

**Art and The Imagination.  
A Notebook**

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## WE NEED A VISION

To see a World in a Grain of Sand  
And a Heaven in a wild Flower  
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand  
And Eternity in an hour

William Blake

C. G. Jung:

"If you remain within arbitrary and artificially created boundaries, you will walk as between two high walls: you do not see the immensity of the world. But if you break down the walls that confine your view... then the ancient sleeper awakens in you... There in the whirl of chaos dwells eternal wonder. Your world begins to become wonderful. Man belongs not only to an ordered world; he also belongs in the wonder-world of his soul . . . If you look outside yourselves, you see the far-off forest and mountains, and above them your vision climbs to the realms of the stars. And if you look into yourselves, you will see on the other hand the nearby as far-off and infinite, since the world of the inner is as infinite as the world of the outer. Just as you become a part of the manifold essence of the world through your bodies, so you become a part of the manifold essence of the inner world through your soul. This inner world is truly infinite, in no way poorer than the outer one. Man lives in two worlds." <sup>1</sup>

Elaine Pagels:

"Yet these gnostic writers do not dismiss visions as fantasies or hallucinations. They respect - even revere - such experiences, through which spiritual intuition discloses insight into the nature of reality. 'Do not suppose that resurrection is an apparition (*phantasia*; literally, 'fantasy'). It is not an apparition, rather it is something real. Instead he continues, 'one ought to maintain that the world is an apparition, rather than resurrection.' <sup>2</sup>

". . . and having become both Mystics and Beholders (*mystæ* and *epoptæ*) we beheld in the pure light, apparitions that were complete, unique, calm, and felicitous -- being ourselves pure from earthly contamination and not encompassed in this investiture which we now call 'Body' and by which we are carried about, fastened like an oyster to his shell."

Plato in the *Phaidros* <sup>3</sup>

One must also study the use of the word 'apparition' in Iamblichus. <sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> C. G. Jung, *Liber Novus* p. 264. Quoted in Lance S. Owens, *The Hermeneutics of Vision: C. G. Jung and Liber Novus*. This article was originally published in: *The Gnostic: A Journal of Gnosticism, Western Esotericism and Spirituality* Issue 3, July 2010, p. 23–46.

<sup>2</sup> Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels*, p. 42.

<sup>3</sup> In : Iamblichus, *Theurgia or The Egyptian Mysteries.*, Online edition.

<sup>4</sup> Iamblichus, *Theurgia or The Egyptian Mysteries. Reply of Abammon, the Teacher to The Letter of Porphyry to Anebo together with Solutions of the Questions Therein Contained*, Translated from the Greek by Alexander Wilder, London, Rider & Son, Online edition:

<http://www.esotericarchives.com/esoteric.htm>

Hillman juxtaposes the fixed meaning of the image with the “. . . imaginative work of animating the image.” It is important to note that both *imaginative* and *image* share a common root. One could say that the ‘work’ is correctly – animating the imaginative, or imagination, or at its root, animating the ‘imago.’ And built into ‘imago’ is *magus*, *magi*, and *magic*.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama:

“If we want a beautiful garden, we must first have a blueprint in the imagination, a vision. Then that idea can be implemented and the external garden be materialized. “<sup>5</sup>

“Thoughts Are Man's Most Potent Builders.”

Karl Jaspers:

“Nowhere is the truth ready-made; it is an inexhaustible stream that flows from the history of philosophy as a whole from China to the West, yet flows only when the primal source is captured for new realizations in the present.”<sup>6</sup>

How, is the *primal source captured*? And what form do the “*new realizations in the present*” manifest in?

## WAYS OF SEEING

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“A new way of seeing is giving rise to a way of constructing. Such is the question Nicholas of Cusa poses in *Icona*: what does it mean to “see”? how can a “vision” bring a new world into being?”<sup>7</sup>

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“The poem continues in a new mode the age-old position of the poet as communal repository of wisdom. Aratus' project is to make us all see what we have always seen, to 'teach' us what we have always known.”

V. 733 'Do you not see? Whenever ...' draws attention to this concern. Such a question would normally refer to a one-time event, but here the verb evokes both physical sight and mental understanding. This 'oddity' pertains both to the problem of reading a text about seeing, and to the mental effort required to 'visualise' what Aratus is talking about, a visualisation which must of course be based on visual experiences and memories.”<sup>8</sup>

Bhikkhu Bodhi

“To free ourselves from suffering fully and finally we have to eliminate it by the root, and that means to eliminate ignorance. But how does one go about eliminating ignorance? The answer follows clearly from the nature of the adversary. Since ignorance is a state of not knowing things as they really are, what is needed is knowledge of things as they really are. Not merely conceptual knowledge, knowledge as idea, but perceptual knowledge, a knowing which is also a seeing. This kind of

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<sup>5</sup> His Holiness the Dalai Lama, *The Little book of Wisdom*, Rider, London, 1997.

<sup>6</sup> Karl Jaspers, *The Perennial Scope of Philosophy*, p. 26.

<sup>7</sup> Michel De Certeau and Catherine Porter, The Gaze Nicholas of Cusa, *Diacritics*, Vol. 17, No. 3, Autumn, 1987, pp. 2-38.

<sup>8</sup> Richard L. Hunter, Written in the Stars: Poetry and Philosophy in the *Phaenomena* of Aratus, *Arachnion. A Journal of Ancient Literature and History on the Web*, nr. 2 - Università degli Studi di Torino, Turin.

knowing is called wisdom (*pañña*). Wisdom helps to correct the distorting work of ignorance. It enables us to grasp things as they are in actuality, directly and immediately, free from the screen of ideas, views, and assumptions our minds ordinarily set up between themselves and the real." <sup>9</sup>

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Prof. Robert Thurman writes:

"If you're a twentieth-century teacher, who can say what the twenty-first century will want? We would think somebody would have to be enlightened to be able to do that, and we don't really have a concept of such a kind of enlightenment. But Tibetan Buddhists do. They know that enlightened knowledge does not just include knowledge of spiritual matters, but it also includes an awareness of how humanity develops and evolves." <sup>10</sup>

This is a very important point. Maitreya the Future Buddha.

*"... enlightened knowledge does not just include knowledge of spiritual matters, but it also includes an awareness of how humanity develops and evolves."*

Do we have a vision of what we would like the future to be? How many people, today have: *"? .an awareness of how humanity develops and evolves."* How many people care? Yes, there are glimpses here and there. This particular work, the initiatory speculation on the future of humanity, is the particular action of Maitreya the Future Buddha. . who has an embodied emanation at the moment, in H.E Tai Situ Rinpoche, based in Sherab Ling, in Himachal Pradesh, India.

The Janus faces provides a perfect image to amplify the Maitreyan future with the esoteric/Hermetic past – possibly the aged face is the Old Brain, and the young face the New Brain. Janus is a bi-modal symbol – it should be compared with other many headed aspects of mythology, e.g. 3-headed Cerebus; 11-headed Avalokiteshvara - etc. And of course, the bimodal: Ganymede Puer – Wise Man– Senex

## VISION

Frances A. Yates:

*"... the potency of the Hermetic impulses toward a new vision of the world..."* <sup>11</sup>

Visionaries. We need a vision. Such a vision does exist and has existed for thousands of years

Unity in diversity

In 1614 a strange German text proclaimed the founding of a secret brotherhood dedicated to religious and intellectual reform. "Finally man might thereby understand his own nobleness and worth, and why he is called Microcosmos, and how far his

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<sup>9</sup> Bhikkhu Bodhi, The Noble Eightfold Path. The Way to the End of Suffering, *The Wheel Publication* No. 308/311 (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1984), second edition (revised) 1994. Transcribed from a file provided by the BPS.

<sup>10</sup> Robert Thurman, Treasure Teachings, An Interview with Robert Thurman, *Parabola*, Winter 1994, pp. 7-16.

<sup>11</sup> Frances A. Yates, The Hermetic Tradition in Renaissance Science, in: Singleton, C.S. ed., *Art, Science and History in the Renaissance*, Baltimore, 1968, pp.260 - p.261.

knowledge extendeth into Nature." <sup>12</sup>

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Vision is shattered - replaced by selfish interests, petty interests, nit-picking etc. VISION - VERSUS - TELEVISION. VISION - etymology - thereof - does NOT mean cramped, narrow, confined, restricted etc. VISION suggests VIEW, or even OVERVIEW, therefore, SPACIOUSNESS, wide-open space, with plenty of room to move about.

The root is Latin, *vede, vide, videre, vision*. and has links through to Sanscrit and to Indo-European roots. For example, Sanscrit: *vidya*.

Now envision, and envisioning, have become popular terms in the so-called New Age movement. For example, someone had a "vision" of many angels gathered over Afghanistan. Seeing, that this person was presumably not in Afghanistan at the time, we conclude that this "vision" was seen internally. The old term for this, is *clairvoyance* . . . another term for people with these inner gifts is Seer. VISIONARY - then to "SEERS" - those who 'SEE' - vision. Or sometimes we talk about visionaries. In all these examples, there is potential for interesting amplification.

If we look at the people in political power today, usually, old men with grey hair in black suits, we will see that they are basically devoid of vision. They only see in terms of material power and usually economic profit, for themselves and their associates.

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Christina Feldman and Jack Cornfield:

"Modern culture would have us worship before the altar of the thinking mind, with its endless capacity to produce ideas, fantasies, and formulas. We are taught that the thinking mind is the possessor of all wisdom, and we dedicate much of our lives to the pursuit of knowledge and information. Seeing the world and ourselves through the filter of all the information we have accumulated, we can be imprisoned by the very ideas and images we have so ardently pursued. Often we think that we know ourselves, when what we know is only what we think about ourselves. When we think we know the world around us, our static images bar us from seeing the mystery held within each changing moment. What is an image if not just a description of the world that is bound to the past?" <sup>13</sup>

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"Wandering between two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born. To live in the time between the gods which have fled, And the gods which are not yet."

—Matthew Arnold

*Imagineers* - (Disney) Engineers of the Imagination - *Imaginal Engineers*

Norman O. Brown:

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<sup>12</sup> Luhrmann, T. M. An interpretation of the *Fama Fraternitatis* with respect to Dee's *Monas Hieroglyphica*. *Ambix*, vol 33 (1), 1986, p1-10.

<sup>13</sup> Christina Feldman and Jack Kornfield, *Stories of the Spirit, Stories of the Heart*. From: Tricycle's Daily Dharma: September 9, 2007.

"It is possible to be mad and to be unblest, but it is not possible to get the blessing without the madness; it is not possible to get the illuminations without the derangement," . . . "And so there comes a time--I believe we are in such a time, when civilization has to be renewed by the discovery of new mysteries, by the undemocratic but sovereign power of the imagination, by the undemocratic power which makes poets the unacknowledged legislators of mankind, the power which makes all things new."

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"The right to dream is a moral fundamental human right, and the Jaipur Festival believes in the human imagination beyond borders, boundaries, nations and ideologies." <sup>14</sup>

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Chris Hedges:

"It is through imagination that we can reach the dark regions of the human psyche and face our mortality and the brevity of existence. It is through imagination that we can recover reverence and kinship. It is through imagination that we can see ourselves in our neighbors and the other living organisms of the earth. It is through imagination that we can envision other ways to form a society." <sup>15</sup>

M. D. Merlin

"We live in an age when a divine vision is dismissed as an hallucination, and desire to experience a direct communication with god is often interpreted as a sign of mental illness. Nevertheless, some scholars and scientists assert that such visions and communications are fundamentally derived from an ancient and ongoing cultural tradition. The hypothesis presented here suggests that humans have a very ancient tradition involving the use of mind-altering experiences to produce profound, more or less spiritual and cultural understanding." <sup>16</sup>

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The Sacred or Solar King encourages creativity in his realm.

Robert Bly:

"I would think that people in the West lost their ability to think mythologically around the year 1000, and then the layer collapsed. Perhaps because Christianity would not allow any new stories, or new gods, or perhaps because after the Renaissance the exciting pursuit of science absorbed more and more imaginative energy, the layer was never reconstituted. European men and women gradually stopped feeling the abundant gods and goddesses with their imaginative energy. The inner heaven collapsed, and we see all around our feet its broken glass. The gods are lying all around our feet." <sup>17</sup>

James Hillman:

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<sup>14</sup> In an article by Devi Rajab, in *The Cape Times*, 3rd February, 2015

<sup>15</sup> Chris Hedges, *The Power of Imagination*, *Truth-out*, 12 May 2014

<sup>16</sup> M. D. Merlin Archaeological Evidence for the Tradition of Psychoactive Plant Use in the Old World, *Economic Botany*, Vol. 57, No. 3 (Autumn, 2003), p. 295.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Bly, *Iron John*, pp. 107-108

"We do not know much nowadays about imagining divinities. We have lost the angelic imagination and its angelic protection. It has disappeared from all curricula — theological, philosophical, aesthetic. That loss may be more of a danger than either war or apocalypse because that loss results in literalism, the cause of both."

Jung:

"All conscious psychic processes may well be causally explicable; but the creative act, being rooted in the immensity of the unconscious, will forever elude our attempt at understanding. It describes itself only in its manifestations; it can be guessed at, but never wholly grasped. Psychology and aesthetics will always have to turn to one another for help, and the one will not invalidate the other."<sup>18</sup>

Elizabeth Greene:

"While Iamblichus' ascent is not entirely 'outer' in an objective sense, it is not entirely 'inner' in a subjective sense either. Shaw suggests that the ascent takes place in a *mundus imaginalis*, and the imagination functions as a medium that effects both the soul's attachment to the body and its return to the gods. Iamblichus himself informs us that the imagination is 'divinely inspired, for it is stirred into modes of imagination from the Gods, not from itself, and it is utterly changed from what is ordinarily human'. "<sup>[19]</sup> <sup>[20]</sup>

John Myriam Reynolds:

". . . a sense of the sacred can be shown to be absolutely crucial to human existence and it comes to shape every aspect of human life. In general, it can be said that religion is concerned with how both the individual and how society as a whole is related to the sacred, however the sacred may be defined within a particular cultural horizon. Again, in whatever ways their mythologies and their theologies may differ, all of the religions found among humanity are fundamentally concerned with this experience of the sacred, whether through collective rituals or individual religious and mystical experience. Although the sacred is encountered in one's immediate experience, its meaning is elicited and put into perspective by way of constructing a narrative, a sequence in time of events and images. Such a narrative, whether oral or written, is known as a myth. Myth is not history. A myth is not a true and accurate account of what actually happened yesterday or the day before, or even hundreds or thousands of years ago. Nor is a myth just an entertaining story about what could have happened long ago. Rather, a myth is a narrative about the actions of gods, heroes, and ancestors that says something fundamental about our world, our society, and our human existence. Myth provides meaning to life, a framework in which to think and evaluate things. Myth provides models or archetypes and these sacred patterns come to govern many kinds of human activities and, even more, infuse them with reality. In general, as distinguished from folk tales and legends, myths recount the archetypal actions of gods, heroes, and ancestors at the time of the beginning of things when creation was still new and fresh, the time when the things and the activities of this world were first brought into being. Myths explain why things are the way they are now. But even more, they provide models and examples that show how life ought to be lived. Myths are not

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<sup>18</sup> *Collected Works*, Volume 15, *The Spirit in Man, Art and Literature* 135

<sup>19</sup> 90 Iamblichus, *De mysteriis*, 133:3-8, in Shaw, 'Containing Ecstasy', p. 62.

<sup>20</sup> Elizabeth Greene, *The Celestial Ascent of the Soul. The Morphology of an Enduring Idea*, MA in Cultural Astronomy and Astrology, Bath Spa University, 2006, pp. 19-20.

dead and ossified structures, like so many specimens preserved in museum cases, but are living processes that evolve with the history of a society. They represent a continuous and on -going dialogue between human beings and a higher dimension of meaning. Thus, religions and mythologies have a history because human beings have a history. [21]

## OVID

Paul Barolsky:

“Like his own Arachne, Ovid is a weaver, a weaver in words, his poem a great tapestry of interwoven narratives. Part of the pleasure we take in reading his poem derives from following the threads of his intertwined stories and discovering the complex patterns he achieves. The web that Ovid weaves extends beyond his book and is part of the larger fabric of culture. His metamorphoses were themselves transformed by Dante, Petrarch, and Chaucer; Botticelli, Correggio, and Titian; Ariosto, Spenser, and Shakespeare; Rubens, Poussin, and Bernini; Milton, Gongora, and Marino; Boucher, Redon, and Daumier; Picasso, T. S. Eliot, and Kafka; George Bernard Shaw, Salvador Dali, and Kiki Smith, to name only a few artists and writers under Ovid's spell. The extent of Ovid's role in modern European culture, in poetry, theatre, short stories, novels, paintings, etchings, engravings, woodcuts, lithographs, drawings, and sculpture, is so vast that no one has ever dared attempt an extensive overview of the subject. Such an endeavor would be defeated by the quantity of texts and images one would need to consider and master, by the difficulty of separating Ovid's influences from those other sources of art with which his own are intertwined.”<sup>22</sup>

T.S. Eliot:

“In using the myth, in manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity, Mr. Joyce is pursuing a method which others must pursue after him. They will not be imitators, any more than the scientist who uses the discoveries of an Einstein in pursuing his own, independent, further investigations. It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history. It is a method already adumbrated by Mr. Yeats, and of the need for which I believe Mr. Yeats to have been the first contemporary to be conscious. It is a method for which the horoscope is auspicious. Psychology (such as it is, and whether our reaction to it be comic or serious), ethnology, and *The Golden Bough* have concurred to make possible what was impossible even a few years ago. Instead of narrative method, we may now use the mythical method. It is, I seriously believe, a step toward making the modern world possible for art, toward that order and form which Mr. Aldington so earnestly desires. And only those who have won their own discipline in secret and without aid, in a world which offers very little assistance to that end, can be of any use in furthering this advance.”<sup>23</sup>

**Henry Corbin:**

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<sup>21</sup> Selections from *The Bonpo Book of The Dead*. Collected and translated by John Myrdhin Reynolds. Bonpo Translation Project. Vidyadhara Institute for Studies in Comparative Religion, San Diego & Copenhagen, 1997

<sup>22</sup> Paul Barolsky, *Ovid's Web, Arion, Third Series*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Fall, 2003), pp. 45-46

<sup>23</sup> T.S. Eliot, "Ulysses, Order, and Myth"



"Having said this, we are better able to define our subject, to say what it is and what it is not. In speaking of the *Imago Templi*, I intend to remain at the level of a phenomenology, a "temenology" if I may risk the word (from the Greek *temenos*, a sacred precinct), which exists at the level of the imaginal world (*'alam al-mithal*), the world in-between (*barzakh*), at "the meeting-place of the two seas". I once had occasion, in relation to the Mazdean transfiguration of the Earth by the *imaginal* perception of the Light of Glory (the *Xvarnah*), to speak of an *Imago Terrae* as a mirror reflecting the *Imago Animae*? Similarly, the case of the *Imago Templi* at "the meeting-place of the two seas" implies a situation which is above all *speculative*, in the etymological sense of the word: two mirrors (*specula*) facing each other and reflecting, one within the other, the Image that they hold. The Image does not derive from empirical sources. It precedes and dominates such sources, and is thus the criterion by which they are verified and their meaning is put to the test." <sup>24</sup>

"The image does not derive from empirical sources, and is thus, the criteria by which they are verified and their meaning is put to the test. It is . . . "not to be understood as allegorical; concealing that Other whose form it is, but *tautegorical* - it is to be understood in its identity with that Other, and as being *itself* the thing which it expresses". <sup>25</sup>

Erik Davis:

"Henry Corbin, the brilliant twentieth century scholar of Sufism, coined the term *mundus imaginalis* to describe the *'alam al-mithal*, the visionary realm where prophetic experience is said to literally take place. It is a realm of the imagination, but a true imagination that has a claim on reality because it mediates between the sensual world and the higher abstract realms of angelic or cosmic intelligences. The *mundus imaginalis* is a place of encounter and transformation. "Is it possible to see without being in the place where one sees?" asks Corbin, throwing down the gambit of visionary experience. "Theophanic visions, mental visions, ecstatic visions in a state or dream or of waking are in themselves penetrations into the world they see." " <sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Henry Corbin: *Temple and Contemplation*. Islamic Publications Ltd. Routledge & Kegan, London, 1986, p.267.

<sup>25</sup> Henry Corbin: *Temple and Contemplation*. Islamic Publications Ltd. Routledge & Kegan, London, 1986, p.266.

<sup>26</sup> Erik Davis, [The New Eye: Visionary Art and Tradition](#)

## THE ARTIST OF THE INNER REALMS



Antoni Tapies, *Cap I vernis*, 1990

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Kenneth Clark:

“Painting for me, is but another word for feeling.”<sup>27</sup>

Alberto Burri

“Words are no help to me when I try to speak about my painting,” says Alberto Burri.

“It is an irreducible presence that refuses to be converted into any other form of expression. It is a presence both immanent and alive.”

“It is useless to speak about paintings. Painting is explained only by painting. I don’t like labels.”<sup>28</sup>

Antoni Tàpies’:

“I’ve always compared the attitude of the artist to that of the mystic. They both follow a path which slowly leads to an ultimate vision of reality. When you arrive at that point it’s difficult to talk about it: what is ultimate reality, or the face of God, as the mystics would say? It’s not so much knowledge as experience.”<sup>29</sup>

Cy Twombly:

“It’s more like I’m having an experience than making a picture. It does not illustrate. It is the sensation of its own realization.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Kenneth Clark, *The Romantic Rebellion. Romantic versus Classic Art*, John Murray, London, 1973, p. 276.

<sup>28</sup> Drohojowska, Hunter, Alberto Burri’s Umbrian Collage, *Architectural Digest*, January 1990, pp.118 – 123.

<sup>29</sup> Peppiatt, M. ‘The Soul Revealed by the Hand: An Interview with Antoni Tàpies’ *Art International* 13 Winter, 1990, p.34.

<sup>30</sup> Cy Twombly, 1957.

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"The painter Robert Henri (1884) writing in his book, *The Art Spirit*, originally published in 1923, seemed to refer to this very state when he offered the following ideas about why an artist paints a picture and why we may later value it:

"The object of painting a picture is not to make a picture, however unreasonable this may sound. The picture, if a picture results, is a by-product and may be useful, valuable, interesting as a sign of what has passed. The object, which is back of every true work of art, *is the attainment of a state of being*, (emphasis in original) a state of high functioning, a more than ordinary moment of existence. In such moments activity is inevitable, and whether this activity is with brush, pen, chisel, or tongue, its result is but a by-product of the state, a trace, the footprint of the state." <sup>31</sup>

Robert Henri:

"Art is an outsider, a gypsy over the face of the earth." <sup>32</sup>

Michael Tucker on Tarkovsky:

"For in the filmic shamanism of this Russian seer, every blade of grass, every drop of water, every flicker of that fundamental aspect of both life and film – light – is both itself, and an intimation of something other." <sup>33</sup>

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Kevin Atkinson

". . . the making of any art, whose apparently disparate elements, is a microcosmic act in relation to a microcosmic act. The artist chooses and brings them together, an act of conjoining or making whole. I suppose most people do it intuitively."

". . . every artist is esoteric. But some are more conscious of it – that is, intellectually conscious of it. All good art contains hidden knowledge. If a person wants to find out something, the choice is there all the time." <sup>34</sup>

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Edward James, an eccentric and man of great wealth, who sponsored the Surrealist and had a long friendship with Leonora Carrington, wrote in a 1941 letter:

"I felt that I could do more to alter the face of the world, more to usher in that new world, by spending it in my own way – in particular, by fostering any and all creative spirits I could meet with, who had something individually to contribute to the building of that more vivid and more living future . . . Moreover, I could see hardly anyone who supported the sort of stairways to the imagination which seemed to me to be so vital and necessary to the spiritual potency of this future . . ." <sup>35</sup>

One wishes there were more people of wealth with this kind of vision.

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In the Codice Matritense de la Real Academia we catch a glimpse of Huichol Indian Shamanic Art:

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<sup>31</sup> Barbara Naron Faulkner, *The Disciples of Light: a way of seeing and the educational transfer of ideas linking spirituality and art among southern painters in the Hensche-Hawthorne Tradition*, Phd Thesis, Louisiana State University, May 2007.

<sup>32</sup> Robert Henri

<sup>33</sup> Michael Tucker, p.263

<sup>34</sup> Avril Herber, *Conversations. Some people, Some place. Some Time South Africa*, Bateleur Press, Johannesburg, 1979.

<sup>35</sup> Surreal Friends. Leonora Carrington, Remedios Varo and Kati Horna, Lund Humphries, 2010, p. 123.

"The true artist, capable, practicing, skilful, maintains dialogue with his heart, meets things with his mind. The true artist draws out all from his heart: makes things with calm, with sagacity; works like a true Toltec." <sup>36</sup>

Bill Viola:

"Actually I can see a strong connection between the outstanding mystics and artists. . . . The basic tenets of the *via negativa* are the unknowability of God; that God is wholly other, independent, complete; that God cannot be grasped by the human intellect, cannot be described in any way; that when the mind faces the divine reality, it becomes blank. It seizes up. It enters a cloud of unknowing. When the eyes cannot see, then the only thing to go on is faith, and the only true way to approach God is from within.... The essence here is the individual faith, and as God is said to reside within the individual, many aspects of it bear close resemblance to Eastern concepts and practices. ... I relate to the role of the mystic in the sense of following a via negative - of feeling the basis of my work to be in unknowing, in doubt, in being lost, in questions and not answers - and that recognizing that personally the most important work I have done has come from not knowing what I was doing at the time I was doing it." <sup>37</sup>

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### SHAMANIC TIME IN TARKOVSKY & MALICK



Michael Tucker:

"For in the filmic shamanism of this Russian seer, every blade of grass, every drop of water, every flicker of that fundamental aspect of both life and film – light – is both itself, and an intimation of something other." <sup>38</sup>

Kerenyi, *Hermes*:

"The dimension of time is missing from all the forms of Greek religion, from its cults, its myths, its mysteries. In myth it appears as a special pre-time, out of which time proceeds. Wherever one looks in the world of this religion, the unfettered eye can see primordial meaning and primal source, a source perceptible in the sculpture of nature."

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<sup>36</sup> From: Hope MacLean, The "Deified" Heart: Huichol Indian Soul-Concepts and Shamanic Art, *Anthropologica*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (2000), p. 75. (cited in Anderson, 1990:153).

<sup>37</sup> Bill Viola, *Reasons* 246, 249, 250.

<sup>38</sup> Michael Tucker, *Dreaming with Open Eyes: The Shamanic Spirit in Twentieth-Century Art and Culture*: London & San Francisco: Aquarian/HarperCollins, 1992, p.263.

Michael Tucker:

"A filmic image lives in time; but it was also essential, said Tarkovsky, that *time be allowed to live in the image*. Compare the length of so many of the magisterial tracking shots in *Mirror*, *Stalker*, (1979) and *The Sacrifice*, for example, with the fact that, in *Rambo II*, the average shot lasts for just 2.9 seconds. Is it any exaggeration to say that, in constructing such transparent fictions of mass culture today, we murder time? A large part of the healing power of Tarkovsky's films lies in the resurrection of time which they embody: for in resurrecting mythic time, they sharper our sense of that 'very secret room that is – that is a holy part of the human being' of which Bergman spoke in the 1960s." <sup>39</sup>

Sukhdev Sandhu:

"The average length of shot in *The Bourne Ultimatum* is two seconds. But a new festival argues for 'slow cinema' – an act of cultural resistance, but also a gateway to beauty and delight. . . ." <sup>40</sup>

Denis Lim:

"Given the sheer beauty and unwieldy philosophical ambition of Tarkovsky's films, it's not too far-fetched to suggest that his true heir is Terrence Malick — a filmmaker whose approach to space and time is fragmented where Tarkovsky's is unified but who shares with the Russian a mystical connection to nature and the elements and a compulsion to pose unanswerable questions with utmost seriousness and sincerity. ("*The Sacrifice*" opens and closes with the image of what you might call a tree of life.)" <sup>41</sup>

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## TARKOVSKY & ALCHEMY

Aaron Cheak & Sabrina Dalla Valle:

"The counter-stretched nature of creation was sensed very keenly in modern times by Andrei Tarkovsky, the great Russian filmmaker who likened film to 'sculpting in time', and directing to literally being able to 'separate light from darkness' and 'dry land from the waters' (Genesis 1: 9-18). 'The work of art', remarks Tarkovsky, 'lives and develops, like any other natural organism, through the conflict of opposing principles':

"Hideousness and beauty are contained within each other. This prodigious paradox, in all its absurdity, leavens life itself, and in art makes that wholeness in which harmony and tension are unified. The image makes palpable a unity in which manifold different elements are contiguous and reach over into each other. [...] The idea of infinity cannot be expressed in words or even described, but it can be apprehended through art, which makes infinity tangible. The absolute is only attainable through faith and in the creative act." <sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Michael Tucker, *Dreaming with Open Eyes: The Shamanic Spirit in Twentieth-Century Art and Culture*: London & San Francisco: Aquarian/HarperCollins, 1992, p.260.

<sup>40</sup> Sukhdev Sandhu, 'Slow cinema' fights back against Bourne's supremacy, *The Guardian*, Friday 9 March 2012.

<sup>41</sup> Dennis Lim, A Second Look: Andrei Tarkovsky's 'The Sacrifice', *Los Angeles Times*, July 10, 2011. "In the late Russian director's 1986 film, its main character's attempt to make a deal with God finds its roots in the filmmaker's spiritual quest in his work."

<sup>42</sup> Aaron Cheak and Sabrina Dalla Valle, *The Alchemical Kiasmus: Counter-Stretched Harmony and Divine Self-Perception*.

From an essay on Rimbaud's *Illuminations* by the Greek poet Demetrios Capetanakis:

"The *Illuminations* are an attempt to blow up all appearances, all orders, all forms of the world, which make our happiness. They are an attempt to blow up all happiness and make a work of pure unhappiness out of the debris and fragments of the explosion. But how strange! These fragments are not pieces of dirt and ugliness. They are not disgusting like pieces of blown-up body. They have a strange, fascinating beauty. They are like precious stones and broken tender whispers . . . This heap of fragments from all possible orders, which should reveal to us what lies beyond all orders of the world, beyond all happiness, rises before us like a glorious rainbow speaking to us of the sweetness of pleasure . . . How they shine, how they sparkle before us, all these diamonds and this foam, these drops of sweat and these eyes, these rays and their floating hair, these flames and this herbage of steel and emerald, these white, burning tears and these ringing, flashing dream flowers, these swarms of gold leaves, these balls of sapphire and these angels of the *Illuminations!*"<sup>43</sup>

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"By the swiftness of its actions, the imagination separates us from the past as well as from reality; it faces the future. . . If we cannot imagine we cannot foresee."

Gaston Bachelard (1964)

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"If you throw even a cursory glance into the past, at the life which lies behind you, not even recalling its most vivid moments, you are struck every time by the singularity of the events in which you took part, the unique individuality of the characters whom you met. This singularity is like the dominant note of every moment of existence; in each moment of life, the life principle itself is unique."

"It is obvious that art cannot teach anyone anything, since in four thousand years' humanity has learnt nothing at all. We should long ago have become angels had we been capable of paying attention to the experience of art, and allowing ourselves to be changed in accordance with the ideals it expresses. Art only has the capacity, through shock and catharsis, to make the human soul receptive to good. Art can only give food – a jolt – the occasion – for psychical experience.

~ Andrei Tarkovsky

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## THE SPIRITUAL IN ART

Susie Gablik - religion in the purest sense, should embody a system of morals and ethics. . . corruption as Nigredo, devoid of any guiding principles – etc. The Russian Orthodox trying to re-establish itself into State structures. Cash for Christ – God (and Julius Malema) wants you to have a nice house – but in America the banks will take your house away, and in Spain you will still have to pay the mortgage. The OATH in Courtrooms – I swear by God to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the Truth - but we know they still lie through their teeth – The Bible is used, but what do they do in Israel? Swear on the Torah – and in Islam swear on the Koran? I do not know. God's chosen people.

Warburg on Gods being worshipped during the Renaissance

Key to the Myths in Art is Astrology – psyche's map == pictorial, as in Dore's illustrations of the Bible; Religion and Art, Christ's Crucifixion, Madonna and Child &c.

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<sup>43</sup> In: John Lehmann, *Three Literary Friendships*, Quartet Books, London, 1983, p. 93.

Can be imbued with deep emotions – Hinduism = Neo-Tantra - abstract and representational  
Iconographic – The Tarot has the same loaded emotional content – it is ‘felt’ subjectively.

Here, we have a view from the Anti-spiritual brigade: Dieter Roelstraete:

“If anything, the deluge of spiritual-themed, occultist or 'mystical' art exhibitions in the last couple of years - and perhaps we could even go as far as including *documenta* 12 (2007) in this list - has certainly signaled the advent of such a post-secular society: a society, precisely, that looks at art with explicit hopes of partial re-enchantment as a way out of the arid *cul-de-sac* of complete secularization. It is clear that the revival of strong (and strongly politicized) religious passions in East (Islamic fundamentalism) and West (Christian fundamentalism) is part of this cultural shift - as is the general pathology of that which is known as 'New Age': a throwback, in fact, to a really Old Age.”<sup>44</sup>

“ . . . Madame Blavatsky, the nineteenth-century founder of the crackpot pseudo-science of theosophy “

“Sure enough, the shadow of the shaman inevitably looms large (there is no point in falsifying history here), and the alchemist claptrap remains: fat, felt, gold-leaf and honey; blackboards scribbled full of esoteric formulas, crucifixes, denunciations of Marcel Duchamp and, above all, the holy scribble of the artist's signature as the very symbol of art's magical powers of metamorphosis.”

“Now what does this current cultural interest in magic and the occult, in the spiritual realm and religious experience mean politically? What are the ideological overtones of this particular enthusiasm, which has all the makings and markings of a cultural pathology? And is much of the art currently produced under the aegis of this (largely curatorial) enthusiasm merely a symptom of this emergent pathology, or possibly - the more desirable option, I would venture - its most effective diagnostic tool? Furthermore, if it is no longer that of (or for) the masses, whose opiate is such a notion of magic, really? How much (or, more to the point, how little) irony is still left in art's obsessive exploration of New Age phenomena at this point in time? Will contemporary art's stubborn drive towards a re-enchantment of the world plunge us back into the dark abyss of superstition from which the men and women of the Enlightenment took such great pains to rescue us, bathing its bathetic depths in the light of earthly knowledge?”<sup>45</sup>

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Dawn Whitehand:

“ . . . the word ‘spiritual’ is problematic in not only the contemporary academic world, but in the world generally, because spirituality, according to Tacey, “leads us to the larger circles of our human and transhuman identity” and as such is “extremely subversive to the status quo” because it debunks the individual ego myth that is perpetuated by “commercial interests and the intellectual forces of modernity.”<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Dieter Roelstraete, *Great Transformations: On the Spiritual in Art, Again, Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context, and Enquiry*, Issue 20 (Spring 2009), pp. 5-15. Note 7.

<sup>45</sup> Dieter Roelstraete, *After the Historiographic Turn: Current Findings*

<sup>46</sup> Dawn Whitehand, p.152. Referencing: David Tacey, *Re-Enchantment. The New Australian Spirituality*, p.185.

## ***Towards a Regeneration of the Sacred***

Dawn Whitehand:

“Within the academic world, the word ‘spiritual’ is often treated with suspicion and viewed as somewhat problematic. This is due in part to its association with the ‘supernatural’, which over time has been articulated and promoted as dangerous by patriarchal monotheistic religions in an attempt to wipe out myth-making cultures, paganism and goddess religions. Established instead were male-centric religions that demand obedience to a higher male authority, and encourage rationalism and modernity, which according to David Tacey “both lead inevitably to desecralisation.” When combined with the exploitative consequences of capitalist consumerism, these tenets have led to the many social and ecological threats our world faces today, because, as Jung believed, “humans have strong symbolic and religious urges... which, when repressed or ignored create... havoc.” [39]

Dawn Whitehand:

“According to Tacey, these major players, governments and multinationals, within consumer societies also debunk any spiritual movement, because such a quest “punctures the bubble of the ego and leads us to the larger circles of our human and transhuman identity [which] is extremely subversive of the status quo.” Dominant commercial interests must keep the “myth of the alienated self alive,” or they must package any spiritual mission as a saleable commodity, as is seen with many products of the New Age movement and alternative therapies. “[12]

Michael Tucker:

“It is this pattern which so interested Mircea Eliade and Joseph Campbell: the possibility of what Eliade called an enlarged humanism, on a world scale, inspired by a participatory respect for the mythic dimension of existence. In *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries* Eliade suggested that, just as the discovery of the unconscious had compelled Western man to confront ‘his own individual, secret and “larval” history’, so would the encounter with non-Western cultures oblige him to ‘delve very profoundly into the history of the human spirit and . . . perhaps persuade him to admit that history as an integral part of his own being.’<sup>47</sup>

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David J. Tacey. *Re-Enchantment. The New Australian Spirituality*. Harper Collins Publishers Pty. Ltd., 2000.

David Tacey:

“The spiritual revolution, is a spontaneous movement in society, a new interest in the reality of spirit and its healing effects on life, health, community and well-being. It is our secular society realizing that it has been running on empty, and has to restore itself at a deep primal source, a source which is beyond humanity and yet paradoxically at the very core of our experience.”

Stanislav Grof:

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<sup>47</sup> Michael Tucker, *Dreaming with Open Eyes: The Shamanic Spirit in Twentieth-Century Art and Culture*: London & San Francisco: Aquarian/HarperCollins, 1992, p.331.



"In the last analysis, the psychological roots of the crisis humanity is facing on a global scale seem to lie in the loss of the spiritual perspective. Since a harmonious experience of life requires, among other things, fulfillment of transcendental needs, a culture that has denied spirituality and has lost access to the transpersonal dimensions of existence is doomed to failure in all other avenues of its activities." <sup>48</sup>

Stanislav Grof, *Spiritual Emergencies: Understanding and Treatment of Psychospiritual Crises*.

"Spirituality seeks a sensitive, contemplative, transformative relationship with the sacred, and is able to sustain levels of uncertainty in its quest because respect for mystery is paramount. Fundamentalism seeks certainty, fixed answers and absolutism, as a fearful response to the complexity of the world and to our vulnerability as creatures in a mysterious universe."

David Tacey:

"The ruling tradition in any era does not grasp the fact that if God is alive and active in the world, then God will be creative in the world, beckoning us to new transformations. The old tradition may in some ways prefer God to be 'dead', because then the sacred body of God can be laid out, dissected by systematic theologians and pedants, and pinned down in precise and scientific ways. But if God is alive, our experience of the sacred is going to be uncertain, creative, imprecise and full of surprise and astonishment. If God is alive, God will always be revealed as mysterious, unknowable and unable to be contained and captured."<sup>49</sup>

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### **Interview with David Tacey. Beyond the Spirituality Revolution 21st April 2012**

*The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality* by Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead, Blackwell Publishing 2005

DT: I think it is a slow revolution. As Robert Forman says in his terrific book of 2004, *Grassroots Spirituality*, and then there was the other book I just mentioned in the UK. And David Hay was doing something in his book *Something There: the Biology of the Human Spirit*, which is on the same theme ... so I think it is undoubtedly a universal movement, but I think it has stalled a bit at the moment. Everyone is so concerned about financial issues at the moment, especially in Europe, but also North America is concerned very much about its demise, and Australia is also very concerned about economic matters. So I notice that the spirituality revolution is still charging along, but it doesn't get a lot of support. I am an optimist by nature, and where I see signs of hope I see signs to justify optimism. But also, as I was writing the book, I was very conscious that the churches, at least the ones that I was in touch with, were not offering the hand of generosity toward the spirituality revolution. The Catholic church in particular, in Australia, was making disparaging comments, saying things like *spirituality is a waste of time*. And the Cardinal in Australia made the comment that *spirituality is an unnecessary adjunct to faith*, which is still resounding in my ears. And I thought, *No! No! – I'm not going to be any part of this morbid attitude*. So I deliberately wrote it with an upbeat tempo – hopefully I didn't overdo it, because it does have its problems, but I think it's a legitimate social movement and has a great and almost wonderful future.

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<sup>48</sup> From the essay *Spirituality, Addiction and Western Science* cited by Gablik in *The Re-Enchantment of Art*, 57-8.

<sup>49</sup> David Tacey, 'The Spirituality Revolution: The Emergence of Contemporary Spirituality'



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## WHAT CAN WE DO

“After all, as Paul Robeson said, artists are the radical voice of civilization. Each and every one of you . . ., with your gift and power and skills, could perhaps change the way in which our global humanity mistrusts itself. Perhaps we as artists and visionaries for what’s better in the human heart and the human soul could influence citizens everywhere in the world to see the better side of who and what we are as a species.”

Harry Belafonte

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Paul Mason:

“The power of imagination will become critical. In an information society, no thought, debate or dream is wasted –

It is the elites – cut off in their dark-limo world – whose project looks as forlorn as that of the millennial sects of the 19th century. The democracy of riot squads, corrupt politicians, magnate-controlled newspapers and the surveillance state looks as phony and fragile as East Germany did 30 years ago.

All readings of human history have to allow for the possibility of a negative outcome. It haunts us in the zombie movie, the disaster movie, in the post-apocalyptic wasteland of films such as *The Road* or *Elysium*. But why should we not form a picture of the ideal life, built out of abundant information, non-hierarchical work and the dissociation of work from wages?

Millions of people are beginning to realize they have been sold a dream at odds with what reality can deliver. Their response is anger – and retreat towards national forms of capitalism that can only tear the world apart. Watching these emerge, from the pro-Grexit left factions in Syriza to the Front National and the isolationism of the American right has been like watching the nightmares we had during the Lehman Brothers crisis come true.”

We need more than just a bunch of utopian dreams and small-scale horizontal projects. We need a project based on reason, evidence and testable designs, that cuts with the grain of history and is sustainable by the planet. And we need to get on with it." <sup>50</sup>

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Media Lens - looks at the *Trashing Of Russell Brand*. I like this quote from the article:

"The corporate media system, with its fraudulent 'spectrum' of opinion, is a hammer that falls with a unified, resounding crash on anyone who dares to challenge elite interests. It works relentlessly to beat down human imagination, creativity and hope, to smash the awareness, love and compassion that might otherwise terminate the 'nightmare of history'. Is resistance futile? Will they always win?"

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Regarding previous notes as to: **What Can We Do:** <sup>51</sup>

"The way to start a new civilization, is not to introduce some new refinement in high culture but to change the imagination of the masses." <sup>52</sup>

But the question then arises, how can we gain access to ". . . the imagination of the masses. . ." when such mass imagination is utterly conditioned by materialistic forces, that seem bent on a dumbing-down devolution and neo-fascism., not to mention creeping fundamentalism. Certainly, to counter the titanism, we could advocate the Small is Beautiful approach as suggested by William James:

"I am done with great things and big plans, great institutions and big success. I am for those tiny, invisible loving human forces that work from individual to individual, creeping through the crannies of the world like so many rootlets, or like the capillaries."

<sup>53</sup>

Perhaps there are too many "...isms." in this. Just a brief note.

One would have to have a Messianic Complex to be able to "do anything" in the present time. Certainly there is no shortage of ideas, but the resources to implement these ideas are almost non-existent. And that is exactly what the hegemony wants - to starve any ideas of the energy necessary. For example, independent Film and Theatre struggle to survive against the onslaught of the Mass Media. Say for example, one went to Berlin in 1937 - what would one be able to "do" to prevent the Holocaust?

## IMAGINATION

...put out your eyes, and touch the black skin  
of an angel named imagination...

e. e. cummings

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<sup>50</sup> Paul Mason, The end of capitalism has begun , 17th July 2015

<sup>51</sup> 1st May, 2007: to Anne Baring:

<sup>52</sup> Brown, Norman O., "The Apocalypse of Islam," in *Apocalypse &/or Metamorphosis*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1991.

<sup>53</sup> William James, "The Will to Believe"



"The imagination is of so delicate a texture, that even words wound it."

William Hazlitt <sup>54</sup>

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Italo Calvino:

"The processes of the imagination follow paths that do not always coincide with the paths we follow in life." <sup>55</sup>

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Federico Fellini

"Ernst Bernhard, the Jungian psychoanalyst, made me grasp that our dream life is no less important than our waking life, especially for the artist." <sup>56</sup>

Jorge Luis Borges,

"I have come to the conclusion, though it may not be scientific, that dreams are the most ancient aesthetic activity." <sup>57</sup>

Robert M. Mercurio:

'In one of his letters, Jung writes that the creative imagination is the real ground of the psyche and "the only primordial phenomenon accessible to us." <sup>58</sup> The creative imagination, at the moment in which it is genuinely creative, is the one thing that takes us beyond what the Orientals call the "Web of Maya" or the illusions we have of how things *really* are. It breaks through the web of projections that we live in. And it is here that real, living religious symbols are born." <sup>59</sup>

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In a recent Cape Times article, Judith February wrote:

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<sup>54</sup> William Hazlitt, *Characteristics: in the Manner of Rochefoucault's Maxims* (1823).

<sup>55</sup> Italo Calvino, *Hermit in Paris*, p. 246.

<sup>56</sup> Chris Wiegard, *Federico Fellini. Ringmaster of Dreams*, Taschen, 2003, p. 105.

<sup>57</sup> Jorge Luis Borges, *Seven Nights*, faber & faber, London, 1986.

<sup>58</sup> C.G. Jung, *Letters*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, Vol.1, p.60.

<sup>59</sup> Robert M. Mercurio, Imagination and Spirituality, *Spring, A Journal of Archetype and Culture*, Vol. 82, 2009, p.16

“But truly creative, transformative processes and people really cannot be “boxed in” and defy labels.”<sup>60</sup> And:

“In conversation, Neo Muyanga turns to the “poverty of imagination” which he often witnesses in South Africa as arts and culture, too, become victims of what he calls “political design.”<sup>61</sup>

Very important points, and a dialogue is long overdue.

Chris Hedges:

“It is through imagination that we can reach the dark regions of the human psyche and face our mortality and the brevity of existence. It is through imagination that we can recover reverence and kinship. It is through imagination that we can see ourselves in our neighbours and the other living organisms of the earth. It is through imagination that we can envision other ways to form a society.”<sup>62</sup>

The first question that arises, is how do we define ‘imagination’ and secondly, by what means and strategies can ‘imagination’ achieve the objectives that Chris Hedges suggests?

Franklin Walker says this about Joseph Conrad:

“Conrad was constantly interested in the effect of imagination in men. As he wrote of *Lord Jim*, “your imaginative people swing further in any direction, as if given a longer scope of cable in the uneasy anchorage of life.”<sup>63</sup>

In his study of Gaston Bachelard Richard Leviton writes:

“Bachelard’s domain is the material imaginations, dreams of the four elements, archetypal poetic temperaments that stimulate our being— hormones of the imagination, he calls them. They are the elemental stuff our imagination is made of, the food it feeds on, the fire that sparks the poetics of life, the air that animates our spirituality. “When the imagination works, everything works,” Bachelard writes. “The entire psyche regains courage; life regains its goals; passion rediscovers hope. A sick, weak, hesitating and blocked imagination can be returned to a state of healthy effectiveness by means of a well-directed image.” Revitalized images may even provide the foundation for a new conception of psychoanalysis and psychological rejuvenation, Bachelard says. “By means of images the subject must be helped to discover the secret knot blocking his soaring.”<sup>64</sup>

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## THE MAGIC OF IMAGES

Camille Paglia:

“Post-structuralism and postmodernism do not understand magic or mystique, which are intrinsic to art and imagination. It is no coincidence that since postmodernist terminology seeped into the art world in the 1980s, the fine arts have receded as a major

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<sup>60</sup> 1 Judith February, *The Cape Times*, 29<sup>th</sup> January 2014

<sup>61</sup> The reference was to the UCT Summer School: In Conversation: Composing A Creative Life: Judith February and Neo Muyanga  
Judith February, lawyer, columnist, political commentator and lover of the arts, will engage with Neo Muyanga, composer, singer, musician and cultural activist, about the ideas and impulses which generate his work. :

<sup>62</sup> Chris Hedges, *The Power of Imagination*, Truth-out, 12 May 2014.

<sup>63</sup> Franklin Walker, Introduction, Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* and *The Secret Sharer*, Bantam Books, 1981, p. xiv.

<sup>64</sup> Richard Leviton, *The Barefoot Philosopher of the Imagination —Gaston Bachelard’s Reverie of the Elements*, 1994.

cultural force. Creative energy is flowing instead into animation, video games, and cyber-tech, where the young are pioneers. Character-driven feature films, on the other hand, have steadily fallen in quality since the early nineties, partly because of Hollywood's increasing use of computer graphics imaging (cgi) and special effects, advanced technology that threatens to displace the live performing arts." <sup>65</sup>

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It may help at this point to look at a series of *equivalences* on the imagination:

**IMAGINATION**  
**IMAGINAL**  
**IMAGINERY**  
**IMAGE**  
**MAGIC**  
**MAGUS**  
**MAGI**  
**YMAGO**

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James Hillman:

"To see the archetypal in an image is thus not a hermeneutic move. It is an imagistic move. We amplify an image by means of myth in order not to find its archetypal meaning but in order to feed it with further images that increase its volume and depth and release its fecundity." <sup>[66]</sup>

In context, this amplification by Jules Cashford: <sup>[67]</sup>

"It is impossible to define Imagination since the only definition we can make is that we are far from it when we talk *about* it. It is perhaps a power so ultimate that only its own numinous images can call it forth, as though we have, as it were, to ask the Imagination to imagine itself. We might say that whenever there is numinosity – a coming alive of divine presence – literally, the "nod" or "beckoning" of a god – whenever an image becomes *translucent* to a reality beyond itself, we are in the presence of Imagination. The images that come towards us – as divinities, daimons, soul-birds, angels, geniuses, muses – are all figures who bring messages from afar or beyond, from the heights or the depths – the realms where consciousness may not go, yet on which it rests and through which it grows. "Wisdom first speaks in images," W. B. Yeats, says <sup>[3]</sup>."

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"The symbolism of the creative process contains something regenerative for its epoch; it is a seedbed of future development. But this is possible only because what emerges in the creative work is not only individual but also archetypal, a part of the unitary reality that is enduring and imperishable, since in it the real, the psychic, and the spiritual are still one."

**Erich Neumann** <sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Camille Paglia, *The Magic of Images: Word and Picture in a Media Age*, Arion, Third Series, Vol. 11, No. 3 (Winter, 2004), pp. 1-22

<sup>66</sup> J. Hillman, *Typologies* 37-8, in *The Essential James Hillman: A Blue Fire*, ed. T. Moore, London: Routledge, 1990, p.60. This quote from" Angela Voss, A methodology of the Imagination, *Eye of the Heart: A Journal of Traditional Wisdom*, 3, 2009. [Available Online]

<sup>67</sup> This quote from" Angela Voss, A methodology of the Imagination, *Eye of the Heart: A Journal of Traditional Wisdom*, 3, 2009. [Available Online]

<sup>68</sup> Erich Neumann, *Art and the Creative Unconscious*, Bollingen Series LXI, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1974. p.192

"Imagination has the integrating powers of the tree. It is root and branch. It lives between earth and sky. Imagination lives in the earth and in the wind. The imagined tree is imperceptibly the cosmological tree, the tree which summarizes a universe, which makes a universe" <sup>69</sup>

Gaston Bachelard, *Repos*, 299-300.

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"Art itself may be defined as a single-minded attempt to render the highest kind of justice to the visible universe, by bringing to light the truth, manifold and one, underlying its every aspect."

Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*.

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Franklin Walker on Conrad:

". . . a work of art is very seldom limited to one exclusive meaning and not necessarily tending to a definite conclusion. And this for the reason that the nearer it approaches art, the more it acquires a symbolic character."

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#### IMAGINATION IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN KNOWLEDGE

#### [SOUZOU](#)

'Souzou' has no direct translation in English but a dual meaning in Japanese: written one way, it means creation, and in another it means imagination. Both meanings allude to a force by which new ideas are born and take shape in the world.

". . . it is the individual who is a prime source of fruitful intelligence -- rather than any collectivity of the "intelligent" or any collective intelligence. Ultimately it is the individual who is obliged to "make sense" of the complexity of the emerging knowledge society."

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"In Arthur Machen's supernatural stories, the everyday city landscape of London is portrayed as an illusion, hiding a mystical world. The writer John Gray considers what they teach us about the limits of perception."

"Machen thought of the world as a kind of text in invisible writing, a cipher pointing to another order of things" <sup>70</sup>

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Henrik Bogdan:

*"Imagination and Mediations*. The esotericist regards the imaginative faculty of man to be of great importance. That which is being revealed to his "inner eyes," or creative imagination, is the material (i.e., invisible part of the Universe) that interests him. Connected to the imagination or *vis imaginativa* is the use of rituals, symbolic images, mandalas, and intermediary spirits. As Couliano has pointed out, magic works primarily through the imagination." <sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Kaplan, Edward K., Gaston Bachelard's Philosophy of Imagination: An Introduction, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (Sep., 1972), p. 6.

<sup>70</sup> John Gray, *A Point of View: The doors of perception*. 26 May 2013.

<sup>71</sup> Henrik Bogdan, *Western Esotericism and Rituals of Initiation*, SUNY series in Western Esoteric Traditions, David Appelbaum, editor, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2007, p.11

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Now let us look at a definition from the Sacred Tarot of The Brotherhood of Light. In answer to a question "Who were the original Masons?", C. C. Zain writes:

Here etymology comes to the rescue. The old Sumerians who lived in the valley of the Euphrates, and who were succeeded by the Semites, the fusion between the two producing the famed Chaldeans, used the word "imga" meaning wise, holy, and learned, to denote their wisest sages, priests and philosophers. The Semites, who succeeded the older race, transformed the work "imga" into "mag" to suit their articulation. From this root-word, "mag" belonging to the Assyrian branch of the great Semitic race, has come to us through various transformations the words: Mason, Magic, and Imagination. Therefore, in whatever era of the dim prehistoric past the first Masons lived, it follows from the very meaning of the word that they were the wisest, holiest, most revered of men.

A mason now is considered to be a builder—one who constructs. Likewise, were those Wise Men of the East; but in their work the sound of neither hammer nor saw was heard; for they were mental builders. Their labour was construction wrought by the imagery of thought, as the word imagination, coming from the same root as does the word mason, clearly implies. Magic is the skilful use of the imaginative faculty, and the original Masons undoubtedly were magicians. The Magi of Egypt, Chaldea, and even more ancient times unquestionably were Masons." <sup>72</sup>

"Imagination is from the word "image," a form, a picture, and has descended to us from the Latin "imago," which, in its turn, was derived from the old Semitic root, "mag." Mason comes to us from the Latin "mass," which means to mould and form, i.e., to build; and the word "mass," through various transformations, was also derived from the root-word "mag." Consequently, originally, there was but little difference in the ancient idea of building pictures in the mind and erecting the mental idea externally in stone. It is from this fact, that, we have to-day Mental Masons, a la the secret orders, and stone masons, who labour for wages. The Mental Masons have merely lost the knowledge of their art. They should, by rights, be as active and correspondingly useful to-day as their more physical brothers, the masons of stone."

C. C. Zain

Thomas H. Burgoyne:

"Magic comes from the Latin "magi" and the Greek word "magos," which means wise, learned in the mysteries, and was the synonym of wisdom. The initiated philosopher, the priest, and the wise men, are all of them included in the "magi." Again, tracing this word to its remote ancestor, we find it terminating in the same Semitic root, "mag," but of this strange root no one was able to say much, except that it seemed to belong to the Assyrian branch of the great Semitic race. But quite recently, thanks to our scientific explorers and archaeologists, versed in the mysterious meaning of cuneiform inscription; Assyrian scholars now inform us that they have found the hoary, primitive original of it, of magic, magi and imago, etc. It is from an old Akkadian word, "imga," meaning wise, holy, and learned, and was used as the distinguishing title of their wisest sages, priests, and philosophers, who, as may be supposed, gradually formed a

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<sup>72</sup> C. C. Zain, [Elbert Benjamine], *Ancient Masonry*, Introduction, Chapter 1. Serial No. 6. Original Copyright 1938. Copyright Church of Light, August 2002



peculiar caste, which merged into the ruling priestly order. The Semites, who succeeded the old Akkadian race in the valley of the Euphrates, as a mere matter of verbal convenience, transformed many of the old Akkadian words to suit their own articulation, and ``*imga*'' became ``*mag*,'' and thus ``*magi*.''<sup>73</sup>

image = imaginal = imagination = imago = magi = *magic*

Pay attention to the word *imago*, in the context in which it appears here:

"We cannot take the time to follow Michael in all his long ramblings through things in heaven above and earth beneath: sun, tides, springs, seasons, the difference between stella, aster, sidus, signum, imago, and planeta, the music of the spheres, the octave in music, eight parts of speech in grammar, and eight beatitudes in theology, zones and paradise, galaxy and horizon and zenith, divisions of time, the four inferior elements and the creatures contained in them, eclipses of sun and moon, Adam protoplasm and minor mundus as the letters of his name indicate, the mutable and transitory nature of this world, the inferno in the earth, and purgatory."<sup>74</sup>

Regarding the development of an INDEX of the images, or symbols associated with the Tarot, I again prefer to turn to Jungian material.

In Hinduism and Tibetan Buddhism in particular, each deity appears with what we translate as his, or her, retinue. In Tibetan thangkas, these smaller deities surround the central deity. Seen as a cosmic graph - this is the mandala principle. Here it would take us in another direction to amplify this point, and for the moment I am suggesting that each deity, arrives, so to speak, in a constellated form. That is to say, the central symbol is the core from which a cluster of minor symbols emanates. They enhance and amplify the central archetype, sometimes leading outside of the immediate sphere of the archetypal activity itself. Many of these imaginal associations, may seem to lead to territories foreign to their source, but in fact they usually lead to liminal spaces, pointing in the direction of associated arcana, or parallel symbolic clusters. There is no end to these permutations, akin to the concept of the Unified Field Theory, or the Interconnected Chain of Being.

Defining the symbol, is to crush the life out of its potential.

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Federico Mayor:

'Imagination is more important than knowledge,' said Albert Einstein, and his remark seems more relevant than ever today. The world is changing so rapidly that our complacency and established ways of thinking are continually being challenged. The more the technocrat's certainties and the planner's pride are confounded by hard facts, the more the individual capacity for inventiveness is at a premium. "All is flux," said Heraclitus over 2,000 years ago. Have we forgotten that change is inherent in the

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<sup>73</sup> Thomas H. Burgoyne, *The light of Egypt; or, The science of the soul and the stars*, pp. 87-88.

Online at: <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/BurLigh.html>

<sup>74</sup> Michael, is Michael Scott, the great Magus of Toledo & Palermo, and the Court of the Emperor Frederick II. And we wish that L. Thorndike, in his "*A History of Magic and Experimental Science* II, 1923, p. 325, would have graced us by following the long ramblings of Michael Scott!

human condition? We are living at a time when the pace of historical change is such that there is an unparalleled need for new thinking." <sup>75</sup>

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But what kind of utopia? And on what terms? Utopia is by definition transcendent, a child of excess which nevertheless remains within the bounds of reason. Such "reasonable immoderation" can make an impact on the real world by raising its aspirations, without for a moment losing sight of respect for mankind. Did not this kind of ambition and utopianism inspire Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi, and Nelson Mandela? Such "open" utopias are quite different from those which confine the community within a logic that denies individual expression and tends to crush it. This sense of vision in utopianism should be *imaginal*.

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James Hillman:

"The theory of the human body is always a part of a world- picture.... The theory of the human body is always a part of a fantasy." <sup>76</sup>

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### HITCHCOCK AND THE VISUAL

[19] These Symbolist influences took a concrete form in that Hitchcock owned a de Chirico painting. "Very early, I was immensely struck by the Symbolists. For a time, I had symbolist dreams." He had the ability to visualize the entire film. ". . . I believe it's intuitive to visualize, but as we grow up we lose that intuition." And he writes about: ". . . thinking in pictures." And: "I have a visual mind. . ." <sup>77</sup>

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The ancient aesthetic activity of dreams, creative imagination . . . Borjes and Jung. This brings me to the personal subject of the aesthetic quality of my own dreams. Has any work been done on the aesthetic in dreams? In Hermetic terminology, beauty, the Realm of the Aesthetic, can only be ruled, by Venus/Aphrodite. The Realm of the Venusian. The Beautiful City.

Latin *imago* 'image'.

Elliot R. Wolfson:

"The notion of *imago templi* articulated by Henry Corbin, deeply influenced by both Western phenomenology and Iranian-Islamic esotericism, is a particular expression of his conception of the image as a theophanic apparition that challenges the dichotomization of the real and imagined." <sup>78</sup>

Henry Corbin:

". . . I believe that the word *imago* can give us, along with *imaginary*, and by regular derivation, the term *imaginal*. We will thus have the *imaginal* world be intermediate between the *sensory* world and the *intelligible* world. When we encounter the Arabic

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<sup>75</sup> Federico Mayor, Attempting the Impossible, *Unesco Courier*, February 1991. [Federico Mayor was Director-General of UNESCO from 1987 to 1999.]

<sup>76</sup> James Hillman, *The Myth of Analysis*.

<sup>77</sup> Charlotte Chandler, *It's Only a Movie, Alfred Hitchcock: A Personal Biography*, Pocket Books, London, 2006. There is a vast mass of research and published material, film studies, &c. on Hitchcock.

<sup>78</sup> Elliot R. Wolfson, "Imago Templi" and the Meeting of the Two Seas: Liturgical Time-Space and the Feminine Imaginary in Zoharic Kabbalah, *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, No. 51 (Spring, 2007), p. 121.

term *jism mithali* to designate the "subtle body" that penetrates into the "eighth climate," or the "resurrection body," we will be able to translate it literally as *imaginal body*, but certainly not as *imaginary body*. Perhaps, then, we will have less difficulty in placing the figures who belong neither to "myth" nor to "history," and perhaps we will have a sort of password to the path to the "lost continent." <sup>79</sup>

Seymour Howard:

"Imago," rooted in archaeological and psychological usage, is an apt word to describe the seed- or chrysalis-like nature of art works. "Imago" signifies the projected embodiment or primordial image of the parent form, idea, or action whose existence brings a thing, thought, or life into being. "Psychomorph", a neologism, similarly can help to define works as fusions of "psyche" (anima, soul, spirit, mind, and breath) and "morph" (body, form, mass, configuration, and structure). Both imago and psychomorph refer to what visually preserves human understanding and acts of will. Investigating how the imago-psychomorph manifests the awakened mind-body of the maker and recreator reveals the structure and business of iconology in its attempt to discern the comprehensive meanings of a work. In Aristotelian times, the works of man, the poet, were contrasted with nature. Greek imagery, based on *phantasia* (the imagination or enlightenings of psyche) and *techne* (the mastery of materials and mimesis) springs from a culture with an incomparably inflected language that had no single word for art (Latin *ars*, making) unless we use, significantly enough, *poesis* (making). Art history, as an integrated study traveling the high road of iconology and epistemology, examines the *phantasia* and *techne* of things in and through time. <sup>80</sup>

Seymour Howard:

"In describing the creative act "as a mere artist," Duchamp, a dedicant of the life of intellectual contradiction (and instinct), rightly stated the case when he argued that, whatever the artist may say in explaining the intent of a work or its importance, viewers complete it, realize its meanings, and create the fame of the maker, whose production, in any case, can never fulfil the original aspirations for it. The work of art - that is, any product of will - only begins its overt life of meaning when performed. And even that performance is the product of a shifting, reflecting self, whose intent and execution vary. We all change through time, and express infinite possibilities. Each act, even breath, responds to an ambience and has consequences. As metaphysicians repeatedly discover, West and East, intention is ambiguous, evanescent - full and empty at its core. The observer, then, largely recreates the painting and its cosmos, just as we all must perforce continually remake the world, as it were. This situation is part of the tacitly shared human condition and a traditional, inherited arena of communications - as with words themselves." <sup>81</sup>

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Robert Avens:

"Men of all times and cultures have enjoyed the privilege of citizenship in two worlds corresponding to two modes of consciousness. The Greeks called them *hypar* (the waking world) and *onar* (the dream world), each having its own logic and its own

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<sup>79</sup> *Mundus Imaginalis, or the Imaginary and the Imago* by Henri Corbin

Available online at: <http://www.antiquillium.com/mundus.htm>

<sup>80</sup> Seymour Howard, On Iconology, Intention, Imagos, and Myths of Meaning, *Artibus et Historiae*, Vol. 17, No. 34 (1996), pp. 89-90

<sup>81</sup> Seymour Howard, On Iconology, Intention, Imagos, and Myths of Meaning, *Artibus et Historiae*, Vol. 17, No. 34 (1996), p. 84.

limitations. Generally speaking, ancient peoples have accorded at least an equal significance and respect to both experiences. For example, Heraclitus is credited with the view that the soul has contact with the cosmic reason (*logos*) only when free in sleep from the interruption of the senses. In the earliest association of dream with death, Homer tells us that dreams issue from the underworld of Hades and refers to sleep (*hypnos*) and death (*thanatos*) as "twin brothers." The Western tradition, however, has exhibited a predominantly negative attitude toward the dream, relegating it to the limbo of the "imaginary," which in turn is equated with the "unreal," hallucinatory, "fantastic," etc." <sup>82</sup>

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Following Henry Corbin, Elliot R. Wolfson writes:

" . . . we should use the word "imaginal" to characterize this plane of being rather than the more conventional and familiar "imaginary," a term that might suggest that what is imagined is not objectively real but only a subjective phantasm." <sup>83</sup>

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Robert Avens:

"The artist's world is real because it is imaginal, as opposed to the imaginary and somnambulistic either/or world, the world of "facts," singleness of meaning, and literalism. From the imaginal perspective, "facts" are indeed the most stubborn, delusional fictions. It is for this reason that archetypal psychology gravitates toward the field of aesthetics in the broadest sense." <sup>84</sup>

There are two important points in these quotations. Firstly, *imaginal*, as opposed to *imaginary*, sets up a dualist interpretation. It appears from surface observation, that the former is intuitive and the latter rational. And secondly, the identification of *the field of aesthetics* with the imaginal, suggest that an imaginal aesthetics exists within the creative matrix. This will become clearer further on.

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Now regarding the first sentence, in the Tarot there are a few images that ". . . can be shown to exist in the records of human history, in identical form and with the same meaning."

For example, Kronos devouring his Children; the Uroboros, the Three Graces, the Caduceus of Mercury; the Phoenix and the Pelican, and so on - in the Mantegna Tarot; and the fleur-de-llys in the Charles VI. We know that the Caduceus has a vast history stretching all the way back to Mesopotamia, and rightly so, it is to be seen held by Thoth, in ancient Egypt.

The variety of these symbolic images, individually and collectively open avenues of research for the context in which the Tarot was formed. It would be useful to develop an Index, of their appearance in the Tarot - and their pre-Tarot forms, e.g. The Wheel of Fortune . . .

"Similarly, as it seems to me, the wise of Egypt - whether in precise knowledge or by a prompting of nature - indicated the truth where, in their effort towards philosophical

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<sup>82</sup> Robert Avens, James Hillman: Toward a Poetic Psychology, *Journal of Religion and Health*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Fall, 1980), p. 187.

<sup>83</sup> Elliot R. Wolfson, "Imago Templi" and the Meeting of the Two Seas: Liturgical Time-Space and the Feminine Imaginary in Zoharic Kabbalah, *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, No. 51 (Spring, 2007), p. 123.

<sup>84</sup> Robert Avens, James Hillman: Toward a Poetic Psychology, *Journal of Religion and Health*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Fall, 1980), p. 192.

statement, they left aside the writing-forms that take in the detail of words and sentences - those characters that represent sounds and convey the prepositions of reasoning - and drew pictures instead, engraving in the temple-inscriptions a separate image for every separate item: thus they exhibited the absence of discursiveness in the Intellectual Realm."

Plotinus, V.8.6. p. 417.

I think that in this section, Plotinus lays the foundation for the visual science of images, *per se*, as they eventually emerged in the Tarot during the 16th in Renaissance Northern Italy, and as well, the imaginal transmission of astrological images from the classical cultures through to the present day. These pictures speak for themselves, in the manner of The Flower Sutra, where the Teaching consisted of the gesture of the Buddha holding out a flower to the students, and saying nothing. By presenting the *imago*, the Buddha was avoiding "discursiveness in the Intellectual Realm."

Thus: *image* = *imaginal* = imagination = *imago*

The context in which I place this equation, the *modus operandi* of my own work is better described in the words of Henry Corbin:

" . . . I believe that the word *imago* can give us, along with imaginary, and by regular derivation, the term imaginal. We will thus have the imaginal world be intermediate between the sensory world and the intelligible world. When we encounter the Arabic term *jism mithali* to designate the "subtle body" that penetrates into the "eighth climate," or the "resurrection body," we will be able to translate it literally as imaginal body, but certainly not as imaginary body. Perhaps, then, we will have less difficulty in placing the figures who belong neither to "myth" nor to "history," and perhaps we will have a sort of password to the path to the "lost continent." <sup>85</sup>

Gaston Bachelard sees:

"Imagination is the voyage into the land of the infinite."

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Firstly, we take for granted that when using the Tarot to interpret mythology, we are not, using a euhemeristic interpretation. That is to say, that Mr. Uranus was castrated and Ms. Venus was born from that event. The same applies to Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden. Carlos Suarez, in his *The Cipher of Genesis*, gives the code of the Hebrew Letters, which is almost identical to that of the Church of Light Tarot deck. The Tarot can be - and is - used as an instrument of Kaballistic speculation, with these co-ordinates in place. Therefore, in Hebrew, the letter Vau corresponds to the English V-U-W - to Venus/Aphrodite - The Lovers - and in Hebrew, the letter Jod or Yod, to the English, I-J-Y and Uranus, The Wheel of Fortune.

Note that in English we also have *iota*, and *jot*. In Sanskrit: *bindu*, and in Tibetan *tigle* - with a rich history of similar nuclear *monads* in Islamic mysticism as well, especially the Hurufi Order, where number speculations are almost identical to the Hebrew Kaballah.

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<sup>85</sup> *Mundus Imaginalis, or the Imaginary and the Imaginal* Henri Corbin

So we could say, that the VAU is born from the YOD. Following this line of speculation, leads to an extremely esoteric area, where words often fail to express what is being said.

### **AN IMAGINAL ARCHAEOLOGY or ALCHEMY? On Images and their Tension.**

Gaston Bachelard:

"Man lives by images."  
"Only images can set verbs in motion again" <sup>86</sup>

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**Camille Paglia:**

"Post-structuralism and postmodernism do not understand magic or mystique, which are intrinsic to art and imagination. It is no coincidence that since postmodernist terminology seeped into the art world in the 1980s; the fine arts have receded as a major cultural force. Creative energy is flowing instead into animation, video games, and cyber-tech, where the young are pioneers. " <sup>87</sup>

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Ursula le Guin:

"Imagery takes place in "the imagination," which I take to be the meeting place of the thinking mind with the sensing body... In the imagination we can share a capacity for experience and an understanding of truth far greater than our own. The great writers share their souls with us — "literally." <sup>88</sup>

Rainer Maria Rilke:

"Works of art are indeed always products of having been in danger, of having gone to the very end of an experience, to where man can go no further ... " <sup>89</sup>

Nils-Aslak Valkeapaa:

"It is important for people, who do not live in the same place, to get along with what one carries alone. This fact dictates practice also in that area of life called art. This is, of course, misleading, but I now happen to use that word – art. It is difficult for people who live as a part of Nature, along with nature, and on the conditions of nature, to understand that there exists separately something which is called art. These people, however, experience and feel all that is experienced and felt while enjoying art. I think they may be experiencing the same thing yet more deeply, more unconditionally than those have cut loose a piece of life and then turn it around with tweezers or examine it with a magnifying glass and then call this piece that has been cut away from life, "art." "  
<sup>90</sup>

Bertrand Russell:

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<sup>86</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, Beacon Press, Boston, pp.109 – 110.

<sup>87</sup> Camille Paglia, *The Magic of Images: Word and Picture in a Media Age*, *Arion*, Third Series, Vol. 11, No. 3 (Winter, 2004), pp. 1-22

<sup>88</sup> Ursula le Guin, in *Dancing at the Edge of the World: Thoughts on Words, Women, Places*, Paladin, 1992.

<sup>89</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke to Clara Rilke, 24 June 1907

<sup>90</sup> The Sami Poet Nils-Aslak Valkeapaa, from: *The Sun, the Thunder, the Fires of Heaven*, A Talk given in 1995.

"Science may set limits to knowledge, but should not set limits to imagination."

Salvador Dali:

"I am a believer in magic, which in the last analysis is simply the power of materializing imagination into reality. Our over-mechanized age underestimates the properties of the irrational imagination, which seems impractical, and is in reality at the basis of all discoveries . . . in our world, there is still a role to be played by magic." <sup>91</sup>

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Robert Johnson:

"In fact, no one "makes up" anything in the imagination. The material that appears in the imagination has to originate in the unconscious. Imagination, properly understood, is a channel through which this material flows to the unconscious mind. To be even more accurate, imagination is a transformer that converts the invisible material into images the conscious mind can perceive . . . imagination is the image-forming faculty in the mind, the organ that has the power to clothe the beings of the inner world in imagery so we can see them." <sup>92</sup>

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Like Godwin I think we need to approach the *Hypnerotomachia* from the perspective of Henry Corbin's *Mundus Imaginalis* . . . what type of esoteric stream was taking place, not merely neo-pagan, or neo-Platonic, more likely Hermetic . . . for example, [these clues from Henry Corbin](#):

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In context, this amplification by Jules Cashford: [<sup>93</sup>]

"It is impossible to define Imagination since the only definition we can make is that we are far from it when we talk *about* it. It is perhaps a power so ultimate that only its own numinous images can call it forth, as though we have, as it were, to ask the Imagination to imagine itself. We might say that whenever there is numinosity – a coming alive of divine presence – literally, the "nod" or "beckoning" of a god – whenever an image becomes *translucent* to a reality beyond itself, we are in the presence of Imagination. The images that come towards us – as divinities, daimons, soul-birds, angels, geniuses, muses – are all figures who bring messages from afar or beyond, from the heights or the depths – the realms where consciousness may not go, yet on which it rests and through which it grows. "Wisdom first speaks in images," W. B. Yeats, says [<sup>94</sup>]."

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So, firstly I want to define what we could say is a methodology for alchemical research. Why we are presently involved in this growth industry of alchemical knowledge. Well, the subject is difficult because by its nature it is not external, and we fall into the trap of trying to analyse experiential knowledge which cannot be understood with the rational and logical mind. It has been said in one of the sayings of Zen:

He who speaks, knows not, and he who knows, speaks not!

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<sup>91</sup> Salvador Dali, *Total Camouflage for Total War*, Published originally in English. Translated by Florence Gilliam. *Esquire* 18 (2) (August 1942): 64-6, 129-30.

<sup>92</sup> Robert Johnson, *Inner Work: Using Dreams and Active Imagination for Personal Growth*, 1989, p. 22.

<sup>93</sup> Jules Cashford, *The Myth of the Messenger*, *ARAS Connections*, Issue 3, 2011 (Available Online at the ARAS site).

<sup>94</sup> Yeats, W.B. *Essays and Introductions*, The Macmillan Press, 1961, London, p. 95.

And in one sense, this means that the Gnostic aspect of consciousness, that which knows, does not use a verbal, linear way to transmit, and that the side which transmits through a non-verbal manner, does not speak. His Holiness the 16th Karmapa also said: "Words are liars."

And this opens us up to a question of great enormity, which puts an end to all speculations on alchemy. Because it is a transmission that is essentially visual. There is very little literature because the alchemical information was transmitted through its pictures. Now the picture forming aspect of human consciousness, takes up a large percentage of the human brain. According to some opinions, the visual intake mechanisms, i.e. the neurons of the human brain, are about 2, 000,000, while auditory inputs consist of only 100,000.

This indicates that we have evolution has designed the sense of sight to be of greater significance than the other senses. So when we look at the alchemical pictures, we are partaking of a science of visualization, the activation of the inner vision. This is very important, because we are dealing here with two types of vision - the OUTER and the INNER.

The Tarot emerges, first half of 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Quattrocento.

**Barbara Obrist:** emergence of Alchemical illustrations first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century

"Verbal and pictorial similes in alchemical documents may be divided into two main groups: analogies, on the one hand, and diverse rhetorical forms of figurative speech – allegory, metaphor, enigma – on the other. While the basic function of analogies is to help finding unknown terms and to name them, the other category of similes relates to persuasion, clarification, and simple comparison. This division, however, merely indicates major tendencies. Hybrid forms are frequent and even the rule as literary genres of alchemical writings diversify in the later Middle Ages. Moreover, similes taken from the macrocosmic, microcosmic, animal, and vegetal realms do not only have a heuristic function but they are also intended to conceal and to mislead. Following a recurrent complaint, the ensuing confusion was one of the many problems alchemists encountered when choosing the ingredients for their work. Indeed, from its very beginnings in Alexandrian Egypt, alchemy was the only scientific discipline to systematically resort to similes."

### [Barbara Obrist](#)

"Visualization in medieval alchemy is a relatively late phenomenon. Documents dating from the introduction of alchemy into the Latin West around 1140 up to the mid-thirteenth century are almost devoid of pictorial elements. [1] During the next century and a half, the primary mode of representation remained linguistic and propositional; pictorial forms developed neither rapidly nor in any continuous way. This state of affairs changed in the early fifteenth century when illustrations no longer merely punctuated alchemical texts but were organized into whole series and into synthetic pictorial representations of the principles governing the discipline."

And further:

" . . . based on the idea that, unlike the arbitrariness of linguistic signs, pictorial forms can preserve original knowledge."



These few brilliantly expressed words: *pictorial forms can preserve original knowledge* could describe the Tarot. And ekphrasis, preserves the pictures in/with words.

"The Books will be nothing but Pictures."

Alice in Wonder Land. And the Pictures, will be Nothing,  
But Pictures Within Pictures, and Books within Books.



Mircea Eliade confirms this:

"What the world could express only imperfectly, or not at all, the alchemist compressed into his images; and strange as they are, they often speak a more intelligible language than is found in his clumsy philosophical concepts." <sup>95</sup>

And thus we return to the words of Plotinus:

". . . they left aside the writing-forms that take in the detail of words and sentences - those characters that represent sounds and convey the prepositions of reasoning - and drew pictures instead, engraving in the temple-inscriptions a separate image for every separate item: . . ." <sup>96</sup>

". . . they left aside. . ."but who *are they*.

This imagery, or imaginal world, was of great concern to Sir Isaac Newton:

"The alchemists had been fertile progenitors of imagery, and Newton frequently aided his reader by compiling long lists of images that referred one and the same thing."

And:

"His function, or one of his functions was to decipher their extravagant imagery and to uncover the one process behind it." <sup>97</sup>

Let me again take the Big Picture approach. Obrist suggests that alchemical illustrations emerged in greater volume in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century . . . more or less exactly when the Tarot starts to make an appearance. Though neither the Tarot or the alchemical images can be proved to exist as a fully organized and external visual system before this date. There is a third body of visual material, connected to both of them, that can be traced back, to ancient times, and this is Astrology.

As there is sufficient evidence to suggest that there is a Hermetic methodology behind alchemy, the Tarot and astrology, why should it not be possible to see the three sciences, if one may call them that, as facets of a common transmission.

Barbara Obrist presents us with a crucial key, when she writes:

". . . unlike the arbitrariness of linguistic signs, pictorial forms can preserve original knowledge."

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<sup>95</sup> Eliade, M. *The Forge and the Crucible*, p.223.

<sup>96</sup> Plotinus, V.8.6. p. 417.

<sup>97</sup> Westfall, Richard S., Isaac Newton's *Index Chemicus, Ambix* 22, Part 3, November 1975, p.180

Does this not seem like a justification of the vast visual body of alchemical images, are parallel to the Quattrocento emergence of the Tarot in Northern Italy? Could not the Tarot be described thus: “. . . pictorial forms can preserve original knowledge.” [Obrist]. One wonders if there could be any possible links between the transmission of “picture-symbols” and “hieroglyphics” that A.E. Waite attributes to the Fratres Lucis. And so on. In context, Obrist writes:

“Visualization in medieval alchemy is a relatively late phenomenon. Documents dating from the introduction of alchemy into the Latin West around 1140 up to the mid-thirteenth century are almost devoid of pictorial elements. During the next century and a half, the primary mode of representation remained linguistic and propositional; pictorial forms developed neither rapidly nor in any continuous way. This state of affairs changed in the early fifteenth century when illustrations no longer merely punctuated alchemical texts but were organized into whole series and into synthetic pictorial representations of the principles governing the discipline.”

From the '*Mundus Imaginalis*' of Henry Corbin to the Imaginal Alchemy of James Hillman, images in the 'Memory Theatre...

The Images (**Dionysian**) have survived - not the Ideologies (**Apollonian**)

Umberto Eco:

“In Christian tradition, the four levels are excavated through a labour of interpretation which brings surplus meaning to the surface. Yet it is a labour performed without altering the *expression-plane*, that is, the surface of the text.”

The *surface* of the image can thus also be excavated, bringing surplus material to the surface – without altering the “*expression-plane*”; of the image (i.e. its surface.)

Could we postulate that the *surface* of the image can also be excavated? The action of bringing ‘. . .surplus *material to the surface*. . .’ is, in other words, a confirmation of the ongoing fecundity of the image, as evidenced by the use of this word by James Hillman: <sup>98</sup>

“To see the archetypal in an image is thus not a hermeneutic move. It is an imagistic move. We amplify an image by means of myth in order not to find its archetypal meaning but in order to feed it with further images that increase its volume and depth and release its fecundity.” [<sup>99</sup>]

What is a *surface*, if not a *face* or *facet*. The polarity embedded in the above, reads:  
SURFACE – EMBEDDED (i.e. *DEPTH*, beneath the surface.)  
THE ACT/ACTION of doing so – is the;  
EX-CAVATION (EX – ‘CAVE’)

And: ‘cave’ = *hidden*.

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<sup>98</sup> This short quote by James Hillman can be applied to the Tarot:

<sup>99</sup> James Hillman, *Typologies* 37-8, in *The Essential James Hillman: A Blue Fire*, ed. T. Moore, London: Routledge, 1990, p.60. This quote from” Angela Voss, *A methodology of the Imagination, Eye of the Heart: A Journal of Traditional Wisdom*, 3, 2009. [Available Online]

The (way) migration of images . . . see Wittkower, Migration . . . and Warburg's Image Wanderings . . .

Let us work with the images as we have inherited them from the tradition, and not cynically neutralize their power merely because they have no historical value. Such a view of history is a dead view.

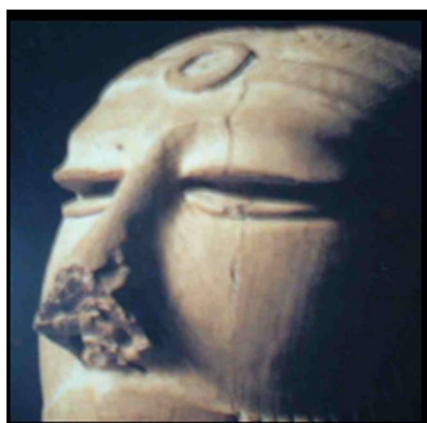
Fusing Tarot and Astrological symbolism because of their constellation/symbolism – were not separate in the medieval mind – this applies to Alchemy as well.  
Garin/Panofsky as non-regimented Hermetic sciences . . . analogical . . .

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What we have to bear in mind, excuse the pun, is that the modelling faculties of the mind, have been stimulated since the classical period by various techniques, in Europe, the *Ars Memoria*, and in the East, Tibetan Buddhism's Art of Visualization. It may not be correct to call the latter an 'Art'. For people outside the charmed circle, little is understood of Visualization, and explorations on the subject from a cross-cultural perspective are still in their infancy.

As we talked about commuting from the micro to the macro, this particular dynamic might help us in examining the subject in greater detail. Western esoteric transmissions have endeavoured under the cloak of symbolisms, analogies, and pictures carrying coded messages for the initiates in the know, while India, for example, has built up a vast system of material over many millennia. Christianity, for example, lacked the explorations and mapping of the psyche and its relationship to the physiological body, that we find in yoga, and further East Tai Chi, just to mention two systems. This cartography has very distinct metaphysical implications, in that the psychic mapping of the human body is seen as a parallel to the mapping of the cosmos itself, hence the religious languages of for example the Vedas, or Tibetan Buddhism is richly invested with analogies that connect the micro to the macro, or to be more distinct, see both polarities as one and the same. There is therefore, no dualistic commuting taking place. It may be said that we, as the creatures on the micro/human side of the spectrum, have merely forgotten our connection to the macro. Religion should be, in essence a system to stimulate the interconnections, on all levels of being, and rituals, are in essence the micro re-enactment of macro processes.

The extreme depths of Tibetan Buddhist visualization practices are closed to outsiders, but clues may be seen gleaming through from ages that pre-date even Buddhism itself. As far back as the Indus civilizations of Harappa and Mohenjo Dharo, we see figures in what is now recognized as a yogic posture, almost identical to the Buddha seen sitting in meditation, or any of the great Indian Gods and Goddesses sitting in the same position.



At the same time and place, a point on the forehead, equivalent to what is now known as the *Ajna chakra*, or in vulgar terms, the "Third Eye" also makes an appearance.

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### Joseph Campbell - x. The World Regained—as Dream

"The use of visions to lead the mind and sentiments beyond themselves, over thresholds to new realms of realization, has been developed in the Orient during the centuries since the writing of the "Guide Book to Meditation on Amida" into an extremely versatile pedagogical technique; and in its service not only books of meditation, but also works of visual art are employed. We have not yet, in our present systematic survey, arrived at the period of the greatest unfoldment of this visionary methodology. However, the basic principles are already evident. And since these represent not only a mode of Oriental guidance of the soul, but also the deepest, broadest, most thoroughly tested and proved theory of the nature and use of myth that learning anywhere in this field has yet produced, I am going to pause for a brief analysis of its elementary postulates before proceeding." 313

"The mind has now been cleared of all connection with actual trees, earth, lakes, and air, birds, banners, and gems; a visionary theatre has been set for the entry of Amida—and behold! he comes."

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### The Imaginal Realm in Metaphysical Islam

The Imaginal Realm is the region of pure Forms intermediate between the region of pure spirits and archetypes totally unconnected to matter, and the Mundane Physical reality. In some esoteric (Ishraqi, Sufi, and Shaikhi) Islamic traditions it is also equated with the *Hurqalya* or "Eight clime" (as distinct from the seven geographic regions of the physical earth), "Imaginal" World (*Mithal*) or world of Souls and Lights (Malakut),

Concerning this Imaginal World, (*Mithal*) Suhrawardi's commentator Outbuddin Shirazi says:

"It is there that the various kinds of autonomous archetypal Images are infinitely realised, forming a hierarchy of degrees varying according to their relative subtlety or density.... On each of these levels species exist analogous to those in our world, but they are infinite. Some are peopled by Angels and the human Elect. Others are peopled by Angels and genii, others by demons. God alone knows the number of these levels and what they contain. The pilgrim rising from one degree to another discovers on each higher level a subtler state, a more entrancing beauty, a more intense spirituality, a more overflowing delight. The highest of these degrees borders on the intelligible pure entities of Light and very closely resembles it." <sup>100</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Henry Corbin, *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth*, p.131.

## MAGINATION and THE CIRCLE

### The Circle of Mirrors

"Jung once remarked that his life's work has been to encircle the "central fire" with a series of mirrors but that necessarily there were *gaps* where the mirrors met." <sup>101</sup>

Tsultrim Allione:

"...could have little gaps in the claustrophobic game of dualism and clarity could shine through. ... The world is not as solid as we think it is, and the more we are open to the gaps, the more wisdom can shine through and the more the play of the dakini energy can be experienced." <sup>102</sup>



**MIRROR:** "The mirror as an indispensable instrument of navigation doubtless refers to the intellect (Mercury) which is able to think and is constantly persuading us to identify ourselves with its perceptions/reflections." C. G. Jung.

**Mirror** Mirrors always retained more or less the same shape, a flat, oval plate of polished copper with a wooden or bone handle. Since the Middle Kingdom at least, the sun-disc provided a model for the mirror. Some goddesses, for example, Hathor and Mut, were presented with two mirrors as a cultic offering. <sup>103</sup>

Gaps = synaptic gap = Thurman Bardo- the in-between – liminality

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The Norman Bryson:

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"Each image, then, is a microcosm of genetic variables, "nested inside one another in concentric formations," carrying its spores forward in time. Each instantiated image is, in fact, an image swarm." <sup>104</sup>

I was very delighted with this excavation from my research, which places the IMAGINATION and THE CIRCLE together, as intuited for the future work: I thought this was rather interesting, as both CIRCLE, CENTRE, & GATHERING were recent posts on the FB Gathering in Fez.

Proclus:

"The imagination, occupying the central position in the scale of knowing, is moved by itself to put forth what it knows, but because it is not outside the body, when it draws its objects out of the undivided centre of its life, it expresses them in the medium of division, extension, and figure. For this reason, everything that it thinks is a picture or a shape of its thought. It thinks the circle as extended, and although this circle is free of external matter, it possesses an intelligible matter provided by the imagination of the

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<sup>101</sup> Rose F. Holt, Review of *The New God-Image* by Edward Edinger, in: *The Roundtable Review*, Jan/Feb. 1999, p. 11.

<sup>102</sup> Tsultrim Allione, *Women of Wisdom*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1984, p. 29.

<sup>103</sup> Lurker, Manfred, *The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt. An Illustrated Dictionary*, Thames & Hudson, London 1980

<sup>104</sup> Their So-Called Life. Norman Bryson on W. J. T. Mitchell, *Artforum*, January 2006, pp. 27 – 28. *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images*, by W. J. T. Mitchell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

matter itself. This is why there is more than one circle in the imagination, as there is more than one circle in the sense world; for with extension there appear also differences in size and number among circles and triangles." <sup>105</sup>

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"Gaston Bachelard says that we must "start from the centre, at the very heart of the circle from where the whole thing derives its source and meaning; and here we come back again to that forgotten, outcast word, the soul." <sup>106</sup>

A title of a letter [*Ra'sil*] of Ibn Arabi, in a very dense, academic study:

"(The Explanation of the Dwellers of the Liaison Departing from the [Outer] Circle of Blending to the [Central] Point of Gathering). " <sup>107</sup>

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Michael Chapman:

"Central to the dialogue that exists between Dionysus and Apollo is the confluence of two competing forces of vision; in the first case a vision directed at an ideal form radiating outwards from a fixed point, and in the second case a vision of the collective; concentric and democratic extending from the circumference to the centre (as in the Dionysian theatre)." <sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Proclus, *In Primum Euclidis Elementorum Librum Commentarii*, 52-3. In Martin H. Curran, *The Immaterial Theurgy of Boethius*, M. A. Thesis, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, August 2012, p.29.

<sup>106</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *The poetics of space*, translated from the French *Poétique de l'espace* by Maria Jolas, with a new foreword by John R. Stilgoe, Beacon Press, 1969. [Originally published: New York: Orion Press, 1964.]

<sup>107</sup> From: Elmore, Gerald, Some Recent Editions of Books by Ibn Al- 'Arabī Published in the Arab World, *Arabica*, T. 51, Fasc. 3 (Jul., 2004), pp. 360-380.

<sup>108</sup> Michael Chapman, Architecture and Hermaphroditism: gender ambiguity and the forbidden antecedents of architectural form. *Queer Space: Centres and Peripheries*, UTS 2007, p. 4.

## THE JOURNEY OF IMAGES

### Tarot in a field of reduced ambiguity

#### Samten de Wet



Dorothea McEwan:

"Warburg used the term "orientation" frequently in his research into "*die Wanderstrassen der Kultur*," the highways of culture, the pathways of the mind or intellect, and more precisely into the "*Bilderwanderung*," the journey of images, literal and metaphorical. Thus, despite his own insistence on being an "image or picture historian" and not an "art historian," he used the label "historian" loosely, certainly not in a Rankean sense of constructing linear history or histories, but in the sense of excavating those thought processes that led people to a spatial grasp of orientation in the cosmos, not unlike a geological map, which shows strata, rock formations, fault lines, and routes of subterranean water courses that exist yet are invisible to the eye." <sup>109</sup>

Dorothea McEwan, writes that Aby Warburg"

". . . tried to understand the transmission of thought, the transmission and metamorphoses of images; he called his endeavour the research into the "*Wanderstrassen des Geistes*," paths traced or taken by the mind, meandering by-ways of the mind, from classical antiquity to Renaissance Europe and beyond to contemporary art." <sup>110</sup>

But these paths are not only of the mind, they are the paths by which images move across time, and maintain their vitality. The traditions and transmissions of the image, of the "*Wanderstrassen des Geistes*," of Aby Warburg's work, are now embodied in the Warburg Library" ". . . the *Library's* classification is particularly suited to tracking the paths of ideas, themes and images across various disciplines, and across time and space."

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<sup>109</sup> Dorothea McEwan, Aby Warburg's (1866-1929) Dots and Lines. Mapping the Diffusion of Astrological Motifs in Art History, *German Studies Review*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (May, 2006), p. 243

<sup>110</sup> Dorothea McEwan, Aby Warburg's (1866-1929) Dots and Lines. Mapping the Diffusion of Astrological Motifs in Art History, *German Studies Review*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (May, 2006), p. 244

Turning to C.G. Jung, he suggested an imaginal classification which I have found useful in formulating an approach to Imaginal Work in general, and the Tarot, in particular:

C.G. Jung -, and re-discovered of one my most cherished sections in his writings, which I have found useful in formulating an approach to the Tarot:

(1) The image is clearly defined and is consciously connected with a tradition.

(2) The image is without doubt autochthonous, there being no possibility let alone probability of a tradition. [note 3] Every degree of mutual contamination may be found between these two extremes.

[note 3] It is not always easy to prove this, because the tradition is often unconscious yet is recalled cryptomnesically. <sup>111</sup>

These two words *autochthonous* and *cryptomnesically* are very dense. Two short 'definitions' are food for further thought:

**cryptomnesia** is defined as "The phenomenon of the reappearance of a long-forgotten memory as if it were a new experience."

**crypto-** combining form concealed; secret: cryptogram. ORIGIN: from Greek *kruptos* 'hidden'.

**autochthon** - noun (plural **autochthons** or **autochthones** ) an indigenous inhabitant of a place. ORIGIN: C16: from Greek, literally 'sprung from the earth', from *autos* 'self' + *khthon* 'earth'.

See the Wiki entry for more on Aby Warburg:

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<sup>111</sup> C.G. Jung, *Alchemical Studies*, CW 13, p.273