions disturbing modern physics.

I wish to offer a disclaimer at the outset that I consider my special field of expertise to be in the realm of the abstraction, so the further out I range into questions of physics, the less confident I feel of the integrity of my solutions. So, if I sound like I am pontificating *ex cathedra*, ~ well, I guess that’s what I am doing. Ideas just come to me.

I take as my jumping off point the notion of the expanding universe, consequent upon the hypothesized Big Bang, and I compare it with my own *Patterns* for the Process of Change. According to my *Patterns*, the process

of change passes progressively and repeatedly through four primary phases, which correspond with the Four Elements of Aristotle, and the Four Seasons of Nature. These also correspond with the four values of Yang and Yin, which greatly clarify the concept which is but inadequately described by “Yang and Yin.” (We may say that “Yang and Yin” constitutes the Second Arcanum, while, through the agency of the Third Arcanum, the four values constitute the Fourth Arcanum, physical manifestation. Those four values are: **young yang** (☲ Fire, Spring), **old yang** (☱ Air, Summer), **young yin** (☵ Water, Autumn), and **old yin** (☷ Earth, Winter).

We might describe those four values for our present purpose (of course, as abstract concepts, they might be described differently, but comparably, for different applications) as young yang = active contraction towards a point; old yang = active expansion outward, away from the center; young yin = passive contraction back to the center; and old yin = passive expansion outward. Old Yang might be described as the extreme of Order (or Infinity; The Creative in the *I Ching*), while Old Yin might be described as the extreme of Chaos (or Zero; The Receptive in the *I Ching*).

My first observation is that, while cosmologists are trying to make a single determination for the state of the cosmos, my own assumption would be that the universe is now undergoing its second phase, that of the old yang. So, instead of supposing that the universe “began” with a Big Bang, and has since been expanding outward, I would rather assume that the universe has passed through the “singularity” represented as the turning point between young yang and old yang, and is now in the process of its active, outward expansion towards greater complexity and higher states of order (my system posits two sudden changes and two gradual changes; the next change, that

from old yang to young yin, will be extremely gradual). The fact that the expansion of the universe is or appears to be accelerating suggests that we are nowhere close to the turning point towards young yin.

This already seems to me to put the ebb and flow of the cosmos into a more understandable context, but I want to continue the analogy to my *Patterns of the Process of Change* to suggest that we are simply enjoying one of an infinite series of universes, each one very similar to the one before it, but slightly changed, incorporating some new elements of Novelty with each successive universe. Thus, with each passage through that point of Singularity (the Omega Point of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin), the new incarnation of the universe that follows will be just a bit different than the one that preceded it, much like the evolutionary succession of lives of any living species.

[I must make a side track here and mention that the succession of lives does not assume a reincarnation of previous consciousness; I rather hold to the principle of the continuity of consciousness. The point of my analogy is simply that with every successive life of any living organism, there is the opportunity for a fresh spasm of Novelty to promote a gradual evolution.]

Now, to imagine an infinite series of universes coming and going in this way is a whole lot easier for me to understand than the notion that our Universe just suddenly popped into being out of nothingness, fully blown, like Athena from the head of Zeus.

What? I thought I was the proponent of creation *ex nihilo*, suggesting that the universe did, in fact, do just that? Aha: yes, but not to this point; not to this universe we are currently enjoying! My third conclusion is that

the succession of universes follows the pattern of the creation of life; namely, that it happened very, very slowly! I would suppose that our current universe represents a very mature specimen of universe. Universes may have been “blinking on and off” for many trillions of such incarnations (each one, of course, existing for the length of time usual with universes, so that the process I am describing did not happen in any six days).

Of course, none of this (yet) describes how the very first one popped into being, but we are getting to that. At least looking at our universe as a manifestation somewhere quite well along, after the succession of universes has had quite an extensive time to evolve from its primitive and abstract beginnings, makes a whole lot more sense to me than anything I have heard described heretofore.

Let me compare the evolution of successive universes to the origin of life on earth. I don't find the origin of life to be so surprising, after all. I am still quite amazed and dazzled by the implications of Consciousness, but life itself seems simple enough. I think Wilhelm Reich was on the right track in his descriptions of the origins of life from very primitive beginnings, starting with simple heating and cooling (following the day and night cycle of the earth), followed by a progressively more pronounced and definite pulsation (“bions” he called them; not yet alive, but precursors to life). These grains of sand in the desert (where there is a large fluctuation in temperature between day and night) may have gone on pulsating in some elementary way for untold millions of years before the intersection of another alternation, the wet and dry cycle, may have boosted the pulsation to something just a tad more complex. After as many more millions of years as you please, we still

might not want to call the little pulsating jolt “alive” or anything, but we can see where this is going.

Obviously, there was never one fine morning when the thing suddenly passed into “life” from its pre-life origins. Even after all of these many millions of years, what we may have is so primitive that no one will agree upon the point at which to call it “alive.” We might say that at some point in the distant past the bit of pulsating matter could not really be called “alive,” but by so many hundreds of millions of years later, it really did seem to exhibit properties which might merit the term, even though in an extremely primitive way. If the cosmos be thirteen and a half billion years old (give or take a few billion, and dating it just from the most recent passage through the Singularity), there is plenty of time for this process to evolve as sedately as you please.

Now to compare all of that with my succession of universes ~ when my first “universe” popped into being *ex nihilo*, it really wasn’t any instance of “something” popping into existence out of “nothing.” It was the joke of considering the alternation from “zero” to “infinity” to have any meaning. It was only after many trillions (“or so”) of such alternations that there was anything present in the passage between zero and infinity that might appear to anyone as anything real. Indeed, the whole substance of my theory of cosmology is that “Everything is all a Big Joke” (~ Dr. Ed Madden, University of Connecticut, *circa* 1954). Or, to express it more specifically, what we think of as the manifest cosmos is really only the field of illusion that seems to exist as God laughs His way from Zero to Infinity and back again.

Still more specifically, I assume that if all of the matter and energy of the cosmos were added up, it would be equal to, yes, take your pick ~ zero and/or infinity. And this is exactly what happens when “all of the matter and energy of the universe is compressed into a single point of no dimensions” as it passes through the famous Singularity (the Big Bang) on its way to incarnating as yet another Universe in the series.

So, when a new universe pops into being, it doesn't really come out of nowhere ~ it follows the inertia of the previous universe, creating a new one very similar to the one before, only this time modified with some additional Novelty as it continues to evolve.

I know I am repeating the expositions of my earlier works when I say that this concept of Novelty is “movement away from the center,” (Yang “the Creative”), in contrast to the Inertia of God which tends to return to the center (Yin, “the Receptive”). “The Devil” has been defined, ingeniously enough, as “distance from God,” suggesting that movements away from the center are movements towards the Devil, while movements towards the center go closer to God. However, I find it more illuminating to think of these two directions as two different aspects of God; there is not a “war in Heaven” so much as an eternal creative interplay of these two ideas.

The movement away from the center is Novelty, which becomes Creativity and Complexity. However, if this movement continues further and further away, it becomes Confusion, and, finally, Chaos. But without that creative movement away from the center, the cosmos would eventually resolve itself back to nothingness.

So, after all of this, I think the nature of the cosmos is a little more clear, yet there are two questions still unanswered. One question is, of course, “why should this Joke have happened, anyway? And, secondly, just how much potential for Novelty is there?”

As to the first question, I might say that the concept is inherent in the metaphysics, which is another way of saying that there really isn't any other basis upon which you could postulate a cosmos. Or, you might simply say that a universe without any potential for novelty would never, therefore, have any chance of coming into being, so, since there seems to be a cosmos here of one sort or another, then clearly such a potential had to exist. I am trying to say that the joke of nothingness being separable into Zero and Infinity is a form of tautology. I am also saying that my descriptions of the Patterns of the Process of Change are the only such patterns which are possible, hence they are inevitable and inescapable. If we were to start all over again with “Nothingness,” sooner or later God would have to appear, popping into existence Himself as His laughter creates His cosmos.

The second question is a bit more subtle. If everything were constantly switching into its opposite, there would be no stability at all, and there would be nothing but total chaos. However, I don't think there is some “Cosmological Constant Novelty Factor.” I recall some very interesting studies of chaos, in which it is discovered that “pure chaos” is impossible, since “pure chaos” is really a kind of order. I think that the study went on to suggest that whenever there is set up any situation of “chaos,” sooner or later it seems to resolve itself into orderly patterns. That is to say, total chaos is a kind of order.

Like genetic mutation, novelty is attempted constantly. Most of the time, novelty goes nowhere, and becomes simply a deviation towards error (towards the Devil), but every once in a while, the random reaching outward into Novelty accomplishes something sufficiently interesting so that the likelihood of it happening again increases. And Who knows to what consequences that might lead?

Is God Almighty?

December, 2010

Any serious effort to discuss theology must begin with a rigorous analysis of all definitions involved in the discussion. It was the brilliant insight of Wittgenstein that when these definitions are exhaustively analyzed until total clarity has been achieved, the questions and problems will unravel themselves, and vanish. It is the disappearing knot trick.

Every “problem” in philosophy should simply melt away like last year’s snow under the bright light of this process of analysis. Once “clarity” has been achieved, whatever has been under discussion will simply be reduced to “zero” (or “infinity”; the two terms mean the same thing). When the “joke” is explained that caused the divergence of the infinite wisdom into two opposite ideas, then once again “it is all one.”

It is only after this process has really been wrung dry, that it is possible to examine the fragments that might remain and see if they constitute an idea or not. Is there any point at all, for example, of introducing a term such as “God” into the discussions of philosophy? Does the whole thing have any meaning, and if it do, then what be it? (This is the subjunctive mood again, Buster, and if you don’t like it, just put up with it.)

There may be nearly as many ideas of what God is as there are people to wonder about it. There are many traditional definitions, but not really any

final consensus; at least, not any consensus to which I am able to subscribe. One way that I see to express the answer to the question is to say that “God is what is left over when all jokes are explained and vanish.”

Well, I have my idea of what is the most relevant and useful way to understand the ultimate resolution of this oldest of all problems, “*What is the Nature of God?*” But I want to compare that idea with some of the traditional definitions. If there be a proposed consensus, it seems to run along these lines: In the First place, it is the Agency by which the cosmos were created, or came into Being. Next, it is pretty universally presumed to be omnipotent and omniscient ~ all powerful and all knowing. Finally, it is asserted to be all good.

The fly in the ointment is the Problem of Evil. One way to express the Problem of Evil is, “*How can you believe in a merciful God when there are such creatures as mosquitoes on the earth?*” There are several other ways in which this problem is sometimes presented, but they all convey the same general idea.

I finally came to the conclusion that something had to go, and it was the idea that God were omnipotent. All of the other attributes are clear and wonderful, even obvious; but there is really no reason to introduce omnipotence among the other attributes of God. In fact, once you consider the aspect of a God which is a little more humble than previous incarnations, your admiration may clarify and greatly enlarge, not be reduced, by “such a come-down as to be giving up the claim to omnipotence.”

Even the omniscience might be toned down a bit. The Omniscience of God is obviously the Collective Unconscious, as it was termed by Carl

Jung, or the Mind of *Gaia*, or Cosmic Consciousness, as others describe it. God is Life, and Life is Consciousness. The more life, the more consciousness; and the more consciousness, the more life. However, vast as this Ocean of Consciousness may be, we can only speculate as to its limits.

Even the assumption that it must be “good” must be looked at very carefully to be sure we understand what we mean by “good.” Is Life as a whole more interested in the survival and enlargement in the whole field of life energy, or does it favor any one part of that ocean of life? To put it bluntly, is Man favored of God, or what?

I don't present my arguments here; I only present my conclusions. The ideas and arguments are far too complex to put into words, and I don't want to make that effort, but I think the human race does represent a very mature development of the energy of life, and, as such, its survival will always be a major part of the agenda of life. However, the survival of the trees may overshadow the importance of man; if the planet becomes uninhabitable, the race of man cannot survive.

The most pressing problem on *Gaia's* agenda is to reverse the physical decline of the earth. Since *Gaia* (or God) be not omnipotent, it must be up to Us Who are actually God, after all, to take upon Ourselves this responsibility.

The Kabbalah and The Tree of Life

March, 2011

I have studied eclectic philosophy all my life. I learned most about the Tree of Life of the Kabbalah when I accidentally re-invented it. When I saw that what I had done matched completely what was done before, I began to think that I must be on the right track.

It was Pythagoras who had the brilliant epiphany that the Numbers of mathematics are themselves the primary symbols of the Arcana, and comprise the original Metaphysics representing our Cosmos as Emanations from God. It is like all of the laws of geometry being based upon the definitions and axioms of Euclid.

Early on in my studies I figured out that all of the philosophies and religions in the world were all based around the same series of primary ideas, some emphasized more than others. I sorted out the ideas into those ideas expressed by the number One, ideas represented by the number Two, ideas illuminated by the number Three, ideas corresponding to the number Four, and ideas relating to the number Five. The meaning of each of these primary mysteries is best illuminated symbolically by the concept of the number associated with each idea (*Pythagorean Doctrine*).

I developed simple images to illustrate the essence of each number, and this sequence of ideas represented by the numbers of mathematics formed the basis of my studies and teaching of Hermetic philosophy.

One day, pretty much by accident, I happened to stack my images vertically instead of horizontally, the way I had been presenting them in my books. To my surprise, I immediately recognized the Tree of Life from the Kabbalah. At first I thought this were an amusing coincidence, but, upon further investigation, I discovered that it was not simply the visible picture that was matched, but in every case, each of the 10 spheres (*Sephiroth*) corresponded precisely to the significance of the same position on my design! At first I was astonished, but eventually I realized that it would be more astonishing if they differed, since my sequence of images was intended to convey the same sequence of ideas represented by the Tree of Life: a primary Metaphysics illuminating evolution from God to Man.

After discovering this similarity, it became an easy matter to develop a much deeper understanding and appreciation of the Tree of Life. This is the same sequence of primary ideas as represented by every spiritual teaching in one way or another.

This primary sequence of Ideas and their Numbers from Pythagoras is none other than the Four Letters of the Name of God: *Tetragrammaton*. I was always very interested in the Tetragrammaton, as it was said to be the highest Key to understanding the Mysteries ~ the *Arcana*. However, all of my research sources lamented that the meaning and significance of the Tetragrammaton, while revered as surely the highest Key to the Mysteries, has, unfortunately, been lost. But such Mysteries cannot be lost. As Pythagoras tells us, the Illumination of each Mystery is contained within itself.

vide: Patterns of Illusion and Change, reprinted in The Laughter of God.

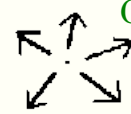
Yod Arcanum I.

Kether



He Arcanum II.

Binah
Moon

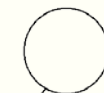


Chokmah
Sun

SOLVE

Vau Arcanum III.

Geburah
Tamas



Chesed
Rajas

COAGULA

Tiphereth

Satva

He Arcanum IV.

Hod
Water



Netzach
Fire



Yesod

Air



Manifestation

Malkuth

Earth

The Tree of Life

The Hierarchy of Importance

June, 2011

The Hierarchy of Importance suggests an idea which comes very close to an illumination of the concept of God. It is of universal application: it is always invoked, in addition to anything else going on. When one searches philosophy for an answer to the questions of life, the function of the reply is to indicate that it is really the answer to the question, “What should I *do, now?*” That is really the answer behind every question; so what should I *do, now?*

Like everything else, the answer will unfold along the lines of that hierarchy of importance. What is of the most fundamental importance? I start with an understanding of our world as a single integrated field of life energy existing within the edges of chaos. What is important to understand is that it is a single organism, and that it is alive, and conscious. Perhaps it is linked with other patches of life energy in the universe, but, in any case, it is most useful to focus our attention upon the life we know of, here: *Gaia*, a personification of the living aspect of all of life on our planet Earth (God, to us).

Our hierarchy of importance starts with the survival and growth of this organism, which is *us*, after all. The major observation is that this field of life energy is under enormous, seemingly insurmountable, levels of stress; the

planet has been visibly dying for several hundred years, and the pace of disintegration of the life force has picked up lately as the earth falls further and further behind, biologically.

Next in importance comes the consciousness that the biological condition of the earth needs to be turned around immediately, “at war-time speed,” as Lester Brown says in his important book, *World on the Edge*. In fact, that book is an excellent place to begin learning about all of the problems facing the survival of life on earth, and some of the suggested ways of addressing those issues.

That book doesn’t really consider the political issues, but there are very definitely political obstacles to the rapid and efficient management of the earth’s resources back to a sustainable, and regenerative, level. So this next idea is the *One World Government*, as the political evolution most immediately essential for the regeneration of the earth to be undertaken. This is always the most politically charged proposal, but the only alternative to some form of *One World Government*, is a *Jungle of Sovereign States*, which is the political format which we are currently enjoying. At least, I suppose we are enjoying it. In the interests of a tight edit, I here omit a whole tirade upon the abuses borne by our Mother Earth by some of her Sovereign Masters, lately.

Moving right along, once we have a One World Government and a Single Currency, we will also want a standard and universal land tax, collected and administered by the state, but no other taxation, other than some sort of “resource depletion tax” which will be used to modify inappropriate activity for the earth.

Next in importance is to establish free farms for the indigent, world-wide. Everywhere in the world there should be places where anyone can go to live for free, with food to eat. This is by far the easiest way to deal with the problem of hungry people: just feed them!

At this point in the argument, it is time to address major issues in land use management in order to evolve ways of living on the earth which will tend to increase the life energy, order, and efficiency of life, rather than continuing the parade of its decline and death. It will come as a surprise to no one that I put the restoration of the Trees as first in importance under this heading!

But, not only do we need to plant more trees, we need to manage all of the biological cycles in the most efficient way, following the course recommended by nature. We will want to create healthy soil for restoring the earth to fertility, and an important example of what needs to be done is for all of the collection of residential organic waste (the toilet, plus kitchen scraps and yard waste) to be processed and returned to the soil in as short a loop as possible (whenever possible, all recycling should be done on the spot, *in situ*). All organic waste, from all sources, must be returned to the soil, or otherwise recycled into use. I have never believed that the entire whirlwind of waste processing is simply to throw it away. *As Above, So Below*: as it is in my garden, so it may be on the Earth: if I constantly recycle all organic waste back to my compost piles, active with worms, then I very quickly accumulate an abundance of rich soil which may be used to increase the coverage of my cultivation. But if the soil be depleted and dry, with flooding and soil erosion in other seasons, then the land will rapidly decline back to the desert.

The next in importance would be to establish a *Seat of Authority* behind the One World Government. My own idea is a Seminary of Candidates, a School of International Studies, which would collectively hold the *Seat of Authority* (*Throne*, or *Cathedra*), and which would endow one of their number as their Spokesperson, who would personally sign their decisions as their agent and advocate.

From here I see a great many lesser matters of process which seem to be flawed, and in need of correction of error. One of the most important ideas is the understanding of personal health in the same light as the health of Mother Earth, or *Gaia*. In order to ensure the survival of life on earth, we want to encourage all of the natural life processes to continue, and minimize interference from the forces of chaos. In the case of the soil of our earth, it is essential to cultivate her as an organic, living being, rich with life, and not clouded with chemical interference whose long term consequences are generally the opposite of the early experience (just exactly the same pattern as any other drug).

And we should treat our own body with the same reverence and respect, trying to understand how to maximize the integration of our life forces in accordance with the natural process, avoiding the use of synthetic chemicals. As our lands will become fertile again, our bodies will likewise become healthy and fertile again, and life can go on.

The Colors of the Aura

2013 ~ 2017

When you add the Colors of the Aura to the patterns of energy described by the trigrams of the *I Ching*, the planets of Astrology, and the metals of Alchemy, it is easy to see anything in terms of its life energy just by considering the visual impact represented by the color of its aura. When Life is broken down into its elements, there is Chaos and Death at the bottom, then Aggression and Failure, War and Peace, the Giving and Receiving of Love, and, at the top, the Point of Perfection, Love, and Bliss: Union with God.

There are eight patterns of energy in this cycle of life, and each one can be easily understood by means of its color: Black is the color of death and chaos; Red is aggression and anger; Purple is rejection and defeat; Orange is war; Blue is peace; Yellow is giving love; Green is receiving love; and White is union with God.

The color of the aura reflects the spiritual evolution or consciousness of the energy form. These auras are not only visible in people, but plants and animals, and even planets, may be seen with their auras clearly visible. There is a simple and obvious hierarchy of spiritual evolution, from the violence and anger of the lower levels, to the higher and much healthier expressions of life energies reaching upwards to love and union.

The theory of alchemy is that the process of change follows an underlying pattern that can be seen in everything that happens. The progression through the metals, from Lead to Gold, has been understood as an analogy to the progress of the soul or consciousness of man, as expressed in the color of his aura. In an earlier article (*The Metaphysics of Sex*), these same patterns of energy were viewed within the context of sexual expression.

At the end of life, back to the original chaos, there is the color Black. Then there are the edges of life and death: Red, the color of aggression, anger, and violence, and Purple, the color of oppression, rejection, and failure. Above this there are the energies represented by the colors Orange and Blue: war and peace. From here, the ranks thin out considerably, as so much of the world, its animals, its plants, and its people, seem to be living their lives in the realms of the lower energies, represented by the darker colors of their aura. Planet Earth, *Gaia*, is dying, twisting and turning in the sordid colors of Red, aggression, anger, and violence, and the Purple of oppression, rejection, and defeat, always edged with Black, and within all of this turmoil on the face of the planet, most of the plants, animals, and people living on the earth seem to be affected by that powerful vortex of negative energy, and so they are caught up in the same energies and colors.

In fact, a considerable amount of energy has to be expended in order to get some upward traction in spiritual evolution, in the face of a dying planet that no longer supports life. There have been many efforts to turn this around, first on a personal level, and then on a planetary level, but the heavy weight of inertia makes it hard to break free. So it is perfectly clear: if we want our world to survive, and to grow into a healthier world for us to live in,

it is essential for all animals, plants, and people to elevate the horizons of their spiritual growth, so that, as *Gaia*, we can continue to survive.

Voltaire figured out long ago that we should all go out and work in the garden: that is the solution to all of the problems of the world. All systems of life must follow the natural process, from organic composting, mulch, and earth worms, to a complete avoidance of chemical fertilizers for the fields, and pharmaceutical drugs for people and animals. These drugs are all of a piece, and they are killing off the bees, and soon the genetically modified soybean and corn, along with copious amounts of glyphosate Round-Up, will kill off the rest of us. It is already happening: the growing prevalence of cancer is just one of the visible effects of living in a world environment which is becoming more and more toxic to life.

So, let us go out and work in the garden, and, with enough sunshine and rain, there will be plenty of green once again on the earth. All of our wounds have to heal, and we must all together try to ascend to a healthier state of life, and try to nurture our planet and ourselves back to health.



BLACK

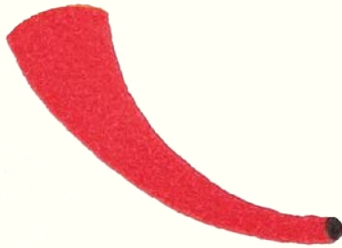
Earth

Prima Materia

☷ K'un

Solitude or Death

The Priest ~ The Magician ~ The Madman



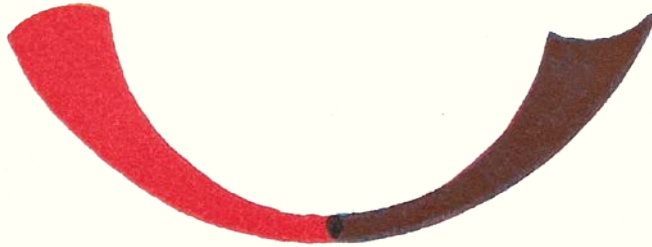
RED

Mars

Iron

☱ Chên

Aggression, Anger, or Violence



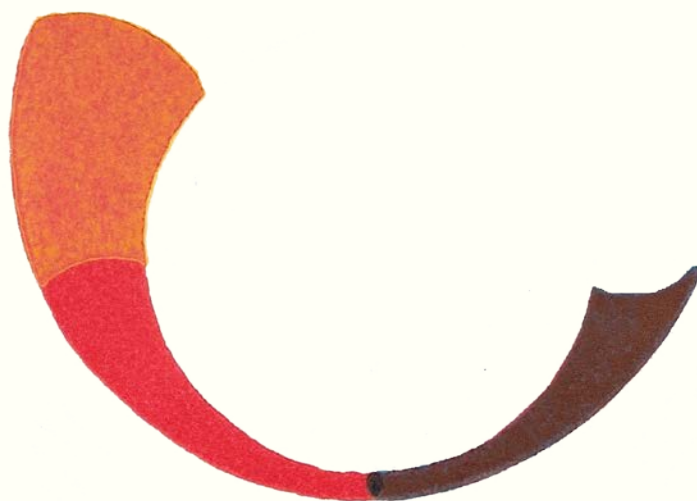
PURPLE

Saturn

Lead

☶ Kên

Oppression or Suffering



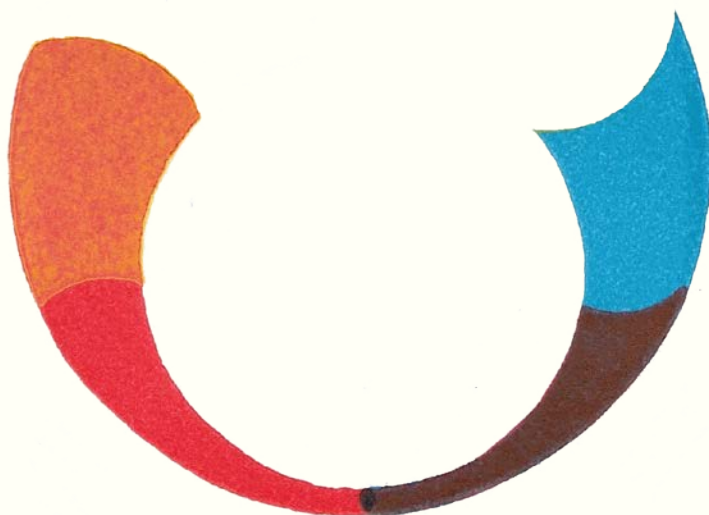
ORANGE

Mercury

Quicksilver

☿ Li

Conflict, War



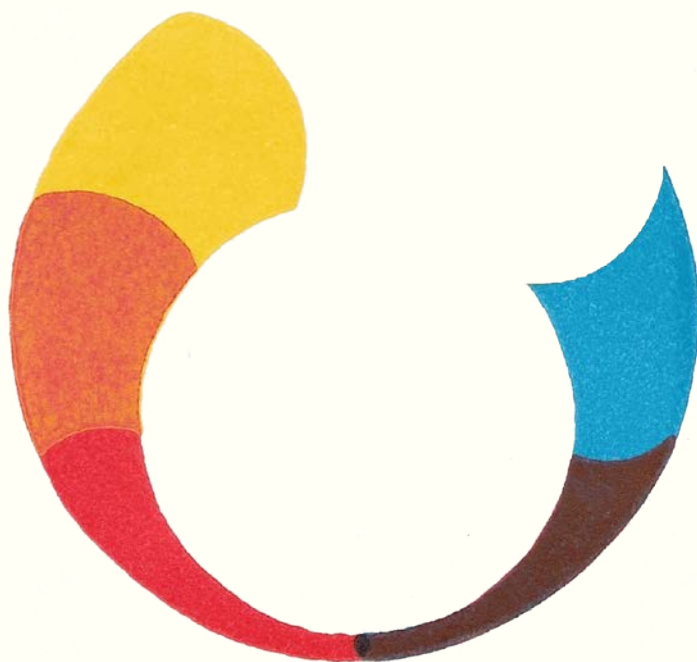
BLUE

The Moon

Silver

☰ K'an

Peace



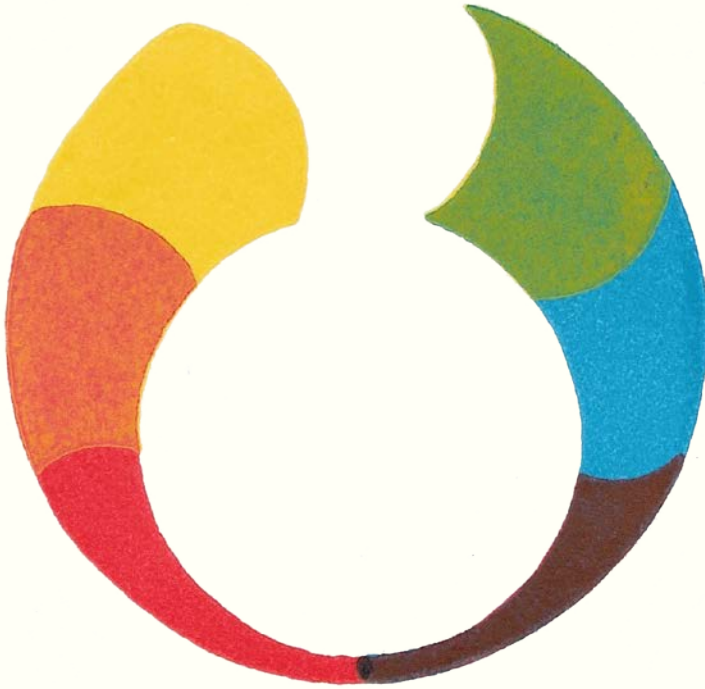
YELLOW

Jupiter

Tin

☵ Tui

Love



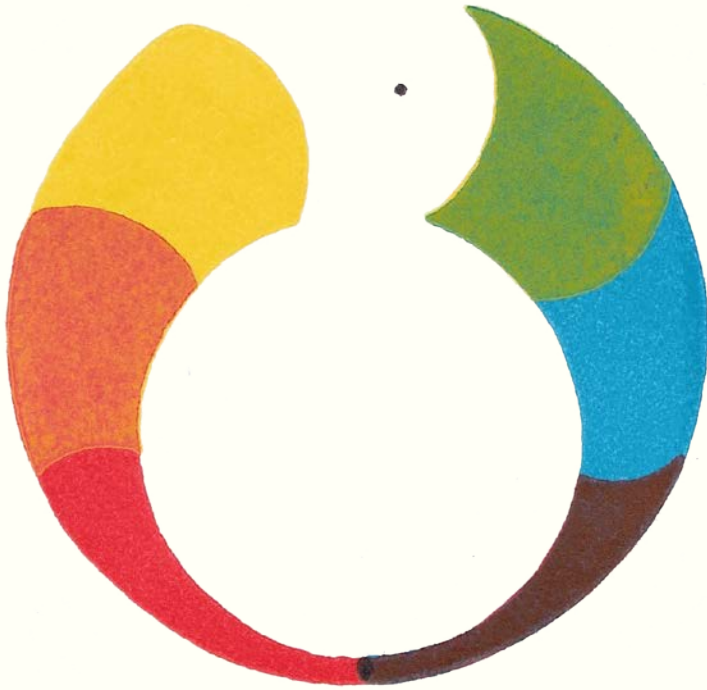
GREEN

Venus

Copper

☰ Sun

Grace



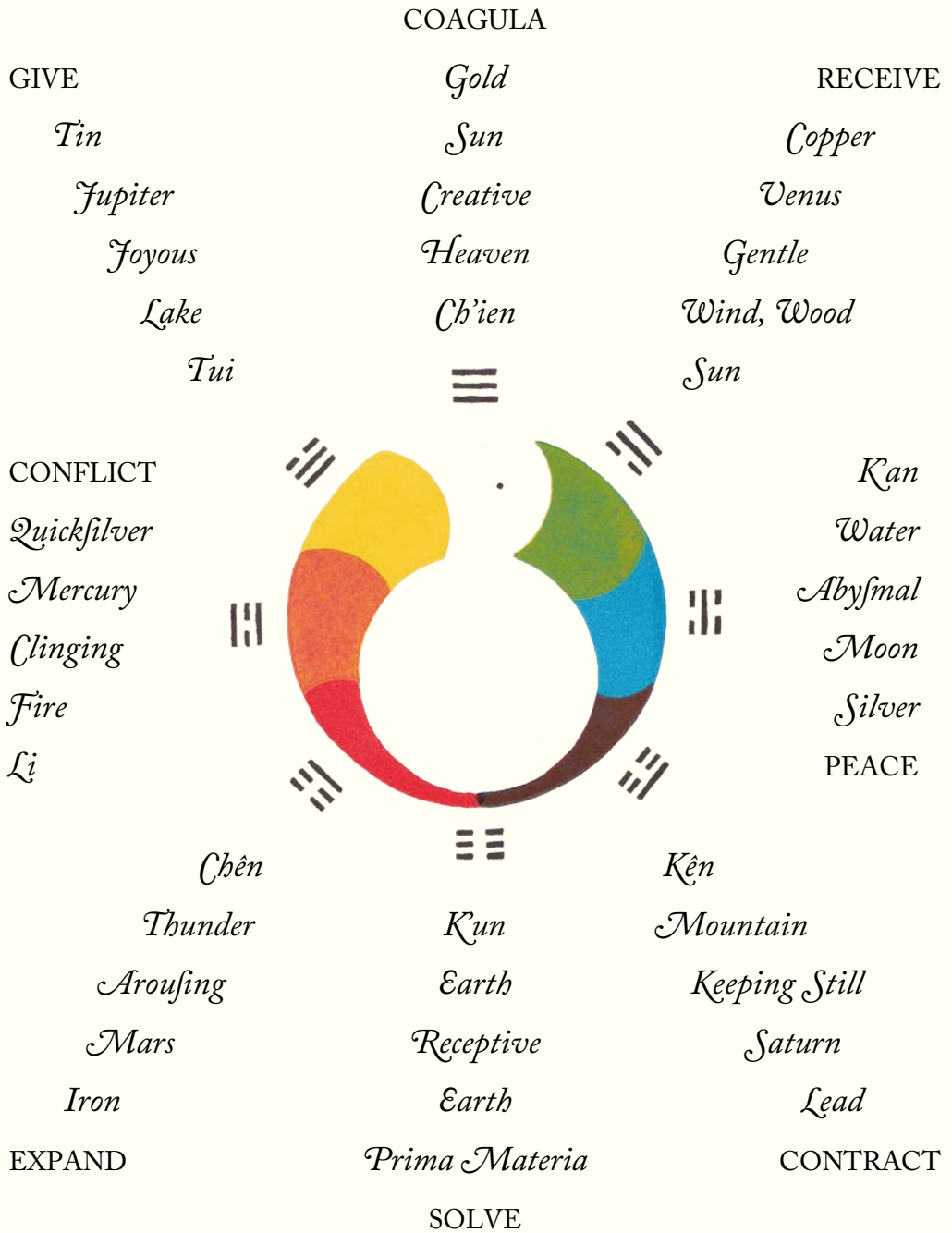
WHITE

The Sun

Gold

☰ Ch'ien

Union



The Evolution of Theology

2016

In my own life, my ideas of religion and theology have passed through a very surprising evolution. Born the son and grandson of Methodist ministers, with my father also a PhD in Philosophy, I was familiar with religious ideas from my earliest years, dutifully attending Sunday School and Church services every week. However, being an intelligent child with an inquiring mind, I was naturally an atheist from at least the age of seven or eight. I suppose it is possible that in my yet earlier and more tender years I may have believed, or at least accepted, my father's explanations of theological questions, but as soon as I was old enough to understand the ideas which I was expected to believe, I thoroughly rejected them. "Just Who does he think is listening to those prayers he makes in church every Sunday morning?" I was embarrassed for my naive and simple-minded father, who had done so well academically, but seemed to be so lacking in mature judgment and critical discernment.

As I grew into adolescence and beyond, my rejection of all fanciful ideas of religion only hardened into a confirmed atheism. However, I found myself confronted with metaphysical questions which I could not answer. Even in my earliest days of rejection of religious answers to the primary questions of philosophy and metaphysics, I had sense enough to realize that

it was not sufficient to proclaim negation; if I were going to reject the religious answers to these questions, I must put forward some credible alternatives which I could believe. In other words, to present the problem in terms of the eight-year-old atheist, if the universe were not created by God, where did it come from? (Or, "Who made God, or where did He come from?") These questions boggled my little brain, but every time I had to endure the embarrassment of listening to my father's Sunday morning prayers, I renewed my determination to understand these questions "without the use of theological postulates." Accordingly, I have spent most of my life searching for answers to these questions. I studied every source of philosophy and religion ~ Christian, Hebrew, Moslem, Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist, Hermetic philosophy, occult philosophy, Freemasonry, even Satanism, as well as the whole gamut of Western philosophy from Heraclitus, Pythagoras, and Plato to Wittgenstein and Whitehead.

From what started out as a huge chaos and confusion of contradictory ideas, I gradually began to discover some promising threads, finding links of remarkable similarity from widely disparate sources. The alchemical ideas of Hermetic philosophy were some of the first to impress me the most favorably. I began to see some patterns emerging out of the labyrinth of ideas, and I gradually began to understand a principle which seemed to be at the heart of the process of change. I liked the concept of the Philosophers' stone, and thought I understood the pivotal role it played in the process of Change which lay at the heart of the mysteries. The Greeks were barking up the wrong tree looking for some fundamental particle or "atom" which was the ultimate basis of the universe. Actually, Heraclitus was onto the right approach, declaring that Change was the ultimate reality.

Gradually I developed an understanding of a whole abstract metaphysics which seemed to bring me closer and closer to an understanding of the primary mysteries of nature (referred to as the Arcana in the old mystery schools). At one point it occurred to me that I might even refer to the Philosophers' Stone as "God," and I thought that was pretty clever, to use the name of God to explain the ordering principle of my system of abstract metaphysics. Then, finally, it dawned on me that I had just discovered what many people had meant by "God" all along! But, of course, my own understanding of "God" was entirely abstract and had nothing whatever to do with that funny Being to Whom my father was addressing his prayers!

In this essay, I want to go over all of this ground again, describing how my understanding gradually evolved to a deeper understanding of the nature of God, reaching such astonishing conclusions as an understanding of the three Persons of the Trinity, and even an understanding of a personal God Who might even hear and answer prayer! And ~ most astonishing of all ~ if anyone had ever told my eight-year-old self that I would someday come to recognize Jesus Christ as the most important religious figure of all time, I would not have believed it.

Not that all of my conclusions are entirely orthodox, by any means! I have finally achieved my childhood quest of understanding the creation of the cosmos *ex nihilo*, and I have even solved the difficulty of the Problem of Evil ("How can we believe in a good, just, and merciful God when there are mosquitoes in the world?" ~ one of many ways in which this old problem can be expressed.) Along the way, I have come to have a radical understanding of God which is contrary to every previous conception of His nature, but

which resolves all of the problems pertaining to our understanding of God. It is this new interpretation of the mystery of God which I wish to introduce in the present essay.

I wish to carry the evolution of God forward in the same sequence in which it has come to me, beginning with rejection and atheism, evolving thence into an abstract metaphysics, then emerging as a conscious and personal God, and finally revealing the outstanding importance of Jesus Christ.

Rejection and atheism is easy. It has always been easier for big sister Lucy to knock over little brother's house of blocks, laughing, than it ever was for Linus to construct his creative work of architecture in the first place.

"Where does the sky end?" was my earliest problem. It was useless for my father to assure me that the sky goes on forever ~ how can that be? Infinity is not a concept that an eight-year-old mind can grasp. But the infinity of time is even more puzzling than that of space. It is bad enough to assert that the universe will go on forever, but to go into the past and pretend that it has always existed is patently absurd, as any bright eight-year-old could easily assure you.

Another absurdity is the notion that we should accept the truth of revealed religion on faith! As Bertrand Russell has observed (quoted from memory; not a direct quote), "There are many hundreds of different religions in the world, all of them mutually exclusive and contradictory, so that it stands to reason, as a matter of logic, that no more than one of them could represent the truth, and all the rest of them are just bunk, so why should anyone believe that the religion into which they happen to have been born is

the truth? It is more logical to assume that all of them are bunk.” ~ Bertrand Russell, *Why I Am Not a Christian*. I fully understand the difficulty ~ since it is considered to be impossible to come to any clear theological understanding by reason alone, the only recourse left to us is to accept our revealed beliefs on faith.

Well, I am here to pick two holes in that analysis. In the first place, as I researched every imaginable source of religious and philosophical ideas, I began to see many of the most important ideas cropping up again and again, clothed, it is true, in an extravagant variety of costumes, but of which certain core ideas kept coming up unmistakably again and again with surprising similarity. Eventually I began to distinguish these ideas and sort them out into a system according to their patterns. Suddenly Bertrand Russell’s whole argument flipped onto its head ~ if the same fundamental ideas keep coming up again and again no matter how widely diverse the sources, there must be something to it!

The second hole in the idea that belief can only be based on faith since there is no way to derive an understanding of religion by reason alone is that I have done just exactly that ~ without relying upon faith at all; in fact, starting from a total rejection of everything I was expected to believe on faith ~ I have derived an understanding of metaphysics and theology which I am not only convinced is correct, but which I believe is the only solution possible to the major problems of philosophy. But what ended up as a complete and integrated system of metaphysics started out as just a series of related ideas.

One of my epiphanies along the way was to see that these ideas were most effectively illustrated by the numbers of mathematics. I understood that this was the meaning of the claim by Pythagoras that Numbers were the

Secret Key to an understanding of the Mysteries of Nature. (So, actually, this epiphany occurred to Pythagoras first, but it was an original idea to me.) “Mathematics is the language of God.” The concept of Number is the mother of all abstraction. The whole field of mathematics is *a priori* knowledge that can be conceived without any reference to the external world. There is a mystery associated with the number One, another mystery associated with the number Two, another mystery associated with the number Three, and another mystery associated with the number Four. The mysteries continue, but these first four are the most important and primary. In fact, the smaller the number, the more important the mystery in a kind of logarithmic scale in which each number is more important than the one which follows. This sequence of the first four primary mysteries comprise what Pythagoras referred to as the *Tetractys*. It is represented also by the four letters of the Name of God in Hebrew (the *Tetragrammaton*).

I have written about these mysteries all of my life, from my earliest book, *Symposium by God and the Devil*, and the *Lapis Philosophorum* (I especially prefer the third edition), to the very elaborate *Theophany*, which I printed by letterpress from hand-set type on paper made by hand, to the *Patterns of Illusion and Change*, and, most recently, *Tetragrammaton*, a small book of pictures illustrating the primary mysteries, “the Keys to the Arcana.” In the first two books mentioned, I presented the sequence of Arcana horizontally, one to a page. Then, in a truly major epiphany (assisted, as I recall, by the fortuitous stimulus of LSD, which enjoys a well-documented history of association with divine inspiration), I stacked the symbols vertically, and saw, to my astonishment, that I had recreated the Tree of Life from the Kabbalah! At first I thought it were just an amazing coincidence, but as I looked more closely, I saw that every sphere on the Tree of Life

corresponded exactly to its relative position on my own diagrams. Then, when I considered that both diagrams were intended to convey the same sequence of ideas (“the evolution from God to Man”), I was no longer surprised that my own designs should be practically identical with a design which was several thousand years old. I also realized immediately that the Tetragrammaton was just one final layer of abstraction up from the Tree of Life (the Tetragrammaton has always been said to express the same mystery ~ the evolution from God to Man ~ although its precise meaning has been universally considered to have been lost over the ages).

So now let us briefly review these ideas. In one way or another, all my writings are expositions of these Arcana, but I will try to review them sufficiently here to lay a basis for understanding the evolution of my ideas of theology. The Number One is the most important, but the hardest to speak about. In the words of the *Tao Te Ching* by Lao Tzu, “From Tao there comes One; from One there come Two; from Two there comes Three; and from Three there come all things.” According to Pythagoras, the best illumination of each mystery is contained in the concept of the Number for which it stands. That is, the meaning of the first and most primary mystery can best be understood by meditating on the Number One. The best I can come up with in words is an idea of Perfection expressed as a point which has no dimensions, no existence in time, and, in fact, no existence at all until the universe comes into being by the Error or Joke of a Distinction between All and Nothing, Infinity and Zero (pretending that the two terms mean something different, opposite to each other). Now it is possible to perceive that point of perfection (after the creation of the cosmos) at the center of a sphere of error, or cloud of confusion, surrounding that point. Of course, we can understand that point of Perfection as God (the Holy Ghost, in my most

recent understanding of correspondence to the Christian Trinity) and all the manifestation surrounding it as “the Devil.” One very important theological point is this understanding of the Devil not as an organized and conscious incarnation of evil (as many Christians seem to believe), but as confusion and error, “distance from God.” This makes a whole lot more sense theologically; there are not two gods, one good and one evil (that is an old but primitive idea ~ compare Zoroastrianism), but only one God, defining Perfection at the center, with Dante’s receding circles of Hell the further away one goes from God. God is the light at the center, and “the Devil” is expressed as increasing confusion and error, receding out into chaos, darkness, and death.

But it is a lot more complicated than this. So far we have this pattern of God at the center, with energies of confusion moving out into error. There are numerous applications of this image ~ for example, we might say that everyone lives their life somewhere on this continuum (which is not linear, but better expressed as a point at the center of a sphere moving out in an infinite number of directions away from God at the center to increasing degrees of error and confusion towards the periphery). Furthermore, it is possible to go closer in towards the center, or to move further out away from God. A practice such as meditation is designed to bring one closer to God, while expressions of anger, over-indulgence in drugs or alcohol, or engaging in crime or war will carry one inexorably further away from God.

So far this might seem to be fairly simple and straightforward ~ going in is good; going out is bad. But it is not that simple! What we see as error and confusion, iniquity and sin, is actually only the excess of that direction of energy, not any movement in that direction at all! Metaphysically, that

direction of energy which caused the universe to break apart from non-being and perfection into manifestation and reality is the Quest for Novelty, which is the Spark of Life! It is an absolutely essential component of the cosmos, and value expressions of “good” or “evil” are wholly inappropriate. One of the reasons why I enjoyed the ideas of Hermetic Alchemy was its recognition that the most efficient path towards perfection was not a bee-line to the center (which, if it were even possible, would just result in the annihilation of all manifestation back into the state of perfect non-being), but the alternation of *Solve et Coagula* (breaking apart and coming together). All evolutionary growth is a product of this pattern ~ inhalation-exhalation, expansion-contraction, analysis-synthesis, *etc.*

So it is only in excess that this “quest for novelty” gets us into trouble. Initially, this quest for novelty leads to creativity and originality, leading to evolutionary growth and all of the wonders of science and life. However, if the forays out into novelty are not resolved and reintegrated back to the center, the outward moving energy just continues out past creativity and complexity into confusion and madness, eventually leading to chaos, darkness and death.

Now to relate these ideas to the numbers of metaphysics, it is the duality of the Number Two, yang and yin, expansion and contraction. If the Number One represents the ultimate Origin, the reaching out into Novelty of the Number Two represents the spark of life which creates and animates the cosmos. So far from considering this movement “evil,” we consider this essential breath of life to be one of the Persons of the Trinity which is God.

At the point of perfection, all good things converge ~ clarity, harmony, love, joy, bliss, good health, prosperity, *etc.* Increasing distance

away from this point leads to confusion, discord, anger, sorrow, conflict, poor health, failure, *etc.* Yet, as long as the energy is continually re-integrated back to the center, the movement outward is life itself ~ novelty, creativity, complexity, and growth. This may seem like a paradox. If all good things converge at the point in the center, how is it that movement away from this point can produce good effects? As I search for an analogy to explain this idea, I find one that may seem unsuitable, yet is really correct. This movement outward, away from the center of perfection is like a drug ~ coffee, for example. Coffee provides a positive stimulus, yet, in the first place, it is most effective the more rarely it is used. And, secondly, the more it is used to excess, the more negative the effects become. The lesson, then, is that this outward movement is very powerful magic, but it must be used sparingly, and followed by a return back to the center to maintain integrity and balance, to assimilate the new information into the path of evolutionary change and growth. Another very coarse example is spontaneous mutation. Spontaneous mutation is precisely this “quest for novelty” in action, and is the mechanism of evolutionary growth. Yet if the pace of mutation exceeds a safe limit, the organism breaks down into uncontrolled chaos and eventual death. The COAGULA phase must follow the SOLVE in order for the novelties to be either integrated into the center (as the agency of positive growth), or rejected and passed over.

Most Christian theologians consider Jesus as the “Son of God” and the second Person of the Trinity, and none of that is inconsistent with my view. The prime attribute of the convergence of all good things is Love, the ultimate COAGULA. (We must distinguish here, by analogy with mathematics, the “approach to the limit” from “the limit itself.” At the actual attainment of the limit, all bets are off, and all manifestation would be

hypothetically superseded by non-being.) Since Jesus Christ is unparalleled in the primacy of his message of love, we may say that Jesus was “closer to God” than any other person known to history. I have to take issue here with people who seem to think that the message of Jesus is, “Believe in Me and you will never die.” For those who don’t know, the message of Jesus can be found in John 13; 34-35 ~ “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if you have love one to another.” And also First John 4:7-8 ~ “Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”

I find Jesus to be a far more impressive person when understood as a human being who was very close to God, rather than some sort of magical being identified as God Himself. The whole point of the teaching of Jesus was to show the way by example as someone whom we may aspire to follow. Once you claim that he is God Himself his whole existence and message is belittled and trivialized. His followers may have been dazzled, as the Aztecs were dazzled by Cortez and thought he was God, but the story of Jesus makes a lot more sense to me as an example of the power and glory of God the closer we approach to Him. But as close as Jesus was to God, he also embodied the virtues of novelty in large measure! Time after time his message broke with tradition, bringing us, in every way, a New Testament. An example of his attitude is his reply when questioned about healing on the Sabbath: “The Sabbath was made for Man, not Man for the Sabbath.” Jesus, being close to God, is a perfect exemplar of the Second Arcanum and the Second Person of the Trinity, reaching out into novelty from the perfection of God.

The funny thing about the Trinity is that it really does take three perspectives to fully understand God. At the top (Arcanum I), there is *God, the Holy Ghost*. Then there are the two forces of the Second Arcanum ~ *Goddeſs, the Mother* (yin), and *God, the Son* (yang). Altogether they comprise the Trinity of God.

So if the Number One expresses God as the ultimate Origin, and the Number Two expresses the Divergence into complexity represented by the movement outward into novelty (balanced by movement back in to the center), what is the significance of the Number Three? The Number Three represents the expanding consequence of the divergence of the Number Two. Three is achieved by a point of perspective between Subject and Object. Where the Number Two expresses abstract directions of energy as complementary ideas, the Number Three brings into being an entire field of energy (for example, the entire manifest cosmos and the infinite consciousness of God) which comes into being between the hypothetical and imaginary limits of All and Nothing, Infinity and Zero. This Trinity completes the expression of God. The Number Four represents the actual and tangible manifestation of the cosmos, completing the evolution from God to Man. (More information concerning any of this may be found in my books already mentioned, which may be found on my web site: www.tree.org.)

But let's take a closer look at this Number Three. The key feature of the Third Arcanum is Life and Consciousness. I have developed this idea at greater length in previous writings, but to make a quick summary ~ by analogy with an atom, which has a nucleus surrounded by a swarm of electrons relatively far out from the nucleus, I imagine that there is a vast

field of energy surrounding every human being. Close to the body there may be an aura, visible to some sensitive people, but there must be a huge field of energy extending out for a considerable distance ~ at least, say, to the outer limits of the atmosphere around planet Earth. What this means is that all life on the planet, human, animal, and vegetable, is occupying the same space! Advancing quickly to a complex idea, I accept the postulate of a being (“*Gaia*”) which is comprised of the entire field of life energy on the planet, with a shared consciousness. Now, by the idea that consciousness increases in direct proportion to the complexity of an organism, *Gaia* must have a greater consciousness than any of the “separate” people, plants, or animals of which she is composed.

Suddenly all manner of psychic phenomena become very easy to understand, since all life is essentially linked into a single system of energy. You see where I am going with this ~ it may be that there is a yet larger Being composed of all life in the cosmos, but from our point of view, we may think of *Gaia* as the Consciousness of God (The Holy Ghost). Suppose this is not just some abstraction, but is actually real? Is it too much to imagine that this Consciousness is “aware” of our individual thoughts on some level?

And what about the other direction? I have always thought it was stupid and useless to “pray” by submitting a shopping list to God like a child writing a letter to Santa Claus. It makes much more sense to me for us to “pray” by listening receptively for any messages which God (or *Gaia*) may have for us. Perhaps my writings are inspired by God. How was it possible otherwise that I should re-invent the Tree of Life of the Kabbalah so many millennia after its initial appearance? *I tuned it in.*

Initially I promised an explanation of the creation of the cosmos *ex nihilo*. That requires some extremely dense metaphysical speculation and is actually beyond the scope of the present essay (but see *Speculations on Cosmology*). However, I also promised to resolve the Problem of Evil, which I now propose to do. The resolution of the problem, as Wittgenstein would advise us, is to be found in the statement of the problem itself. “How can we believe in the existence of an Almighty God, infinite in power, wisdom, and goodness, in the face of so much manifest evil in the world?” Well, the solution to the problem lies in the prior assumptions. Who says God is Almighty, infinite in power, wisdom, or even goodness? Are we like the Aztecs dazzled by Cortez, or like children who believe in the infallibility of their parents? If we understand that God is all of Us, all Life on the planet, and We are just trying to stay alive (and, perhaps, losing the battle), then perhaps We can understand the inadequacy of the attitude to “let George do it.” We need to take responsibility for Our world, the only one We have, and put Our shoulders to the wheel before it is too late.

Our concept of God has evolved considerably from the Old Testament to the New Testament. Jesus has given us a glimpse of a much greater God than anything found in the Old Testament, by teaching that God is Love; a radical idea then as now. Now it is time for us to come of age and participate in the continuing evolution of God and Man. If we just sit back and let George do it, there may be nothing left for our children. Our planet is dying (and that means We are dying), and it is up to Us to rise to the challenge of Our present need and try to reverse that slide into confusion, error, chaos, darkness, and death. *Gaia* can't do it without Us. Do you hear Her speaking to you? *If not, then shut up and listen!* At the very least, get out of the way if you can't lend a hand, for the times they are a-changing. It is

up to Us to ensure that the changes bring Us closer to the light instead of delivering Us to the rapidly encroaching darkness.

The most urgent priority is to mobilize a vast army of tree planters to restore the protective tree cover on the earth. More trees will improve the carbon balance, produce more oxygen, and help to prevent the destructive cycle of drought and floods by anchoring the soil to the earth, retaining the water when it rains, and returning it gradually during the dry seasons, preventing water runoff and soil erosion. Trees also encourage the survival of smaller shrubs and ground covers, further protecting the earth and its living creatures, including human life.

There are plenty of other problems that need to be addressed, but the restoration of the Trees is such an urgent priority that I don't want to mention anything else on the same page.

The Glory of God is very much manifest in the Trees, but up until now, the human race has just been dragging Us down. The human race has interjected an amazing and explosive burst of Novelty, but if We are unable fully to realize that energy and reintegrate it back to God, it will carry Us inexorably further out along the path of increasing complexity leading to confusion and error, and thence to the outer reaches of chaos, darkness, and death. The message here is that it is not enough to say that "God is in His Heaven, and all's right with the world," or "God works in mysterious ways, but His plan is surely unfolding as it should." No! Our world is spiraling out into chaos, and time is running out. Enough SOLVE already! Now it is time for a new COAGULA to bring Us back to God.

Speculations on Cosmic Consciousness and the Love of God

2016

A while ago (March of 2015) I saw on the news the videos of the soldiers of ISIS destroying all the ancient art, artifacts, and architecture from a museum in Northern Iraq. As I write this, I seem to recall that that was even before the unbelievably egregious destruction of Palmyra a bit later on. All of that is way beyond inexcusable. War is a bad enough business, and, most of the time, both sides seem to be convinced that they are in the right, but wanton destruction of our heritage of ancient art is totally senseless. I am still in shock over the burning of the library at Alexandria, and now this!

Religious beliefs are hard to argue with when people believe on faith the religion they were taught at their mother's knee. When someone else comes along with different beliefs which he also accepts on faith, there is no common ground for any discussion. Well, here I am trying to establish some common ground. My first proposition, which I offer for acceptance as an axiom (accepted without proof) is that "the meaning and purpose of religion is to get closer to God." I believe that is a pretty fundamental idea which most people would accept regardless of their religious backgrounds. Buddhism is not specifically theistic, but I think most Buddhists would

accept the proposition anyway, when they see how I understand the concept. (In other words, what I mean by “getting closer to God” turns out to be identical with the goals of Buddhist practice, the attainment of enlightenment being simply equated with union with God.) I can hardly imagine anyone claiming a different purpose for their religious practices, but if they do (*e.g.*, to propitiate an angry God) then my present remarks just do not apply to them.

But, if one accept my starting premise, then I introduce my second premise, which is that the best way to measure a person’s closeness to God is to consider the degree to which they love everyone. I suggest that the most clearly distinguishing feature of the most religious or spiritual people is the love they feel for all of life. Most recognized “holy men” or “holy women” or spiritual teachers are famous for radiating an oceanic love for all life. Once again, it is hard to engage “proofs” for this idea, so I will call it another axiom ~ “The more love one feels for all of life, the closer one is to God.”

So, if we can accept these two propositions, suddenly we have an objective measure of comparison for religious beliefs and practices. Simply look at your religious beliefs and practices and ask, “Do these beliefs and practices bring me closer to God, or do they drive me further away from God? As I continue on the way of my religious observance, am I becoming more loving to all of life, or less?” If one be looking for a spiritual teacher or guru, simply seek one who most clearly radiates the love of God. In other articles, I have repeatedly described a three dimensional continuum which goes from a center of peace, love, harmony, joy, and clarity outwards in all directions towards increasing tension, anger, disharmony, sorrow, and confusion. God is at that point at the center, and the further away one goes

from that point, the more one is distant from God (“distance from God” is an old and very good definition for the Devil).

So, to make my conclusion, I say to those soldiers of ISIS,

No, you are not obeying the will of Allah, as you pound those ancient artifacts to rubble, consumed with your passion of anger and hatred. No, you are lost in confusion and error. I am not an Islamic scholar, but I am sure that a diligent search of your Koran will suggest new directions for your energies that might bring you closer to God than your present course of anger, violence, and hatred. It is not necessary to convert to Christianity or Buddhism; all you have to do is seek for those interpretations of your Koran that lead you closer to the love of God.

Of course, it is not only Moslems who drift away from God, seduced by false prophets ~ plenty of Christians (and others) have lost all understanding of the original teachings of the founders of their Church and are just as lost in confusion and error as any Moslem. I call upon the leaders of every religion to clarify for your communicants the path which leads to the love of God.

Many people are uncomfortable with any expression of religious belief. When I was a child, unbelievers would prudently conceal their unbelief. Now, it is religious believers who hide their beliefs out of a fear of ridicule. Well, the important aspects of my own ideas are quite independent of the religious component. My principle image describing the spiritual state of human beings (a sphere with a center of peace, harmony, clarity, love, and joy extending outward towards increasing anger, disharmony, confusion, hatred, sorrow, darkness, and death) may be applied without any mention of

God. If I label the center “God” and the outer reaches of confusion “the Devil,” that may be understood figuratively rather than literally. Certainly the labeling of confusion, distant from God, as “the Devil” is intended to disavow, once and for all, the idea of the Devil as a kind of conscious and deliberate “evil god.” And, whether you think of God at the center as a conscious being of some sort or just a figurative image to describe the quality makes no real difference. Just as Buddhist meditation can bring you to a state of peace and serenity, so the effort to become “closer to God” can yield the same benefits of peace, clarity, joy, love, and good health, regardless of any theological ideas pertaining to that mysterious point at the center.

The crux of the whole matter is consciousness. I suggest that consciousness (and free will) increases as you get closer to God (or “to the center”) and decreases as you move away into confusion, error, and darkness. So “union with God” would mean the attainment of cosmic consciousness, as well as enlightenment, Nirvana, limitless love, and total bliss. This, of course, is entirely speculative. I am suggesting, by analogy with the consciousness of animals and human beings, that the more complex and highly evolved the organism, the greater the consciousness. To postulate that the entire field of life energy on the planet is all inter-connected and, in fact, comprises a single living being, is also speculative, but it is an extremely interesting and provocative concept, and offers no theological problems whatsoever. It is the suggestion that this being (“*Gaia*”) is fully conscious and is responsible for the nearly universal belief in some sort of God, that is the most radical idea here. If it were true, it could account for a great many unexplained and/or psychic phenomena as a medium for the transmission of all kinds of energies of communication and even telekinetic activity, as well as prayer.

At the same time, it is an idea of God that avoids the deal-breaker concept of an Almighty God Who is responsible for everything that happens in the world, good and bad. When theologians try to explain the Problem of Evil by attempting to shift the blame onto humans, when the Deity should have known better, I don't find their arguments very convincing. I think God is evolving along with Our cosmos, and We are doing the best We can.

Consciousness is a very astonishing experience. But if human beings can enjoy the kind of consciousness with which we are familiar, I do not find it too surprising to imagine *Gaia* as a conscious being, trying hard to stay alive but losing the battle due to the endless and growing confusion of her parts.

But, whether you believe that *Gaia* is a conscious Being, an unconscious being, or even just a random and unconnected confusion of unrelated beings (human, animal, and vegetable), the path towards an evolutionary growth that can sustain the fragile envelope of life on this planet is all the same ~ a concerted effort for all sentient beings to move closer to that center of peace, clarity, love, and joy, regardless of whether you endow that point with any theological significance or not.

Philosophical Meditations

on the Nature of God

2015 - 2017

11.III.15 Suddenly I am re-thinking the whole *Gaia* hypothesis. The problem is that all of the life energies of the planet do not show a level of integration comparable to the single organism of a person, animal, or plant. It is true that a human being contains millions of smaller organisms that are hostile to the person, and sometimes these hostile organisms destroy the integrity of the person, leading to death. But in this case, those hostile organisms are opposed to the person, not an integral part. I would speculate that the person's consciousness would not include these organisms but would maintain distinction from it. In the same way, a human body sometimes rejects a transplant; the ego (*i.e.*, the center of consciousness) refuses to incorporate the alien part. So, in the case of planet earth, I cannot see the analogy of a single organism with a single consciousness. As I try to make sense of it all, I try to follow the consciousness. I have always had a pagan "many gods" attitude (whether or not there is One overall God) ~ that every family, school, city, state, tribe, language group, biker group, street gang, or interest group (not to mention every river and forest) may have a shared consciousness, so perhaps our world is just a jungle of such "gods," all

struggling for dominance. Perhaps the God of the Hebrews was just that ~ a parochial god for one tribe of people, not a God who would include other alien tribes (this may be the root cause of much anti-Semitism).

So, if this more accurately represents the spiritual state of the planet, what are the implications for consciousness and/or theology? Of course, I am treading upon unknowable ground, but I am a philosopher, not a scientist. A scientist does not speculate beyond the data, whereas the speculations of philosophers begin where those of the scientists leave off.

My first thought is that I cannot decisively rule out a single consciousness that encompasses all of life. But in view of the jungle of mutually hostile life forms, such a consciousness would not necessarily favor mankind. Perhaps such a consciousness would favor Man's destruction by fire (nuclear war) comparable to an earlier destruction by flood. Once the failed experiment of human life were cleared from the earth, the evolution of life might proceed again, over here, with a fresh opportunity. As to theology, this view of the nature of the consciousness of God does not offer much comfort (to human beings).

But, whether or not there is some sort of overall consciousness, I consider the status of the next level of consciousness down ~ is there a single consciousness for the human race as a whole, or is the jungle of warring peoples, races, tribes, religions, and lawgivers in an endless struggle for survival or dominance? And what are the implications for the survival of life on earth? Well, as to that, I return to a very old idea of mine, which has been shared by many others over the years ~ there can be no hope for any positive evolution of the human race until or unless the entire planet be unified under a single political entity. This might be accomplished after

devastation by war and conquest, or by political evolution of negotiation and compromise. One idea which I have had from the beginning of my theological speculations about *Gaia* is that God is just as much a work in progress as any of the life forms which contribute to His consciousness. If the human race and the planet can be unified under a single political structure, then our God could grow commensurately.

So, after all of this speculation, I am left with a world in chaos, beset by warring factions all over the globe with no end in sight. One idea seems clear enough ~ a gradual and evolutionary movement toward union (COAGULA) is better (*i.e.*, more conducive to the possibility of the survival of life on earth) than a cataclysmic or expanding conflict leading to destruction and chaos (SOLVE).

So, the conclusion of my morning's meditation is to suggest passing out free LSD to all the warring factions all over the world to promote an elevation of spiritual consciousness leading finally to an ultimate union and the triumph of the love of God over the confusion, chaos, and darkness of the Devil.

The lesson for *Gaia*, the consciousness of our planetary god, is the same as that for every person on the planet ~ in order to accomplish a positive elevation of spiritual growth, the life energies on our planet, just as with each individual soul, must come together towards a center of clarity, peace, harmony, joy, and love. The alternative, for each person as for our planet, is confusion, destruction, chaos, darkness, and death. *Therefore, choose Life.* (Deuteronomy 30:15-20)

13.III.15 *Primum Mobile*

I may, of course, be wrong in any of my speculations, but at least I have clear ideas about almost every aspect of philosophy and metaphysics. There is really only one point that is not entirely clear ~ the very first point, the *primum mobile*. As I have mentioned before, science really has no better explanation for this point than theology. Science can describe the expansion of the Big Bang from the first few millionths of a second after the Big Bang itself, but by that time all of the really interesting stuff is already ancient history. I want to know exactly how and why that Big Bang actually happened in the *first place!* So, that is my problem of metaphysics, and there is also my problem of theology and consciousness ~ is there a whole planetary consciousness or is the consciousness limited to lower levels? This is unknowable, but my current thinking is that there is some sort of planetary-wide *Gaia* consciousness, even if the parts are in conflict.

It may sound funny to put it in this way, but, as a God, *Gaia* is way down on the scale of spiritual evolution (about on the level of the Old Testament God). When the life energies of the planet resemble the fully realized saint of “Buddha Nature” or “Christ Consciousness,” then we will be entering a Golden Age or the Kingdom of God on Earth. We have a long way to go (*understatement alert*). So, to clarify my ideas about a personal God Who might hear our prayers or facilitate other psychic phenomena, this might refer to levels of super-consciousness below the planetary level, and these spheres of consciousness may be intermingled in any complex way beyond our comprehension.

But it is the first and most abstract metaphysics that I want to consider now: the *primum mobile* itself. So, to review, there is the First Arcanum, as

that point of perfection at the center of our virtual sphere (which doesn't exist until the Second Arcanum brings it into being). Then the Second Arcanum causes the Universe to split apart and come into being with a Quest for Novelty which moves away from the perfection of God at the center outward into "error" in any of an infinite number of directions. Does the First Arcanum have any existence or reality "before" the Second Arcanum brings it all into being? The First Arcanum makes sense to me as a senior concept (from which the Second Arcanum breaks away) even in the absence of the Second Arcanum. In the same sense that the concept of Number may have an *a priori* reality apart from any manifestation in the physical world, so, also, in the same way that we imagine infinity as an approach to a limit, I can imagine an ultimate *ain soph*, total nothingness, as the Original antecedent of the birth of God, which I call the First Arcanum. We might call that *ain soph* the Zero Arcanum, analogous to The Fool of the Tarot.

But it is this Second Arcanum which holds the greater part of my interest! There is something natural and original about the First Arcanum, but the Second Arcanum is really the trigger (or its consequence) which initiates the Big Bang. [The First Arcanum and the Second Arcanum are different; the *Change* which happens occurs at a point between the two Arcana, in the same way that the First Arcanum already expresses the point in process as it changes from *ain soph* to the first singularity.]

So what is this Quest for Novelty, and whence does it come? It doesn't seem to be as obvious a given as the serenity and perfection of the First Arcanum. The Quest for Novelty exists because without it there would be nothing to disturb the serenity of God's infinite Perfection. But *why* does

it exist? It is, obviously, the origin and source of life, as well as all existence, personified as *Eros*. In spite of the fact that it is clearly a “junior” concept to the seniority and perfection of the First Arcanum, it seems to be responsible for most of the interest. The movement inward, back to the center and perfection of God, seems to be more like a resolution of the error implied by the movement away from the center (this would be gravity ~ time and/or space is “the measure of error”) but the movement outward, in any of an infinite number of directions in search of novelty, seems to bear all of the dynamic potential of the cosmos and of life. (It also offers a theoretical explanation for the significance of “devil worship.”)

So this Quest for Novelty is the final and irreducible *primum mobile*, after all. It defies speculation as to where It might come from ~ all we can say is that without It there never would have been any universe to disturb the Perfection of God.

Nothing in these speculations is contrary to any of the findings of science ~ all I have done is to restore the name of God to the Creation. Until any scientist or theologian can explain the how or why of the Big Bang at the moment of Creation itself, I will prefer my solution, as it showcases the very focal point of the Mystery Itself instead of trying to pretend that it doesn't exist.

16.XII.16 Another explanation for the *primum mobile* might claim that the quest for novelty is inherent in the metaphysics. By analogy, we claim that the numbers of mathematics may be entirely derived *a priori* and

ex nihilo. The concept and meaning of the numbers of mathematics do not depend upon any external realities. In the same way, it may be possible to claim that the metaphysics of the sequence of the primary mysteries of nature is also inherent in the fundamental nature of reality. The metaphysical expansion of the ideas of Number have been there all along, as much a part of the attributes of Number as their use as simple counting markers. Specifically, as the Second Arcanum reaches Outward into Novelty it is nothing more nor less than the inevitable expression of the Second Arcanum. In the same way, the Mystery of the Number Three is just as inevitable: once the process of expansion into complexity through the operation of the Quest for Novelty has begun (*Solve et Coagula*), it will inevitably generate Life, and, finally, Consciousness. You can call this God, or just call it the natural world doing its thing.

A very interesting idea from Taoism is *enantiodromia*: reversal *in extremis*, the idea that as everything makes its round of cyclical progression, at the end of every extremity of yang or yin there is a turning around to go the other way. This is the same as the Quest for Novelty and the Return to the Center, or the *Solve et Coagula* of the alchemists. According to this view, the universe had to pop into existence sooner or later, and, as time is meaningless in the absence of existence, it just had to happen. Now, of course, the universe is winding back down to Nothingness once again. This cycle of a universe popping into and out of existence may be analogous to the popping into and out of existence of sub-atomic particles of quantum physics.

On the other hand, it is possible to imagine that this is all Natural and inevitable, and doesn't require any "God" to put it into motion. Or, you could say that the bursting apart of Original Perfection into the endless Quest for Novelty and the Return to the Center, is God's little Joke, and it is His Laughter that we know as the unfolding Universe. This would be God's way of existing forever without getting bored.

10.I.17 *Deus fecit*

Looking over these meditations, I can see that I have narrowed it down to two possibilities ~ either we accept the premise that the metaphysical extensions of the concept of Number are, in fact, as inherent in the numbers themselves as are their qualities as simple counting units, so that the whole progression of metaphysics is inevitable ~ that the universe just had to pop into existence "sooner or later," and that the evolution to life and consciousness was also inevitable; or one could deny the associations of metaphysics to the qualities of Number. In fact, one might even reject the claim that Number itself could be derived *a priori* and *ex nihilo*. My metaphysics falters on the same rock that stumps the scientist. Certainly, given One, Two must follow, and then Three, and then All Things. But who says the One is given? If even the abstractions of Number be not allowed as given (or as axioms), then the Original Source of the initial One is just as unknown as the hypothetical Big Bang of science.

But that is all good ~ if the claim that the metaphysics is inherent in the concept of Number be not considered sufficient to say that the universe

made itself, then Whatever or Whoever brought it into being, we might as well call God.

The concept of *enantiodromia* is the foundation of Taoism. It is even a definition of the Tao, as in “From Tao there comes One . . .” [I], which started off the whole chain of events. The dichotomy and alternation of All and Nothing, Infinity and Zero [II], is inevitable, and the alternation between the two sets up a field of energy between them [III] which, in turn, creates the manifest cosmos [IV]. Zero and Infinity may be equivalent at the limit, but in the hypothetical movement between the two a whole potential field of energy comes into being, reaching out into Novelty, hence the ensuing evolution into the cosmos as we know it.

So we can trace the origin of the cosmos back to the Tao. But, of course, whence comes this Tao? I think it is irreducible. Either we accept the Tao as original and fundamental, out of which the cosmos created itself, or we append the name of a causal agent: *Deus fecit*. It’s all one.

29.I.17

The fundamental axiom of Western Logic is that “A Proposition is either True or False.” From this axiom, the whole system of mathematics, philosophy, and science is deduced analytically. In the binary logic of computers, each bit in the string is either On or Off. This may seem straightforward enough, and, like Newtonian physics, it generally suffices for most of the tasks to which Western logic is put.

But, just as Western logic and mathematics prove inadequate when dealing with sub-atomic or quantum levels of reality, they are also inadequate when dealing with macrocosmic questions such as the creation or origin of the universe. No, for those questions we must employ the more comprehensive potential of Eastern logic and philosophy.

Where the Western philosopher or scientist takes as his starting axiom that a proposition is either true or false, the Eastern philosopher allows for a proposition to be either "True," "Not True," "both True and Not True," or "neither True nor Not True."

Careful analysis of the last two possibilities reveals that they are essentially the same, but from the point of view of opposite perspectives. Thus, we can simplify the Eastern position by suggesting that there is a "Third Way" in addition to the two values recognized by Western logic, philosophy, and science.

This "third way" throws an enormous monkey wrench into any effort to get a grasp on reality. To begin with, we must regretfully give up the concept of "certainty." We can never be certain of anything, at all. To get an idea of what it might mean in terms of our efforts to understand the cosmos, I want to combine the ideas of Heraclitus and Lao Tzu. From Heraclitus we get the idea that nothing can exist without the simultaneous existence of its opposite. From Lao Tzu and the concepts of Taoism we get the idea that Yang and Yin succeed each other in turn. So we might evolve a new idea, that, to start with the binary logic of computers, each bit is either "predominantly On," "predominantly Off," or "fluctuating so rapidly between On and Off that its state is indeterminate."

In the ordinary reality of daily life, these fluctuations mostly balance each other out, but on the level of quantum mechanics or macro-cosmology, the indeterminate nature of reality is inescapable. This is the loophole that “lets the magic in,” allowing our cosmos to exist at all, with the possibility of expanding towards limitless complexity in search of endless novelty.

So, sit back and watch the show, or sit up and participate in the unfolding of our astonishing universe.

29.IX.17

Question ~ is Enantiodromia (reversal *in extremis*, the Tao) sufficient to explain the Quest for Novelty? Or is the Quest for Novelty the elder idea, which requires the utilization of the principle of Enantiodromia, the Tao, to implement its intention?

It seems to me that I have failed to find a First Cause sufficient to create the universe *ex nihilo*. My candidate, the Tao, is silent when asked whence he comes. So if we say that the Quest for Novelty utilizes the Tao to obtain its effects, the position of this Quest for Novelty is sounding more and more theological all the time. But I can't think of any other way to account for it. Otherwise, if we say that the Quest for Novelty is derived from the Tao, it is the same situation, just calling the First Cause by a different name. *Deus fecit*.

24.X.17

My problem has always been the *Primum Mobile* ~ how did it all begin?

I have a metaphysics which explains the endless expansion into complexity that is our universe, but I feel like the scientist who describes the original expansion of the cosmos from the Big Bang, beginning ten millionths of a second after the big bang happened ~ who cares about those minor details? I want to know *how it all began*.

The sequence of the *Arcana* are as fundamental and *a priori* as the numbers of mathematics. The Primary Mysteries, illuminating the unfolding evolution from God to Man, are inherent in the Numbers, as Pythagoras so famously figured out so long ago. And the sequence of the first four comprise the Tree of Life of the Kabbalah, and the Name of God, the *Tetragrammaton*. Why, it is enough to make one give up eating beans (as required by followers of the school of Pythagoras).

So far, all of this is the answer to the question, “Where do all of these ideas come from?” So we are only really left with one problem ~ why did the Big Bang happen to have happened when it did? Actually, this is the easier question ~ obviously “time” has no more meaning than anything else prior to the moment of creation.

As to these unfolding Mysteries, starting from Arcanum 0, the *ain sof*, then all three of the primary *Arcana* come into being at once ~ I, II, and III. Then comes IV, the manifestation of our cosmos springing to life *ex nihilo*, as the consequence of the metaphysics set up by the first three,

followed by the endless expansion into complexity, which is still going on. (“This trip is going on.”)

The sequence of the *Primary Arcana* are a description and illumination of the unfolding evolution from God to Man, just as the sequence of primary numbers expresses the same thing more abstractly. The *Tetractys* of Pythagoras, the *Tree of Life* of the *Kabbalah*, and the four letters of the Hebrew Name of God (*Tetragrammaton*), are all expressions of the first four primary mysteries.

22.XII.17

Contemporary binary logic suggests a linear sequence of points, each of which is On or Off, just as Western Logic assumes that a Proposition is either True or False.

Suppose, as an alternative logic, a non-linear succession of points, each of which is either On, Off, or Indeterminate (True, False, or neither/both). Thence proceeds a triangular logic of great complexity, leading to a whole new world of logical possibility.

[2018: This may not be just a crazy and impossible idea of mine; I have recently (long after first writing those words above) been reading about “Quantum Computers” featuring “qubits” which “are capable of being in both states at the same time ~ 1 or 0 ”).]

27.XII.17

What non-binary logic might look like as applied to our own world ~

Binary: On, Off, On, Off, On, Off . . .

Non-Binary: at random intervals, a point might be *Indeterminate*, which would then be followed by either On or Off, or both.

. . . On, Off, *Ind.* --> On, Off, On, Off . . . --> Off, On, Off, On . . .

This is the flaw in Perfection that “lets the magic in,” and perhaps allows our Cosmos to come into being at all. If, at any point, a link in an energy stream becomes indeterminate, it can be followed by going in either direction, on or off, true or false. The possibility of this happening can be entirely random, or there may be an average “cosmological constant novelty factor.” It seems to me that the indeterminacy must be totally random; otherwise, it makes no sense at all.

The first bifurcation of Reality, from infinite Perfection to the endless interplay of Yang and Yin, All or Nothing, was the spontaneous Creation of the Cosmos. Since then, this potential for novelty has kept our world expanding outward into endless unfolding complexity and further growth.

The Noosphere

March, 2017

I am just reading over *The Phenomenon of Man* by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, one of the most significant books in the history of philosophy. His thesis is that the evolution of the universe is the evolution of Life, and that the evolution of Life leads inevitably to the evolution of Consciousness.

He sees this evolution on an inevitable trajectory towards an increasing of consciousness towards some unknowable future state which he calls the *Omega Point*. He leaves it there, not hazarding a speculation as to the nature of such a point, but he understands it as a transformational point by which ontogenesis, biogenesis, and noogenesis make a major breakthrough to a whole new plateau, as profound as the initial transformation into Life from the chance agglomerations of matter, or the transformation into the level of reflective thought and consciousness from the instinctive level of lower animals.

Today's meditation is a speculation as to the nature of that evolutionary advance which will lead life and consciousness into these new levels of experience.

I suggest that this transformational point which we are in the process of crossing is the transition from individual consciousness to planetary-wide

bio-consciousness. Actually, Teilhard de Chardin suggested as much, but he clearly anticipates that there will be much about this new experience that is beyond speculation. This evolutionary leap may take a great many years to be fully accomplished, but I expect that we will see more and more people sharing a planetary-wide consciousness as the years go by. Together we will form a whole new plateau in the expression of Life leading to monumental changes in every aspect of our existence.

I have always felt that I were “tuning in” messages from the planetary-wide “*Gaia* consciousness,” not only in terms of philosophical ideas, but also in terms of planetary evolution. Now, some of my ideas may seem way beyond radical (*vide, e.g., A One World Total Makeover*), but eventually the ideas may be seen as being in line with what the desperate state of our world requires.



TETRAGRAMMATON

The Keys of the Arcana

The Theory of Everything

by John Roland Stahl



*to future generations
of life on earth*

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THE ARCANA

Hermetic Philosophy is the Process of Change. Pythagorean Philosophy is the Ultimate Nature of Reality, and the Meaning of Life.

Mathematics is the Language of God. Pythagoras suggested that it is an expanding Pattern expressing and revealing the Ultimate Nature of Reality. The sequence of Natural Numbers corresponds to the same sequence of the Principle Mysteries of Life in the order of their Importance; and the Keys to these Mysteries are the Numbers themselves.

The sequence of the first four Numbers and their associated Mysteries is the basis of the Tree of Life of the Hebrew Kabbalah. The Tetragrammaton, the four letters of the Name of God, represents the same sequence of Numbers and Mysteries. Pythagoras called the same sequence of ideas Tetractys, represented as pictured on the Title Page.

Heraclitus had the idea that Nothing could exist as a Thing in Itself, but could only exist by the simultaneous existence of its opposite. We expand this idea by combining it with the Taoist principle that the directions of Yang and Yin (On and Off, expanding towards Infinity and contracting towards Zero), succeed each other in turn, as when reaching the Limit in either direction, they turn to go the other way (enantiodromia: Tao).

The Appearance of the Universe is the fluctuation between All and Nothing, the endless Patterns of which thence ensuing evolving eventually to produce Life and Consciousness, on its way to endless expansion into further Novelty and ever increasing Complexity.

We are alive.

Yod Arcanum I.

Kether



He Arcanum II.

Binah
Moon



Chokmah
Sun



SOLVE

Vau Arcanum III.

Geburah
Tamas



Chesed
Rajas



COAGULA

Tiphereth
Satva

He Arcanum IV.

Hod
Water



Netzach
Fire



Manifestation

Yesod
Air



Malkuth
Earth



The Tree of Life

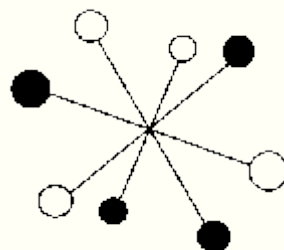
ARCANUM 0

ain soph



ARCANUM I

Yin



Yin

Yang

Passive

Active

Contraction

Expansion

Receptive

Creative

Inertia

Novelty

Gravity

Energy

Apollo

Dionysus

God

Eros

Positional Chess

Combinational Chess

Theology

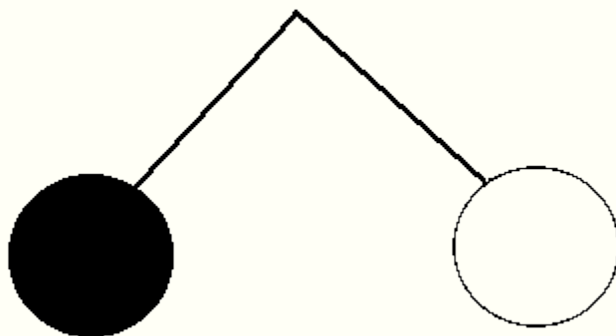
Metaphysics

COAGULA

SOLVE

ARCANUM II

Yang



“From Tao there comes One.
From One there come Two.
From Two there comes Three.
From Three there come all things.”

~ Lao Tzu
Tao Te Ching

ARCANUM III

Tao



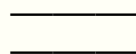
Wands

Yesod

Air

SUMMER

Old Yang



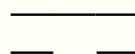
Cups

Hod

Water

AUTUMN

Young Yin



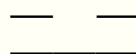
Swords

Netzach

Fire

SPRING

Young Yang



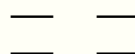
Pentacles

Malkuth

Earth

WINTER

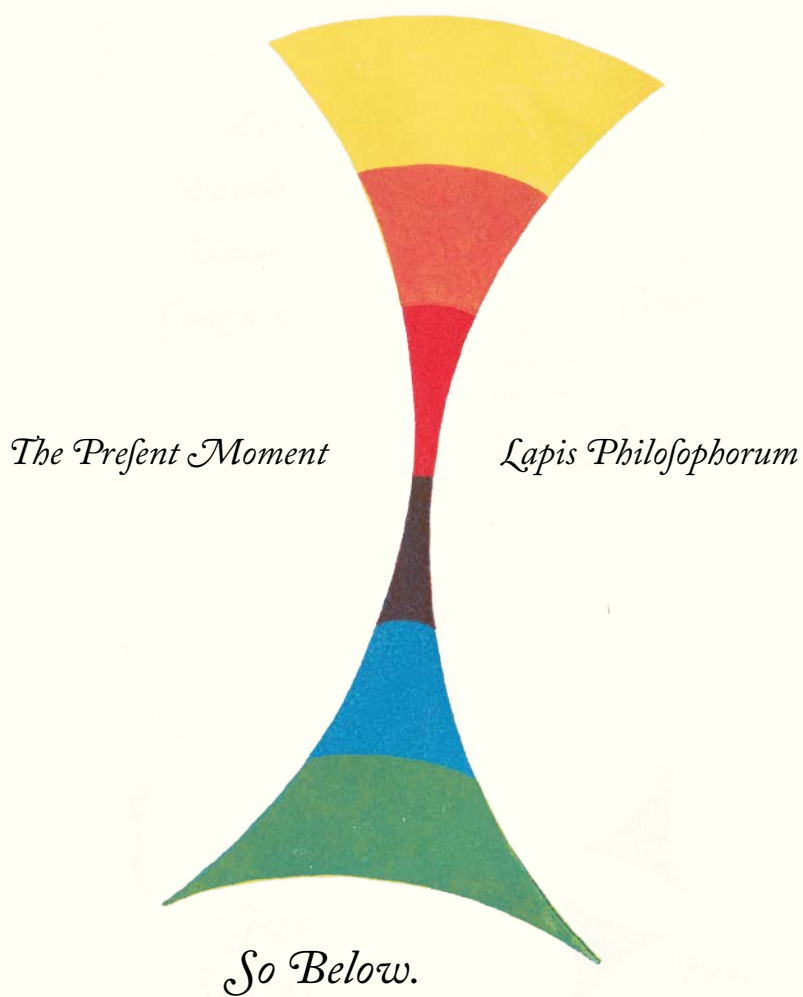
Old Yin



ARCANUM IV

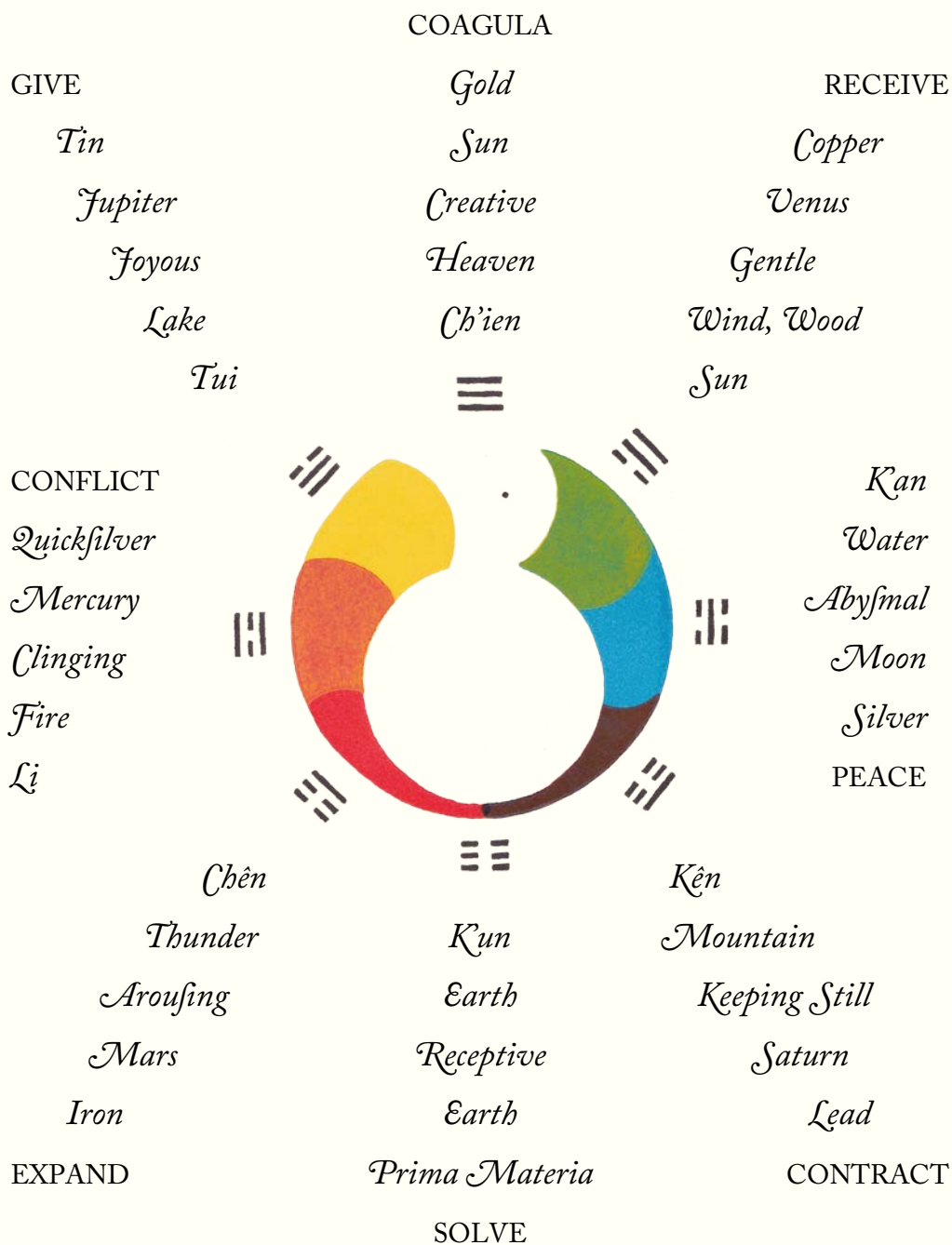
Life

As Above,



ARCANUM V

Change



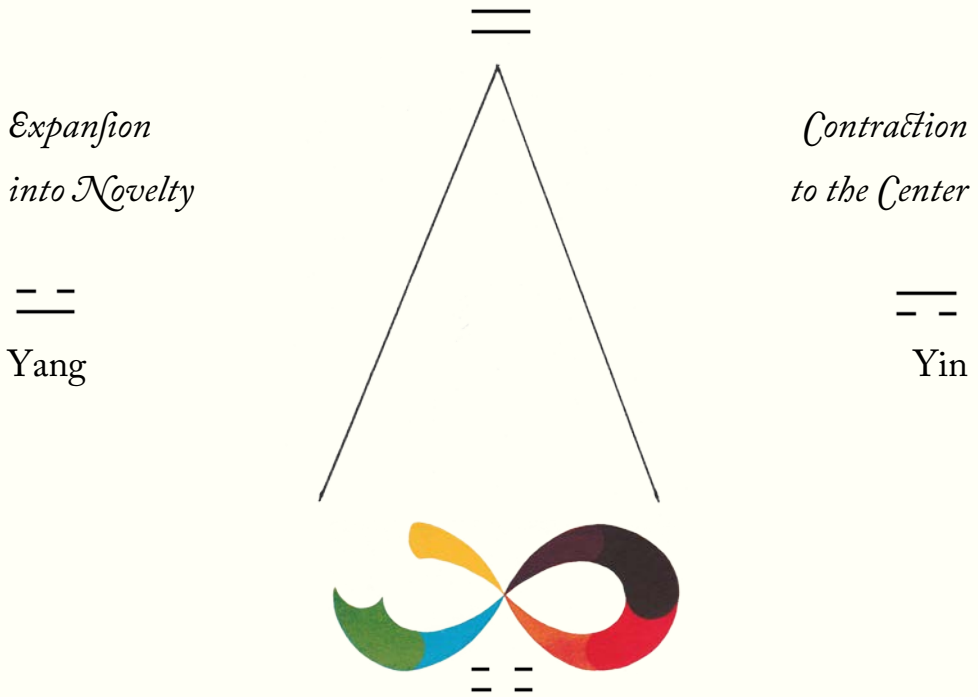


God ~ Life ~ Light

Consciousness ~ Free Will ~ Health

Love ~ Harmony ~ Peace

Clarity



Confusion

Hatred ~ Anger ~ Conflict

Chaos ~ Karma ~ Disease

The Devil ~ Death ~ Darkness



Meditation on Consciousness

April, 2018

Frequently, in my philosophical speculations, I don't know which way to apply symbolic representations of yang and yin. The issue is greatly clarified by the concepts of Young Yang, Young Yin, Old Yang, and Old Yin from the *I Ching*. Thus we have the All and Nothing of the Old Yang and Old Yin, but there is also the expanding and contracting of the Young Yang and Young Yin. But then the issue is further complexified by the concept of *enantiodromia*, that the consequence of the extreme of either yang or yin is a reversal into its opposite direction.

But another consideration that I run into repeatedly is that, given any microcosm (or Macrocosm, for that matter, as a good Hermeticist), while some aspects are expanding as yang, others are contracting as yin. Thus, for example, we have the world exploding into astonishing levels of complexity, typified by the apparently limitless potential of computers and the internet. One thing is for sure ~ we haven't seen anything yet. The whole computer and internet age is just in its veriest infancy. But this has divergent consequences ~ some of the consequences are very good, while others are very bad. One simple example is the unbelievable access to information. In so many ways, this opens up whole new worlds of possibility, accelerating the pace of advancing science and technology, but it also means the total end of

privacy as we know it. Children are now being born into a world where everything is known about everything and everyone, and plenty of people seem to welcome this development, or at least accept it as the inevitable price of our unprecedented access to information.

Other developments are a bit more sinister ~ “the more theoretical control is gained, the more actual control is lost.” For example, chemical pesticides and herbicides may seem to augment the capacity of the earth to grow more food to feed more people (arguably, not at all a good thing on the face of it), but, in fact, they may be destroying the ecosystem of the earth, killing off not only harmful insects, but beneficial insects as well. Bees are massively dying off, and the deaths of people to cancer, caused by our increasingly toxic world environment, are not far behind. And, *quod erat demonstrandum*, modern technology may create incredibly powerful nuclear weapons, but, rather than making the world more secure, they threaten to destroy all life on earth.

Change happens slowly, too slowly to notice. Personal privacy is not the only thing that is being lost to the modern world. Many of today’s young people know nothing of trees, gardens, or fresh food. Four-fifths of every supermarket consists of products which I don’t recognize as food, from sugary drinks to processed “food.” And hamburgers are not only destroying the last of the ancient rainforests (one of the major sources of pollution is the smoke from the thousands of acres of rainforest burned off every day to make room for more burger-beef), but they are also destroying the health of anyone so misguided as to eat them, thinking they are a kind of food, washed down with sugar water and greasy fries.

But none of this was what was on my mind when I took up my pencil today (I am happy to edit by computer, but I compose by pencil, an ancient wooden artifact filled with carbon, formerly used for writing before the advent of computers).

I wanted to discuss consciousness. I have been using the imagery of spiritual elevation leading to convergence at a center of unity, clarity, cosmic consciousness, love, joy, and health. Distance from this center leads out progressively into error, disharmony, subject-object divergence, anger, and conflict, leading finally to chaos, darkness, and death. But there is an aspect of consciousness that increases as a function of complexity ~ higher organisms, representing increased orders of complexity, exhibit greater consciousness. How do I reconcile those concepts? Isn't the expansion into complexity the pattern of moving away from the perfection at the center? But "a little knowledge leads one away from God; a greater knowledge brings one back, closer to God." This is a case of two movements in different directions going on at once ~ the yang energy of separation and expansion into diversity, and the yin energy of the coalescence of consciousness back to the center of unity, clarity, and love. These are independent movements ~ the elevation of consciousness towards unity can be going on in spite of an ongoing expansion into complexity.

I don't have a finished idea to present here; that's why I call it a meditation.

I think where I'm going with this is that some "New Age" writers seem to assert that the ultimate origin of the universe is pure consciousness, from which all manifestation has been derived. This has a really nice "feel good" aspect about it ~ you know, the Original Mind of God as the Creator of the

universe. But as I look back on my theological speculations, I seem to have been suggesting a more impersonal explanation for the origin of the universe, that the universe somehow “created itself” ~ came into being spontaneously as an inevitable manifestation of ultimate *a priori* principles (*vide: The Evolution of Theology, Speculations on Cosmic Consciousness and the Love of God, and Philosophical Meditations on the Nature of God*). Then, not only is consciousness a later development, but God Herself is evolving along with Her Cosmos. In other words, until and unless we find some more evolved beings somewhere, as far as we know, We are the cutting edge of Consciousness, and God and *Gaia* are evolving along with us. This is a total reversal of most New Age doctrine, but it makes more sense to me.

In many ways, I think I am getting at what Pierre Teilhard de Chardin was talking about as we expand our evolutionary growth of consciousness towards an unknowable Omega Point (*vide: The Phenomenon of Man* by Teilhard de Chardin). This evolution of life and consciousness is still going on. Compare the evolution of Man’s understanding of God, from the very primitive, vengeful, and petty God of the Old Testament (not welcome at my house; if the Old Testament God were to show up at my house, I would offer Him a meal and a place to sleep, out of Christian charity, but then send Him on down the road in the morning), to the far more enlightened God of Love of the New Testament, to present conceptions of *Gaia*, encompassing not just the tribe of Hebrews, nor even the whole human race, but the entire field of life energy on the planet.

Human consciousness, too, is evolving on all sides. Perhaps the Omega Point of Teilhard de Chardin represents the convergence back to the center of unity, clarity, love, and light which enlightened mystics have been

describing for a long time. Perhaps one day a critical mass of enlightenment will propel the human race, along with all life on earth, towards a new Golden Age.

Let us hope that the energy towards such a convergence will overtake and displace the contrary energy towards divergence, destruction, and chaos which is riding us rampantly (transitive verb) to the edge of darkness.

Gravity

May, 2018

I have briefly mentioned my idea of gravity as the yin force of a “return to the center” which balances the yang force of the “quest for novelty” (*Philosophical Meditations on the Nature of God*, 13.III.15), but I want to take a closer look at it today.

One of the fundamental questions which continue to bother scientists and philosophers is, “Why is there any universe here at all, instead of just nothing?” I have also been confused by that problem, and my solution is not altogether satisfying even to me (that the universe just popped into being spontaneously, in accordance with some inevitable ultimate reality).

But I don’t want to belabor that problem anymore here ~ what I want to do is to accept those two opposing forces as given, and try to understand how those two forces might explain the nature of the cosmos as we know it.

I start by agreeing that the “natural” state of the cosmos is nothingness, non-being, *ain soph*. This is not yet “zero” ~ zero is already far along on the road to the manifestation of being. Now comes the “Laughter of God” (or however you like to express this mystery) which separates nothingness into two parts, All and Nothing, or an expansive force which creates and maintains a subject/object distinction, and a complementary force which

resolves all such distinctions back to “the center” (the singularity which started and/or ended it all).

I am happy to see that some recent speculations on the nature of the cosmos tend to see some sort of endless cycle expanding out of a singularity and finally resolving back into a black hole, whence it might re-emerge to form a “new universe.” This has always made more sense to me than the facile postulation of an original Big Bang *ex nihilo*. However we may wish to explain the expansive force, or attempt to account for its presence or existence, it is clear to me that the opposite force, of reduction back to the center, from diversity back to singularity, is what we know of as the force of gravity.

Since nothingness is the “natural” state of the cosmos, some force or intervention is required to create and maintain a distinction. One of my earliest philosophical pronouncements (dating back to my book of *Jokes*, 1975, letterpress, miniature) is “Time is the Measure of Error.” I might slightly update that pronouncement as: “Time and Space are the Measures of Error.” Thus, the expansive yang energy of subject/object distinction is identified as some sort of error, like the grain of sand in an oyster which generates a pearl. So, as that initial force dissipates, and the distinctions resolve back to singularity, the manifestations of time and space tend to return back to zero. (A singularity, as a point of no dimensions, is indistinguishable from zero, the reverse of the First Arcanum, which refers to the emergence of the Singularity from the Zero Arcanum of *ain joph*.)

This whole process of the return back to the singularity is what is observed as the “force of gravity.” That is, the “force of gravity” isn’t really a force, at all; it is just the dissipation of the contrary force which generates

expansion into proliferating distinction. In other words, yang expresses an active force reaching out into novelty and distinction, while yin is the passive return to the equilibrium of nothingness. The Hermetic alchemists summed up the whole process as *Solve et Coagula*.

So, is everything clear now? Of course I have side-stepped the whole question of the origin, nature, and meaning of that yang force of distinction, the quest for novelty. Words are wholly inadequate (which is why I resort to quotation marks so often), but to suggest that the whole “Laughter of God” is somehow based on some sort of error, or “crack in the cosmic egg,” seems to me to be hinting, in some poetical fashion, for an interpretation of the ultimate mystery of why there is anything here at all, instead of just nothingness.

The Religion Taboo

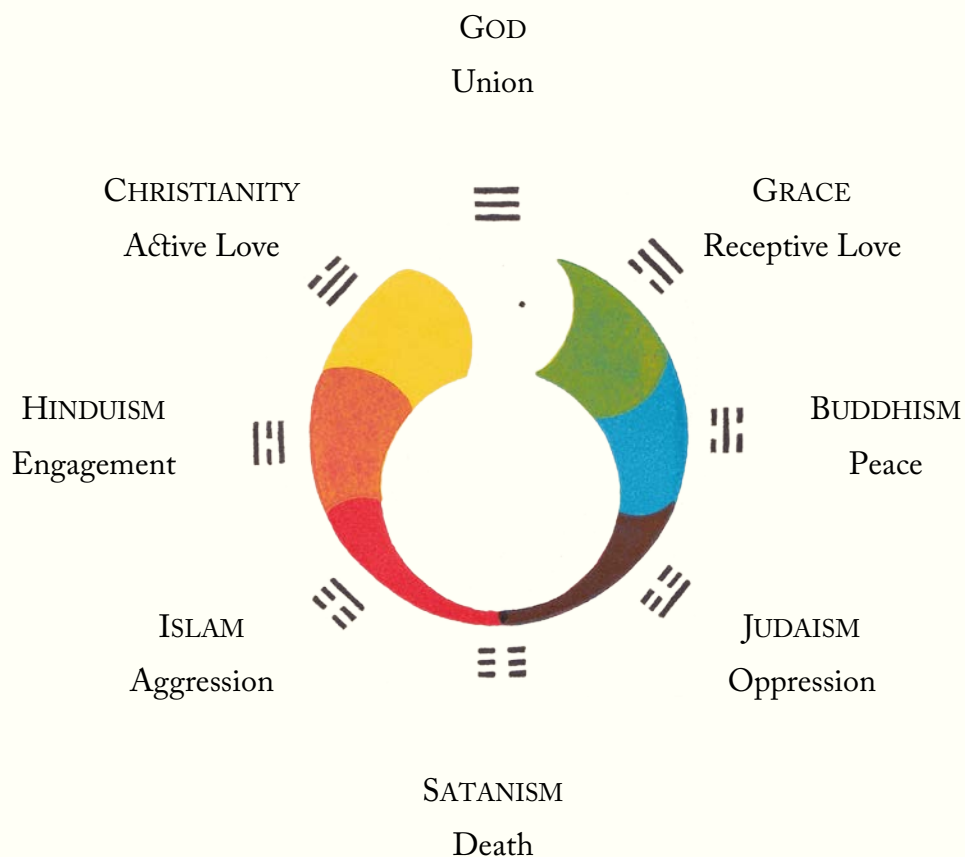
August, 2018

Continuing along the line of the observation that if we draw a map of the world in which every area is colored according to my scheme of aura colors, then there is a startling overlap of the most volatile areas, in the colors of Red and Purple, with the range of Islam over the globe. But that's not the Islam I know ~ isn't Islam all about peace, and obedience to the Will of Allah? So why is the face of Islam so mired in the Red of aggression and violence, and the Purple of oppression and defeat?

I know that it is not considered politically correct to question another person's religion, but I have found that, even though all religions speak of similar themes, there seem to be differences among the major religions that suggest to me sorting them out according to the colors of their aura. This is a pretty radical political venture. It suggests that there are differences in spiritual or ethical value among the religions of the world: that some are better than others.

All of the placement of the colors seems to be obvious, except perhaps the Orange of Hinduism, but I see Hinduism as a religion of engagement with the world, where Buddhism is a religion of withdrawal from the world (Blue). Christianity has always been the clearest voice for the message of

love (Yellow). The Jews have historically been oppressed people (Purple), while Moslems seem to be on an endless jihad (Red).



So here it is possible to see the levels of value, with the Black of Satanism on the bottom, and the Jews and Moslems slugging it out, literally, on the line between life and death, with Hinduism and Buddhism at a clearly elevated plane of consciousness above. This puts Christianity close to the top, along with the Grace of God (Yellow and Green). Above is the merger into Cosmic Consciousness at the apex of Union (White).

I am just sitting here stunned at the extent to which this is all politically incorrect. How can I sit here and make these judgments? Well, I just call them as I see them, and I find Christianity to be the clearest expression of the highest religious experience. Leaving aside Hinduism and Buddhism, both of which impart valuable spiritual values to their followers, that leaves Islam and Judaism as problematic religions, and I look at them not through their theology, but through the actions of their adherents. I find them both to be primitive (somewhere on the level of the Old Testament God). Someone should send missionaries to spread the message of higher levels of consciousness.

Well, intellectual honesty compels me to acknowledge that I do not believe that all religions are equally worthy of respect, but that some are better than others (from the point of view of world harmony). I have eaten fearlessly from the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, the Apple of Discord. According to Homeric myth, the Apple of Discord was the source of the origin of the cosmos, which I call "The Laughter of God."

As I look over what I wrote yesterday, I see that it is deeply flawed. I have been critical of both Islam and Judaism, not because of their theology or stated principles, but because of the way the people live their lives. Obviously this is a gross generalization ~ I am just reacting to what I see on the ground, and that is the unconscionable behavior of the Israelis towards the Palestinians as they pursue the "final solution" to the "Palestinian problem" without any appreciation of the historical irony, and the endless jihad of Moslems all over the globe. I must, in fairness, dissociate the state

of Israel from the Jewish people worldwide, most of whom seem to live their lives innocuously enough.

However, in the case of Christianity, I have unfairly focused on the essence of what it is all about, rather than the actions of Christians. But even if we only look at the present day, and ignore all of the historical atrocities committed in the name of Jesus Christ, the picture is not unequivocal. The United States is predominately Christian, overall, yet its government is out of control in planetary-wide life-threatening depravity. Perhaps it is more accurate to characterize the United States as essentially lacking in any religious awareness at all. In any case, it is very hard to find any uniform standards by which to compare the integrity of religious beliefs.

I guess I have to conclude that my catalog of religious beliefs according to the predominant aura color is just an idle amusement which cannot be seriously defended. But it is useless to consider the value of religious teaching while neglecting the way that teaching influences the moral expression of its adherents.

I wrote all of that several days ago, and I have been unhappy about it ever since. At the very least, we will have to say that it is grossly oversimplified, if not entirely misleading and worthless. And yet, something about the idea persists, and I just can't let it go. The basic problem is that it deliberately targets both Jews and Moslems as living under a substandard religious influence, with negative consequences.

But, if that is the core of the issue, perhaps there is something to it. As I look at what I know of Judaism and Islam (and I take my knowledge not from their sacred literature and traditions, but from an observance of the effect of their religion on personal behavior), I have to say that I don't see much of any tendency to love thy neighbor. Islam gets points for their hospitality to strangers and travelers, and I have always felt that one of the most charming traditions of Judaism is the Seder, some special memorial dinner in which one is urged to find someone who is alone and invite him to share the meal together with your family. I also want to mention that I have traveled extensively in Moslem countries and I have encountered numerous instances of very friendly people who have gone out of their way to be helpful to me, and I have never personally witnessed any moral shortcomings of the Moslem people. But that still leaves the unimaginable depravity of the State of Israel against the Palestinian people, and the endless jihad of Moslems, mostly against other Moslems, not just against The Great Satan and other Western countries. If it is unfair of me to malign these religions on the basis of the actions of some minority of their adherents, I would say that it is up to the religious leaders of both Judaism and Islam to speak out against those abuses and clarify the position of their faith. *Place your bets here:* will the leaders of Judaism be the first to speak out against the State of Israel, or will the leaders of Islam speak out against the endless wars carried on in the name of Islam?

On the whole, Christianity is way out in front expressing the high ground of spiritual consciousness. *A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. (John XIII: 34-35)

Now I want to get down to cases. First of all, levels of spiritual consciousness contain both sides in their aura ~ Yellow and Green, Orange and Blue, and Red and Purple. I have placed the Moslems on the Red side, and Jews on the Purple side, but in the case of the relationship between the Jews and the Palestinians in Israel/Palestine, the Jews are clearly the violent aggressors (Red), and the Palestinians are the oppressed victims (Purple). I have seen as a general observation of human nature that when someone commits an injustice upon someone else, rather than apologize for their error, they double-down and increase their violent attacks against their victim. Here, the Israelis are clearly exhibiting the characteristic behavior of persons ruled by a Red/Purple aura, which typically oscillates between aggression and violence on the one hand, and then further oppression as victim on the other. It is a vicious cycle that can only be transcended by going upwards.

More and more I am thinking that my “facetious” suggestion that Jews should convert to Christianity and Moslems to Buddhism is literally the way forward in this thousand year old conflict in the Middle East. If the Jews were suddenly visited with Christ Consciousness (like Saul on the road to Damascus), they might make a sudden leap upwards in spiritual consciousness, open their borders to returning Palestinians, end all embargo by sea, rebuild the infrastructure that they have been so persistently demolishing for the last hundred years, and offer cash reparations to Palestinians who have been forcibly removed from their land. If they were to do all of this, then relations between the Jews and Palestinians might

approach normal conditions in as little as two or three generations. And, as for Moslems embracing Buddhism, I think that would be the best thing for the peace of the earth. They need to try meditation and find peace within; they need to let go of all of the anger and aggression and return to the love of their families and friends.

Anyway, instead of fighting against any of these people, either Jews or Moslems, they should be offered opportunities of religious education, something like Christian Science Reading Rooms (rather than, for example, more aggressive Missionaries). Whether Jews or Moslems actually convert to Christianity or Buddhism, or whether they just advance new sects which embody higher levels of spiritual awareness and expression, it all amounts to the same thing in the end.

The Holy Ghost

September, 2018

The Holy Ghost is the Cosmic Consciousness of God. In this sense, it is easy to see that the same God which is the entirety of the Cosmic Consciousness of God is also that *Primum Mobile* which caused the cosmos to come into being, bursting out with Novelty as it expands into endless complexity. There are two directions of energy known as God (or God and the Devil) : God as the movement in, back towards the Center, and God as the creative movement outward into Novelty, away from the Center. Altogether it is a Trinity, the understanding of which is the traditional Secret of occult philosophy.

God and Our universe come into being as God divides Oneself into yang and yin. *Solve et Coagula.*

Uncertainty

October, 2018

Is it a Quest for Novelty or simply the fundamental error rate of the cosmos? In my search for God, I value this reaching out into novelty just as much as I value the return to the Center of Perfection. And I keep wondering (reverently) whence comes this outward quest into novelty? But perhaps it all comes down to the fact that our universe just isn't perfect, after all, but is subject to some mean failure rate. Perhaps there is some small chance that any particle of matter or energy could flip into its opposite expression at any time or at any place. This fundamental uncertainty would be what makes our cosmos lurch along at random, exploding into novelty as it expands.

So, according to this theory, the *primum mobile* is the expression of that inescapable potential for error in the cosmos. At some point in time (which didn't exist until that moment) the Universe slipped out of Perfection and fell into Being. Naturally, there is a powerful force for the restoration of Perfection again (gravity), equal to the energy which broke it apart, but that potential for error in the cosmos just seems to keep pushing the universe further out into complexity. Perhaps, because of that error potential, there is no chance of restoring perfection, or stopping the cosmos from spinning out into ever increasing complexity, finally leading to darkness, chaos, and death. So now I don't know whether the universe will finally contract back to a

singularity again (Perfection) or if each universe just plays out until its heat death (the opposite pole of the Singularity) and then we wait for the cosmos to slip out of perfection again some time, falling into Being one more time. *I look, but I see it both ways.*

If the Universe were perfect, it wouldn't exist; existence implies error. But there's a flaw somewhere. Earlier I was writing about incorporating uncertainty into a non-binary logic for a computer. Suppose that at any place, at any time, there is always a chance ~ very small perhaps, but not zero ~ that "anything" might reverse into its opposite expression (remembering from Heraclitus that anything or any idea can only exist along with its opposite). Suppose that this is just a fact about our universe here ~ No; it isn't perfect; there is always the chance that anything could suddenly flip into its opposite expression "without intervention", *i.e.*, without perceivable cause according to the known laws of physics. And perhaps this fundamental Uncertainty is one more of the laws of physics.

The good news is that it is this Error which allows our universe to come into being at all, for which I am thankful and grateful. As for this endless potential for uncertainty, it isn't necessarily bad news ~ perhaps it is what accounts for the persistent novelty reaching into the Unknown with a new idea, and is responsible for all of the interest in this silly world of ours.

And what if that were the whole idea all along? Perhaps the Consciousness of God came into being with the first event or error. This particular universe with its Conscious God is alive and going on, gathering momentum as it expands. We always knew that nothing could be Perfect ~ there always has to be some flaw somewhere, or it can't exist.

Error

January, 2019

God is absolute *Perfection* and the movement in towards the center. But the movement out into *Error* is also an important part of the understanding of God, because without error, there would be nothing at all. Error is the source of life. If you look for the ultimate *Primum Mobile*, you will find error, the *Dæmon* that is looking for something new. In some mythologies, this *Dæmon* which caused the cosmos to come into being is identified with *Eros*, the god of Love.

This it is that allows Life to happen, reaching out into Novelty. It is this error that inspires the Laughter of God, which we experience as our unfolding universe.

That's our Cosmos, *a priori* and *ex nihilo*, caused by random error.

Thank you, God.



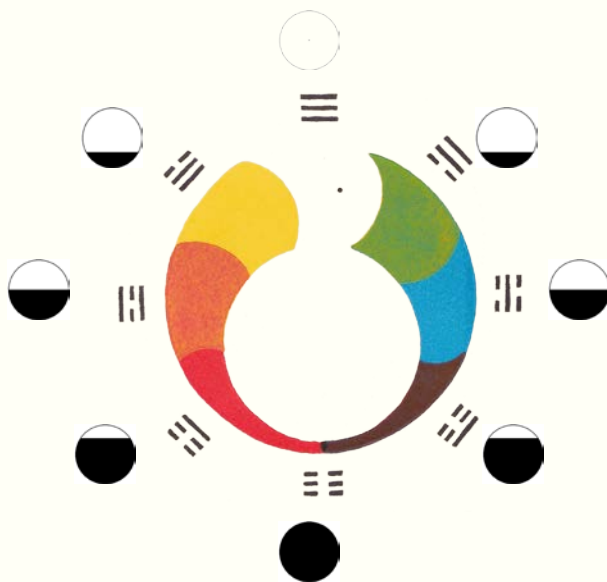
Loving Everyone

February, 2019

The familiar image of Hermetic philosophy and alchemy is the transmutation of lead into gold. This movement through the seven metals has been considered by philosophers as correlating to the stages of growth of the consciousness of man. This range and progression of the planets and metals along with the colors of the aura, matching the same sequence of ideas in the Trigrams of the *I Ching*, is the basis of Hermetic philosophy and esoteric alchemy.

Today I just thought of another way of expressing that progression of consciousness. I have related the rising of consciousness to the expansion of a feeling of love for everyone. *When you take about 300 mcg of LSD you see God, and you love everyone.* But this doesn't mean that you love all people equally ~ there will always be some that you love more or less than others. But what happens is that the whole level rises, as there are fewer people whom you love less, and more people whom you love more. I have thought of graphing this pattern over that familiar Wheel of Change.

If you represent a circle to include all the people you know, and then shade the portion you like less than the others, the picture seems to follow the familiar pattern with remarkable fidelity.



To clarify what this diagram means, if the Aura of a person be known, that person might have a like/dislike profile similar to what is suggested in the diagrams.

A Personal God

March, 2019

Now I am reading over *Honest to God* and *The Honest to God Debate*, and it seems to me that John Robinson, Bishop of Woolwich, doesn't really seem to understand God, so it is no wonder that he is all confused. I agree that many of the "supernatural" aspects of Christianity may have to be clearly relegated to the euphemism of historical analogy, myth, and symbol, such as the Virgin Birth (Immaculate Conception), the Divinity of Christ, the Resurrection, and the Transubstantiation. But then Bishop Robinson goes on to conclude that we will also have to let go of the phantasy of a Personal God, now that we have "come of age."

And yet, according to my theology, God is very much of a Trinity of ideas, all of which seem to be independent ideas, but all of which are necessary and inseparable for a complete view of God. Of these, "the Mother and the Son" correspond to the primary Yin and Yang with which God brought Oneself into Being, Whose metaphysics I have been trying to elucidate in my books *The Laughter of God* and *More Laughter*. But it is the Holy Ghost that ties it all together and infuses the Whole with life and consciousness.

I understand fields of consciousness at every level ~ every family, tribe, nation, language, or interest group contains a center of consciousness which constitutes the center of life for that entity. Thus, our world contains all of

these fields of consciousness simultaneously in a complex and interconnected dance. To posit that these fields are *conscious* and *alive* may seem to be debatable, but to me it seems to be the whole essence of the matter ~ to be alive is to be conscious. I am aware of the consciousness of trees, other plants, and animals, and have no trouble communicating with them.

I go up to the most inclusive field of consciousness on planet earth, comprising the entire biosphere of life on the planet, and I assume that it is alive and conscious, and currently receiving mail as “Gaia,” but I have no trouble imagining a more all-inclusive consciousness as comprising the entire field of life in the universe, but, as I have said before, the consciousness of *Gaia* is the primary focus for the idea of God on earth, and must be known, understood, supported, and protected, as essential to our own survival and well-being.

Consciousness is the essence of life, and it is certainly personal. Every center of consciousness is aware of its smallest component parts, and communicates with them. Likewise, each part sends its messages back up the line to the center of consciousness, analogous to the experience of living human beings.

So, yes ~ we can pray to God, or *Gaia*, and (if we can learn how to listen) we can also hear messages and replies coming to us. I wish more people would pay more attention to this voice, as it is coming with increasing urgency.

So, all of this makes me practically Orthodox, with a belief in God as a Trinity, and including a very Personal God in the person of the Holy Ghost. Add to this the person of Jesus Christ, showing us clearly the path to eternal

life as a path of love, and we have the essential message of the Christian Gospel in a nutshell.

But, lest I leave too orthodox a taste in the mouth, let me recount my understanding of some of the historical aspects of the Christian story.

To begin with, there is the matter of the Virgin Birth. Out of respect for the mother of Jesus, I will stipulate that no other interpretation of the historical events other than that of the virgin birth story can be imagined. If Mary never had any sexual congress with Joseph, then clearly the father of Jesus must have been God Almighty. (If there were a cute stable-boy who might have had other information, no memoirs of his have survived.) Incidentally, the claim that Jesus was of the House of David is carefully documented from King David all the way down to ~ *Joseph*, which, of course, can have no bearing upon the ancestry of Jesus.

Moving right along, what about the divinity of Jesus? If we accept the record of the Gospels, it seems to be clear beyond dispute that Jesus considered Himself to be divine in a much more primary sense than that “all living things partake of the divine to some degree.” Perhaps Jesus was very close to God, hence “divine,” and yet it seems clear that Jesus had visions of a grandeur some orders of magnitude beyond that. No problem; so Jesus was a simple fisherman, who need not be expected to have comprehended all of the complexities of metaphysics. I consider Jesus not as a God, but as a teacher whose message was clear and important, matching the wisdom of the Hermetic philosophers and alchemists who taught a similar aspiration towards higher consciousness under the analogy and symbolism of the transmutation of the baser metals into gold.

Next, I come to the sacrament of Holy Communion. I believe that community and fellowship are very important. I think it is a wonderful idea to commemorate the last supper of Jesus with his disciples. Today, *whenever two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them.* By all means, let us break bread together with our friends in fellowship and love, but anyone who needs to take the words of Jesus literally and assume that they are eating the flesh of Jesus and drinking His blood are requested to keep such unwholesome phantasies to themselves.

Then there is the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. Many people seem to think that this is the real essence of Christianity. How can anyone be a “Christian” unless they believe in the death and resurrection of Christ? Well, since you ask, Jesus himself explained how ~ *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

As I consider the story of the resurrection of Jesus, I wonder if there are any other interpretations of the data (as in the story of the virgin birth, for example). Sure enough, other possibilities arise. I might suppose that Jesus survived the crucifixion, for example. As I look over the story, I see nothing about that experience that precludes survival ~ they didn’t even break his bones. I think that perhaps we may tend to think about historical events in the precise categories of modern terms, when the actual events may not have been so inflexible. Certainly one was not expected to survive crucifixion, but the certainty of death need not have been assumed. The importance of the crucifixion was the enormity of the torture. Whether or not anyone might survive such an ordeal was beside the point.

But the Crucifixion of Christ was a devastating failure. It seems evident from the tale as we have it that Jesus expected to be “glorified by the Father,” Who would be coming down to earth surrounded by his Choirs of Angels to exalt Jesus and bear him off in Glory and Triumph to His Celestial Home, to the sound of Hosannas of Joy and Praise to the Lord and His Son.

That didn’t happen. The poor old fraud just suffered his agony on the cross, leaving his exhausted and wasted body to be gathered up by Joseph of Arimathæa, with Pilate’s permission. Upon cleaning the body for interment, Joseph discovered that the poor wreck of a man was still alive, so he whisked the body off to a safe house where he might be nursed back to health. Later on, the disciples had the wit to make the best of a bad situation by claiming that Jesus died on the cross, all right, but that he then arose from the dead on the third day, *etc.* But, as for Jesus, he had just been shown up as a fraud, so he made only rare appearances to his closest disciples. Perhaps Paul never knew.

Whether he then slunk away with Mary Magdalene, making it as far as France where they had some babies, whose heirs eventually included the Merovingian Kings of France, is a story which may be considered apocryphal, as the evidence for anything like that is generally considered to be meagre.

Everything is for the Best in this Best of all Possible Worlds

November, 2019

The idea that everything is for the best in this best of all possible worlds comes from Leibnitz, but it is probably best known from *Candide*, the hilarious story by Voltaire, in which the idea is mercilessly pilloried by Voltaire's matchless wit. The poor hero Candide, his wife Cunegonde, and his philosopher Pangloss suffer the most horrible adventures imaginable, while Pangloss is trying to explain to Candide how all of their sorrowful catastrophes can be understood within the context of this "best of all possible worlds." But, funny as that story is, I have been increasingly inclined to agree with Leibnitz! The key to understanding the concept lies in the operative word "possible." In fact, this is the only possible world; hence, it must surely be the best.

I have been reading the very enjoyable and brilliant book by Paul Davies, *The Mind of God*, which examines many of the fundamental questions in which I have been interested all of my life. There is one point to which he returns again and again (and he is not alone in this fantasy; I see it all the time among philosophers, scientists, and mathematicians) ~ he expresses astonishment at our amazing and complex world, full of some special set of particular "laws of physics" which just happen, by chance or otherwise, to apply to our world. He continually speculates about all of the

infinite variety of other possible universes which may happen to enjoy some completely different set of physical laws. However, it is my belief that what we know as “the laws of physics” are inevitably derived from the ultimate nature of reality as revealed by many inspired writings and esoteric traditions, such as the Hebrew Kabbalah, the I Ching, the Taoist writings of Lao Tzu and his followers, as well as the ideas of Heraclitus, Pythagoras, the Hermetic alchemists, and many others, all of which I have tried to restate in as clear and consistent a presentation as possible.

I am a die-hard Platonist, believing that all of the metaphysical ideas which I derive from the numbers of mathematics are inherently real and inescapable. That is, these ideas are not “invented”; they are “discovered,” and it is not surprising that many speculative philosophers and mystics have come up with very similar views of this ultimate nature of reality. This means that all of the elaborate metaphysical implications of those ultimate symbols, the numbers of mathematics, are not clever inventions, but are ongoing discoveries about the ultimate nature of reality.

So I say to all of those philosophers who like to speculate about all of those other “possible universes,” some going so far as to suggest that there are an infinite number of possible universes, “No ~ you’re all wrong! This universe and its laws of physics are not just a happy collection from amongst some infinite pool of imaginary “laws of physics,” but that every aspect of the world we know is inevitably derived from the same ultimate and universal metaphysics which may be derived deductively from those Original Symbols, the numbers of mathematics, according to the famous epiphany of Pythagoras that “all is number.”

So we suggest that the numbers of mathematics are not just some clever inventions, but represent a window into the Mind of God. The metaphysics which we derive from the numbers of mathematics are not only derived *a priori* from those symbols, but the metaphysics derived from the numbers of mathematics constitute the only such metaphysics which may be derived from any other symbols or ideas. There are no other symbols comparable to the numbers of mathematics in their *a priori* purity and perfection. Any other symbols you might enjoy are all derived from the lower world, created, according to Plato, by the Demiurge from the pure ideas of the upper world of perfect forms.

In fact, all of this is so obvious and clear to me that I am really surprised that many otherwise brilliant philosophers, scientists, and mathematicians can speak so blithely about all of those infinite other possible universes with some selection out of an infinite pool of possible laws of physics! No, all of what we know as the laws of physics must be ultimately derived from the same original metaphysics (the only possible metaphysics) revealed by the numbers of mathematics. Some of these mathematicians speak of an arbitrary set of “input conditions” out of which some novelty *universe du jour* might be hatched.

By the way, in case anyone wants to know, I have figured it out ~ the egg came first. If you have to ask where the egg came from, you haven't been paying attention.

The Finger of God

November, 2019

“The more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it seems pointless.” ~ Steven Weinberg.

Oh, no ~ the universe is brilliant! As I said so felicitously and mellifluously somewhere earlier, the universe expanding with endless novelty into ever greater complexity is God’s way of living forever without getting bored. The universe is an endless exploration and celebration of the Quest for Novelty.

There it is ~ the meaning of life, and the solution to the enigma of why there should be any universe here at all, instead of simply nothing. I seem to be just summing up here because I come again to the origin of the universe as *Eros*, forever reaching out into Novelty; but remembering also that this is just one Person of the Trinity of God (the Mother, the Son, and the Holy Ghost). And all three come into Being simultaneously, *habens tres partes Philosophiæ totius Mundi. Completum est quod dixi de Operatione Solis*. And the universe thence proceeding is the *Laughter of God*, unfolding into the infinity of eternity.

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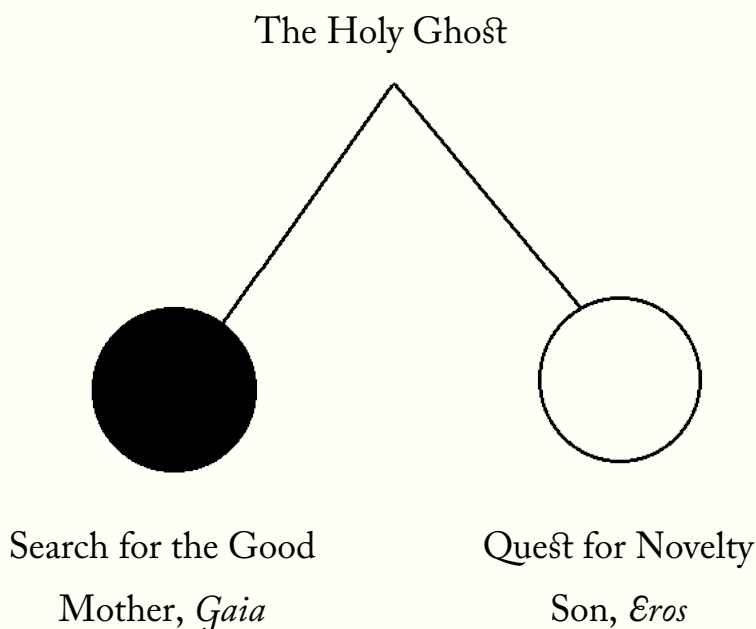
I have been thinking of the idea of quantum uncertainty ~ that “anything,” in order to exist at all, must exist as both some thing and it’s

opposite, after the epiphany of Heraclitus. And they can reverse into their opposite expression at any time, randomly ~ it is just the fundamental nature of reality. But the inherent uncertainty of quantum physics becomes more and more averaged out when you consider higher (more complex) levels of manifestation.

However, this ripple of uncertainty can always bubble up into any level, creating an apparent anomaly, or error. The potential for this error is at the heart of the creation of the cosmos. What we refer to elsewhere as *Eros*, and the endless Quest for Novelty, we are here looking for the equivalent mathematical expression, and I want to illustrate this with a computer program. Let us take, for example, a program that generates a continuously expanding fractal. Now, suppose we introduce a bug into the program that allows (with an average random degree of frequency depending on the complexity of the program) any pair of bits to switch into their opposite expression, on or off, yang or yin. Now we run the program and see what happens. By tinkering with this rate of novelty, we might generate programs of varying levels of interest, an examination of which might suggest interesting speculations. It would probably have to be rare, because unrestrained error would probably quickly crash most programs. In terms of the replication of fractals, it might be pretty interesting. The range of “useful” rates might be narrowed down to some theoretical range, varying from radical change to very slow evolution. Too far to the left beyond radical change leads to explosive expressions, and too far to the right leads to stasis and constipation. (You are welcome to compare political analogues.)

Now, over and above all of this “random change,” is the teleology sufficient to suggest evidence of design? Is the principle of design anything

more than the endless novelty, or is the finger of God somewhere in evidence? (I am wondering if there is any way that the sense of that line might be perverted, but any such efforts seem to be meaningless. Perhaps someone with the patience and afflictions of Job might lament ruefully at the finger of God ruining his life. Hey, I guess that works, but it's not how I meant it.) But perhaps half the time the finger of God sends blessings, but the other half brings affliction. So believers in God's goodness and mercy will consider all of their blessings and be grateful and thankful, all the while trying to ignore or transcend all of their afflictions, but there may be others for whom the finger of God has given them nothing but sorrow. Am I avoiding the Question, or is it unanswerable? I want to believe in a search for the Good, not just a mindless quest for Novelty. This has to be the Holy Ghost, making order out of chaos. But in the quest for this ultimate Good, there is certainly a whole lot lost in the debris from the finger of God.



In Honor of Jesus Christ

December, 2021

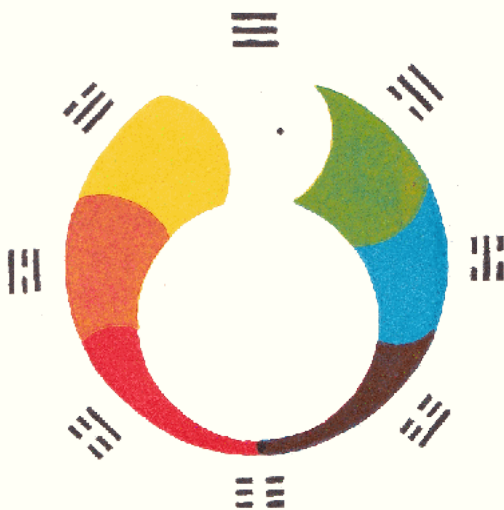
In honor of Jesus Christ, I want to review the eight layers of consciousness, represented by the series of planets and metals of astrology and alchemy, the trigrams of the I Ching, and the colors of the aura. The familiar quest of the alchemist was to transmute lead into gold, as represented by the following sequence of colors.

On the bottom is Black, solitude or death, depending on your frame of reference. Nothing to see here. Then, from the view of the bottom of the whirlpool into Black, we see the struggle for life between the anger and violence of Red and the oppression or defeat of Purple. For a large part of the human race, this is the horizon of consciousness ~ dog eat dog, and rat eat rat, as people strive to get ahead of others by theft, deceit, or violence. At a higher level than that, there is Orange, conflict or engagement, which may be anything from war to market struggle, or any work involving close interaction. At a far remove from all of that, above the fray, there is the peace and rest of Blue, where everything is in harmony with Tao. This is the object of Buddhism.

As the horizon of consciousness rises, it includes the earlier layers, but each layer is only aware of those at that level or below. Levels higher than the ideals of Buddhism are hard to find, but there are two more levels above the Blue, not counting the union, White, at the top ~ Yellow and Green,

love and grace. Yellow expresses the radiance of positive energy as love, and Green expresses the blessings of the grace of God.

The most important lesson to be learned from this alchemical sequence of the transmutation of lead into gold is that everything gets better as the level of the consciousness rises. If everyone would understand this, everyone would want to raise their consciousness as high as possible. Jesus Christ is the most famous advocate of this level of consciousness, and this is the foundation of his message. The theology of the Christian Church has been developed by later scholars, but his foundational message coincides exactly with the secret tradition of alchemy which studies the transmutation of lead into gold.



*A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another;
as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another.

John XIII, 34-35

Deus Perditus

August, 2022

I always keep looking for the root causes of problems. It is useless to keep stretching new band-aids over festering wounds, when what we really need is something much more fundamental. I look at the political problems facing the United States, and the Rest of the World, too, and I compare it with the escalating Climate Catastrophe our planet is experiencing, along with the Pandemics, and the Fires that are literally burning our planet up, and I try to think, “What is the Root cause of all of this mayhem? What is really causing this?”

My standard answer, for the last fifty years or so, has been that the wanton destruction of our planetary heritage of Trees is the biggest problem underlying everything else. Now they are telling us that planting trees is not even sufficient anymore. No, it is not *Sufficient*, but it is *Necessary*. This planet is too far gone to be restored to vitality merely by re-planting the Trees that we have destroyed. But it is the underlying pre-condition before anything else can really begin to help. It's not just about carbon. There is a whole organic biosphere that needs to be restored, and packing compressed carbon dioxide into barrels buried in the ground (at astronomical expense gleefully financed through the Banks) is not the solution. A much better solution is to restore all of that carbon to the planet as Trees that have always been the foundation of its health and vitality.

But I have realized that this problem cannot even be addressed in today's world, as long as the planet continues as a lawless raging jungle, activated solely by financial considerations. I have said before that Money is the same as Power, in the same way that Matter may be converted into Energy ~ they are two names for two expressions of the same underlying concept. And, just to emphasize again the main point, that is no way to run a railroad, let alone a Planet. That whole cloud of psychic energy which we call Money (or Power) is what runs this planet, and has been causing its inevitable collapse, which is now upon us.

So, before we can address the physical dying of our planet, we have to address the raging conflagration of Power Points (*e.g.*, Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin, Xi Jinping, Big Oil, Google, Amazon) all struggling for dominance, which is the cause of the planet's disease. Yes, of course this is the same old theme, because there really isn't any other hope unless we figure it out ~ that *reliance upon financial gain and profit is not suitable as the motivating force driving all activity on the planet.*

But today's idea is to see the problem from a yet more fundamental view ~ always trying to get to the ultimate Root of the Problem. And I find that all knowledge of God seems to have been lost to the present generation. *Deus Mortuus, Deus Absconditus, aut Deus Perditus.* Is God Dead? Or is He only in Hiding? Or has He been Lost?

Since my father was a Methodist minister, I encountered the problem of God at a very early age, but couldn't understand it. Since then, I have made it a major study, and long ago I began to figure it all out. Now it all seems so simple and obvious. Whether you believe in God or not, at least it is clear what it means. *God is to the World as a Gardener is to his Garden.* Did

the Gardener die? Has he turned from his garden and hidden himself away?
Or has the Garden lost its Gardener?

All this talk about the Gardener makes me sound very conservative, certainly paternalistic (although, of course, the Gardener we are looking for might be either male or female, or even something in-between). Authoritarian is the word, I guess. Yes, certainly ~ it is all about the *Source of Authority* ! That is the fundamental problem of the world, and the one which must be addressed first of all, before the other problems can be sorted out. You need a King to keep the Nobles in check. The King, whose power comes from God, allies with the People, in the same way that the whole Free Farm economy and all the free services of health, education, food, and transport are all to support the People, while the Nobles are taxed by the King to pay for it all. But the King cannot be just the most powerful bandit of the lot ~ He must be on a higher level, in which the King is really identified as God. It is no coincidence that this pattern is exactly the pattern of human society from its infancy. So, yes, we long for the Return of the God-King, as in all the best fairy tales, and, lest you misunderstand, we are certainly not talking about the Donald ! What a comical joke for people who somehow yearn for the *Return of the King* to see someone like Donald Trump as the possible Messiah they have been looking for. My viewpoint rises quite a bit higher on the Conservative scale than that ! No, we need to recreate a new King as an Avatar of God in a dedicated Alchemical Vessel.

A lot of people are very fearful of the implications of all of this, but it is certainly clear to me and to a great many other visionaries that our little garden would be a whole lot better off if the Gardener would come back. Please, if we have lost our Gardener, let us cultivate a new one. If we gather

a Seminary of healthy young people from all over the world, and give them the best encouragement we can in every way, then surely an Avatar of God will come into Being among them. That's how magic works.

And if you can figure that out, you will not only understand Magic, but you will also understand God.



The Canary is Dying

January, 2024

What is going on ? I am not surprised that the world is overwhelmed with chaos. *Of course* our world is plunging into chaos ~ there are so many huge problems tearing this planet apart that there are going to be some strange days ahead for the foreseeable future. Oh, no, Toto, forget about Kansas ~ those days are never coming back; that balloon back to Kansas has sailed long ago. Tensions exploding into war over larger and larger portions of this frail planet of ours ? ~ get used to it. Maniacs attempting to seize power with the help of scared and confused people who don't know what to think ? ~ what else is new ? [*Which maniacs do I have in mind, here? Start a list.*]

The whole “Conservative” trend that has been going on lately confuses a lot of different ideas which need to be sorted out. I have considered that the more relevant fulcrum upon which the world turns is to be found in the continuum between the extremes of *Sharpening* and *Leveling*. Not to review the whole idea here, but basically it is *sharpening* that leads to effects of diminishing tolerance variously called right-wing or fascist, and *leveling* that leads to effects such as socialism or free farms. The important point here is that neither idea is right or wrong ~ it is all a matter of degree (and application, time, place, and situation). A certain amount of sharpening promotes an increase of excellence, but an extreme of sharpening becomes fascism, just as surely as ripe fruit begins to rot by a continuation of the same

ripening process (oxidation). It is only when the fulcrum between sharpening and leveling goes out to extreme distances in either direction, that the probability of revolutionary change increases. This is pure Taoist philosophy here ~ when an extreme of Yang or Yin has been reached, the energy reverses direction, and goes the other way (*enantiodromia*). In a complete life cycle there are four such points of change, two of them very gradual, and two of them very sudden. [*vide: End Notes*, below]

Yes, one of those sudden changes we are talking about here is the *Bad News*. So, the more we see rising symptoms of increasing sharpening all over the world, lurching toward the right-wing, becoming less and less tolerant, more and more hostile, and increasingly angry and violent, the closer and more inevitable that looming *Bad News* becomes.

None of this, as I have said, is the least bit surprising. All of this is perfectly evident to quite a number of people, world-wide, who express their dismay, aghast with unbelief and horror. But what I find most astonishing, and even quite scary, is that nowhere do I see the slightest glimmer of interest, anywhere, in addressing the *Problem* !



As I have said before, quite a number of times, there can be no progress moving forward until the entirety of planet Earth be united, and cultivated as a Garden by a Trustee who receive one's authority from God.

If you don't understand what we mean by God, don't worry about it ~ enough people have understood it over the years to keep the light visible at the end of the tunnel. One way to get an understanding of the idea of God is to compare our present world (without God, or where God has been abandoned) with a potential world united under a single, established institution designed to promote the channel from God to the life of our planet and its *flora* and *fauna*, including human beings. This present world of ours is a rolling catastrophe of endless war, greedy mining, raping, and pillaging under the *Law of the Jungle*. That world is now in smoking ruins ~ just ask anyone in Ukraine, Gaza, Yemen, Syria . . .

But a world gratefully accepting the Grace of God in the person of an incarnate Avatar who would supervise the restoration and cultivation of this Earth of ours back to the Garden it once was, would be a game changing

improvement, a transformative revolution analogous in scope to the *Omega Point* of Teilhard de Chardin (*quod vide*).

Money is a universal abstraction which describes the movements of human energy on the planet. Thus, a new Bank must be established under an entirely new principle. Money would be created as needed and dispensed to fund every enterprise important to the health of the planet. A functioning economy has to have a free flowing movement of money, so the new Bank would fund farmers to grow food and people to plant trees. All public services, health care, education, research, public transit, structural maintenance, and more would all be directly funded by the Bank, as authorized by the Trustee. Other services could be provided, such as non-profit food distribution, and free farms for the indigent. Other aspects of life, such as the manufacture and sale of consumer products, would be provided by a free market.

The Bank would manage the value of the new currency it creates by a system of taxation. A primary tax would be imposed for any pollution or resource extraction of any kind. For example, a very large tax would have to be paid to the Bank for every barrel of oil pumped out of the ground, or every tree cut down. This would force the prices up, so that much less oil would be pumped out and fewer trees would be cut, and those taxes would continue to increase, pricing oil out of the market entirely (except for very specialized industrial uses), and making wood products very expensive. But after these taxes, a general property or wealth tax would be collected from the wealthiest of persons or companies. A progressive tax rate wouldn't even start until around \$10 million or so, at very moderate rates, but then rates would increase rapidly at the upper levels of wealth so that it would be the

super-rich who pay the great bulk of the tax, while everyone else not only pays little or no tax at all, but receives all of the free services above enumerated for the smooth and happy functioning of the world. Best of all, who among the super-rich will come forward to complain about the tax? The amount of ones tax would be an ultimate status symbol.

Anyone else would be free to operate any business without hindrance, as long as there be no infraction of the extensive climate or environmental regulations, taxes, or fines. With a network of free farms, “where everyone is welcome and everything is free,” anyone who runs out of financial resources for any reason could just live a simple life for free (until or unless taking up a new position in the outside world again). An immense host of social problems would fade away once it were no longer necessary to obtain *money* at any cost.

There would be very little need for any other international regulation apart from the enormous influence of directing the creation and spending of money. However, the same Avatar, incarnation of the living God, would also exercise the function of final arbiter of Justice in the court system, in addition to authorizing the disbursement of funds by the Bank. There would be no more use for war, since wars only move one backwards. War creates a nadir of prosperity, which, in turn, creates more anger and violence, which leads to more and more mutually self-destructive war, (this is the self-perpetuating negative cycle of Red and Purple consciousness ~ did you know that there is also a self-perpetuating positive cycle way up above, at the level of Yellow and Green?) Since ultimately it is *money* over which people go to war, territorial distinctions won't make much difference. It really doesn't

matter who “owns” regions of eastern Ukraine, since everyone would live by the same laws anyway.

All of the transactions with the Bank could be done instantly, by computer. All taxes and fees paid back to the Bank would be simply erased, as the only function of the taxation is to maintain the value of the currency by trimming the excess off the top. The *Natural Law of Money* (in case you hadn’t noticed) is that it is constantly being vacuumed up to the top, so the obvious principle of taxation, and the role of the State, should be to take it off the top and return it to the base *via* all the free services described herein. Notice how the “role of the State” here differs from the Jungle economy, in which the “State” is maintained by the wealthy for the purpose of conserving and increasing their wealth. The present Jungle economy must be replaced by a Trustee whose authority comes from God. The founding of a Seminary for this purpose has been discussed elsewhere.

Under the beneficent regulation of this Trustee, or Advocate, who speaks for God, a new Golden Age of peace and prosperity would supervene. Anger and conflict would begin to recede; “the war will be over;” soldiers could return to their families and their farms; and the agenda of regenerating the living biosphere of the Earth could begin in a systematic way ~ planting more trees, retreating from the fossil fuels in favor of renewable energy, and more ~ for example, inhumane factory animal farms would be taxed or fined out of existence. Non-organic farming practices would also be taxed away or outlawed.

It is hard to calculate the net effect of all of this on the general index of happiness and prosperity, but it seems to me that a world under the direction of a Gardener under the authority of God would vastly outperform our

present world, and the contrast between the chaos rampaging all over the globe at the present time and a world carefully cultivated by the Gardener of God would finally allow anyone who hasn't figured it out yet to understand what God means, after all.

End Notes: Further information about the ideas mentioned here can be found in the Author's collected essays ~ *One Planet Makeover* (tree.org/One Planet Makeover.pdf) and *Selected Articles, Metaphysics and Theology* (tree.org/Selected Articles.pdf).

The Meaning of Life

May, 2024

At last! Some good news: “*U.S. signals support for possible ICC sanctions over Israel warrants.*” But then, when I go to read the article, it turns out that the sanctions under discussion are sanctions against the International Criminal Court for daring to suggest that Israel had done anything wrong! We are told that the ICC has made a “profoundly wrong-headed decision.” That’s worse than Donald Trump instigating an insurrection when he fails to get re-elected. Both the United States and Israel need to take off their blinders and see what they look like in the eyes of the rest of the world. Both countries are acting from a very primitive level of consciousness. But since levels of consciousness have been plunging precipitously all over the planet, it is all the more important for some visionaries to exercise some leadership at a higher level, to guide this wayward planet back to health, because, of course, the planet’s prevailing level of consciousness is directly related to the prevailing level of biological health. As one goes down, so does the other. It is the *unintended consequence* of climate change.

Oh, how the mighty are fallen! This used to be a great country (relatively speaking) as recently as 1950, but it’s all over now, Baby Blue.

The rate at which stuff that goes on in this world is spinning out of control is rapidly accelerating. I must be getting old, if everything I see happening is *wrong, wrong, wrong, and getting worse*. I take some comfort

from the fact that most of my views align with those of the very young, who are concerned about climate change, and consider it a real issue, unlike the endless parade of useless news that is just out there to distract us from what is really going on. Most young people, all over the world, want to see charges dropped from Julien Assange (and given a Congressional Medal of Honor, into the bargain), and are strenuously opposed to the genocide perpetrated by the State of Israel against the Palestinian people, who were living on the land before the Jews came along to take it from them.

Anytime I say things like this I have to repeat that I do not dislike Jews ~ it is the odious State of Israel and its leaders that I dislike, with their unreconstructed view of Zionism ~ very Old Testament, and repugnant to modern sensibilities. In the same way, I do not dislike the Russian people or the American people; I just dislike the wicked governments of same.

What else do we agree on, young people and I? ~ the insurgents in Burma (calling itself Myanmar, these days), and the people of Ukraine, Tibet, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, all of whom want to be free. Tax the rich, especially billionaires, who can most easily afford it, and, in return, provide a Universal Basic Income for the rest of us (similar to my suggestion of Free Farms ~ I still like the free farm idea; it's more fun, cheaper to implement, and an altogether better solution for people who run out of money). Tax Big Oil and any other criminal gang profiteering from the rape of the earth. Settle international disputes by diplomacy instead of war. Free the herb, of course, but free LSD, too, and all the rest of the agents of change, while we are at it. Free people should be allowed to make their own choices about the way they want to live their lives [*thank you, Jimi Hendrix*]. Education should be the only legal recourse against anything with which one has a

problem. If people want to tattoo their bodies, change their gender, abort their children, love someone whom other people consider inappropriate [which is worse ~ loving someone of an “inappropriate” age, gender, or status, or not loving anyone at all?], jump off the Golden Gate Bridge, or otherwise behave in ways at variance with the dominant paradigm, it is nobody’s business but those who are directly involved.

I think the voting age should be twenty-five. Anyone over that age shouldn’t be allowed to vote.

There is a reason why the large strand of human energy flows in the way that it does, but creative variations all around the central cord, in constant search of an alternative, are the energy of creative evolution, the endless quest for novelty. It’s the Meaning of Life, after all.



