

**Alchemy in Anthroposophy:
A fractal narrative towards a present practice of alchemy.**

Western Esotericism Master's Thesis

University of Amsterdam

August, 2019

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Abstract

Through its multifaceted history, alchemy has expanded and diversified along with its interaction with different cultures and ages. Drifted between spiritual and material territories, it has opened its theory and practices towards multidisciplinary fields, becoming associated to metallurgy, astrology, early or proto-chemistry, medicine, philosophy, psychology and occultism between others. Perhaps as a result of its versatility, alchemy has also managed to persist quite a long time, from antiquity until the present. Today, alchemy is lively active in present esoteric communities such as the Anthroposophical Society founded by Rudolf Steiner in 1912. Steiner's Anthroposophy its partly grounded on alchemical principles, which are contained in the different levels of the Anthroposophical narrative in a fractal¹ projection. These interwoven narratives help to give birth to Anthroposophical practices such as Medicine, Biodynamic agriculture and Waldorf education, among others, which represents one of the most prolific contemporary uses of Western alchemy in esoteric practices. Focusing on the practices of agriculture, medicine-pharmacology and education, and with a principal emphasis on five selected alchemical principles, this investigation pretends to recognize how alchemical elements thoroughly permeate the Anthroposophical narrative, and to then analyze how these ensembled principles impregnate multidisciplinary practices, building a theoretical and practical Anthroposophical Alchemy.

Keywords: Anthroposophy, Alchemy, Rudolf Steiner, Biodynamic agriculture, Waldorf, Anthroposophical Medicine, planetary metals.

¹ By fractal I refer to the recursive reproduction of the same narrative at different levels of the main discourse.

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Acknowledgements

- i. The published works and lectures of Rudolf Steiner will be referred to as they appear in their coded organization according the Rudolf Steiner Archive. This codification consists of the abbreviation GA, for Steiner's complete works collection, followed by a number to specify its position in the chronological order of the publications. These publications do not count with a page numeration so the footnote references will not show reference to particular pages. All Rudolf Steiner works can be found at www.rsarchive.com under the explained designation.
- ii. The attached documents alluded in the different sections can be found at the end of this document with their proper authorship reference but will be analyzed as part of the corpus of the document.

Introduction. A short history of...

Alchemy

In the human pursuit for understanding and knowledge, an historical dynamic relation between spirit and matter has been shaped in accordance to the different epochal ‘personalities’ and cultural gestures. In a similar scenario between spirit and matter, Alchemy has also transited this dynamic path since the 3rd century A.D.² to the present day, with diverse practical purposes and outcomes. But if we want to talk about alchemy it is necessary to be aware that “...one cannot simply speak of “alchemy”, but must distinguish its practical, theoretical, nature-philosophical, mystical and medical aspects”³ as explained by Bernard D. Haage in Wouter Hanegraaff’s *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*. Given its multifaceted nature and multidisciplinary expansion added to its multicultural presence and large chronological scale of permanence, alchemy still lacks a single unified theory able to “clear to the modern mind what was the purpose and underlying conception of the alchemists”⁴ leaving the need to draw lines of distinction in case one wishes to refer to this prolific discipline. As a first basic distinction it seems useful to draw a line that differentiates “*exoteric* alchemy as the ‘Corporeal Science’”⁵ from an esoteric or hidden alchemy; both of them presenting theoretical and practical versions. The former, outward or exoteric alchemy, would be concerned with the “perfecting” (or physical transmutation) of “mettals or imperfect bodies”⁶ and the preparation of the Philosophers’ Stone -also *Lapis Philosophorum*- “endowed with the power of transmuting the base metals lead, tin, copper, iron and mercury into the precious metals gold and silver”⁷ or working as an Elixir or Tincture that would prolong human life indefinitely⁸. Also, part of the exoteric alchemical practice will be the ancient metallurgical practice of gold-making through the mystical transmutation of base metals

² The first alchemical text known, *Phisika kai Mystika* of Pseudo-Democritos dates from this century but derives from the earlier Bolos de Mendes from the 3rd century B.C. as explained by Bernard D. Haage in Wouter Hanegraaff’s *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*, p.16.

³ Hanegraaff, *Dictionary...*, 16.

⁴ A.J. Hopkins as quoted in *The Alchemy Reader*, 4.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ (pseudo-) Roger Bacon as quoted on *The Alchemy Reader*, 5.

⁷ Holmyard, E.J. *Alchemy*, 15.

⁸ *Ibid.*

or lesser pure metals as lead⁹, more than five thousand years ago, which will set the roots for the ever-expanding practical alchemy. The latter, inward or esoteric alchemy, would deal with inner matters as spiritual¹⁰ or theological alchemy, philosophical and psychological alchemy¹¹. According to Eric Holmyard, historian of science and technology, the esoteric or mystical vein on alchemy would have emerged from the early notion of the alchemical Opera or Work only being achievable “by the divine grace and favour”¹², which later derived in a “devotional system where the mundane transmutation of metals became merely symbolic of the transformation of sinful man into a perfect being through prayer and submission to the will of God.”¹³

Interesting derivations from both perspectives have been evolving right up to present times. Historians of science classify alchemy as a proto-chemistry preceding the enlightened times, during which science and the metaphysical (or spiritual) have been separated by an empirical line. This proto-chemistry would give birth to the evolution of present practices of chemistry and pharmacology, even making it possible to interpret highly symbolical alchemical writings in pure chemical terms. On this matter, the work made by science history authors like Lawrence M. Principe¹⁴ and William R. Newman give a wide range of fruitful and interesting historical and practical references. Inner alchemy has also given birth to recognizable practices as psychological alchemy or archetypal symbols in Jungian psychology, the illumination path followed by Western New Age ramification of Yoga and Meditation between others after the 19th century hermetic spiritual tradition impulse by Mary Anne Atwood.

Even though the differentiation line between inner and outer alchemy seems helpful, it bares the difficulty of hiding those hybrid versions of alchemy that consider the practice of both

⁹ Diverse and numerous

¹⁰ Ancient monolithic belief boosted in the 19th century by the publication of Mary Anne Atwood’s *Suggestive Inquiry into the Hermetic Mystery* (1850) which depicts alchemy as the pursuit for spiritual elevation according to Lawrence Principe’s words in the introduction for Wouter Hanegraaff’s *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*.

¹¹ Mainly C.G.Jung: *The collected works of C.G.Jung* (Princeton University Press). *Alchemical studies*. (Princeton University Press, 1967)

¹² Holmyard, E.J. *Alchemy*, 15.

¹³ *Ibid*, 16.

¹⁴ Added to his wide range of publications and academic collaborations on the subject, Principe also counts with interactive videos on youtube relating this subject. For an illustrative example of the chemical generation of Basil Valentine’s Glass of Antimony go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2vS4aPQI80M>

inner and outer alchemy as a simultaneous interrelated and fully integrated act. An illustrative example of this mid-section would be Heinrich Khunrath (1560-1605) with his “Oratory-Laboratory”¹⁵ (attachment 1) where spiritual alchemy joins practical-chemical alchemy in a transversal and non-hierarchical association. As part of this same middle section there is also the common notion of alchemy as a dual exo-/ eso-teric practice in which “the process for perfecting base metals was applied to the sinfully corrupt soul and psyche of man”¹⁶ as for it to morally evolve into a more pure or golden state, closer to its divine nature. Anthroposophy will be situated as part of this last hybrid section since it works with the exoteric process for the alchemical generation of pharmacological substances for medicine (as in the fabrication of organic preparations for agricultural use¹⁷), at the same time that it develops a deep image around the planetary and metallic composition of the human nature in its physical and non-physical configurations. In its spiritual way, the Anthroposophical relation to alchemy seems to give a glimpse on a what we can call Christian alchemy, in which the divine golden principle or the *Lapis-Christ*¹⁸ is directly related to the figure of Christ as a solar figure to which human evolution should aim to, which is very much a fundamental notion in Anthroposophical narrative¹⁹.

As a complementary delimitation, and due to the broad cultural and chronological dimension in which alchemy has expanded, it is necessary to classify the particular type of alchemy that will be mainly referred to as part of Western Alchemy. This tag, particularly for its ‘Western’ designation, is not exempt from complications arising from diffused margins’, but it helps to at least insinuate a more particular section on the broad field of alchemy that includes Chinese, Indian, and even Native American alchemies. Scientific knowledge is translated from Greek²⁰ roots to Arab nations through west Persian academies²¹ and Egyptian centers, specially Alexandria. Alchemical literature and practices experienced a wide growth due to Arabic

¹⁵ In Hendrich Khunrath: *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae*

¹⁶ Linden, S (Ed.). *The Alchemy Reader: From Hermes Trismegistus to Isaac Newton*, p.5.

¹⁷ Both of these practices will be deepened into on later individual sections.

¹⁸ As in C.G. Jung’s *Psychology and Alchemy*.

¹⁹ For more information on the Sun-Christ figure in Anthroposophy: lecture *The Christmas Festival as a Symbol of the Sun Victory* in “Signs and Symbols of the Christmas Festival second”, 1905. GA54, between many others.

²⁰ Mainly Platonic, Aristotelian and Pythagorean.

²¹ Mainly the Academy of Godinshapur.

collaboration and will set a major influence on Western alchemical notions and equipment. Between those works where the Hermetic writings of the Greco-Egyptian²² Hermes Trismegistus the philosophical *Corpus Hermeticum* received first in Renaissance Italy through the celebrated translation by Marcilio Ficino in 1471²³. Even though alchemy was already widely practiced as part of Medieval science, the entrance of the Hermetic “tradition” -as thought at the time- through the figure of Hermes Trismegistus and the long before present alchemical *Tabula Smaragdina* or Emerald Tablet²⁴ will generate a major switch in Western alchemy as brightly explained by Wouter Hanegraaff when he affirms:

With hindsight, if “hermeticism” nevertheless assumed a predominant profile in the imagination of later scholars of the Renaissance, this seems to have been caused not just by the reception of the *Corpus Hermeticum* and the *Asclepius* alone, but probably even more by the influence of a quite different tradition strongly linked to the name of Hermes: that of alchemy. It is also this tradition, grounded in the study of natural processes, that became central to the contextual shift of the later seventeenth century and the eighteenth century, [...]. As science and natural philosophy began to take the place of theology and metaphysics as the dominant framework of interpretation in all domains of thought, those who believed in the superiority of ancient wisdom naturally began to emphasize what they saw as Hermes’ teachings about the workings of nature. (*Esotericism in the Academy*, 192)

The alchemical influence of the Emerald Tablet was such that, as the Rosicrucian Dennis Hauck affirms, “modern spiritual movements, such as Freemasonry, the Rosicrucians, Theosophy, the Golden Dawn, Eckankar, Fourth Way, and many New Age Philosophies, are also based on ideas first revealed in the Emerald Tablet”²⁵ between which Anthroposophy can also be situated.

The twelve theses exposed in the *Tabula* are encoded in a direct but mysterious wording that opens the text to multiple and varied interpretations from different levels - spiritual, technical, astrological as general examples- among the seekers of the alchemical Opera. As an illustrative example we can shortly get on some of these interpretations. In Edward Waites collection of Paracelsian hermetic writings Paracelsus will assure “the

²² For its cultural synthesis derived from the Egyptian god Thoth and the Greek Hermes.

²³ As part of the Renaissance Neo-Platonic academies founded by Cosmo I and Lorenzo de Medici.

²⁴ “first found in the *Kita b sirr al-khalī qā* or Book of the Secret of Creation attributed to “Balinas” (pseudo-Apollonius of Tyana, ca. 8th c.)” according to William R. Newman and Anthony Grafton in *Secrets of Nature*, p.25, and first translated to Latin during the 12th Century.

²⁵ Hauck, *The Emerald Tablet: Alchemy of Personal Transformation*.

ancient Emerald Table shews more art and experience in Philosophy, Alchemy, Magic, and the like, than could ever be taught by you your crowd of followers”²⁶ leaning towards a more practical or even scientific view over the writing which will also inspire the physician on his later spagyric work. The already quoted Dennis Hauck, who dedicates a whole publication to the interpretation of the Emerald Tablet as a clear instructive towards personal transformation²⁷, explains “I became convinced that our mystical and religious visions originate in a hidden reality that the Emerald Tablet not only describes but shows us how to access”²⁸ defining then Tablet as a “scientific document that actually *works* with something we perceive as metaphysical in nature, thus presenting a spiritual technology for the human race”²⁹ deriving an absolute inner dimension of alchemy.

On the side of German Renaissance, another alchemical revolution will occur under the authorship of Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim better known as Paracelsus (1493-1541). Even though medicinal alchemy has its origins in Arab alchemy³⁰, it will find strong and permanent roots in Western European grounds through the figure of Paracelsus and its followers from the 16th century. His medicinal interpretations and simplification of the precedent alchemical writings will lead to a predominant interpretation of the alchemical principles towards the preparation of Chemiatic (Chemical Medicine) compounds or *arcana* by the ways of the Spagyric art (of astro-alchemical analysis and synthesis) with medicinal purposes. He will re-interpret the four bodily humors³¹ theory popularized by Galen through the Western world to give place to a theory where external agents to the human body would be the cause of disease and infection. Under this scenario, the correct way for treating the imbalance of disease would be through the preparation of varied compounds following alchemical principles. Four centuries later, as will be referred further on, Anthroposophy

²⁶ Waite, Edward. *Hermetic and alchemical writings of Paracelsus*, p.19.

²⁷ As expected from the inherited “19th century occultist views of a self-transformative ‘spiritual’ alchemy” (Hanegraaff, *Dictionary...*, p.14.)

²⁸ Hauck, *The Emerald Tablet: Alchemy of Personal Transformation*, p.2.

²⁹ *Ibid*, p.3.

³⁰ Principe, 16.

³¹ In very basic terms, since ancient the ancient Greek and then through the Roman Empire, humorism would explain disease and infections as caused by a quality of imbalance in one or more of the four bodily humors, namely phlegm, blood, black bile and yellow bile.

will take both proposals, the humors theory as temperaments and the alchemical preparation of medical compounds, between other, into consideration as part of its practices.

The main principles

Regardless of its multidisciplinary and versatility, certain basic principles are shared by almost every type of alchemy. An interesting selection of recurrent theories -more than principles- is made in the introductory section to *The Alchemy Reader*³². In this occasion and for practical purposes directly related to this investigation, five particular alchemical principles will be prioritized and deepened into as to later observe their presence in Anthroposophical narrative. The selected elements will allow to draw a nice inter-related picture of what could be seen as a basic structure of a more general alchemical narrative. These principles are presented in a numerical progressive structure that, in very simplified terms -which will be later explained-, can be organized and characterized as follows:

- I. The origin, unity, the Monad, the Primordial essence or state, the One-ness: the Prima Materia or prime matter, the Philosophers' Stone, Gold.
- II. Duality, polarity, complementarity: Solve et Coagula.
- III. The triad, the threefold constitution, the encounter, body-soul-spirit: Salt, Sulphur and Mercury.
- IV. The four elements and humors, elemental states or qualities: Heat, Dryness, Humidity, coldness or Fire, Air, Water and Earth.
- VII³³. The seven planetary metals.

Even though the progression starts with number one, the actual sense of the takes shape when, once we get to take a closer look to the different principles, we can see the fractal relation between them. By these I mean that every principle seems to be contained in, at least, one of the other

³² Specifically in section "Alchemical principles and theories" in p.12.

³³ Yes, seven. Principles associated to numbers five and six will not be included in this document.

principles at the same time that contains, at least, any other of the remaining principle in its own configuration.

The selection of these particular principles is completely arbitrary as it pretends to structure the terms in which main alchemical discursive structures are present in the Anthroposophical narrative, which is the main concern of the present investigation. For this same purpose, we will review a more specific characterization of these principles, so they get to be far easier to recognize once we get to observe the alchemical-Anthroposophical practices.

- I- The unifying principle of the One encircles the presence of one absolute origin, one common root from which everything has emerged from as defined by Dorje Jinpa who explains "...in essence all things, animate and inanimate, have a common basis and origin"³⁴ when alluding to the Prima Materia or primordial matter of the alchemical Opera. Divine, philosophical, mathematical or scientific, the notion of a common origin -at different scales of course- is transversal across almost every theory of existence and has been present since ancient Platonic and Aristotelian [natural] philosophy: "In this Aristotelian teleology, God is not only the end, but also the cause of the chain of movement, the first unmoved mover, who always maintains movement and in this manner continually shapes the world with a purpose"³⁵. When reviewing some alchemical author's words on this principle we also find various but complementary definitions through time. In *A testament of alchemy*, newer edition to the first Arab alchemy text translated to Latin³⁶, the ancient Morienus explains to King Khalid in his quest for the Major Work³⁷ "...know that it [the Work] has but one [root], and one substance of which and with which alone is done, nor is anything added to it or subtracted from it"³⁸ similar to Pseudo-Geber's words "For there is one stone and one medicine in which the magistry consists..."³⁹ same origin where all the "four elements, heat,

³⁴ Jinpa, Dorje. *A synthesis of Alchemy*, p.7.

³⁵ Haage in Wouter Hanegraaff *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*, p.18.

³⁶ And therefore entering the West culture.

³⁷ Namely the transmutation of base metals into gold, being the Lesser work the transmutation resulting in the generation of silver.

³⁸ Stavenhagen, L. *A Testament of Alchemy*, p. 13.

³⁹ Newman, William R. *The Summa Perfectionis of Pseudo Geber*, p.639.

wetness, cold and dryness⁴⁰, are basically one”⁴¹ and “Though all have but one root, there is an operation that alters each one, giving many new colors and natures, hence many names”⁴². Later on, John Dee (1527-1608/9) in the second Theorem of his *Monas Hieroglyphica* will comment: “...by virtue of the point and the Monad that all things commence to emerge in principle”⁴³ as the principle of one-ness not only contains everything in it but is also the place from where everything emerges. Pseudo-Geber will write on this respect on the “Particular discourse on Sol” section where he will explain how the qualities of all the other metals are to be contained in that of Sol “...this is one of the secrets of nature. The spirits, likewise, are mixed with that and fixed by it...”⁴⁴.

II- Mercury and Sulphur, the Solve et Coagula, subtle and gross, fixed and volatile, death and life, moon and Sun, night and day, feminine and masculine. All these binaries, and others not included, share the quality of complementary polarity. The Solve principle denotes a force of spiritualization, elevation and lightness. In opposition, the Coagula principle brings things together in condensation and therefore into the material realm and that of gravity. Already between the 8th and 10th centuries, as part of the *Corpus Jabirianum*, the composition of everything that existed and, of course the seven metals, owed its existence to the alchemical binary of Sulphur and Mercury “which are in turn composed of the four elements. Sulphur, the principle of combustibility, consists of Fire and Air; Mercury, the principle of fusibility, of Water and Earth”⁴⁵.

⁴⁰ These qualities are now better known through physical elements of Fire,

⁴¹ *Ibid*, pp.13-14

⁴² *Ibid*, p.17.

⁴³ Full text available at: <http://www.esotericarchives.com/dee/monad.htm>

⁴⁴ Newan, William R. *The Summa Perfectionis of Pseudo Geber*, p. 672-673.

⁴⁵ Hanegraaff, Wouter. *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*, p.19.

- III- As Haage explains in Hanegraaff's *Dictionary...*, from Arabic influence, the mythological binary is opened into the triad spirit-soul-body and then, from Paracelsus writings, into the Mercury-Sulphur-Salt triad in the 16th Century.⁴⁶
- IV- The four elements. The doctrine of the elements was first referred by Empedocles of Agrigent (c.500-430 B.C.) being later adopted and adapted by Aristotle and therefore inherited as part of the Greek and Arabic alchemical influence over Western. To the four Empedoclean elements -Fire, Air, Water and Earth- Aristotle will add the four elemental principles of heat, dryness, moist and coldness which are not the physical elements we know but qualities related to them and to other formations such as the seven planetary metals. The elemental doctrine will “dominate the natural sciences and medicine until the late Middle Ages”⁴⁷. Such a beautiful example sets Paracelsus about this difference between the element and the quality of fire when he says:

The celestial fire which flows to us on the earth from the Sun is not such a fire as there is in heaven, neither is it like that which exists upon the earth, but the celestial fire with us is cold and congealed, and it is the body of the Sun. Wherefore the Sun can in no way be overcome by our fire. [...] the Sun is fire which, dissolved in heaven, is coagulated with us.⁴⁸

The combination between these elements and qualities will give origin to the

⁴⁶ Haage in Wouter Hanegraaff *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*, p. 20

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p.18

⁴⁸ In Waite, E. *Hermetic and alchemical writings of Paracelsus*, p.11

Aristotelian elements and qualities

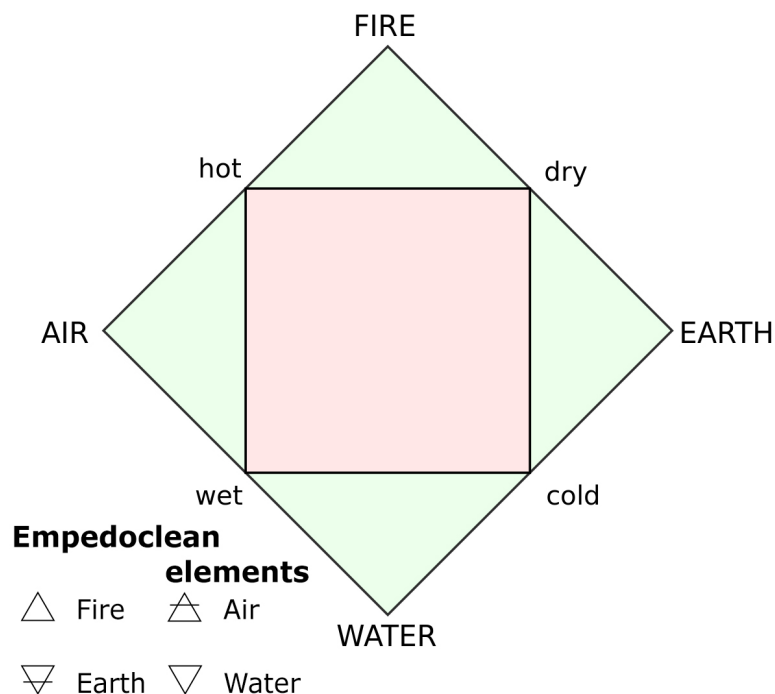


Diagram 1⁴⁹. The very simple figure depicts the relation between the Empedocle's elements and the Aristotelian qualities. The elements Fire, Air, Water and Earth share the qualities of heat, humidity, coldness and dryness, which not only inter relate each element with the next but also designates the possibility of transition between one external state to the other.

Related to Diagram 1, it also seems interesting how Paracelsus in his *Coelum Philosophorum*⁵⁰ characterizes Fire and heat with the quality of life and coldness with that of death, which forms an image of transition between life and death as moving from one element to the other. Since the seven metals, according to authors like Pseudo-Geber in his already quoted *Summa*, originate from different interactions of these four principles. The life and death division would help to recognize the more 'lively' or more 'dead' metals, and therefore planets. For example, Saturn-Lead which is characterized as dry and cold by Paracelsus⁵¹ could then be categorized as part of the 'dead'

⁴⁹ Diagram taken from:

https://www.google.com/search?q=aristotelian+diagram+of+the+four+elements+and+qualities&rlz=1C5CHFA_enCL783CL783&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewi3nY326KjkAhXDy6QKHfeXDogQ_AUIESgB&biw=1440&bih=669#imgrc=rewTZL4C1dzUVM

⁵⁰ Waite, *Hermetic and alchemical writings of Paracelsus*, p.11.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 79

quality. Attachment 2 at the end of this document shows an illustrative 18th century alchemical image from the *Musaeum Hermeticum* (1749) which portraits the elementary dynamic in their relation to the *Lapis Philosophorum* or Philosophers' Stone with an added comment on its respect.

VII- The seventh principle makes reference to the ancient analogy between the seven classic planets -Saturn ♄, Jupiter ♃, Mars ♂, Venus ♀, Mercury ☿, Moon ☾ and Sun ☉- and the seven basic metals -Lead, Tin, Iron, Copper, Mercury/Quicksilver, Silver and Gold- used in the alchemical Opus. The planetary relation to metals was first mentioned by the pagan philosopher Celsus in the 2nd Century of the C.E. and was then standardized by the Byzantine Stephanus of Alexandria in the 7th Century⁵² remaining largely present until the 16th Century. Its interrelation became so strong that very often is possible to read alchemical texts which, explaining the qualities and relations between the seven alchemical metals designate them by their planetary name as in the works of Pseudo-Geber⁵³, Paracelsus⁵⁴ and Michael Maier's (1568-1622) *Atalanta Fugiens*⁵⁵. The analogy between planets and metals was sustained under the belief cosmic forces working on Earth and materializing in the form of metals. Basil Valentine (15th C.) in his *Triumphal Chariot of Antimony* (1604) will explain on this respect "...all Things, which are generated in the Bowels of Mountains, to be infused from the Superior Stars, and take their beginning from them, in the form of an aqueour Cloud, Fume or Vapour, which for a very long time fed and nourished by the Stars, is at length educted to a tangible form by the Elements"⁵⁶. Even more specific will be Maier's description on the same subject in his Discourse 1 when he says "Now from fumes or winds (which are nothing else but Air in Motion) being coagulated, Water is produced, & from Water mixed with earth all minerals & metals do proceed"⁵⁷ from where it is also possible to derive the notion of the elementary origins of the seven metals. This means, as mentioned in the fourth principle, that different configurations of the four main qualities will give form to the seven different metals, being gold the one in which all of these qualities are in perfect balance.

⁵² Forshaw, Peter. *Chemistry, that starry science*, p. 148

⁵³ In his *Summa Perfectionis* will dedicate one 'Particular Discourse on Sol' and rubric discourses on "Luna", "Saturn" and "Jove" [Tin].

⁵⁴ In *Coelum Philosophorum*.

⁵⁵ Which also features gorgeous images of the theses on the Emerald Tablet.

⁵⁶ P.63

⁵⁷ H.M.E. de Jong, *Michael Maier's Atalanta Fugiens: Sources of an Alchemical book of Emblems*, p.1.

Yannis Almirantis, from the Biology center for physical Sciences ‘Demokritos’ in Greece suggest an interesting paradox of the planetary metals’ analogy:

The paradox of the planetary metals cannot be understood on the basis of causal relationships. It brings together physical factors—the geocentric angular speed of celestial bodies, physical properties of planets, physical and chemical properties of metals—with beliefs: myths related to gods of the ancient Middle East, astrological traditions of those civilizations, the geocentric concept itself. Only nowadays, with a knowledge of atomic quantities, is the paradox evident. It is either meaningful and synchronistic, or it is sheer coincidence.⁵⁸

Almirantis’ paradox mixes historical background on the matter with interesting references to present scientific qualities associated to the planets and elements giving a fresh update to this long existing analogical doctrine.

Anthroposophy

Short historical review and present state

After his years of academic philosophical and Goethean research, Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) will join Madam Blavatsky’s (1831-1891) Theosophical Society (becoming the leader of its German branch in 1902), where his popularity will grow considerably mainly because of his active diffusion on esoteric lectures around Europe⁵⁹. In 1904, he will also be named leader of the Theosophical Esoteric school for Germany and Austria by Annie Besant, who became president of the Society after Blavatsky’s death. His position as leader of the school will open the opportunity for Steiner to guide his esoteric teachings according to his own personal beliefs. His preference for a Theosophical Society identified with a Christian-European foundation as for the association with

⁵⁸ Almirantis, Yannis. *The Paradox of the Planetary Metals*, p.41.

⁵⁹ Brandt and Hammer, 116.

a larger Rosicrucian tradition⁶⁰ will strongly differentiate itself from the Eastern vein prioritized by Blavatsky and her followers, which together with his extra attention towards arts and natural science, will open a gate of conflict between Steiner and part of the non-German Theosophical community. The reinforcement of irreconcilable differences between both parts culminated in the presentation of Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986) as the reincarnated Christ according to C. Leadbeater and Annie Besant, and will mark the end of Steiner's interest in any relation with the Society, leaving it in 1909.

With numerous affiliates of the Society following him, Steiner would found the Anthroposophical Society in Cologne, Germany in 1912. After its re-foundation in 1923/4, its headquarters will be at the Goetheanum⁶¹ building in Dornach (up to present-day), Switzerland, home to the Anthroposophical School of Spiritual Science⁶². Presently, the Anthroposophical Society exists in different configurations throughout seventy-eight countries over the world distributed over the five continents. Since the foundation of the first Waldorf School in Stuttgart 1919, a total of 1182 Waldorf and Rudolf Steiner Schools are registered as active today, globally, together with 1911 Kindergartens⁶³. One year after his first educational project, Steiner and Ita Wegman (1876-1943) developed the basis for Anthroposophical Medicine and Pharmaceutics, founding the Weleda pharmacy in 1921, initiative that has expanded to be present in more than fifty countries⁶⁴ around the five continents⁶⁵. As will be seen further on, specially this section of Anthroposophical practices shows a very direct basis on western alchemical teachings, mainly in relation to Rosicrucian and Paracelsian medical notions and pharmacological recommendations; even though Steiner references to specific studies, specially from Paracelsus, are rather vague. In order to continue with present practices, in 1924 Steiner would develop the Biodynamic agricultural system, a foundational practice of the later organic farming movement that has been under development since then. Under an alchemical understanding of the dynamics involved in the organic processes of the vegetable and animal world, silica, manure, and compost preparations

⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 120.

⁶¹ The first Goetheanum was built in 1913, destroyed by a fire in 1922 and rebuilt in 1923.

⁶² For more information see: www.goetheanum.org

⁶³ Information available at: <https://www.freunde-waldorf.de/en/waldorf-worldwide/waldorf-education/waldorf-world-list/>

⁶⁴ Info available at: www.weleda.nl

⁶⁵ Even though for the African continent the only country included would be Morocco.

are generated to revitalize the soil and promote organic balance towards a higher quality development⁶⁶. Demeter International is the actual organization in charge of organic and biodynamic certification around the world, having around ten thousand farms (between member and non-member countries), eighteen hundred processors, and a bit more than nine hundred distributors affiliated to it⁶⁷.

Rudolf Steiner's theoretical background and influences

Philosopher by formation and with a great interest in science and phenomenology, Rudolf Steiner's early publications will study the scientific method of knowledge proposed by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)⁶⁸ which will open the first volume of Steiner's vast oeuvre with the title *Goethean Science*⁶⁹ published in 1883 and also translated as *Goethe the Scientist*. These were followed by two volumes on *The science of knowing*⁷⁰ (1886) based on Goethe's conception of the world, and *Truth and knowledge*⁷¹ (1892) or *Truth and science* where he will deepen into Immanuel Kant's epistemology, in which, as opposed to current practices, epistemology cohabitated with metaphysics. Not only the union between epistemology and metaphysics will remain present in Anthroposophical narrative but also the Kantian reflections on self-consciousness and knowledge⁷² will accompany his future Sophia. This scientific-philosophical research will conclude in the publication of *The philosophy of Freedom*⁷³ in 1894, which will set the basis for the later philosophical science of Anthroposophy.

Regardless of his distance from the Theosophical Society, Steiner is historically classified between the post-theosophical or second-generation Theosophy authors according to the history of occultism⁷⁴. The Boehmian theosophical or Christian theosophy narrative along with

⁶⁶ Information available at: <https://www.demeter.net/what-is-demeter/biodynamic-preparations>

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Goethe did not only write 'fiction' literature but also interesting treatises in botany, morphology, anatomy and colour as: *Metamorphosis of plants* (1790), *Theory of colours* (1810) and *My Botanical studies* (1831).

⁶⁹ GA1

⁷⁰ GA2

⁷¹ GA3

⁷² For an enlightening short explanation on this subject see: Schulting, Dennis. *Apperception, Objectivity and Idealism*. Available at: <https://philpapers.org/browse/kant-cognition-and-knowledge>.

⁷³ GA4

⁷⁴ Asprem, 3.

Blavatsky's Theosophical discourse on Cosmo-conception and her Westernized Eastern elements⁷⁵ will remain present strongly enough to highly determine the configuration of the Anthroposophical narrative in spiritual terms. The theosophical leaning towards the direct acquirement of true knowledge related to the human and universal nature, both of divine origin and therefore in relation, will dye the basic ground for Steiner's pursuit for human wisdom. This to the point where his publication *Theosophy* (1904) will be considered as one of the five basic books⁷⁶ recommended by the Anthroposophical formations all over the world for setting the basic terminology and theory to approach Anthroposophy. In this text, the configuration of the human being in his Corporeal, Soul, Spiritual and Egoic Natures -or "bodies" as Steiner calls them-, is explained in detail and later related to the afterlife phase in relation to the Theosophical -in the "Blavatskian" sense- elements of Karma and Reincarnation⁷⁷. The stationary Theosophical Cosmo-conception, also taken as direct reference by contemporary Rosicrucians of Steiner as Max Heindel in his *Rosicrucian Cosmo-conception* (1909), will be taken almost in an intact form except for the degree and nature of the interpretations derived by Steiner. This model is mainly developed in the publication *Occult Science, an outline* (1910) by Steiner. Other relevant influences on his work and later practices come from a "special interest for "Teutonic" mysticism and the German philosophical canon"⁷⁸, Goethe's close friend Friedrich Schiller, the prolific Friedrich Nietzsche, and as quoted by diverse sources, post-Kantian philosophy by the works of idealist philosophers such as Franz Brentano, J.G. Fichte and F.W.J. Schelling, G.W.F. Hegel in their *Naturalphilosophie* vein.

In addition to the previous philosophical background and specially related to the subjects considered in this investigation, it is interesting how the Anthroposophical approach to natural phenomena inhabits a place between Aristotelian and Goethean scientific proposals for the approximation. The Aristotelian attitude, even though mostly empirical, "does not conceive of natural processes in a mechanical and quantitative manner, but as an interaction of principles and

⁷⁵ For more information on theosophy (Jacob Bohme) and Theosophy (Madame Blavatsky) see: Jocelyn Godwin. *The theosophical enlightenment*.

⁷⁶ Being the other four *How to know higher worlds* (GA10), *Philosophy of Freedom* (GA4), *Occult Science, an outline* (GA13) and *Christianity As Mystical Fact and the Mysteries of Antiquity* (GA8).

⁷⁷ Steiner will initially work on these concepts in his titles: *Theosophy* (GA09), *How to know higher worlds* (GA10) and *The stages of Higher Knowledge* (GA12) between other publications and Lectures, together with the concepts of Meditation, Intuition, Imagination and Akashic chronicles.

⁷⁸ Aspren, 5.

qualities”⁷⁹ or the identification of the “gesture” of things in Anthroposophical terms, or the “form” (*eidōs*) or essence, in Aristotelian terms, of things; which is expressed in the way things (for lack of a more precise word) interact with each other. “This physics of qualities dominates the theory of alchemy and medicine until the advent of modern science” Haage assures, but it will also remain present in Anthroposophical theory and practices as the main perspective from where and how to observe the world and perceive human nature. An illustrative example on this matter is given by Steiner in his first lecture named *The Impulse for Renewal in Culture and Science* as part of the “Anthroposophy and Natural Science” programme in Berlin 1922:

Let's imagine someone is confronted with a written word. What will he do? If he hasn't learnt to read he would meet it as something inexplicable. If he was literate he would unconsciously join the single forms together and encounter its meaning within his soul. He certainly wouldn't start with each symbol, for instance by taking the W and search for its meaning, by approaching the upward stroke, followed by the descending stroke, in order to discover the foundation of the letters. No, he would read — and not search for the underlying to obtain clarity. In this way phenomenology wants to “read” as well. You may remain within the connections of phenomenology and learn to read them, and not, when I offer a complexity of phenomenon, turn back to atomic structures.⁸⁰

Here is where the Aristotelian ways meet the Goethean ones. Goethe is a main figure in Anthroposophy to which Steiner dedicates multiple references and some of his writings. Even Anthroposophical theories like the theory of colors are strongly based on Goethean teachings on the matter. Goethe, who also considered himself a man of science, understood that to truly understand nature and the worldly phenomena it was not possible to keep on looking at them from an outside perspective as distant and non-involved spectators. Otherwise, the only results possible were going to be material causal sequences which wouldn't reveal the actual ‘personality’ of nature's elements. For him, to truly understand what is observed one must look from the thing rather than at the thing. By this approach the observer could actually experience internally the gesture or principles acting in what is observed and then, by uniting that inner experience with the measurable qualities of the element, get a rounder (i.e more ‘whole’), inner and outer, image of it. This manner of approaching nature defines the way Anthroposophy understands a learning experience towards knowledge. Steiner explains how, as presented by the ancient Mysteries, “man,

⁷⁹ Haage in Hanegraaff, 2006, 19.

⁸⁰ Steiner, Rudolf. *The Impulse for Renewal in Culture and Science*. GA0081

through the knowledge he acquired therein, was to become a quite different being from what he was before”⁸¹ where knowledge implies an encounter between the [passive] outside observation of sensory-perceptible qualities together with an [active and] individualized inner experience (of the animic, astral or soul body in Anthroposophical terms) in relation to the observed. The starting point was man himself, and he was made to realize -through the acquirement of knowledge- his connection with different natural processes.

Anthroposophy recognizes this dual approach in the language and interpretations used by Western alchemy. Its literal language will be able to refer to defined elements as the seven basic metals, namely Gold, Silver, Mercury, Copper, Iron, Tin and Lead, at the same time that it expresses their qualities and ways of interacting with each other in a symbolic language of images that depict the “physics of qualities” that reign among them “...entering into the field of phenomena and learning to read within their inner meaning”⁸².

Even though carved from spiritual roots, Steiner’s purpose with Anthroposophy as a Spiritual-Science, was to develop a system that would allow to approach the understanding of human nature in its spiritual and physical senses. As the nomenclature of its name alludes, Anthro-(human) + Sophia (wisdom) would seek in human’s own nature and the nature surrounding him the traces for true knowledge. This knowledge would be attainable through the practice and extension of the rational use of the mind from inorganic and materialized bodies to the fields of the metaphysical contained in the interactive patterns of the organic formations.⁸³ Rationality extended and refined through practices of observation, meditation and imagination⁸⁴ could reveal knowledge beyond the perceivable by the bodily senses, showing an underlying ground of further knowledge also related to the human Soul Nature and Spiritual Nature according to Steiner’s categories. In his autobiography, *The Story of my life*, Steiner explains how “this mode of scientific shaping of spiritual °knowledge”⁸⁵ would generate another main reason for Anthroposophy’s

⁸¹ *Lecture XI, The secret of plants, of metals and of men* (1923), GA0232.

⁸² Steiner, *The Impulse for Renewal in Culture and Science*. GA0081.

⁸³ Steiner, *The Story of my Life*. Ch.XXXII. GA028.

⁸⁴ Imagination not in the sense of fantasy but, as the active generation of inner images that allow inner experiences of knowledge. For more information in the hermetic/mystic perception of imagination: Corbin, Henry. *Mundus Imaginalis*. For Anthroposophical references to the term and related practices see: Steiner Rudolf, *How to know higher worlds*.

⁸⁵ *The Story of my Life*. Ch.XXXII. GA028.

distance from Theosophy despite their “scientific rigor” -which would basically reside on a systematic classification of Blavatsky’s ideas executed by Annie Besant and Charles W. Leadbeater⁸⁶- as from his scientific critics that will relabel his practices as pseudo-science.

Alchemy in Anthroposophy

Even though Anthroposophy, as Alchemy, have deep theoretical and abstract dimensions, the priority focus of this investigation will reside mainly in relation to the way in which Western alchemical theory and its practices, based on the five specified principles, have impregnated the present Anthroposophical practices and initiatives. The purpose of this investigation will aim to recognize how Western alchemical elements imbue the Anthroposophical narrative in a scale that seems fractal since the same alchemical elements are recognizable in different levels of the Anthroposophical discourse, impregnating its multidisciplinary practices, building a theoretical and practical Anthroposophical Alchemy. In this occasion, the focus will be limited to the narrative of its Cosmogonic theory and the residing theoretical principles behind the practices of agriculture and medicine-pharmacology; even though the same elements can be found in Waldorf education.

Core Anthroposophical Cosmogonic Narrative⁸⁷

After his participation in the German section of the Theosophical Society until 1912, Rudolf Steiner would mirror the basic structure of Blavatsky’s spiritual evolutionary theory in his own Anthroposophical version. The central narrative disruption between both discourses will reside on Steiner’s desire to be able to develop “an esotericism that honored the stress of

⁸⁶ Hinde, Daniel on Charles Webster Leadbeater. Available at: http://www.rudolfsteinerweb.com/contemporaries/Charles_Leadbeater.php

⁸⁷ With minor changes, his whole section has been taken directly from the final paper *Alchemy in Anthroposophy* of my own authorship, for the course Renaissance Esotericism by Dr. Peter Forshaw at the University of Amsterdam.

modernity on individual freedom”⁸⁸ which no longer could be fulfilled with ‘old instincts’. He would sympathize with the cyclic and progressive narrative of the Theosophical cosmic evolution formed by a seven-stage progression⁸⁹ (seven-periods, seven planetary states, seven revolutions, seven incarnations, seven races and seven sub-races) but will work on a particularized modification of it from an individual perspective towards “spiritual consciousness” where the ultimate evolutionary state is the individual development of the spiritual Self-consciousness or the egoic human entity towards its way to a spiritual or solar state named Vulcan.⁹⁰ This evolution is not restricted to the human race but involves all forms of existence as spiritual beings in different states. Together with this, Steiner will not restrict the main ground of this theory to a Cosmic-planetary and human evolution but will project it over a re-interpretation on how areas like social organization, medicine, agriculture and education should be understood in terms of one whole spiritual pursuit. Like in a Microcosm-Macrocosm dynamic, the individual human spiritual path of evolution and its everyday activities act together with the Earth and Cosmos, completing an evolutionary path towards ‘spiritualization’; a transmutation where the Prima Materia (primary matter) includes not only human beings but also nature and the complete Cosmos.⁹¹

In the fourth chapter of his 1909 publication *Occult Science*, Rudolf Steiner develops the Anthroposophical narrative for *Cosmic evolution and the human being*⁹² proposing an evolutionary development and transformation based on a succession of progressive incarnations-materialization (also called Cosmic days) and spiritualizations-etherealizations (Cosmic nights) which resembles the dual quality of the ‘Solve et Coagula’ dynamic. This polar transition would be experienced by both planet Earth and human beings as spiritual beings that belong to a major cosmic order. This

⁸⁸ Mckanan, *Eco-Alchemy*, p.4.

⁸⁹ Alfred Percy Sinnett (1840-1921), member of the first generation of the Theosophical Society and president to the London Lodge of the Society will prefigure the cosmic seven section structure in his publication *Esoteric Buddhism* (1885). The structure proposed by Sinnett will be then taken and modified by Blavatsky in the first volume of *The Secret Doctrine* (1888) where she will explain the seven “Stanzas” or major principles under which a cosmic evolution -between other levels of evolution- will occur. Blavatsky’s configuration will be then reconfigured by Steiner who will also relabel the stages the seven stages under the planetary names here explained.

⁹⁰ Steiner’s Cosmogonic notion and Cosmic evolution are explained in depth through the fourth and sixth chapters of his work *Occult Science. An outline* (GA013) available at www.rsarchive.com. The reading of this work considers the reader is already familiar with Steiner’s classification and characterization of the four bodies (physical body, ether body, soul body and the ego) that are introduced in Steiner’s *Theosophy* (GA009), so it is highly recommended to approach *Occult Science* by first reading Steiner’s *Theosophy*.

⁹¹ General description based on the readings of Rudolf Steiner’s books *Theosophy* (GA009), *Occult Science* (GA013) pp.117-197 and pp.376-398, and *La Teosofia del Rosacruz* (GA099).

⁹² In Steiner, Rudolf. *Occult Science. An outline*. Ch.4. pp.117-197.

cyclic evolution is meant to go through seven stages or planetary entities/states designated under the names and corresponding qualities of the seven Ptolemean planets and one mythical referent: Saturnine, Solar, Lunar, Earthly, Jupiterian and Venusian, culminating in the Vulcanian⁹³ stage as shown in Diagram 2⁹⁴. At first sight, and remembering the seven classical planets, it seems as if the sequence has added the planet Earth and omitted Mercury and Mars. Steiner will clarify that the Earth stage appears as a double-quality planet, with both Mars and Mercury qualities working within it⁹⁵. As a particularized example, in the fourth stage corresponding to the Earth-state cycle, a fractal projection of another seven-stage evolution is contained as shown by the letters A to G in Diagram 2. In this cycle, letter D would designate planet Earth as we know it. Planet Earth or letter D of the Earth stage as appears on the diagram, also contains a seven-stage evolution of seven epochs (namely Polarian, Hyperborean, Lemurian, Atlantean, Post-Atlantean, epoch of Seals and Epoch of Trumpets) -not depicted in the diagram- being the fifth, namely the Post-Atlantean epoch, the present large epoch, which also contains a seven-stage progression of seven cultural ages (Ancient India, Ancient Persia, Egypto-Chaldean, Greek-Latin, European -our present times-, Slavic and American)⁹⁶. In this section of the fractal figure, in the middle of the Atlantean phase preceding our present Post-Atlantean epoch, the Martian and Mercurial impulses are supposed to assist the human and Earth spiritual evolution in order to help them keep evolving even when its light and dark principles (Yahve and Ahriman/Lucifer respectively) are so strongly dissociated and contrasted. In this polarized duality, the Mercurial impulse would be the one giving the Earth the capacity and preparation to receive the Christ impulse (the presence of the divine principle and the superior planetary spirit of the Earth) in the completely materialized physical body⁹⁷ corresponding to this chemical stage. Though separated in stages or states, each of the seven planetary presences are, anyhow, a cosmic force actively and simultaneously present in the

⁹³ Steiner will not justify in precise terms the reason for the Vulcan label of this final stage. He will characterize it though as the phase of evolution where a “fully spiritualized form of existence” will occur (*Occult Science*, p.394). A simple association can be made towards the figure of mythical Vulcan god of fire. Being fire the purifying element per excellence, it is possible to associate the force of the works of Vulcan with the final purification and higher spiritualization process of the seven-stage evolution process.

⁹⁴ This diagram belongs to Max Heindel’s *The Rosicrucian Cosmo-conception* (1910) which shares the same Cosmo-Conception explained by Steiner if not taken directly from his Lectures in Berlin; the polemic about the authorship is still unsolved.

⁹⁵ Steiner, Rudolf. *Occult Science* (GA013) pp.197-238.

⁹⁶ It is significative to remark that the fifth state of this evolution which corresponds to our present times was designated by Blavatsky under the name of *Aryan* but will be renamed by Steiner as the *Post-Atlantean epoch*. These epochs were also renamed as so by Steiner after switching Blavatsky’s denomination of *root races*.

⁹⁷ Steiner, Lecture GA0152.

development of 'Earth' and every other planetary period, as of the entire Cosmos. They would just act as different principles and impulses with certain defined qualities and times of action, as different parts of a big unique body with differentiated components working together towards [their own] evolution; as a Macrocosm that will also be projected in the Microcosm of the human body, the human individual biography, and all the living earthly dynamics of the inorganic and organic world.

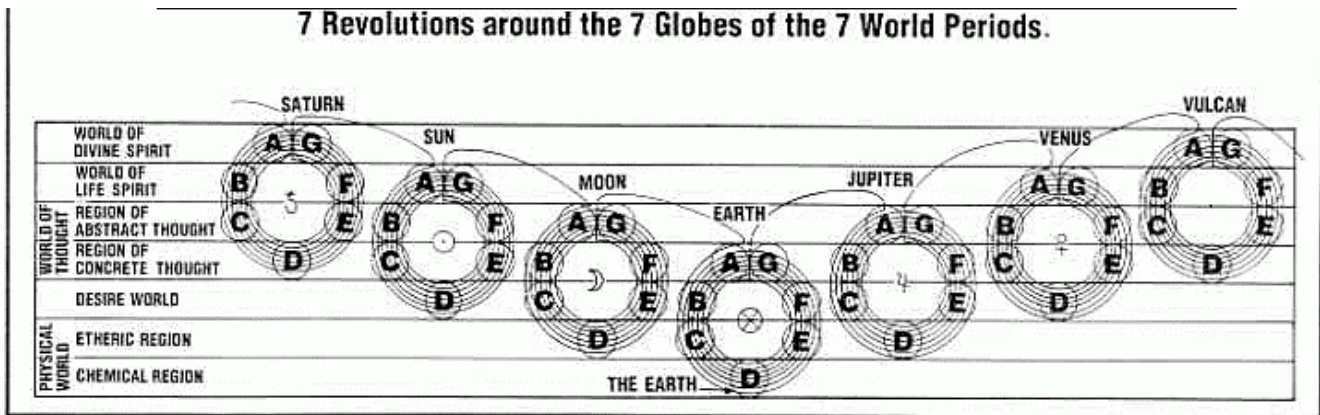


Diagram 2⁹⁸. Seven Planetary or World periods. Designated by the letter *D* in the Earth globe in the diagram, the present configuration of the planet Earth belongs to the chemical region where physical and chemical principles reign over the configuration of the existing bodies as the cosmic progression would be at its 'lowest', coagulated or more materialized form. This state would be the vertex before the cosmic progression retakes an ascension path towards the world of the divine spirit which is where superior stages A (first) and G (last) from the Saturn and Vulcan formation take place.

As shown in Diagram 2, the cosmic evolution comprises a process from a spiritual or thinner state (Saturn) down to a condensation or coagulation (*Coagula*) of the same Cosmos in its Earth state which gets to inhabit the chemical region. After the material bottom, the process is supposed to de-condensate back to its Divine Spirit form but now in a more evolved spiritual state. It is a transition from *Solve* to *Coagula* and back to a superior *Solve* state named Vulcano, which recalls qualities more generally related to a Sun state, as everything that exists there would irradiate warmth in a non-material and subtle form. The mid-states of the sequence do not seem to be in

⁹⁸ Image taken from Max Heindel's *The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception*, p.197. Even though this image does not belong to Anthroposophy Max Heindel derived the contents of this publications from Rudolf Steiner's Lectures on the subject.

accordance with any ancient nor present astronomical or astrological references, but they can throw interesting analogies when the particular qualities of these cosmic states are compared to the alchemical stages depicted by alchemical birds.⁹⁹

The four main elements are also introduced progressively through the first four stages, namely Saturn, Sun, Moon and Earth. In Saturn a warmth/heat state would predominate¹⁰⁰, while the Solar revolution will bring the airy state, the Lunar the watery condition and Earth, of course, the earthly condition, where all the four elements meet and gather. The second half of the sequence will mirror the initial one. As we also see in Diagram 2, the Earth period in its D revolution, designated by the name Earth on Diagram 2, belongs to the chemical realm, where the incarnated human essence is affected not only by its inner spiritual, astral and etheric bodies but also by the physical and chemical laws of the world that surrounds it. In this condition, the human relation with the cosmic planetary forces will also inhabit the physical realm, interacting with the presence of the planetary impulses in the form of metals; between others. The Seven Metals will not only appear as part of inorganic and organic formations belonging to earth as we are used to imagine them, but also to the human bodily composition and its individual inner evolution and biography.¹⁰¹

Biodynamic Agriculture¹⁰²

As revised in the Cosmo-conception structure, the present Earthly state would correspond to the ‘chemical region’, where the more coagulated version of all the existing beings take form mainly through the chemical world of physical structures and interactions. Even though condensed into hard matter, the evolving spiritual forces can be traced in the organic and inorganic elements,

⁹⁹ As a quick first association, it is possible to derive the following analogies between these planetary stages and the alchemical birds often used to depict the stages of the alchemical Opus by their change of colors and certain matter qualities: Saturn-death/change-raven, Sun-light-dove or swan, Earth-physical appearance and vertex-peacock, Venus-love and sacrifice-Pelican, Vulcan-fire, transformation, re-borne sun-phoenix.

¹⁰⁰ This, as we saw, is very contrasting with the Cold and Dry qualities given to the alchemical Saturn.

¹⁰¹ It must be said that the allusion to the Seven classical planets in the Anthroposophical narrative is recurrent but variable in its sequence. The order of the planetary succession will vary depending on the type of phenomena that is being referred to, but the characterization given to each planetary impulse prevails from one level to the other.

¹⁰² With minor changes, his whole section has been taken directly from the final paper *Alchemy in Anthroposophy* of my own authorship, for the course Renaissance Esotericism by Dr. Peter Forshaw at the University of Amsterdam

together with their qualities and behaviors. In a completely different scale, the interaction and functions of the chemical elements in nature, in its inorganic and organic forms, will contain and reflect the cosmic elementary qualities in a Micro-Macro cosmos relation where alchemical structures and principles do not cease to be present. Thus, out of what could be perceived as a fantastic Cosmogonic narrative, Steiner and his supporters arrive at a more scientific approach towards the natural processes, always in balance with the spiritual co-narrative, but nevertheless intertwined with the interpretative anthroposophical eye. As Dan McKanan comments in *Eco-Alchemy* following Steiner's words in the *Agriculture Course LI*¹⁰³:

“Steiner [...] taught that forces streaming from the moon, the planets, and the stars must be enlisted for the renewal of the soil, and he proposed alchemical and homeopathic methods for doing so. These two dimensions –what we might call the “biological” and the “cosmic” aspects of biodynamics—cannot really be disentangled.”¹⁰⁴

Following the fractal structure of the Anthroposophical narrative, the evolutionary principle of consciousness we previously revised is transferred by Steiner to the earthly work of agriculture. In the agrarian dimension, human and Earth are united by their fundamental condition as spiritual beings, as so, interrelated in their evolutionary paths. The biodynamic agriculturist Dennis Klocek affirms in his title dedicated to this matter, *Sacred Agriculture* (2013), that “the development of consciousness is a force in the human that unites the human being with the destiny of the Earth as a spiritual being in the cosmos [...] the evolution of the Earth depends on the evolution of human consciousness”¹⁰⁵ following Steiner's teachings. According to the Anthroposophical interpretation, Earth's cosmic aspiration would be to develop into a Sun-state where humans beings, since they would be spiritually connected to Earth's evolution, would responsible for assisting this process. This evolutive path grows an ascending progression from the ancient Saturnian primary state¹⁰⁶ towards a Sun-state¹⁰⁷, which reminds and quotes the

¹⁰³ - “...everything which happens on the Earth is but a reflection of what is taking place in the Cosmos.”

¹⁰⁴ McKanan, *Eco Alchemy*, p.13.

¹⁰⁵ Klocek, *Sacred Agriculture*, p.1.

¹⁰⁶ Meant as a transformation gate, which also implies the entry to the Saturnian warmth or “will of being” (Klocek, *Sacred Agriculture*, p.106)

¹⁰⁷ In a process of wisdom or “consciousness of light” where “the will warmth of Saturn becomes the light of wisdom of ancient Sun” (Klocek, *Sacred Agriculture*, p.106)

alchemical path of purification, is preceded by the narrative of ‘The Fall’ of both human and nature from the Heaven or Paradise state. In this gesture, which forms a U-shaped transitional structure from fall to rise, present in almost every dimension of the fractal narrative in the Anthroposophical discourse, a mixture of the two most important esoteric narratives occurs: The Fall as the transition of a perfect spiritual state to a deficient material one¹⁰⁸ where also the relation with the spiritual substance is, at least partially, lost; and then, the recovery of an improved spiritualized state through the transmutation of imperfect substances, as in the Alchemical Opus.

The alluded structure implies a human-Earth synchronic work and growth where human being, through its consciousness can re-enter nature and, as an “alchemical artist [...] find how nature is working”¹⁰⁹ in order to transform nature’s substances into medicine and food and, in a deeper sense, reconnect earth with its cosmic rhythm. For this purpose, man needs to understand the quality, relation and application of the planetary motion’s effects on Earth¹¹⁰ -and earth- and, simultaneously, the presence of the planetary forces in earthly metals and minerals, adding astrological elements to the alchemical work. This figure of an agricultural alchemist positioned in a middle ground between the Macrocosm of the heavens and the projected Microcosm in earth elements and dynamics recalls the famous principle “As above, so below” of Hermes *Tabula Smaragdina*. A rather playful but clarifying image is given by Klocek on the matter when he writes:

The Earth as a spiritual being interacts with its own beings. It has brothers and sisters. It has family reunions. It has issues. It has events that are significant for its destiny. The Earth has challenges, much as you do when uncle Elmo comes to a family reunion and starts a political argument with Grandpa. You know what happens when uncle Elmo gets going with Grandpa. For the Earth, Elmo arguing with Grandpa is Mars conjunction with Saturn. The cosmic dimension of the agricultural work is the environment in which the Earth lives continually interacts.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Which nevertheless appears as a reflection of the divine world.

¹⁰⁹ Klocek, *Sacred Agriculture*, p.23.

¹¹⁰ For a clarifying and educative astrological review on alchemy read: *Chemistry, That Starry Science.Early Modern Conjunctions of Astrology and Alchemy* by Peter Forshaw in “Star and Symbol”.

¹¹¹ Klocek, *Sacred Agriculture*, pp.18-19.

In this conscious relation, the *husbandman* appears as a kind of alchemist belonging to a mixed practice of alchemy as a spiritual and practical work. Aware of his own possible actions in nature's patterns and rhythms and, in harmony with nature's own principles, he could generate a positive transformation/transmutation on it as a spiritual act along with its practical actions. This dual role expected from the agriculturist-chemist of biodynamic agriculture expands the husbandman's labor on physical resources towards a holistic, above and below participation -remembering Hermes again-. In line with the same dual quality of spirit and matter, incarnation, or the fall of spirit into fixed matter or a manifest body is seen as a spiritual death, matter being a condensed corpse of the manifested spirit where all the spiritual potentialities are now fixed into a material form; serving as a necessary stage in the spiritual evolutionary process. The anthroposophical alchemist, knowing the contained essences in materialized bodies will be able to "reanimate or resurrect the corpse of substances back to their potential states [...] so that the original creative force in the substance could be used for healing [...] and eternal life. [Since] hidden in the corpse is a great secret of the salt, or phantom¹¹², of the potential for human sensory life as the key to transforming Earth into a star"¹¹³ quote that recalls Paracelsus notion on alchemy as a way towards the generation of healing compounds. To accomplish this physical-spiritual relation to earth (soil) and planet Earth, the *husbandman* needs to develop the capacity of reading nature in its formative and gestural motifs -in a way that reminds the Aristotelian "physics of qualities"- ; gestures that will contain the spiritual qualities residing in these material forms and that will allow the agriculturist to find the natural balance and rhythm according to which alchemical progressions could be accomplished. All the elements are provided and present in nature, the difference will be made by the act of the agriculturist-chemist who, with his consciousness in action has the possibility of being the agent of change.¹¹⁴

In his eight lectures for the *Agriculture Course*¹¹⁵, Rudolf Steiner sets the theoretical and practical basis for a Bio-dynamic agriculture which will be fixed basically under

¹¹² Phantom here refers to the non-material essence contained in materialized bodies.

¹¹³ Klocek, *Sacred Agriculture*, p.108.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, p.24.

¹¹⁵ All eight of them accessible in www.rsarchive.org, under the designation: GA0327.

alchemical structures of interpretations of the elements and gesture motifs¹¹⁶ of the natural forces by an analogical reading of its qualities or signatures¹¹⁷. These analogies are generally depicted as mental or even poetic images that refer to elemental qualities. Understanding these qualities as images would allow an inner understanding of them, facilitating a better understanding of their analogical relations. Particularly the practices of imaginative meditation and taking ideas and experiences to sleep are often used as knowledge interiorizing practices in Anthroposophy¹¹⁸. A correct understanding of nature images could be taken by the agricultural alchemist into his work of imaginative meditation or cognition¹¹⁹ in order to be able to extract bio-dynamic principles from the inner understanding of their analogical qualities. The derivation of these principles would allow him to generate bio-dynamic preparations as a resulting concretion after exercising the sequence of imaginative¹²⁰ analogies between plant, mineral, animal and planetary particular qualities brought together in a seasonal-rhythmical pattern. An analogic and synergic reading that the earth-chemist/ *husbandman* brings together in its mission the re-union of nature with its cosmic quality.

In the first steps towards analogical understanding, the careful observation of natural elements and forces must be put into practice. Steiner derives his own natural observations from Goethe's approach to natural phenomena, which attempts to understand things by looking 'from' them [in an imbricate gesture] rather than 'at' them [in a separatist gesture]. By drawing an intertwined overview of Steiner's Lectures on agriculture and the clarifying observations made by Dennis Klocek in *Sacred Agriculture* on this same matter it is possible to generate a first basic image of this agricultural interpretation *from* nature's eyes as follows:

¹¹⁶ Klocek, *Sacred Agriculture*, p.30.

¹¹⁷ This reminds the reading of the Sacred book of Nature and the Signature of all Things present in Jakob Bohme's narrative and Paracelsus.

¹¹⁸ For a better understanding of imaginative cognition or knowledge see: Steiner, Rudolf. Lecture IX: *Imaginative knowledge and Artistic Imagination* in "Esoteric development" (1906) (GA096).

¹¹⁹ Klocek will characterize this process as a controlled and conscious generation of inner picture-making process or visualization towards formative processes and the derivable analogies related to them. (pp.36-48).

¹²⁰ Klocek will reinforce the strength of the imaginative work as the "alchemical reasoning" based on the four-element mandala that will conform the basic logic line for agricultural alchemy even referring to it as "imaginative science" in page 26 of the same chapter.

The first operating principle would be the dual and dynamic principle of *solve et coagula*¹²¹ in which all the elementary relations, transitions and reactions will be contained. This polarity, far from being a division, is actually present as a dynamic non-excluding balance of both polarities. The *solve* principle is dressed with the qualities of levity (counterforce to gravity), periphery, the upward and centrifugal or repulsion forces and as so holds a strong relation with the cosmic and spiritual dimension; as in the word *solve* the particle *Sol-*, meaning Sun, is contained, we can say that when an element becomes soluble through the action of a solvent, it is then being “sunned” or taken to the cosmic dimension.¹²² Related to elements, *solve* will be part of the soluble gestures and lighter forces which also open the room for movement, heat and transformation. As so, the basic elements¹²³ of air and fire will be the representative forces of this principle. Strangely enough, the levity or solve quality will also be associated with the outer planets, meaning Saturn, Jupiter and Mars¹²⁴ even though they will be categorized with structuring forces when relating to the planetary metals in medicine. These outer planets will be agriculturally associated with the inner or living warmth¹²⁵ which is active as part of the below-earth forces which act upon seeds, roots and humus formation processes.

The *coagula* principle on the other hand appears mainly related to density, gravity, coldness, the centripetal or attraction forces that make things come together, slow down, and fall or drop “into manifestation from an invisible realm¹²⁶. As so, *coagula* will be the force that allows the alchemical embryo to be materialized out of non-condensed elements¹²⁷, as rain

¹²¹ Part of the intention of this work is to observe and recognize alchemical elements and structures in Anthroposophical narrative and practices which can seem speculative at times since Steiner himself does not explicitly allude to which would his alchemical influences would be or which alchemical principles he is considering in particular. Steiner will lecture and develop reflections around alchemical and esoteric characters as Paracelsus and Jacob Boheme but these references are rather abstract and diffuse and will not explain which precepts from their writings he is particularly considering. An example of these can be perceived in his lectures *Salt, Mercury and Sulphur* (1923) (GA220) and *Mysticism at the Dawn of Modern Age* (1901) (GA007)

¹²² This gesture also reminds the warmth and solar principles present in the Cosmo-conception narrative previously exposed: The planetary evolution would go from the warmth quality of the Saturn stage of solve where no matter exists, falling into the coagulated stated of the Earth chemical state in its maximum materialization-incarnation, and back to a solve state on its way towards the final Sun or Vulcan stage.

¹²³ Understood by Steiner as “universal archetypal processes” (Klocek, p.91).

¹²⁴ Steiner, Agriculture Course Lecture 6. GA0372.

¹²⁵ Steiner, Agriculture Course Lecture 2. GA0372.

¹²⁶ Klocek, *Sacred Agriculture*, p.27.

¹²⁷ Image that recalls Emblem 1 of Michael Maier’s *Atalanta Fugiens* where Boreas the Wind carries the alchemical embryo in its belly which would be conformed of wind coagulated into water and later mixed with earth for the mineral and metal formations. The alluded image is attached at the end of this document as **Attachment 3**.

does from clouds. Under the same gesture or image, the configuration of the seed and the mystery of its growth/transformation is drawn in Anthroposophy, which seen as a condensed form of the original and fertile Chaos (an entropic and fertile potentiality of undefined elements) and all its potentiality, later fixed as a plant or tree. With its gravitational quality, *coagula* will also recall the figure of a fixed center as in Earth and the earthly materialization of all the spiritual-*solve* principles. Coagula or materialization in this dimension of things is considered as a sacrifice of the spirit towards incarnation, from a free-mobility or “freedom to become” to a fixed condition of what has become¹²⁸, the embodiment of spirit. As an example of this, in biodynamic agricultural terms, the two elements Carbon (organic) and Silica (inorganic), which are “octaves of each other in the periodic table”¹²⁹ -atomic numbers 6 and 14 respectively- like equal musical notes in different pitch scales, both would fulfill a sacrificial function as they allow the embodiment by structure or harden that allows other substances to arise¹³⁰ and evolve. A very similar characterological image is given to the figure of Saturn by Paracelsus as we revised in previous a section, where Saturn sacrifices itself into matter in order to allow his other brothers spirits to embody and be able participate of the alchemical purification. This parallel figure appears as an example of the analogical reading of the gestural motifs related to nature previously alluded. Finally, the *coagula* polarity is related to the denser elements water and earth and, in astrological terms, to the inner planets namely the Moon, Venus and Mercury, which will be related to the outer or dead warmth, together with leaf and flower warmth and coloring. Diagram 2 taken from Klocek’s *Sacred Agriculture* portrays an initial idea of how the principles of *solve et coagula* structure the main framework on which the whole Anthroposophical alchemical agricultural structure is based.

¹²⁸ Klocek, *Sacred Agriculture*, p.32.

¹²⁹ Ibid, p.31.

¹³⁰ This gestural motif will be developed more accurately in the Thesis paper *Alchemy in Anthroposophy*.

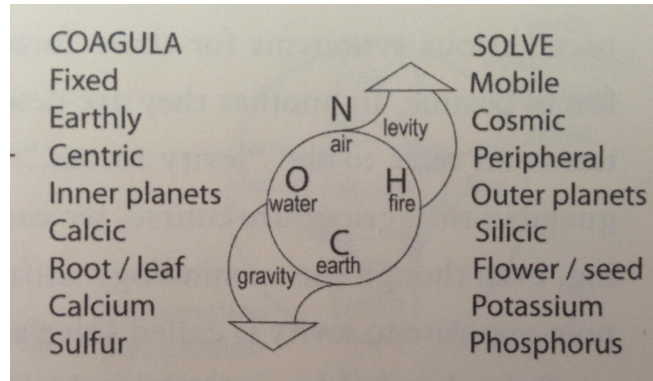


Diagram 3¹³¹. Solve et coagula quality association in agricultural terms. The central circle contains the four elements -air, fire, water and earth- as belonging to one sphere of qualities which are divided into two different groups: one with the levity quality, which will be related to the Solve or subtle principle and therefore characterized by the terms on the right side of the image [mobile, cosmic, peripheral, etc...]; the other one is designated as gravity, related to the Coagula, congealing or coagulation force, which will be characterized under the terms fixed, earthly, etc. Water and earth are part of the gravity polarity, while air and fire will be the subtle ones, related to the levity principle. Also, the main elements N: nitrogen, H: hydrogen, C: carbon and O: oxygen, will be associated with the qualities given to the air, fire, earth and water principles respectively.

As we can see, the two main principles of *solve et coagula* associated to the forces of levity and gravity respectively, contain the referred qualities -along with other ones-. Inside the dual structure the four classic elements appear as said levity-air-fire, gravity-water-earth, to which now the organic elements Nitrogen, Hydrogen, Water and Carbon are added; together with the non-depicted Sulphur which will appear as a main figure in this organic net. In general, and in summarized terms, Carbon, as the more coagulated or coagulating element, will be present in every organic physical formation or biological structure and framework present in nature. Depending on its degree of concentration, it will generate more rigid or looser structures as we can see when we compare vegetable and human or animal consistencies. Being Carbon (earth) the stiffening force or formative force in Anthroposophical terms, it needs to be regulated with other less-hardening forces to generate more flexible structures. A beautiful example would be the human action of breathing, where Oxygen (water), the lesser of the coagulated element, comes into our lungs as etherical or life force which mixes with our inner coagulated earthly-Carbon element thanks to the action of Nitrogen (air) and brings it out as CO₂, “detoxifying” us from Carbon’s rigidity. This de-contraction is possible because of the help of Sulphur, which, as an

¹³¹ The original image belongs to: Dennis Klocek, *Sacred Agriculture*, p. 27.

etymological “light bearer”, mediates between the Universal Ether (living force/principle) and the physical body. It is also worth mentioning that Steiner, in his third lecture for the Agriculture Course, refers to Carbon and its various and contrasting modifications as the actual Philosopher’s Stone since it “bears within it the creative and formative cosmic pictures -the sublime Cosmic Imaginations, out of which all that is formed in Nature must ultimately proceed”, designation which is actually shared by the scientific community that characterizes Carbon as the common element of all known life based on its high capacity for compound formation, also referred to as the central or king of the elements since it allows life to be structured. The fire element contained in the Hydrogen element, predominantly present in the figure of the Sun (75% of its composition) will correspond to the vanishing, transforming and carrying out with the help of Sulphur “to the far spaces of the Universe all that is *formed* [Carbon-earth], and *alive* [Oxygen-water], and astral [Nitrogen-air]”¹³²; the *solve* element par excellence.

Through this quick and general overview, it is possible to take a first glimpse at the alchemical precepts and interpretative lens present in bio-dynamic agriculture. Even though this short approximation does not even begin to present all the alchemical influence in Anthroposophical agriculture, it seems a good and interesting starting point in trying to understand how Alchemy appears as a very tangible and day-to-day notion-practice that can accompany a microscopic and macroscopic notion of earthly life.

¹³² Steiner, Agriculture Course Lecture 3. GA0372

Planetary Metals and Anthroposophical Medicine.

“...from the standpoint of a spiritual conception of the universe. We shall best approach our subject if, to begin with, we understand the meaning of an ancient maxim, [...] where the priestly wisdom of Hermes flourished. It is an axiom which forms the fundamental principle of all spiritual science, and which has become known as the Hermetic Axiom; it runs, ‘As above, so below.’”
(R.Steiner)

Steiner will explain in his lectures on *Fundamentals of Anthroposophical Medicine* how the use of Anthroposophical medicine, even though using “older traditional ideas about humanity”¹³³ does not apply the same approach given by them since “Those earlier conceptions arose in human thought at a time when there was no natural science in our sense; mine have been developed in an age when natural science has not only come into being but has reached a certain — albeit provisional — perfection”¹³⁴, and every medical idea that comes from anthroposophical investigation needs to be an stimulus that needs to be studied and perfected empirically, for only this path “can there arise valid and convincing judgments of the matters in question — and this is the kind of judgment that is needed in the domain of therapy.”¹³⁵ Steiner will observe the medical progressions due to the contributions of Hippocrates, Galen, Paracelsus and even Jacob Boehme, but will not take from them any direct formulas or preparations for his writings but rather learn from them through the spiritual-scientific eye of anthroposophy and the empirical experience: “Viewed in the light of spiritual science, the universe is the summit of complexity, and just as we gradually elaborate the elements of our own cognition in order, let us say, to pass from the cell to the human being, so we progressively simplify what the cosmos reveals and then come to the human being”¹³⁶. Not the empirical nor some “spiritualized science brought down from the clouds”¹³⁷ will be enough on its own. An “Imaginative cognition” process needs to be experienced

¹³³ Steiner, Rudolf. Lecture I on *Fundamentals of Anthroposophical Medicine*, 1922. GA0314.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

in order to understand the underlying principles in the interactions of human biology -as in any other attempt of knowledge-. Imaginative cognition works through images, as does alchemical engravings when explaining meanings that transcend the written word. Remembering the Aristotelian “physics of qualities”, also called ‘gesture’ in Anthroposophy, will be the key concept to understand the following section. An illustrative example through a simple imagery is given by Steiner on the difference between just perceiving a phenomenon with the external senses and being aware of that phenomena’s gesture or quality:

Suppose, for example, I walk past a bank at nine o'clock in the morning and see two men sitting there side by side. I look at them and form certain judgments about various things in relation to them. At three o'clock in the afternoon it happens that I again walk past the bank. There are the two men, sitting just as before. The empirical state of affairs is exactly the same in both cases, allowing for very slight differences. But now, think of it: one of the men may have remained sitting there for the whole six hours. The other may have been sent out on quite a journey right after I first passed the bank and may have just returned. This essentially alters the picture and has nothing to do with what I actually perceive with my senses. As far as my senses are concerned, the same state of affairs presents itself at nine o'clock in the morning and three o'clock in the afternoon, but the state of affairs determined by sense observation must be judged in accordance with its constituents.¹³⁸

The imaginative lecture of qualities will be used by anthroposophical pharmaceuticals and doctors in order to derive alchemical and chemical qualities of the elements, the seven planetary metals between them, to later create medicinal preparations. The medicinal notion on which these preparations are conceived will be aligned with the understanding of the human being as a “seven metal/planet being”¹³⁹ containing the seven planetary in its physical and astral dimensions-as we revised in the planetary influence above-, principles reactive to the balances and imbalances -by lack or excess- of the metallic processes and presence. The planetary and metallic influence over the individual human being recalls the hermetic “As above, so below” or duality principle of the opposite polarity where two act as One, also reflected by the Macrocosm influence over the human Microcosm.

According to Henning Schramm, anthroposophical teachings on the metallic properties are based on the metallic mystery or enigma coming from the Eleusinian Mysteries¹⁴⁰, which would

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ Schmidli. *Planetary Metals Seminar* N°II

¹⁴⁰ Ancient Greek initiation rites to the agrarian gods Demeter and Persephone.

later be complemented by the Christ mystery “impregnating the entire Rosicrucian Alchemy”¹⁴¹ and therefore, the Anthroposophical Medicine¹⁴². Weleda’s chemists and others under the anthroposophical medical and pharmaceutical formation like Albert Schmidli¹⁴³, study the European traditional stories collected by Jacob (1785–1863) and Wilhelm (1786–1859) Grimm, better known as the Brothers Grimm, since in them, “Rosicrucian alchemical knowledge is contained in the form of images”¹⁴⁴.¹⁴⁵ These stories are interpreted in terms of metallic and planetary qualities by an “imaginative cognition”¹⁴⁶ through images derived from the stories. Images “together with a their mental content, possess a sensitiveness [experimented in the astral or body of feeling] and symbolic moral values”¹⁴⁷ that would complement the related empirical experimentations. This hybrid process would provide a final image related to each metal from an inner and subjective perspective through images that affect our souls or sentient body and, an outer, sensorial and objective one derived from empirical experience.

Based on the previous explanations, the next section will develop the main characterizations given to the figure of the planetary metal Saturn-Lead as a descriptive example. Of course, the supposed empirical experiences related to the perception of the planet Saturn by active observation and the experience of Lead by chemical experimentation will be replaced by a textual summary of their perceived qualities during these practices.

¹⁴¹ Schramm, Henning. *Cuentos y Medicamentos. Una introducción imaginativa a la terapia antroposófica con metales*, p. 31.

¹⁴² Complementary information on the subject also in *Christianity as a Mystical Fact and the Mysteries of Antiquity*, 1902. GA008.

¹⁴³ Albert Schmidli is a chemist, free school teacher and trainer in anthroposophic medicine and pharmacy. At Weleda Switzerland, he was responsible for product development and training for doctors for 25 years. He currently provides worldwide training for healthcare professionals on anthroposophic medicine and medicines. Info taken from: <http://medisch.weleda.nl/medische-nieuwsbrief/medisch-nieuws-lente-2016/workshop-met-albert-schmidli.html>.

¹⁴⁴ Schmidli, A. Planetary Metals Seminar N°1.

¹⁴⁵ I still haven’t been able to find any suitable bibliographical background for this major affirmation, but the importance of the interpretation of Fairy Tales -specially for Waldorf teacher- is a substantial matter due to the strength that reside in the images they provide for reader of all ages. On this matter see: *The Poetry and Meaning of Fairy Tales*. 1908. GA0108.

¹⁴⁶ Here imaginative goes for image and not for imagination as in fantasy.

¹⁴⁷ Schramm, Henning. *Cuentos y Medicamentos. Una introducción imaginativa a la terapia antroposófica con metales*, p. 14.

Saturn-Lead

The adoration to the figure of Saturn dates back to even earlier times than the fiery figure of the Sun. Even before the ethereal principle associated to the presence of the Sun and with it of the fire element, the idolization of the structural element of the firm stone linked to Saturn reigned between the ancient monoliths as Stonehenge and menhirs at Carnac¹⁴⁸. With its strength, the figure of the stone evoked the stability and safety of firm foundations and solid structures accompanied by the quality of eternal permanence, which made of Saturn a “spiritual rock which is the enduring foundation of the Solar Temple”¹⁴⁹ as it also acts like an organizing force, due to his great gravitational force, of the Solar system. Later reappearing in the figure of the ancient Greek-Roman Cronos-Saturn it will be depicted as father of time during the Renaissance, once ended his reign over the golden age of eternal youth. Saturn will be the container of everything that has been created, as the “material skeleton of the world”¹⁵⁰

Despite the difference in the explanation of the alchemical transmutation¹⁵¹, Ancient metallurgy, all variations of alchemy¹⁵² and some of its astrological timing recommendations¹⁵³ present Saturn-Lead as the starting point towards the Stone or the generation of Gold. The transition starts with the calcination phase, which seeks the death or martyrdom of the metals¹⁵⁴ through the purifying fire, from which it will get the name of *Nigredo* for its characteristic black color. Usually, to represent the *Nigredo* or black stage in alchemical imagery and emblems, remembering death as the starting point of the Opus, we can see the image of a black crow or raven¹⁵⁵ reproduced in alchemical emblems as to depict the imminent death of the corrupted bodies towards purification. Under Paracelsus’ understanding, as explained in the Fifth Canon of his *Coelum Philosophorum*, Saturn-Lead is characterized as earthly or bodily abode for the other six metals:

¹⁴⁸ Hall, Manley P. *The secret teachings of all ages*. p.303-304.

¹⁴⁹ Hall, Manley P. *The secret teachings of all ages*, p.303.

¹⁵⁰ Roob, A. *Alquimia & Mística*, p.171.

¹⁵¹ The variations go between four and twelve stages. For more basic info see: *The alchemical work and Alchemical Practice* in Wouter Hanegraaff, “Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism” pp. 17-21.

¹⁵² Even though there are varied ways of presenting the alchemical Opus or Work and its execution stages.

¹⁵³ For more information on astrology and alchemy see: Forshaw, Peter. *Chemistry, that starry science*. 2013.

¹⁵⁴ On the martyrdom of the metals: Zosimos of Panopolis. *Tratado sobre el arte*.III. 1-3.

¹⁵⁵ For more information on alchemical birds visit Adam McLean’s article on *The birds in Alchemy* (1979) available at: <https://www.alchemywebsite.com/alcbirds.html>.

“My six brothers are spiritual, and thence it ensures that so often as I am put in the fire they penetrate my body and, together with me, perish in the fire, Sol and Luna excepted [...] My spirit is a water softening the rigid and congelated bodies of my brothers. Yet my body is inclined to the earth. Whatever is received into me becomes conformed thereto, and by means of us is converted into one body”¹⁵⁶

From this image it is possible to perceive a quality of containment or supporting structure where the engrossment of “his other six brothers” occurs towards purification. Still following Paracelsus words “The spirit of Saturn is concrete and formed from a dry, dark, cold admixture of elements”¹⁵⁷ tending more towards an earthly state capable of giving structure to more ‘spiritual’ brothers. Somehow, it seems like Saturn is depicted as the bodily essence in which the spirit of the other six metals ‘incarnate’ so they can experience the alchemical death, which is the first necessary step of purification by fire or the “office of Vulcan” as designated by Paracelsus, which separates the bad [impure] from the good [pure], and “passes out three essences [the three-fold principle] into one essence”¹⁵⁸. Saturn is shown as the containing structure, the body capable of dying as for being able to receive the spirit of its other six brothers, which situates Saturn as a concrete threshold of passage and transformation for both death and life. In this matter it is possible to sight the relation with the mythological Saturn or Cronos, father of time and space, the two main elements capable of containing and giving structure to the original chaos for it to give birth to everything that exists. Once again quoting Paracelsus in Waite’s edition:

The Art is this: After you have made heaven, or the sphere of Saturn with its life to run over the earth, place on it all the planets, or such, or more, as you wish, so that the portion of Luna may be the smallest. Let run, until heaven, or Saturn, has entirely disappeared. Then all those planets will remain dead with their old corruptible bodies, having meanwhile obtained another new, perfect, and incorruptible body. That body is the spirit of heaven. From it these planets again receive body and life and live as before.¹⁵⁹

were death and life, death and resurrection, death and purification are but two principles of one same force and is the figure of Saturn the one that will give place to this progressive dynamic of existence. Finally, these beautiful quote from Almirantis scientific paradox

¹⁵⁶ Waite, E. *Hermetic and Alchemical writings of Paracelsus*, pp.7-8.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 79.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p. 22.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p.13.

approach, suggests an analogy between the mythological Cronos and the metallic Saturn-
Lead:

Saturn, god of old age and of time, corresponds with its characteristic gray tint to the slowest of the planets and to the heaviness of lead—the ancients could not, of course, know that lead is the final product of radioactive degradation of all the naturally occurring radioactive elements, which is a nuclear-physics analogue of ageing.¹⁶⁰

Now on the side of Anthroposophy, we will now see how it works with the precedent Saturnine qualities and its physiological-astral¹⁶¹ presence considering both, the planetary and the metallic qualities. Diagram 4, in a very similar way to the Anthroposophical Cosmo-conception showed in Diagram 2 in the Anthroposophical Cosmogonic section but now in a human scale -as in an inner section the fractal narrative-, shows the individual planetary journey made by the spiritual or “egoic entity”¹⁶² in anthroposophical terms, towards incarnation in his pre-birth life, his incarnated life, and post-mortem life in a three-fold existence that recreates the triad Sulphur Salt and Mercury. The first third of the process -that of Sulphur- is the coagulation process or the way towards the engrossment and therefore of the physical existence. For this, a spiritual death is experienced on the way towards matter, the spirit will pass through the seven planetary spheres, acquiring in this process the planetary qualities that will characterize his sentient, astral or personality body; image also present, though in a more negative quality, in the Gnostic and Paracelsian ‘animism’¹⁶³. The second third -that of Salt- will be the incarnated period where the human spirit, now with its sentient or astral body, is born on Earth in a physical body; this period end by death in the gate of Saturn again. The final third -that of Mercury-, which begins with the death of the physical body through the gate of Saturn as we just mentioned, will be the returning path towards the spiritual world. Where the spirit now gives back the planetary spheres the sentient properties given to them on the first third fall towards matter.

¹⁶⁰ Almirantis, Yannis. *The Paradox of the Planetary Metals*, p. 38.

¹⁶¹ Astral as for the sentient body, or body of feelings and personality in Anthroposophical terms. For more information on the subject: *Theosophy* (GA09).

¹⁶² Schramm, Henning. *Cuentos y Medicamentos. Una introducción imaginativa a la terapia antroposófica con metales*, p.37.

¹⁶³ See: Roob, A. *Alchemy and Mysticism*, p. 17-18.

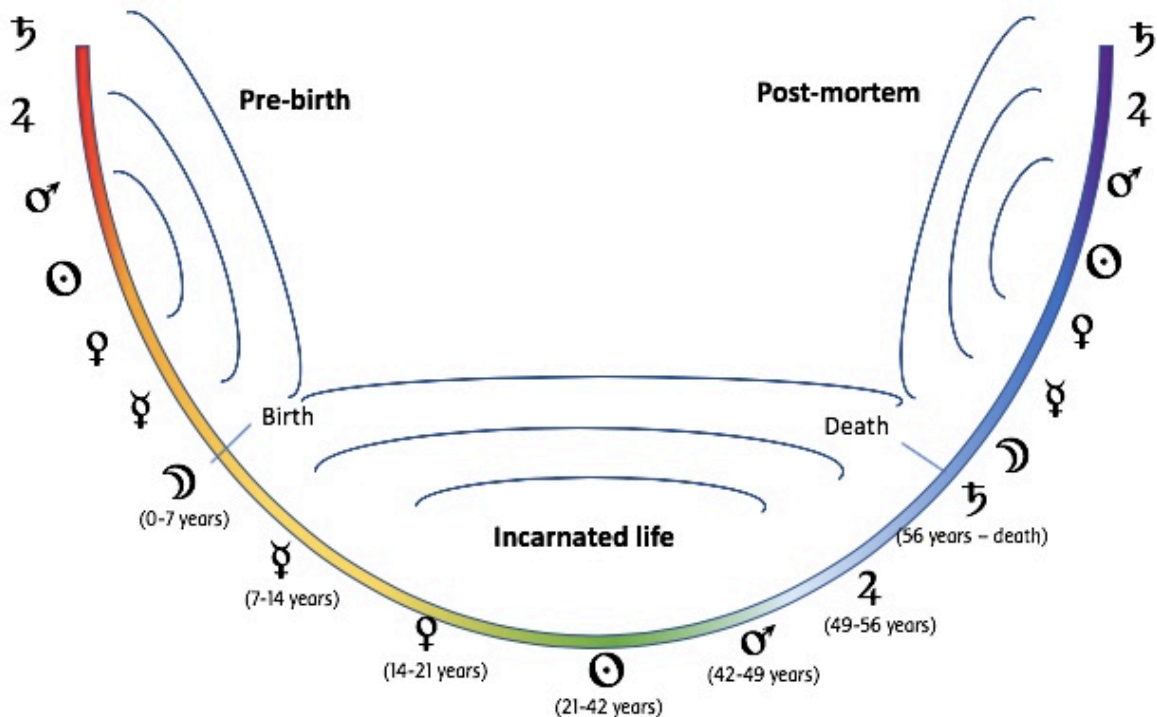


Diagram 4¹⁶⁴. Graphic representation of the threefold human existence. Each cycle - pre-birth, incarnated life and post-mortem, consist of seven planetary stages designated by their respective symbols: Saturn ♄, Jupiter ♃, Mars ♂, Venus ♀, Mercury ☿, Moon ☾ and Sun ☉. As an example, the sun in the incarnated life, period between the 21 and 42 years of age, symbolizes the activation of the forces of the [Anthroposophical] Self, which is home to individuality and will, qualities related to the sun by the Anthroposophical narrative.

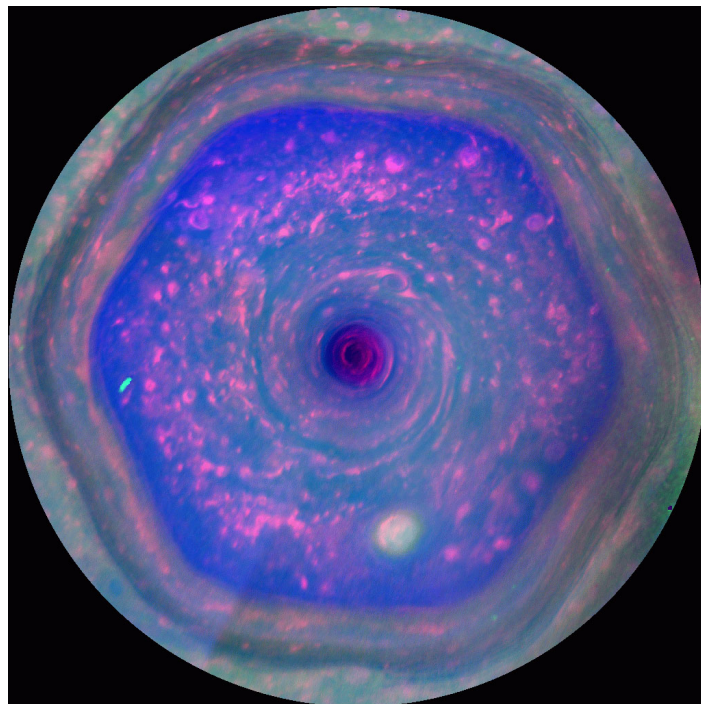
Planetary qualities of Saturn:

Being the last visible planetary light in the sky at night by the bare eye, Saturn depicts the limit of the dimension perceptible by the senses. When looking at it at night, it shows what seems like a low veiled yellowish light. Even though it is a gas planet made out of Hydrogen and Helium, it shows signs of concrete formations related to it. With the help of its “33 pastoral moons”¹⁶⁵ - which are not actually moons since they were captured and not derived from the mass of Saturn as is the case of the Earth moon- it is capable of maintaining in order the millions of particles that

¹⁶⁴ This diagram and its explanation are from my own authorship according to the contents given by Albert Schmidli in the Planetary Metals Seminar given in Barcleona

¹⁶⁵ Schmidli, Albert. Seminar I.

form its rings. On its north pole it also present a bizarre six-sided hexagon feature as seen in picture 1, which seems rather improbable to find in a body made out of gas. Saturn is also has a very high temperature of about 20.000°centigrades which is more than the amount of heat it receives from the Sun radiation, as if it was generating an inner heat. Its gravitational force is strong enough to affect every element inside of the asteroid belt, including other planets and the external elements which come into the solar system; quality that seems to recall its mythical figure as the skeleton of the universe or the Paracelsian body of the other six spirits characterization.



Picture 1. Saturn's Hexagon.¹⁶⁶

Metallic qualities of Lead:

At first sight, the metallic aspect of Lead can seem heavy and cold greyness, without brightness as its reflected light seems veiled or opaque, which brings up a sensation of heaviness

¹⁶⁶ Image taken from: <https://www.jpl.nasa.gov/spaceimages/details.php?id=PIA17652>. For some [amazing!] moving images of Saturn's hexagon follow the previous link.

and density similar to the characterization of depression and even death.¹⁶⁷ This image recalls the earthly [in density terms of the elements] characterization previously made about this metal, as well as to its alchemical relation to darkness or blackness and death. Although his heaviness is also obvious to the touch, its coldness does not seem so, giving a rather warm feeling¹⁶⁸. Lead is not a heat conductor but seems to own an inner warmth¹⁶⁹ as it doesn't conduct heat but rather absorbs it and keeps it inside. When exposed to fiery heat it expands and liberates from his inside, and it also shows a veil of colored oxide layer. Its structure is so dense that it is also capable of absorbing strong emissions as x-rays, sound vibrations and explosives forces in an inhibitory or retardant gesture. These qualities are understood by Schramm and Schmidli as forces of constancy and, as so of a gesture of fidelity or faithfulness. The heaviness and strong capacity of retention also draw an image of orientation towards the past that can be tagged as melancholy. It is also used as protector for paint and car engines from rust [oxidation] and to improve isolation to coffins. When affected by great impacts it also acts as shock absorber being its slight change of shape the only indicator of reaction. "Every influence over Lead leaves an imprint which is somehow maintained within it. In Lead, movement is crystalized in space"¹⁷⁰. As so, Lead can be also characterized as holding an effect of protection and limits.

Among its manifestations in nature, Lead can be found as participating of alloys of diverse colors and forms. When combined with Sulphur in the depths of earth, it forms lead sulfide or Galen [lead sulfide ore], and transparent anglesite [Pb(SO₄)] when oxidized. Both formations seem interesting since Lead, Sulphur as we have revised along this document, are characterized by coagulation forces. Lead is the container body of his other six spiritual brother as we saw with Paracelsus, Sulphur the coagulating or fixing force in the Mercury-Salt-Sulphur triad. On the other side, Oxygen, even though also related to the water coagulating force in the agricultural section of this document, is also characterized with the quality of carrier of the living force. When looking at both mineral formations it almost seemed like we could recognize the 'deathly' and the 'lively' qualities in them.

¹⁶⁷ Schramm, Henning. *Cuentos y Medicamentos. Una introducción imaginativa a la terapia antroposófica con metales*, p.39.

¹⁶⁸ This contradicts the Paracelsian characterization of Saturn-Lead as cold and wet.

¹⁶⁹ Schramm, Henning. *Cuentos y Medicamentos. Una introducción imaginativa a la terapia antroposófica con metales*, p.38.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*



Image 2. Galena. PbS.



Image 3. Anglesite. Pb[SO4]¹⁷¹



Image 4. Galena. PbS.



Image 5. Cerussite. Pb(CO₃)

As galena emerges from the its inner earth formation it oxidizes forming crystals as the Anglesite, we see in image 3. In a similar way, but with a different geometrical gesture we can see a similar gesture in the Cerussite in image 5. Due to its similarity to the structure in human bones formation, and the closeness of the Lead quality to that of bones -we will deepen in this soon-, Cerussite is used in anthroposophical medicine as base for medicinal preparations against osteoporosis and bone metastasis¹⁷², which are excessive Lead processes. As depicted in its mythical, planetary and metallic qualities, Saturn-Lead can be characterized as giver of limit and containment, of structure as our skeletal structure. Bones are going to be the image of death at the same time as the image of the carrier of life. Added to this, there is the fact that bones contain and protect the bone marrow where blood cells are formed, which will later carry the oxygen with its living force through the circulatory system and therefore through our body. Here, the death and life duality attributed to Saturn-Lead appears. The anthroposophical interpretation of the inner

¹⁷¹ All mineral images were taken from: <https://www.dakotamatrix.com/mineral-galleries/archived?page=16&name=A>

¹⁷² Schmidli, Albert. Seminar I.

formation of the bone marrow inside of the “dead” bone structure, reads a gesture of resurrection which recalls the Saturn-Lead inner warmth.¹⁷³

Intoxication by Lead also known as Saturnism, which presents symptoms of insomnia, contraction of peripheral blood vessels, paleness, greyish skin and darkening of the mouth gum, anemia, osteosclerosis, coma and collapse of the circulatory system which leads to death, is first produced by an initial passive intoxication that, before exposing these symptoms, it is installed in the bones expelling the Calcium out of them, triggering all the external symptoms afterwards. All the collapsing structures are originally also formed as part of the Saturn-Lead process in the human body. In its healthy proportion, the Saturn-Lead process will manage the formation of inner spaces. This is one of the reasons why it is related to the spleen organ¹⁷⁴, which acts as a limit organ since “is where blood cells go to die”¹⁷⁵. According Steiner’s teachings, the blood system is the container of the solar or sunned principle of the anthroposophical self, which is contained and limited by the saturnian structure of the skeleton, which also allows its circulation.

Even though in this case we are referring to the actual metal Lead, the binomial Saturn-Lead is rather considered in anthroposophy as a process that has to do with the presence of the Saturn-Lead, or any of the other six binomials, as a process in which the qualities or gesture associated to the planetary metal develops -in balance, excess or deficiency- in a human system or body.¹⁷⁶ In the next section where the Saturn-Lead tale “Faithful John” is examined, what will be depicted in the imagery of the story will be exactly the presence, in different measures, of the Saturn-Lead process.

As final example, we can make a short analysis on the “Faithful John” or “Trusty John”¹⁷⁷ tale to observe how the qualities of Saturn-Lead are imaginatively illustrated. Before getting into the tale, it is clarifying to know that in the image depicted by the planetary-metallic tales, almost

¹⁷³ Schramm, Henning. *Cuentos y Medicamentos. Una introducción imaginativa a la terapia antroposófica con metales*, p.39.

¹⁷⁴ Schramm, Henning. *Cuentos y Medicamentos. Una introducción imaginativa a la terapia antroposófica con metales*, p.29.

¹⁷⁵ Schmidli, Albert. Seminar I.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ The complete tale is attached at the end of these document under **Attachment 4**.

every character and motif represent some degree of the metal-planet process. Some will represent the excess of the process, others the lack of it, and the tale will always culminate with the image of the harmonic image of the depicted process in balance.

The tale of “Faithfull John”. An imaginary interpretation.

Starting with the title and as mentioned in the metallic characterization of Saturn-Lead, faithfulness and constancy would be qualities related to the nature of Saturn, which comes from a beneficial or balanced Saturn-Lead process. This means that John and the qualities attributed to him will be the ones the reader should consider as a parameter for a balanced Saturn-Lead process. The story starts with the old king in his death bed asking to Faithful John to take care of his son, the younger king. Once the old king is dead, John needs to show the entire palace with all its rooms and treasures to the young king, everything but the room where the picture of the princess of the Golden Dwelling, otherwise he would “fall in love with her”, “drop down in a swoon” and “go through great danger”. Of course, even though John tries to faithfully keep his promise, the young king enters the prohibited room, sees the painting, falls in love with the princess, drops in a swoon and the great dangers start to approach.

The image until this point puts the reader in the atmosphere of Saturn as the old, sick king lies in his death bed. John’s immense fidelity to the king comes in part from the past times and history shared with him. As in the metallic Lead, the love of John for the king is an imprint of the past absorbed in his interior. From the strength of his fidelity, the inner brightness of resurrection will be present in John. As we will see further on, John’s capacity of sacrifice will imitate that of Saturn as he, as we saw in Paracelsus writings, is willing to sacrifice in the pursuit of the spiritualization of others through him. Also, considering that the three characters represent Saturn-Lead in different states of the process and, remembering the three-fold pre-birth, incarnation and post-mortem existence diagram at the beginning of this section, we can identify how the old king’s death depicts the culmination of the process, crossing the saturnian threshold towards the post-mortem state. On the other side, the young king would be a “new” spirit or egoic entity just entering the pre-incarnated life. He right away wants to enter the prohibited room where the Sun motif depicted in the image of the princess of the Golden Dwelling is, but he is not ready. As the Saturn-

Lead is the one that needs to be capable of containing the transmutation process towards the sun or the golden state, the former needs to be in balance to be able to contain the sun force in him. But the young king doesn't know that because he is too young. He looks at the picture of the golden princess anyways but as he is not yet in balance or correct maturity the golden image overwhelms him and he will "drop down in a swoon" as predicted by the old king. He wakes up and Trusty John strengthens him with wine, the *vitis* or life as in *vita*. The image of wine is rather significant since a quality of individuation is also given to this fermented drink. Different from grape juice, wine develops an individuality recognizable by its taste, texture and particular qualities, relating it to a particular area and a particular stock which individualizes it. In the same way, the strengthening drink of wine given to the king by John is a drink to strengthen him on his upcoming path towards individuation through incarnation¹⁷⁸. Once awake, the image of the golden princess, meaning the solar center or even the sun, is now imprinted inside his soul, so he decides to go get her, that is, he -as an egoic entity- decides to begin his journey towards the sun and incarnation. The Saturn-Lead process has now started for the young king.

Sailing the seas with the young king on their way to meet the princess, John hears a conversation between three ravens about three great dangers that threaten the young king and the ways to keep him safe from these dangers. The first danger comes as a chestnut horse that will leap forward to meet the king on his arrival back to his lands. Once the young king mounts the horse the latter will run away with him rising up in the air and never seen again. To avoid this danger, the horse must be killed with a pistol carried by the horse in its holster. The second danger will arrive once the young king and the princess enter the king's castle before the wedding. There "a wrought bridal garment will be lying there in a dish, and looking as if it were woven of gold and silver; it is, however, nothing but sulphur and pitch, and if he put it on, it will burn him to the very bone and marrow". To save him, someone wearing gloves must throw the garment into the fire. The third menace would occur after the wedding, during the dancing, where the young Queen will "suddenly turn pale and fall down as if dead, and if someone does not lift her up and draw three drops of blood from her right breast and spit them out again, she will die". Finally, whoever tries to tell the young king about these menaces would become stone (from toe to knee, from knee to heart, "from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot"). To what he just heard, Trusty John

¹⁷⁸ Schmidli, Albert. Planetary Metals Seminar N°I.

will say: "I will save my master, even if it brings destruction on myself" as a sacrificial and faithful Saturn attitude would do. And so, he sacrifices his life for the young king's life and happiness avoiding these dangers from being realized, and finally clarifying the reasons behind his strange behavior Trusty John is completely turned into stone.

As we revised before in this section, the Saturn stage in alchemy is also related to the blackness or the *nigredo* which is often depicted as a black raven in alchemical imagery. On the same way, the three ravens have come to announce three different processes of death by imbalance which threaten the young king's life and how to overcome them. The solidification with which John is willing to pay his loyalty against these threatens represent the saturnian disease of Sclerosis, a disorder of the ego-organization forces according to Rudolf Steiner¹⁷⁹, when the Saturn-Lead process is un-balanced¹⁸⁰:

"Lead works upon the organism in such a way as to stimulate the catabolic action of the ego-organization. If we introduce it into the organism where this action is deficient, it will therefore stimulate it, if administered in sufficiently strong doses. If the doses are excessive, hypertrophy of the ego organization results. The body destroys more than it can build up and must disintegrate."¹⁸¹

After passing through the sphere of Saturn, the young king's journey in his individuation process must pass through the sphere of Jupiter, where the forces for the formation of the head and thought operate. Jupiter appears as a strong structuring force related to the earth element depicted in the story by the arrival of the king from the sea back to his lands where dangers await. The three menaces depict the possible dangers awaiting in the upcoming planetary spheres if the Saturn stage is not balanced at the moment of transition, and this is what John tries to avoid. An imbalanced Saturn-Lead process formation in the young king on his journey towards his union with the sun.

The first menace, the chestnut horse which like a Pegasus can rise in the air and take the king away. The horse will here be image for the generation and development of the mind, and thoughts since "the sphere of Saturn will make the constitution of thoughts, representations and memories out of the sensorial body possible"¹⁸². The horse color is reddish, showing the intensification of these qualities or an excessive Saturn process, which can lead to over-

¹⁷⁹ Steiner, Rudolf. *Fundamentals of Therapy. CHAPTER XX: Typical Therapeutic Substances*. 1983.

¹⁸⁰ Sclerosis is treated in Anthroposophical medicine with *Scleron*, a preparation made out of Lead, honey and sugar.

¹⁸¹ Steiner, Rudolf. *Fundamentals of Therapy. CHAPTER XX: Typical Therapeutic Substances*. 1983.

¹⁸² Schramm, Hening. *Cuentos y Medicamentos*, p.43.

intellectualization and rigidity of the mind. But the horse can also fly, showing the dangers of a disperse mind, a volatile mind incapable of fixing thoughts, getting lost in the world of ideas. By shooting and killing the horse, John saves the young king from falling in the dangers of these imbalances.

After the sphere of Jupiter is out of danger, the second threat depicts the dangers waiting in the sphere of Mars to an ego with an excessive Saturn-Lead process. The bridal garment that seems made out of gold and silver, the noble metals, is actually made out of Sulphur and pitch that would “burn him to the very bone and marrow”, both -bone and marrow- structures related to the Saturn process on the biological body as we saw in the previous characterization of Saturn-Lead on this section. “When the Saturn process works at the organic level in connection with Mars forces, in the inferior metabolic pole, it has an effect of degradation and self-destruction”¹⁸³ destructive effects represented by the burning effect of the garment in bones and marrow.

Then we have the image of the garment that burns and that is also burned, from where we get two different types of fire or heat. The burning effect of the garment will represent the destructive quality of the Saturn forces over the motor-metabolic system when acting excessively on the Mars sphere as it happens with degenerative arteriosclerosis, but the fire burning the garment will be a purifying fire or “spiritual heat”¹⁸⁴ capable of overcoming the destructive forces of excessive Saturn-Lead process.

Leaving the Jupiter sphere the egoic entity of the young king will enter the Sun sphere: the marriage to the golden princess is concreted. In the egoic transition through the planetary spheres, the Sun stage will be the one where the ego or individuation of the being finds a balanced place, a center. When entering the Sun sphere, if the essence of the egoic entity is still unbalanced in a way that the ego is too absorbed in itself, then it will not be able to receive the enlightening force of the Sun and unite with it becoming instead isolated and obscure. A state of self-absorption would be a contradiction and an opposition towards an encounter with the world or with what is outside of the ego, generating isolation. This state can be related to the Saturnine figure of the absorbed introspection, the predominance of the inner world of thoughts. Albrecht Durer’s image

¹⁸³ Ibid, p.45.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

for melancholy, often related to the figure of Saturn, in **Attachment N°5** can be a representative image for this isolation state. *Melencolia* with a lost stare sits alone -with the exception of the child angel on his side- with the rays of sun strongly shining at the deep bottom of the scene, but Saturn is not even looking at the light since his sight seems rather be looking inwards, undermining almost everything that is around him. Even more, crossing the image almost in front of the Sun appears the figure of what seems a dark figure, possibly a rat or bat, holding the name of *Melencolia*, and the houses where other beings would be appear also far away. He is isolated, locked in himself, so even the working tools that could help him build the foundation structures suggested in the image are out of use¹⁸⁵. Melancholy is also related to the heaviness of Lead, which would be the opposite state to the Sun state. Going back to the story, once the wedding dance begins, the now young queen “suddenly turn pale and fall down as if dead”. The Sun, represented here by the queen, is the center of the solar and circulatory system¹⁸⁶ -in a macro-microcosm way-, being biologically related to the heart¹⁸⁷. In both systems planets and organs are part of the sun’s orbit or sphere of action. When exposed to an excessive Saturnian force, the circulatory system is now intoxicated with Saturn-Lead, depicted in the story through the paleness and fall of the queen as if she was dead as the blood withdraws. But John, by extracting the drops of blood from the young queen’s right breast saves her from the poisoning Saturn-Lead excess.

Finally, John is condemned to death by the king but before his execution he decides to confess the truth behind his actions solidifying into stone. The king and queen feel terrible and anguish about mistrusting John’s loyalty and order to put his solid body in their room where he will stay for a long time until the royal twins are born and rapidly grown. One day, while the children were playing in the room the king was grieving the loss of his friend John wishing to find a way to bring him back to life to which the stone answered “If thou wilt will cut off the heads of thy two children with thine own hand, and sprinkle me with their blood, I shall be restored to life”. Even though terrified, the king decides to do as the statue says, willing to be as loyal to John as he was to him. And so the children are beheaded and the king uses their blood to sprinkle the stone

¹⁸⁵ It also seems interesting in this image, the fact that the magic square placed over Saturn’s head is not actually Saturn’s magic square but Jupiter’s, the formative force that builds over saturnine foundations.

¹⁸⁶ Schramm, Hening. *Cuentos y Medicamentos*, p.46.

¹⁸⁷ **Attachment 6** shows an image of *Theosophia practica* from 1722, an image relating the planets to a specific organ or part of the body, notion inherited from Indian philosophy into Western esoteric Rosicrucian and theosophical communities.

of John who comes back to life. Using the same blood and rubbing the children's wounds John will also bring the little ones back to life. Once the queen is back from church, the king will tell her what happened and test her loyalty to John by making her believe they still needed to sacrifice their children to which she consents. Finally, they're all happy until the day of their deaths. The closing images of the story portrait the resurrection force related to the Saturn-Lead process in its relation to the generation of blood cells in the bone marrow:

“With the bone structure, the Saturn-Lead process has reached its special configuration. It has died towards space¹⁸⁸ petrifying. But the Saturn process is not over. At this point the process reverts and revives in the regenerative forces of the blood formation in the bone marrow. In the center of death, there where the organism has died in hands of mineralization, the revival and rejuvenation occurs”¹⁸⁹.

By sacrificing their kids, the king and queen show their loyalty to John, demonstrating also that now they do have bare a balanced Saturn-Lead process in them which is rewarded with the revival of their dear friend and their children. Now, also John has experienced the resurrection force of the Saturn-Lead process through the blood spread over his stone¹⁹⁰ and the three characters are united in a balanced Saturn-Lead state.

Examples of Medical Use

From the imaginative knowledge associated by anthroposophy to esoteric stories like *Trusty John*, physiological and biological analogies are made based on the characteristics extracted from these tales; united to empirical experimentation that pretend to confirm the veracity of these principles. As a short example, the already mentioned *Scleron* or *Plumbum mellitum* compound for the treatment of sclerosis in its rigidity symptoms is made out of Lead, honey and sugar as a way of rebalancing the destructive forces of an excessive Saturn process. In this compound, lead will direct “the ego processes of the ego organization”¹⁹¹ but

¹⁸⁸ Which reminds the spiritual death and sacrifice towards incarnation.

¹⁸⁹ Schramm, Hening. *Cuentos y Medicamentos*, p.48.

¹⁹⁰ It seems interesting to recall at this point the ancient adoration to stone as the permanence force at the beginning of this section, since the figure of John as a stone that revives not only alludes to permanence but to death and life as a cycle of permanence.

¹⁹¹ Steiner, Rudolf. *Fundamentals of Therapy. CHAPTER XX: Typical Therapeutic Substances*. 1983.

this process needs not to be fixed but rather transitory, so honey is added to the mixture because of its airy quality. Honey would work over the control of the ego over the astral body (the sentient body or body of feeling) taking “from the astral body its relative autonomy in sclerosis”¹⁹². Finally, sugar will directly strengthen the ego-organization strengthening it, so the remedy would have the following effect will say Steiner: “lead works catabolically in the manner of the ego-organization, not the astral body. The honey transfers the catabolic action of the astral body to the ego-organization and the sugar places the ego-organization in a position to fulfil its specific task.”¹⁹³

Even though specifications as the effects of the planetary and metallic processes over the metabolic and catabolic processes in the body were not approached in the present document, the example tries to show how the anthroposophical logic line works based on its understanding of planetary and metallic qualities and processes.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

Conclusion

By analyzing the Anthroposophical narrative under an alchemical rubric, interesting elements emerge. The presence of general alchemical principles such as I. The Monad, II. The binary, III. The triad, IV. The four principles and qualities and VII. The seven planetary metals seem rather strong. Together with the Aristotelian natural philosophy and the Goethean science they will characterize a major part of the anthroposophical narrative and ways of interpretations. Since anthroposophical narrative can be interpreted as a fractal structure, the presence of the alchemical principles in it seems to follow the same organization as they are present in every level of the spiritual-science discourse. At times is difficult to discern which elements are actually being considered from an alchemical pre-conceived notion and which are actually anthroposophical alchemical derivations based on its own logic line of interpretation. It would be interesting to develop future deeper analysis on every particular area as a way to better recognize particular alchemical elements in anthroposophical narrative and practices, draw a sharper line of theoretical precedence and finally derive the possibility of an independent anthroposophical alchemy. As so, the analysis made on the matter in this occasion is far from extensive and deep enough to actually extract a proper anthroposophical alchemy narrative as a particularized Western alchemy derivation. The vague reference to its sources, and the enormous amount of anthroposophical publications -even if only considering Steiner's books and lectures alone- makes the enterprise of deriving a particular anthroposophical alchemy a task that exceeds this first approximation. Without too many publications on this matter, these document pretends a first, still not grounded, approximation towards the observation of western alchemy on one of its biggest sources of contemporary practice.

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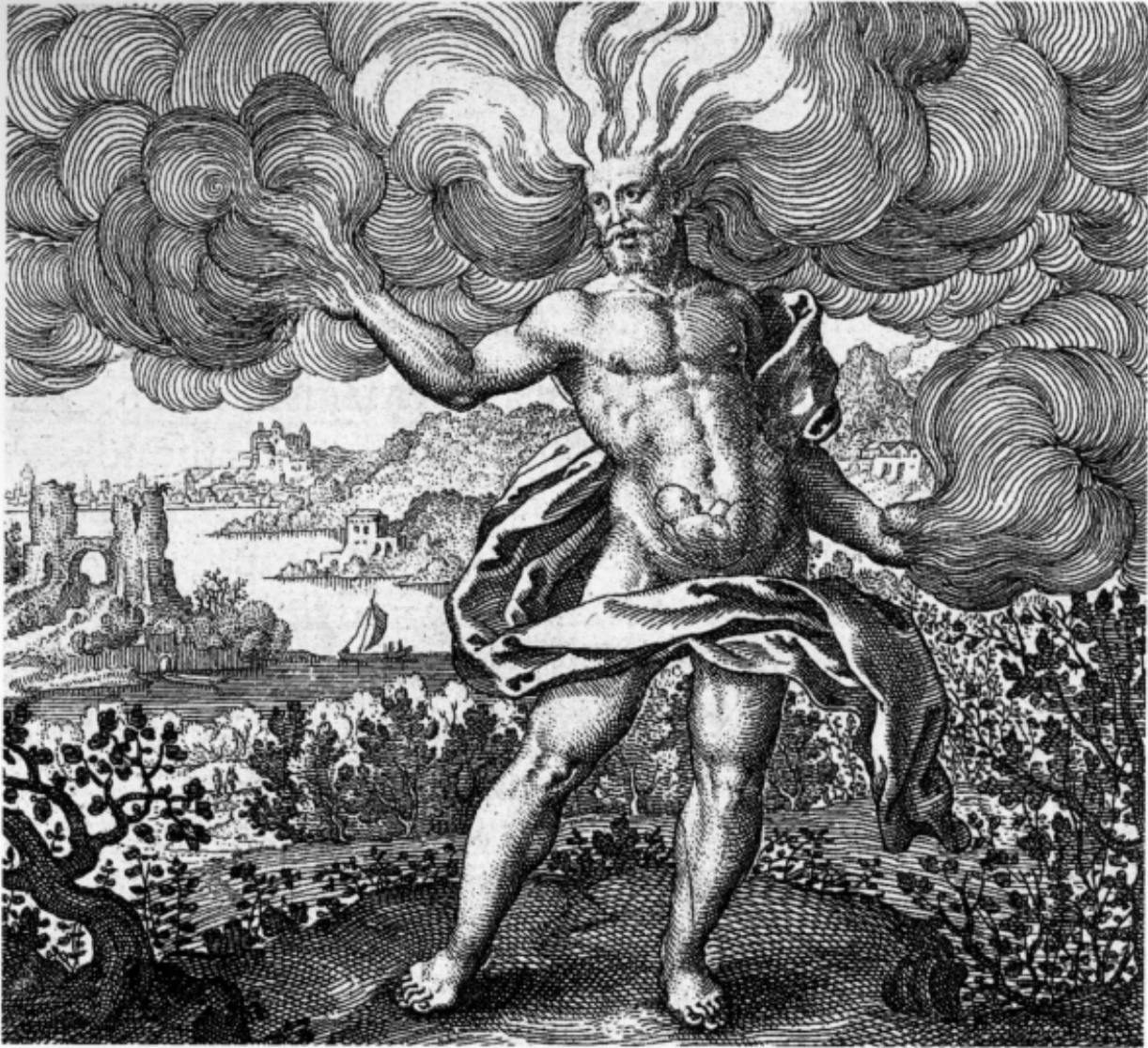
Attached documents:



Attachment 1. Heinrich Khunrath's Oratory-Laboratory. Engraving done by Hans Vredeman de Vries (1527–1607) in 1595 for Khunrath's *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae*.



Attachment 2. Front piece of the *Musaeum Hermeticum*, of the *Francfort* edition (1749) depicting the union of the gross and subtle principles shown by the Fire and Water symbols of Empedocles into the *Lapis*, which would be formed by circulation through the four qualities or elements and qualities showed on the four corners of the image.



Attachment 3¹⁹⁴. Atalanta Fugiens, Emblem I. The emblem depicts Epigram I from the Hermetic *Tabula Smaragdina* which quotes:

“If the embryo enclosed in the windy belly of Boreas
Can live once it is born in this light,
On its own it can outdo all the labours of Heroes
In art, hand, strength, body, mind.
Let him not be a Caeso for you or a useless abortion
Nor an Agrippa, but born under a good star.”

¹⁹⁴ Taken from: H.M.E. de Jong, Michael Maier’s *Atalanta Fugiens: Sources of an Alchemical book of Emblems*, York Beach, Maine: Nicolas-Hays, Inc., 2002, extracts

Attachment 4.

Faithful John¹⁹⁵

There was once on a time an old king who was ill, and thought to himself, "I am lying on what must be my death-bed." Then said he, "Tell Faithful John to come to me." Faithful John was his favourite servant, and was so called, because he had for his whole life long been so true to him. When therefore he came beside the bed, the King said to him, "Most faithful John, I feel my end approaching, and have no anxiety except about my son. He is still of tender age, and cannot always know how to guide himself. If thou dost not promise me to teach him everything that he ought to know, and to be his foster-father, I cannot close my eyes in peace." Then answered Faithful John, "I will not forsake him, and will serve him with fidelity, even if it should cost me my life." On this, the old King said, "Now I die in comfort and peace." Then he added, "After my death, thou shalt show him the whole castle: all the chambers, halls, and vaults, and all the treasures which lie therein, but the last chamber in the long gallery, in which is the picture of the princess of the Golden Dwelling, shalt thou not show. If he sees that picture, he will fall violently in love with her, and will drop down in a swoon, and go through great danger for her sake, therefore thou must preserve him from that." And when Faithful John had once more given his promise to the old King about this, the King said no more, but laid his head on his pillow, and died.

When the old King had been carried to his grave, Faithful John told the young King all that he had promised his father on his deathbed, and said, "This will I assuredly perform, and will be faithful to thee as I have been faithful to him, even if it should cost me my life." When the mourning was over, Faithful John said to him, "It is now time that thou shouldst see thine inheritance. I will show thee thy father's palace." Then he took him about everywhere, up and down, and let him see all the riches, and the magnificent apartments, only there was one room which he did not open, that in which hung the dangerous picture.

¹⁹⁵ Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm. Faithful John. Household Tales, trans. Margaret Hunt London: George Bell, 1884. Text taken from: https://www.worldoftales.com/fairy_tales/Brothers_Grimm/Margaret_Hunt/Faithful_John.html

The picture was, however, so placed that when the door was opened you looked straight on it, and it was so admirably painted that it seemed to breathe and live, and there was nothing more charming or more beautiful in the whole world. The young king, however plainly remarked that Faithful John always walked past this one door, and said, "Why dost thou never open this one for me?" "There is something within it," he replied, "which would terrify thee." But the King answered, "I have seen all the palace, and I will know what is in this room also," and he went and tried to break open the door by force. Then Faithful John held him back and said, "I promised thy father before his death that thou shouldst not see that which is in this chamber, it might bring the greatest misfortune on thee and on me." "Ah, no," replied the young King, "if I do not go in, it will be my certain destruction. I should have no rest day or night until I had seen it with my own eyes. I shall not leave the place now until thou hast unlocked the door."

Then Faithful John saw that there was no help for it now, and with a heavy heart and many sighs, sought out the key from the great bunch. When he had opened the door, he went in first, and thought by standing before him he could hide the portrait so that the King should not see it in front of him, but what availed that? The King stood on tip-toe and saw it over his shoulder. And when he saw the portrait of the maiden, which was so magnificent and shone with gold and precious stones, he fell fainting to the ground. Faithful John took him up, carried him to his bed, and sorrowfully thought, "The misfortune has befallen us, Lord God, what will be the end of it?" Then he strengthened him with wine, until he came to himself again. The first words the King said were, "Ah, the beautiful portrait! whose is it?" "That is the princess of the Golden Dwelling," answered Faithful John. Then the King continued, "My love for her is so great, that if all the leaves on all the trees were tongues, they could not declare it. I will give my life to win her. Thou art my most Faithful John, thou must help me."

The faithful servant considered within himself for a long time how to set about the matter, for it was difficult even to obtain a sight of the King's daughter. At length he thought of a way, and said to the King, "Everything which she has about her is of gold tables, chairs, dishes, glasses, bowls, and household furniture. Among thy treasures are five tons of gold; let one of the goldsmiths of the kingdom work these up into all manner

of vessels and utensils, into all kinds of birds, wild beasts and strange animals, such as may please her, and we will go there with them and try our luck."

The King ordered all the goldsmiths to be brought to him, and they had to work night and day until at last the most splendid things were prepared. When everything was stowed on board a ship, Faithful John put on the dress of a merchant, and the King was forced to do the same in order to make himself quite unrecognizable. Then they sailed across the sea, and sailed on until they came to the town wherein dwelt the princess of the Golden Dwelling.

Faithful John bade the King stay behind on the ship, and wait for him. "Perhaps I shall bring the princess with me," said he, "therefore see that everything is in order; have the golden vessels set out and the whole ship decorated." Then he gathered together in his apron all kinds of gold things, went on shore and walked straight to the royal palace. When he entered the courtyard of the palace, a beautiful girl was standing there by the well with two golden buckets in her hand, drawing water with them. And when she was just turning round to carry away the sparkling water she saw the stranger, and asked who he was. So he answered, "I am a merchant," and opened his apron, and let her look in. Then she cried, "Oh, what beautiful gold things!" and put her pails down and looked at the golden wares one after the other. Then said the girl, "The princess must see these, she has such great pleasure in golden things, that she will buy all you have." She took him by the hand and led him upstairs, for she was the waiting-maid. When the King's daughter saw the wares, she was quite delighted and said, "They are so beautifully worked, that I will buy them all of thee." But Faithful John said, "I am only the servant of a rich merchant. The things I have here are not to be compared with those my master has in his ship. They are the most beautiful and valuable things that have ever been made in gold." She wanted to have everything brought to her there, but he said, "There are so many of them that it would take a great many days to do that, and so many rooms would be required to exhibit them, that your house is not big enough." Then her curiosity and longing were still more excited, until at last she said, "Conduct me to the ship, I will go there myself, and behold the treasures of thy master."

On this Faithful John was quite delighted, and led her to the ship, and when the King saw her, he perceived that her beauty was even greater than the picture had represented it to be, and thought no other than that his heart would burst in twain. Then she got into the ship, and the King led her within. Faithful John, however, remained behind with the pilot, and ordered the ship to be pushed off, saying, "Set all sail, till it fly like a bird in air." Within, however, the King showed her the golden vessels, every one of them, also the wild beasts and strange animals. Many hours went by whilst she was seeing everything, and in her delight she did not observe that the ship was sailing away. After she had looked at the last, she thanked the merchant and wanted to go home, but when she came to the side of the ship, she saw that it was on the deep sea far from land, and hurrying onwards with all sail set. "Ah," cried she in her alarm, "I am betrayed! I am carried away and have fallen into the power of a merchant I would die rather!" The King, however, seized her hand, and said, "I am not a merchant. I am a king, and of no meaner origin than thou art, and if I have carried thee away with subtlety, that has come to pass because of my exceeding great love for thee. The first time that I looked on thy portrait, I fell fainting to the ground." When the princess of the Golden Dwelling heard that, she was comforted, and her heart was inclined unto him, so that she willingly consented to be his wife.

It happened, however, while they were sailing onwards over the deep sea, that Faithful John, who was sitting on the fore part of the vessel, making music, saw three ravens in the air, which came flying towards them. On this he stopped playing and listened to what they were saying to each other, for that he well understood. One cried, "Oh, there he is carrying home the princess of the Golden Dwelling." "Yes," replied the second, "but he has not got her yet." Said the third, "But he has got her, she is sitting beside him in the ship." Then the first began again, and cried, "What good will that do him? When they reach land a chestnut horse will leap forward to meet him, and the prince will want to mount it, but if he does that, it will run away with him, and rise up into the air with him, and he will never see his maiden more." Spake the second, "But is there no escape?"

"Oh, yes, if any one else gets on it swiftly, and takes out the pistol which must be in its holster, and shoots the horse dead with it, the young King is saved. But who knows that? And whosoever does know it, and tells it to him, will be turned to stone from the toe to

the knee." Then said the second, "I know more than that; even if the horse be killed, the young King will still not keep his bride. When they go into the castle together, a wrought bridal garment will be lying there in a dish, and looking as if it were woven of gold and silver; it is, however, nothing but sulphur and pitch, and if he put it on, it will burn him to the very bone and marrow." Said the third, "Is there no escape at all?"

"Oh, yes," replied the second, "if any one with gloves on seizes the garment and throws it into the iron fire and burns it, the young King will be saved. But what avails that? Whosoever knows it and tells it to him, half his body will become stone from the knee to the heart."

Then said the third, "I know still more; even if the bridal garment be burnt, the young King will still not have his bride. After the wedding, when the dancing begins and the young Queen is dancing, she will suddenly turn pale and fall down as if dead, and if some one does not lift her up and draw three drops of blood from her right breast and spit them out again, she will die. But if any one who knows that were to declare it, he would become stone from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot." When the ravens had spoken of this together, they flew onwards, and Faithful John had well understood everything, but from that time forth he became quiet and sad, for if he concealed what he had heard from his master, the latter would be unfortunate, and if he discovered it to him, he himself must sacrifice his life. At length, however, he said to himself, "I will save my master, even if it brings destruction on myself."

When therefore they came to shore, all happened as had been foretold by the ravens, and a magnificent chestnut horse sprang forward. "Good," said the King, "he shall carry me to my palace," and was about to mount it when Faithful John got before him, jumped quickly on it, drew the pistol out of the holster, and shot the horse. Then the other attendants of the King, who after all were not very fond of Faithful John, cried, "How shameful to kill the beautiful animal, that was to have carried the King to his palace!" But the King said, "Hold your peace and leave him alone, he is my most faithful John, who knows what may be the good of that!" They went into the palace, and in the hall there stood a dish, and therein lay the bridal garment looking no otherwise than as if it were

made of gold and silver. The young king went towards it and was about to take hold of it, but Faithful John pushed him away, seized it with gloves on, carried it quickly to the fire and burnt it. The other attendants again began to murmur, and said, "Behold, now he is even burning the King's bridal garment!" But the young King said, "Who knows what good he may have done, leave him alone, he is my most faithful John."

And now the wedding was solemnized: the dance began, and the bride also took part in it; then Faithful John was watchful and looked into her face, and suddenly she turned pale and fell to the ground as if she were dead. On this he ran hastily to her, lifted her up and bore her into a chamber then he laid her down, and knelt and sucked the three drops of blood from her right breast, and spat them out. Immediately she breathed again and recovered herself, but the young King had seen this, and being ignorant why Faithful John had done it, was angry and cried, "Throw him into a dungeon." Next morning Faithful John was condemned, and led to the gallows, and when he stood on high, and was about to be executed, he said, "Every one who has to die is permitted before his end to make one last speech; may I too claim the right?" "Yes," answered the King, "it shall be granted unto thee." Then said Faithful John, "I am unjustly condemned, and have always been true to thee," and related how he had hearkened to the conversation of the ravens when on the sea, and how he had been obliged to do all these things in order to save his master. Then cried the King, "Oh, my most Faithful John. Pardon, pardon bring him down." But as Faithful John spoke the last word he had fallen down lifeless and become a stone.

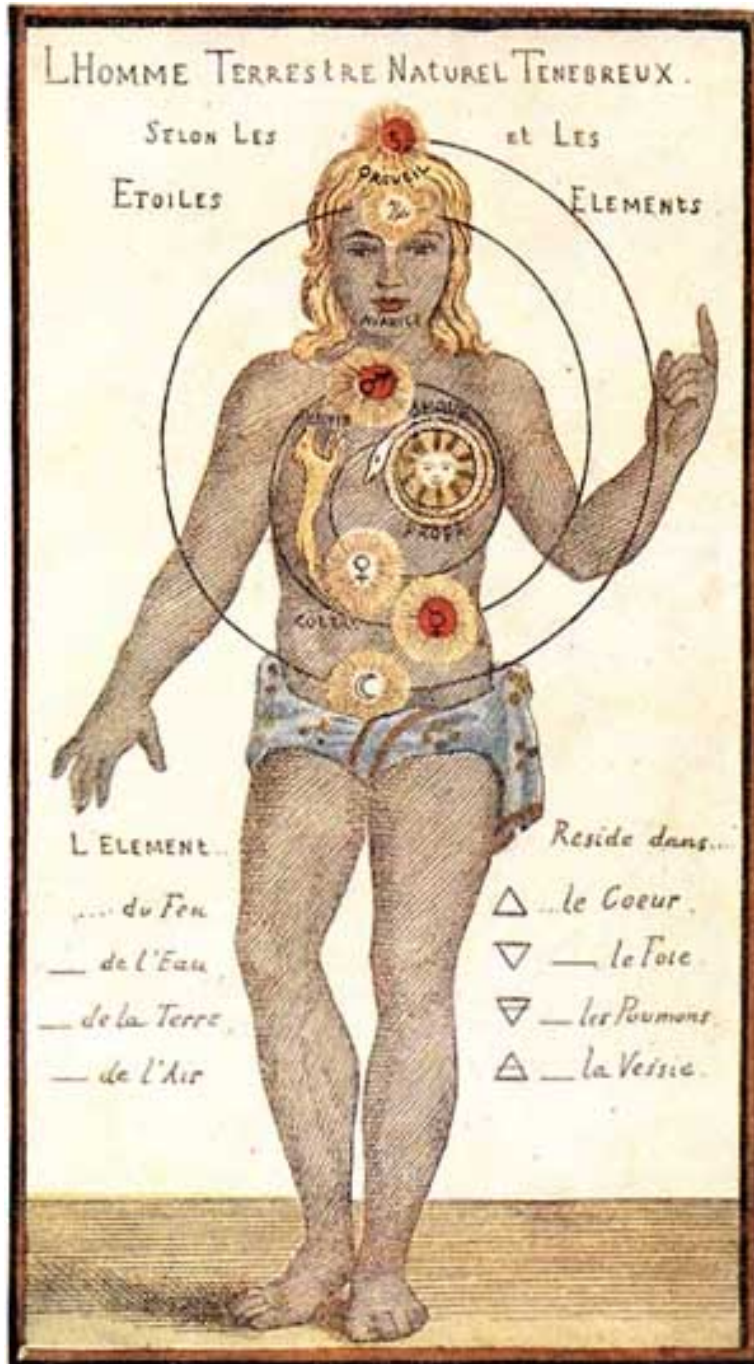
Thereupon the King and the Queen suffered great anguish, and the King said, "Ah, how ill I have requited great fidelity!" and ordered the stone figure to be taken up and placed in his bedroom beside his bed. And as often as he looked on it he wept and said, "Ah, if I could bring thee to life again, my most faithful John." Some time passed and the Queen bore twins, two sons who grew fast and were her delight. Once when the Queen was at church and the two children were sitting playing beside their father, the latter full of grief again looked at the stone figure, sighed and said, "Ah, if I could but bring thee to life again, my most faithful John." Then the stone began to speak and said, "Thou canst bring me to life again if thou wilt use for that purpose what is dearest to thee." Then cried the King, "I will give everything I have in the world for thee." The stone continued, "If thou wilt will

cut off the heads of thy two children with thine own hand, and sprinkle me with their blood, I shall be restored to life."

The King was terrified when he heard that he himself must kill his dearest children, but he thought of faithful John's great fidelity, and how he had died for him, drew his sword, and with his own hand cut off the children's heads. And when he had smeared the stone with their blood, life returned to it, and Faithful John stood once more safe and healthy before him. He said to the King, "Thy truth shall not go unrewarded," and took the heads of the children, put them on again, and rubbed the wounds with their blood, on which they became whole again immediately, and jumped about, and went on playing as if nothing had happened. Then the King was full of joy, and when he saw the Queen coming he hid Faithful John and the two children in a great cupboard. When she entered, he said to her, "Hast thou been praying in the church?" "Yes," answered she, "but I have constantly been thinking of Faithful John and what misfortune has befallen him through us." Then said he, "Dear wife, we can give him his life again, but it will cost us our two little sons, whom we must sacrifice." The Queen turned pale, and her heart was full of terror, but she said, "We owe it to him, for his great fidelity." Then the King was rejoiced that she thought as he had thought, and went and opened the cupboard, and brought forth Faithful John and the children, and said, "God be praised, he is delivered, and we have our little sons again also," and told her how everything had occurred. Then they dwelt together in much happiness until their death.



Attachment 5. Albrecht Dürer *Melencolia*. 1514.



Attachment 6. Gichtel, *Theosophia practica*, 1722. Looking at the linear descending order of the planets and their location in relation to specific organs Saturn appears on the top of the head where the Mind is -not the brain- and, at the center of the line the Sun appears situated over the heart. In the linear order, the Sun is at the center, but if now we follow the spiral shape that travels around the planets-organs Saturn is also the starting point but the Sun is now the finishing line or goal. This dual interpretation of the Sun image recalls the double order alluded to the same figure in the story of *Trusty John*.