The ROSICRUCIAN

Issue No 101 - November 2025



Contribute to Peace



When we survey the history of humanity from its very dawn to the modern day, we observe that it is littered with wars. Generally speaking, they are caused by vested economic, political or religious interests: for example, the goods belonging to one or another group of people are appropriated, a particular form of government is imposed, or people are forced to convert to a particular religion. Whatever the cause, the common factor is that the decision to conduct war and the waging thereof is people. People are responsible for the horrors they generate; it is not chance or fate, or even God. Throughout the ages, wars have caused the death of millions of men, women and children, plunging so many families into despair and chaos. Today, the situation is ever more disturbing now that humanity has the means to self-destruct on a planetary scale.

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My Contribution to Peace

I contribute to Peace when I strive to express the best of myself in my contacts with others.

I contribute to Peace when I use my intelligence and abilities to serve Good.

I contribute to Peace when I feel compassion toward all who suffer.

I contribute to Peace when I see all people as my brethren, regardless of race, culture or religion.

I contribute to Peace when I rejoice over the happiness of others and pray for their well-being.

I contribute to Peace when I listen with tolerance to opinions that differ from mine or even oppose them.

I contribute to Peace when I resort to dialogue rather than to force to settle any conflict.

I contribute to Peace when I respect nature and preserve it for generations to come.

I contribute to Peace when I do not seek to impose my conception of God upon others.

I contribute to Peace when I make Peace the foundation of my ideals and philosophy.

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A Mongolian shaman in an offering ceremony honours the spirits of place and seeks assistance with natural environmental relationships, such as good weather, healing, or predicting the activities of the natural world.

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Beyond the Western Seas: The Quest for Atlantis Continues

by **Steven Armstrong**
(1954–2019)

The concept of Atlantis is one of the most powerful and pervasive ideas in the western psyche. If Atlantis had not existed, we would need to create the Lost Continent, so important is this mythos to us. Indeed, in the science fiction universe of *Star Trek*, this is exactly what the government of Earth and the United Federation of Planets began doing in the mid-24th century CE, geo–engineering a new continent in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean.[1]

In one of US television's longest running science fiction programs, *Stargate SG–1*, humanity discovers that Atlantis was an ancient city capable of interstellar flight, created by our distant ancestors who then subsequently ascended to the psychic realm.[2] In the spin–off program *Stargate Atlantis*, which began in 2004, an international team from Earth re-colonises the lost city, now in a distant galaxy, and inherits both the successes and mistakes of 'the Ancients', our Atlantean forebearers.[3]

Both of these very popular programs, as well as the myriad of novels and films portraying Atlantis or Atlantean themes, demonstrate the immense place the Lost Continent has in the hearts and minds of the western world, and arguably in much of our planet. It should not be surprising that the search for Atlantis is alive and well in the early the 21st century, with no end yet in sight.

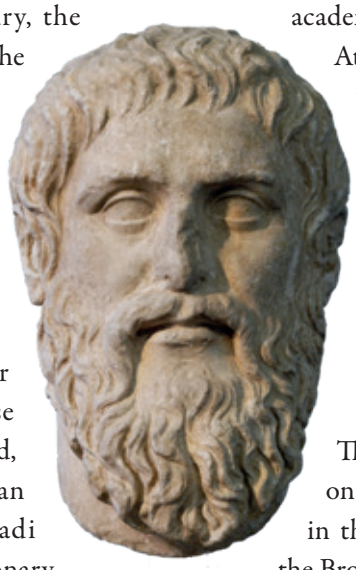
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The Modern Quest for Atlantis Takes on New Dimensions

As the plate-tectonic theory of continental formation and movement became more and more accepted during the late 20th century, it became increasingly difficult to maintain the concept of the literal sinking of an entire continental body. However, our increased knowledge of the variability of sea levels during historical and pre–historical periods has more than compensated for this difficulty and has produced a myriad of Atlantean theories.

In an endeavour such as the search for Atlantis, controversy is inevitable. Research and methods generally fall into two camps. Academic mainstream archaeology and its allied sciences tend to be naturally conservative in their methodology and claims, and these researchers consider very few sites as serious candidates. Indeed, the mainstream view is that Plato's story was a myth, and so it is a minority of orthodox scholars who continue to search for Atlantis today.

On the other hand, alternate archaeologists and historians are often more daring in their theories, challenging standard paradigms and explanations. At the beginning of the 21st century, the wider availability of technology and the spread of information on the internet have enabled these researchers to more successfully challenge their mainstream colleagues, with data and publicity to back up their claims. The line of demarcation between mainline and alternate archaeology still remains, but there are increasing signs of crossover theories and research. Perhaps these two approaches have always interacted, as the discovery of Troy, the Minoan Civilisation, and the Nag Hammadi Library can attest. Dreams and visionary quests can fuel discoveries, and these may occur when we least expect them. Rosicrucians have long taught that thought manifests reality, and we may be seeing evidence of this in today's continuing quest to find Atlantis.



Plato

Modern theories about the location of Atlantis fall into several categories, based on geography. First, there are several sites in the Mediterranean that are considered prime possibilities for Atlantis, some of which are of interest to those mainstream archaeologists who consider the possibility of a factual background to Plato's account. Second, areas in the Atlantic off the coast of North Africa and Europe have garnered considerable attention during the 20th and early 21st centuries. Third, many sites around the world have been identified, in one way or another, with Plato's Atlantean realm. Finally, at the beginning of the 21st century, a new approach altogether began to emerge in a worldwide context. We can look at some of the most popular examples of each of these in turn to consider the possibilities for the ongoing quest for Atlantis.[4]

THE MEDITERRANEAN

The search for the location of Atlantis is not a favoured theme within mainstream archaeology, since many academic scholars consider Plato's story of Atlantis to be allegorical or didactic, rather than historical. Nevertheless, in these circles the possibility is held out that the myth of Atlantis and the Flood stories may have some basis in a major cataclysm that took place in the Eastern Mediterranean in the distant past.

The Thera-Santorini Theory

The most popular of these theories centres on a massive volcanic eruption on Thera, in the Santorini group of islands, during the Bronze Age, circa 1630–1500 BCE. Lying about 125 miles southeast of the Greek

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mainland, Santorini is a modern vacation spot, named for St Irene by the Romans or Venetians in the 13th century CE. Its earliest inhabitants were from the Minoan culture in 3000 BCE, followed by a later Dorian settlement in the 11th century BCE.[5]

When the eruption took place in circa 1630–1500 BCE[6], the entire centre of the island was obliterated, and a tsunami resulted which struck the northern side of Crete with devastating force. Together with the ash fall, this event took a severe toll on the Minoan civilisation on Crete. Although this did not destroy the Minoans it may have weakened their culture, and thereby provided the opportunity for the Mycenaeans from the Greek mainland to conquer Crete around 1420 BCE.[7]

Throughout the middle and late 20th century, noted Greek archaeologist Spyridon Nikolaou Marinatos argued that the Thera eruption, its weakening of Minoan culture, and the later defeat of the Minoans at the hands of the Mycenaeans formed the basis of Plato's Atlantis Myth.[8]

The eruption at Thera has also been suggested as the basis of the disasters described in the *Admonitions of Ipuwer* from the Middle Kingdom of Egypt. *The Admonitions* in turn may have influenced the description of the ten plagues of Egypt in the Biblical Exodus account.[9]



Morndern-day Santorini.

istockphoto / Maglara

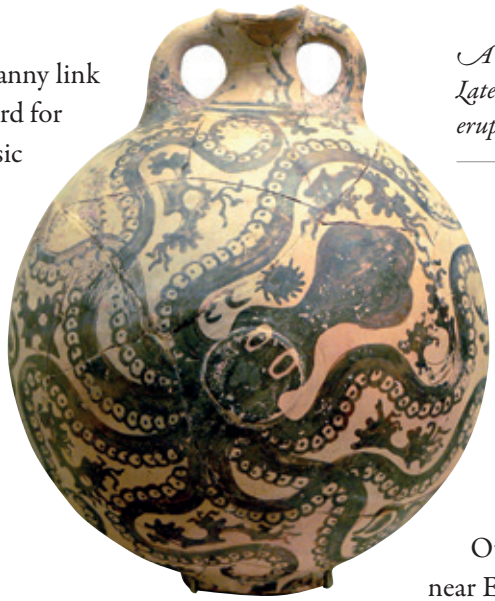
The Minoan culture of Crete does have many similarities to the traditional description of Atlantis, and—although this assumption is debated—has usually been seen as a primarily peaceful rather than bellicose civilisation.[10] The possibility of Minoan human sacrifice has been raised[11]; however, this claim is disputed.[12] If the evidence proves to substantiate human



Section of a fresco discovered at Santorini, showing vibrant port life, leading some to speculate that this is evidence for the Santorini theory of Atlantis.

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sacrifice, this would be an uncanny link to the similar reason put forward for the fall of Atlantis in the classic esoteric work, *A Dweller on Two Planets*.[13] The Thera theory remains the favourite of those mainstream archaeologists today who take an interest in the search for Atlantis.



A vase from c. 1500 BC, typical of the Late Minoan IB period that followed the eruption of Thera.

Other Mediterranean Theories

Although the Thera-Santorini-Minoan thesis is the most popular of the Mediterranean theories about Atlantis, it is not the only one. Cyprus, Cádiz (Spain), Spartel (a sunken island in the Strait of Gibraltar[14]), and the island of Sardinia[15] have all been mentioned, and they are not alone. Locations in Turkey, including Troy[16], and the Middle East are sometimes put forward as well[17], each with its own proponents and detractors. Jericho and surrounding territory has also recently been proposed as the origins of the legend.[18]

Malta has also been a very popular possibility for the Atlantean culture. The connection of Malta and Atlantis is not a new theory. This was first espoused by the renowned Maltese architect Girogio Grongnet de Vassé in 1854. More recently, several alternate archaeology researchers on Malta have added to the evidence, arguing for the presence of humans on the island as early as the Paleolithic Era (15,000–18,000 years ago), rather than the usually accepted 6000 BCE for the first human occupation, and that this culture of builders was destroyed by a flood in 2200 BCE.

Considerable disputes have arisen between mainstream Maltese archaeology and these theories, and no clear end to the controversies is currently in sight.[19] Regardless of the outcome of these disputes, Malta's ancient culture and geographic situation make it a reasonable option for Atlantis.

OFF THE COAST OF EUROPE AND NORTH AFRICA

Outside the Mediterranean, but still near Europe and North Africa, there are multiple locations suggested today for Atlantis. Among the most popular are the following.

Andalusia in southern Spain, and its lost city of Tartessos, have been candidates for Atlantis since first proposed in 1673. Tartessos was an important trade city until it suddenly vanished from history in the 6th century BCE. Advocates of this theory suggest that the Tartessians were the sea peoples who attacked many Mediterranean cultures during the Bronze Age, giving rise to the story of Atlantis.[20]

The islands of Britain and Ireland, and the North Sea and Celtic Shelf between France and Britain, have also been cited as the location of the Atlantean civilisation in several scenarios, in combination or separately. These theories take into account several factors. The well-known megalithic culture of the area during the Neolithic Era is a primary attraction for researchers. Sea-level studies also indicate that portions of the North Sea and the Celtic Bank have been above sea level in the past. Mont Saint-Michel in Normandy is a dramatic example of the effects of rising and lowering sea levels.

Further, in the Arthurian legends, the mystical forest of Brocéliande (today known as Paimpont Forest in Brittany) was said to connect France and Britain,

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Mont Saint-Michel in Normandy.

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and is near the famous standing stones of Carnac. One wonders if this could be a memory in the collective unconsciousness of a time when there was an actual land connection. All of these make these locations plausible Atlantean sites.[21]

The Canary Islands, an archipelago of Spanish islands located off the coast of Morocco and Western Sahara, contain several mysteries. Although the islands were known in classical antiquity and were visited by the Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans, there is considerable debate today over the origins of the indigenous populations of the various islands and their genetic connection to other populations.

In the 1990s, famed explorer Thor Heyerdahl studied the complex that includes the six Pyramids of Güímar, ancient constructions very similar to step pyramids on the island of Tenerife. No conclusive theory of their purpose, age, or construction have yet been established.[22] However, in Pliny's Natural History (6:37), he makes mention of the fact that reports from Juba II of Mauretania indicated 'traces of buildings' on the island in antiquity.[23] These two circumstances have persuaded some to consider the Canary Islands as potentially Atlantean.

The islands of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge have long been regarded as very likely remnants of an Atlantean empire. In particular, the Azores, a Portuguese archipelago in the mid-Atlantic Ocean, have been a favourite contender for Atlantis, including among Rosicrucians. Ignatius Donnelly, a member of the US House of Representatives, was among the first exoteric writers to mention the Azores in this connection in his seminal work, *Atlantis: The Antediluvian World,* in 1882.[24]

More recently, this hypothesis has been supported and further researched by Nikolai Zhirov, a Russian chemist and Atlantis scholar. Zhirov martials data from oceanography, climate studies, seismic studies, gravimetrics, ancient botanical studies, geomorphology, plate tectonics, ocean bottom current patterns, submarine erosion, and geological data to support his positions with impressive documentation.[25]

Further findings by other alternate researchers may indicate riverbeds on the shelf areas surrounding the Azores now submerged, making the possibility of these once being land areas plausible.[26] A simple search of the internet will demonstrate the continuing support and popularity for the idea that the Azores Islands are the mountain peaks of ancient Atlantis.

FURTHER AFIELD: PROPOSALS FOR ATLANTIS OUTSIDE THE EUROPEAN AREA

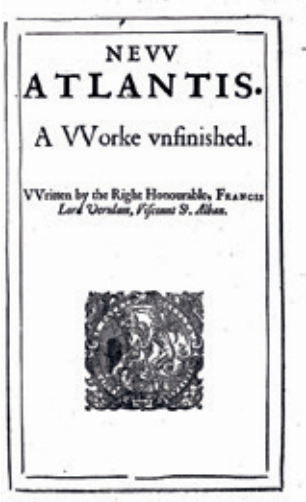
Outside of the area of Europe and Africa, several other parts of the world have been proposed as candidates for the origin of the Atlantis stories. Probably best known is the area of the Caribbean. Much of the popularity of these theories is due to the readings of the American

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mystic and clairvoyant Edgar Cayce, who predicted in 1938 that signs of Atlantis would be found near Bimini.[27] The discoveries of the 'Bimini Road' have fuelled this theory. Off North Bimini Island, part of the Bahamas to the east of Florida and to the north of Cuba, some mysterious undersea formations were discovered in 1968, leading some to identify them as a road of human construction. The debate over their nature and meaning has continued to the present day.[28] Bimini remains one of the favourite candidates among those who hold for a New World location for Atlantis.

Other candidates in the Caribbean include the Isla de la Juventud near Cuba[29] and a purported sunken island off Central America[30]; however, both these claims are controversial and contested by most researchers.

North and South America Offer Possible Atlantean Sites


NEVV
ATLANTIS.
A VVorke vnfinished.
VVritten by the Right Honourable, FRANCIS
Lord Verulam, Viſcount St. Alban.

Some Atlantis advocates have suggested that the Americas themselves, or some parts of North or South America, were the actual location of the Atlantean civilisation. This is certainly not a new idea. In 1627, Rosicrucian Imperator Sir Francis Bacon penned a utopian novel, *The New Atlantis*, setting his island Bensalem ('Offspring of Peace') off the western shores of the Americas. In the context of Bacon's work, it is clear that the original Atlantis was in the Americas, though North or South is not specified.

If one thinks about it, this is not at all a surprising idea. When the Americas were discovered once again by Colombus, it would seem to have been a fulfillment of the desire to find the 'Lost Continent' to the west of Europe, considerably larger than western North Africa and Asia Minor (Plato's 'Lybia and Asia') combined.

Over the past 200 years mainline archaeologists have learned much about the advanced and sophisticated civilisations in the Americas. In 2006, Charles C. Mann's study, *1491*, provided a thorough and astonishing look at what we know today about the complex human societies of the Americas on the eve of Columbus's voyage, including a population probably greater than that of Europe, with larger and more advanced cities.[31]

Some Atlantis advocates have suggested that the Americas themselves, or some parts of North or South America, were the actual location of the Atlantean civilisation.

Furthermore, the origins of American civilisation are continually being pushed back. The finding of the circa 5,000-year-old Peruvian pyramid-builder civilisation at Caral on the Pacific Coast north of Lima has considerably revised the estimates for the antiquity of American cultures, now coeval with the Egyptian pyramid builders.[32] It is within the realm of possibility that ancestral memories of contact between Europe, Africa and the Americas could have fuelled Atlantean legends.

The connection of Meso-America and Atlantis became popular among some nineteenth century archaeologists. In 1879, Edward Herbert Thompson proposed the Maya-Atlantis connection in *Popular Science Monthly* but later revised his opinion.[33] The amateur archaeologist and photographer Augustus Le Plongeon is most famous in alternate archaeology

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Augustus Le Plongeon



A map showing the supposed extent of the Atlantean empire. From Ignatius L. Donnelly's Atlantis: The Antediluvian World*, 1882.*

circles for his theories (no longer accepted in academic archaeology) of the association of Mayan culture with Atlantis and the lost Pacific continent of Mu or Lemuria. He held that Central America was the cradle of civilisation, later transmitting this culture westward to Atlantis and Egypt.[34]

Although his theories in this area have been discredited in academe, he and his wife, Alice Dixon Le Plongeon, are still honoured as early pioneers of archaeological photography.[35] Le Plongeon's Atlantean theories have proven enduringly popular among alternate researchers and have had some influence on James Churchward's famous *Mu* series.[36]

North American Authors Utilise the Atlantis Theme

The alternate archaeological writings of Ignatius Donnelly and Lewis Spence continued the idea of Atlantis in America into the late 19th and early 20th centuries.[37] Several writers of visionary novels delved into this theme as well. Best known of these is Frederick S. Oliver's *A Dweller on Two Planets.*[38] As an 18-year-old youth in Yreka, CA, north of Mount Shasta, Oliver began receiving this channeled book from 'Phylos the Thibetan'. He continued to receive the book until 1886, and it was published posthumously by his mother in 1905.[39] The novel tells of the lives of several Atlanteans through various incarnations.

Another example is *Yermah the Dorado*, by early feminist science fiction author Frona Eunice Wait in 1897. Wait chronicles the adventures of her dashing hero Yermah, an Atlantean, on the ancient coast of California, in what is now San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, Richmond, and the Haight-Ashbury disticts.[40]

During 1926, the AMORC publication *The Mystic Triangle* serialised a futuristic novel connecting the destinies of America and Atlantis: *Zada* or *Looking Forward* by J.H. Thamer. The June 1926 instalment has the 21st century protagonists exploring the ruins of Atlantis surrounding the Azores.[41] Dr Lewis's seminal work, *Lemuria,* extended the connection of America to the Lost Continent of the Pacific.[42]

Atlantis in Bolivia

More recently, researcher Jim Adams has proposed the Altiplano in Bolivia, in the region of Lake Poopo, as the site of ancient Atlantis. His ingenious solution to the many problems of identifying the ancient site are laid out in his websites and publications.[43] He

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carefully matches Plato's descriptions of the geography of Atlantis to the Altiplano; and explorers have found evidence of a sunken island under the waters of Lake Poopo, with evidence of human habitation. All of this makes the Bolivian theory a very attractive alternative approach, worthy of further study.

Asian Possibilities for the Lost Continent

Even further afield, Arysio Santosa, a Brazilian nuclear physicist who also writes on mystical subjects, proposed in 2005 that the huge plain of Sundaland on the continental shelf of Southeast Asia (which was exposed during the last Ice Age) is Atlantis. This would comprise the Malay Peninsula and Indonesia, including Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Bali, and the smaller islands in the archipelago. He suggests that refugees from the sinking of Sundaland eventually came into contact with Egyptians, who then recorded a garbled version of the history of the lost lands.[44]

The Antarctic Theory Becomes Increasingly Popular

One of the most persistent suggestions for an Atlantean location is the southernmost continent of Antarctica. The literature of this theory is varied and fascinating. In fiction, the American horror writer H. P. Lovecraft popularised the Atlantis–Antarctic link in his 1931 novel, *At the Mountains of Madness*[45], at least partly inspired by Edgar Allen Poe's 'The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket' (1838), which breaks off unfinished with a mysterious maelstrom near Antarctica.

This subject matter exercised such a fascination on the public that Jules Verne had earlier penned a sequel as well, in 1897, *The Sphinx of the Ice Fields,* which continues Poe's narrative.[46] Verne had already envisioned the ruins of an undersea Atlantis in *Twenty-Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* (1870).



Lake Poopó in Bolivia; the region has been proposed as another site for Atlantis.

During the late 20th century, scientific researchers in Antarctica made multiple announcements of their discoveries, through ice core samples, of ancient tropical flora and fauna during a period ranging from 250 million years ago to as recent as three million years ago. Evidence of running rivers in Antarctica has been found as late as 4000 BCE.[47] In 2004, satellite imagery revealed the existence of Lake Vostok beneath the ice in Antarctica, approximately the size of Lake Ontario in North America and still fluid.[48] These discoveries have only fuelled the hopes that at last, in our most remote continent, Atlantis could be found.

Unusual Maps Add Evidence for Atlantis

Several writers, including Charles Berlitz, the scion of the language education empire of the same name, who is also a popular author on unsolved mysteries around the world, suggested the identification of Atlantis with Antarctica.[49] One of the most interesting clues in this area is the mysterious Piri Reis Map. Discovered in 1929 in the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul, it has been authenticated as a navigational map by the well–known Turkish Admiral Piri Reis, drawn in 1513 from a number of other maps he had available to him, according to his own testimony.[50]

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Topkapi Palace in Istanbul.

istockphoto / RuslanKaln

position. Mainline geologists do not generally support this theory, even though Hapgood's first book is graced by a foreword by Albert Einstein, who thought enough of the theory to discuss it seriously.

With the work of the Flem-Aths and Colin Wilson, we have a synthesis and evolution of the theories of James Churchward, Charles Hapgood, and a century of alternate historians and

The Piri Reis Map shows parts of the western coastline of Africa and the eastern coast of South America. More controversially, it also appears to show the outlines of Antarctica, several centuries before the accepted discovery of Antarctica in 1820. Since ancient times, cartographers posited a southern landmass to balance the northern continents of Europe and Asia. However, modern theorists and researchers Charles Hapgood and Gavin Menzies have argued that the map represents accurate seafaring knowledge of either pre-Classical Western (Hapgood) or Chinese (Menzies) mariners[51], from whose maps Piri Reis gleaned the information about Antarctica. Both theories are widely dismissed by academic scholars but are very popular among alternate historians[52], and so the mystery persists.

All of these pieces of evidence combined have inspired the most persistent and thorough advocates of an Antarctic Atlantis in the latter 20th and early 21st centuries: Rand and Rose Flem-Ath and Colin Wilson.[53] One of their major pieces of evidence is based on Charles Hapgood's theory of the Earth Crust Displacement[54], which holds that the earth's crust and the poles can and do shift. Under this approach, Antarctica was once 2,000 miles north of its present



The Piri Reis map from the Topkapi Palace in Turkey (1513), purportedly showing Antarctica.

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archaeologists. As the publisher of *The Atlantis Blueprint* put it, this is a 'spellbinding blend of history and science, scholarship and speculation'.[55] In fact, this theory has opened the door for the newest approach to the Atlantis mythos.

Popularised by journalist and alternate researcher Graham Hancock and several allies, including Robert Bauval, John Anthony West, and geologist Robert Schoch, a new, comprehensive approach emerged at the dawn of the 21st century. This highly synthetic scenario builds on the work of Von Dechend and Santillana, *Hamlet's Mill*[56], which argues that myth can and often does encode scientific and historical truths.

A Planetary Cataclysm Destroys a Worldwide Civilisation

Incorporating themes from much of alternate archaeology since Ignatius Donnelly and Le Plongeon, together with modern archaeological discoveries, Hancock and others suggest that the Flood stories which exist in so many world cultures actually point to a cataclysmic event which took place approximately 12,500 years ago.

This destruction obliterated a worldwide maritime civilisation which is the basis of our myths of the golden age: Atlantis, Lemuria, and many others. According to these researchers, the cultures which arose around the world, beginning anywhere from 10,000–5,000 years ago, are the survivors and inheritors of the great antediluvian planetary civilisation; and the memory of that society and its destruction is encoded into myth, religion, and architecture in each of these cultures. Underwater archaeology is a cornerstone of the worldwide theory, and new discoveries of evidence for the ancient civilisation are predicted, using undersea and satellite technology.[57]

Controversy and Support for this Comprehensive Atlantis Theory

These theories have been widely attacked by mainstream scholars, and there have been several highly publicised controversies during the last few years. Graham Hancock's website is very useful for keeping up with the entire burgeoning field and includes many genuinely useful essays by numerous authors.[58] To his credit, Hancock includes legitimate critiques of his own books and productions. Through the haze of the academic battles, it appears that the first steps toward a rapprochement between academic science and alternative approaches may be gradually emerging.

'Atlantis' may be considered to be a mythically encoded word for the whole of this antediluvian civilisation; however, it might also have been the capital or major centre of such a society.

The advantage of such a comprehensive theory is that one need not feel the need to pick one site over another. 'Atlantis' may be considered to be a mythically encoded word for the whole of this antediluvian civilisation; however, it might also have been the capital or major centre of such a society. As more evidence turns up, Plato's location may be found, just as Homer's Troy was. The theory does not depend on sinking continents or earth crust displacement but on the known and accepted rise and fall of sea level due to ice ages and on catastrophes such as meteor strikes, vulcanism and the like. Only time will tell, but it may be that here myth and science will finally establish an equilibrium and harmony, finally finding Atlantis and our lost history.

Rosicrucians and mystics of all traditions, as well as psychologists and literary scholars, know that the

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Rosicrucians and mystics of all traditions, as well as psychologists and literary scholars, know that the questing journey may very well be as important as the object sought. It may be that the desire to find Atlantis has been deeply implanted in us for a reason.

questing journey may very well be as important as the object sought. It may be that the desire to find Atlantis has been deeply implanted in us for a reason.

Tolkien's Use of the Atlantis Archetype

'Beyond the Western Seas', the title of this essay, is an epithet for one of Professor J.R.R. Tolkien's great divine or angelic spirits, the Vala Varda, also known as Elbereth who is 'Queen Beyond the Western Seas'.[59] Tolkien, too, had his own version of the Atlantis story, which he tells in 'Akallabêth', one of the sections of his posthumously published *Silmarillion*.[60]

Númenor, or Westernesse, was the great western isle prepared especially for humans by the great creative beings, the Valar. Númenor prospered for many years until humanity on this blessed island was seduced by Sauron, who, thousands of years later, was the Dark Lord in *The Lord of the Rings*. He convinced the Númenoreans to mount a naval assault on the Undying Lands to their West, where Varda was queen, and, in so doing, their whole island was sunk and the exiles were sent back to the shores of Middle Earth. After this, the world was changed, made round, and no longer had direct access to the lands of the Valar. Only the Elves had access to the Straight Road that could take them from this world to the next.



Tolkien in the 1920s.

On one level, the tale told in 'Akallabêth' is a creative reworking of the Atlantis mythos, integrating it into Tolkien's immense cosmic vision. However, it may point us to something more. In Tolkien's world, to look to the Western Seas is both to mourn Númenor (Atlantis) in its greatness and its fall, and also to seek the Undying Lands, the source and destiny of all being. Thus the quest for Atlantis is not only a historical search but a journey to find our own meaning, our source, and our goal.

Academic Scholars Doubt Plato's Intent

Many traditional classical scholars share the approach of Dr Julia Annas of the University of Arizona, who steadfastly refuses to consider the possibility that Plato's story might have any historicity:

> 'The continuing industry of discovering Atlantis illustrates the dangers of reading Plato; for he is clearly using what has become a standard device of fiction: stressing the historicity of an event (and the discovery of hitherto unknown authorities) as an indication that what follows is fiction. The idea is that we should use the story to examine our ideas of government and power. We have missed the point if instead of thinking about these issues, we go off exploring the sea bed. The continuing misunderstanding of Plato as historian here enables us to see why his distrust of imaginative writing is sometimes justified.'[61]

In so doing, scholars can fall into the same error

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that Plato himself does from time to time when he mistrusts the imagination. It is precisely our faculty of visualisation that is being called into play with the Atlantis mythos. The quest for Atlantis impels us to seek our source and exercise our power of 'sub-creation'.

If Atlantis were not real, we would be forced to create it. And perhaps we have. In the intricate, demanding and challenging novel *Foucault's Pendulum*, Umberto Eco weaves the story of a group of journalists who 'create' a history linking the Knights Templar to modern manifestations. And then, this history begins to manifest in reality.[62]

The quest for Atlantis has kept us searching for thousands of years for our lost heritage.

The Atlantean Quest Remains a Treasure for Us and the 21st Century

The quest for Atlantis has kept us searching for thousands of years for our lost heritage. In the process we have found a world of priceless archaeology and history. We have discovered things about Crete, Malta, the Canary Islands, the Azores, Bolivia, and a myriad other locations throughout the world because we wanted to find lost civilisations. Today, we are on the verge of discovering even more through underwater archaeology and satellites that can aid in scanning under the vast deserts of the planet and identify features we miss by being too close.

As we search, we find out more about the Primordial Tradition, the source of all human wisdom, and the goal toward which it beckons: union with Being itself. Just as Tolkien's Middle Earth dwellers gazed out upon the Western Sea to ponder the fate of Númenor, and in so doing went beyond the western seas to dream of the Undying Lands and the origin and goal of all being, so too we are drawn to this goal through our search for Atlantis.

Atlantis will be found—if not today, then tomorrow—and many other wonders on the journey as well. Our divine creativity is too great to fail. We may feel empowered in both the quest and the creation, as expressed by Professor Tolkien speaking for the Divine within us:

> 'So great is the bounty with which we have been treated that we may now, perhaps, fairly dare to guess that in Fantasy we may actually assist in the effoliation and multiple enrichment of creation. All tales may come true; and yet, at the last redeemed, they may be as like and as unlike the forms that we give them as Humanity, finally redeemed, will be like and unlike the fallen that we know.'[63]

May the desire to find Atlantis—and our own origin and destiny—never cease until we finally find our way beyond the western seas.

Endnotes

This article has extensive endnotes. If you would like to receive a copy of the endnotes, please write to editor@amorc.org.au.



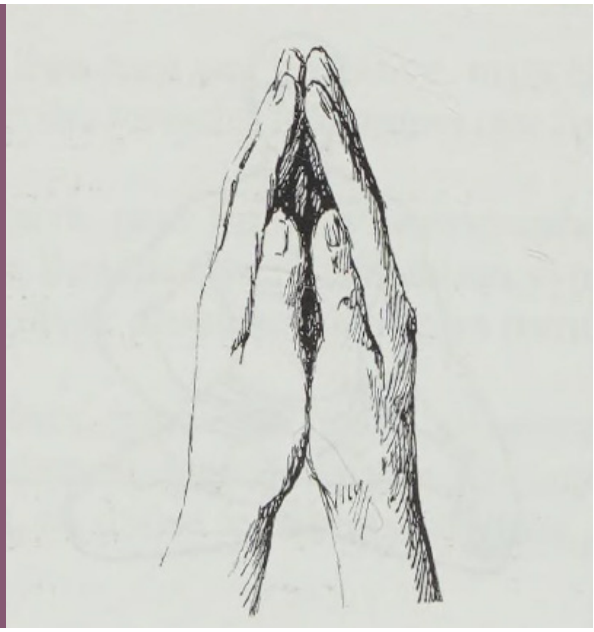
Nicholas Roerich's The Last of Atlantis.

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NAMASTE

A Mystical Gesture

by **Homi Daruwala**



istockphoto / LightFieldStudios

Many of us are familiar with Dürer's painting *The Hands of an Apostle*, often reproduced on Christmas greeting cards. This gesture of both hands joined together with fingertips touching is now recognised as a universal gesture of prayer and adoration.

The origin of this symbolic gesture is an ancient Indian ***mudra***. A mudra is a gesture of the hands, feet or eyes, representing certain states or levels of consciousness. Mudras are normally accompanied in their performance by body postures and breathing techniques.

The various types of mudras (approximately 399, according to some authorities) have been abundantly represented for centuries in Indian and Buddhist art, sculpture, dance forms and spiritual texts. In Indian sculpture, the position of the hands and the body postures of various deities or sages expresses an inner state of consciousness which the artists wished to represent or convey to worshippers for their meditation. Conversely, adopting a certain mudra can help us attain the state of consciousness it symbolises.

The ancient science of mudras states that these gestures and movements involve and affect certain areas of the brain and, correspondingly, our internal chemistry and psychic centres. As an illustration, the regular practice of the mudra depicting fearlessness, as depicted in some sculptures of the Hindu deities, will help inculcate the quality of fearlessness in the practitioner. However, the empty practice of a mudra without the prior purification of intent, reverence and focus of consciousness will render the mudra ineffective, or even psychically affect the practitioner for his irreverence.

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The 'hands joined in prayer' gesture is known as the *Atmanjali Mudra*, described in the *Natya Shastra*, the classic Indian dance text considered to have been composed in the 2nd century BCE. This sacred sign has been trivialised and cheapened in modern times by politicians and civil servants saluting one another in the gesture called *Namaste*.

Namaste is an ancient Indian mystical gesture that forms an integral part of Indian culture. In this gesture, both palms are held erect together in front of the centre of the chest. Namaste (pronounced *nuh-must-tay*) is a Sanskrit word which literally means 'I bow to you.' *Nama* means 'bow', *as* means 'I' and *te* means 'you'. It is a mystical gesture which means 'I salute the Divinity in you'. This beautiful symbol acknowledges that we are all *Jivas*, or souls, part of the one Divine Self.

How to perform namaste

As mentioned before, namaste is part of the *Atmanjali Mudra*. *Anjali* means 'offering' and *Atma* is the Divine Soul. To perform namaste, you place your hands together at the area of the heart centre. Make sure that there is a little hollow space between your palms. Then you close your eyes and bow your head. Another method of performing namaste is by placing the hands together in front of the third eye, at the level of the forehead, then bowing the head and finally bringing the hands down to the area of the heart. This form of namaste symbolises a deep gesture of respect to a spiritual teacher, a guru, a master.

Before doing this mudra, sit or stand for a while with your arms spread and raised to Heaven. The ancient Egyptians and Zoroastrians worshipped their concept of divinity with raised arms. This practice was later adopted by the Celts and the Teutons. It was considered a very powerful gesture of Cosmic communion and was only permitted to the high priests or shamans. Christianity later forbade this gesture to its worshippers. Only the Pope uses this gesture when worshipping at the Basilica in the Vatican and before conducting Mass.

Benefits of performing this mudra

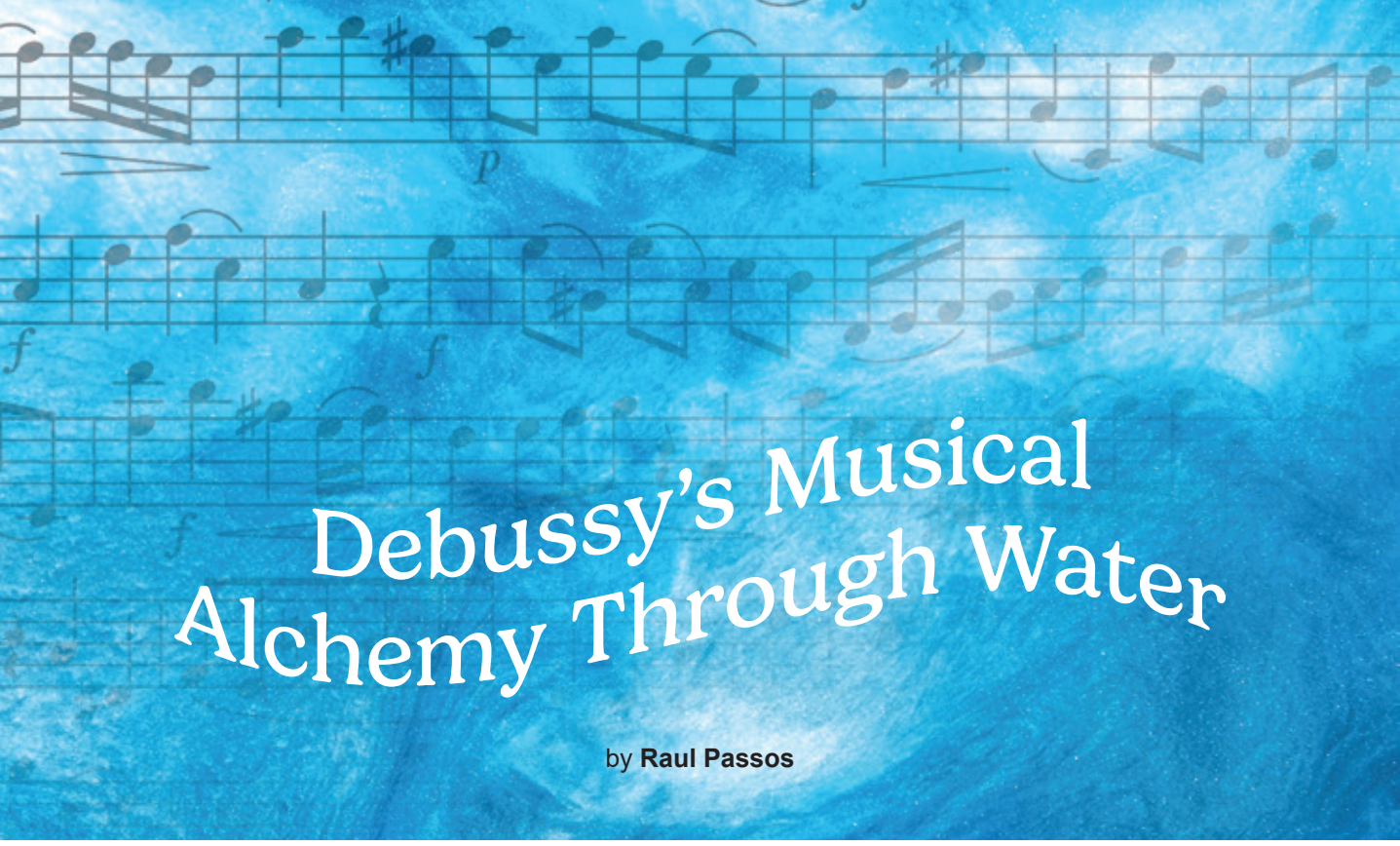
When you place your hands in front of your chest it helps inner recollection and creates harmony, balance, inner silence and peace. This gesture also activates and harmonises the coordination of the left and right brain hemispheres. It is ideally done before and after a period of meditation or Cosmic attunement, or when you petition the Cosmic. This mudra calms your thoughts, creates mental clarity and stabilises the mind.

Finally, this gesture also expresses reverence or gratitude. You can reverently end any period of spiritual communion with namaste and a silent affirmation, in your own words or thoughts, that means 'Full of gratitude, I receive the gifts of the Divine that are granted to me for my spiritual growth.'



The Hands of an Apostle *by Albrecht Dürer.*

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Debussy's Musical Alchemy Through Water

by **Raul Passos**

'Nature isn't at the surface; it's in the depth.'

– Paul Cézanne

Of all the elements traditionally considered from an esoteric point of view, water is perhaps the most enigmatic. Indomitable, though sometimes giving the illusion of being controlled, through its elusive and often hidden presence its imprint is felt directly and indirectly in various phases of human action, consciously and subconsciously affecting our interaction with the world.

In the Jungian universe, and especially in that of alchemy, water is closely associated with dissolution, often characterising periods of crisis or revolution. However, this is also the operation that allows processes of expansion that would not occur otherwise and which, extrapolated to a mystical reading, lead to the opening of a subtle reality, to contact with the Greater Being, making possible a transcendental experience of the Whole. Spiritual experience therefore is, par excellence, within the scope of the alchemical operation of water.

Music is an artistic manifestation that interacts with emotions in a particular way, and, due to that, they are essential for its production. Music is not crystallised in a closed space but requires a temporal window for its revelation, a space in which interactions with the psychological landscape of the performer and the listener take place. This unique dynamic is particularly conducive to opening the window of the subconscious.

The association between music and water is therefore particularly relevant from the perspective of mysticism, and no composer was as prolific and

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fascinated by the theme of water as Claude Debussy (1862–1918). In fact, although water as a source of inspiration has long existed in Western music, it is through Debussy that it is embodied and instrumentalised beyond the realm of inspiration—becoming the very essence of action—in such a way as to produce an unprecedented revolution in the history of music while also enabling the existence of an effective bridge between the art of sound and spirituality.

Music is not crystallised in a closed space but requires a temporal window for its revelation, a space in which interactions with the psychological landscape of the performer and the listener take place.

However, before we approach Debussy the composer and his importance for music and the leading role of water in his work, let's consider for a moment the question of the 'pictorial' representation of extra-musical elements in music.

Suggestion versus Representation

Strictly speaking, music does not convey a specific and defined message, since the perception and interpretation of the musical phenomenon are profoundly subjective and can vary from one individual to another, even within a homogeneous cultural context and even for the same individual at different times. That is, the sound event operates physically and according to established intrinsic rules, but the message (if that is the right word to use) that emerges from it results in a particular way, depending on the listener, since it depends on and interacts with other factors such as memory, physiology, psychological state, etc.



Village at the Water's Edge *("Village au bord de l'eau") by Paul Cézanne.*

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Therefore, it must be said that the very association between a given element of nature and its possible musical representation is fundamentally debatable at its root. However, from the point of view of musical syntax, it is legitimate to argue that throughout history a series of compositional procedures and characteristic figurations have been established which, often supported by context or suggestive titles, have forged a somewhat archetypal and vernacular sonic aspect of the element of water in its most diverse forms, such as watercourses, waterfalls, snow, waves, rain and, going a step further, creatures—mythical or not—associated with the aquatic universe.

From Nature and Towards Nature

> Those who listen to the piping of the birds, to the murmur of the breeze among the foliage, to the laughter of the pebble-studded stream, and try to catch their elusive harmonies, must realize that the keynote of Nature's music is its extreme subtlety. All is enchantingly indefinite, between the notes... It always eludes us, and that is why we love it. If one thinks of the opening phrase of Debussy's *L'après midi d'un faune* (The Afternoon of a Faun), this same subtlety is noticeable; all is subdued, delicate, nebulous—for Debussy was the first composer to turn entirely from the human and write Nature-music pure and simple.
>
> – Cyril Scott

This intriguing quotation by the British composer and occultist Cyril Scott is a calling card for the universe of the great French composer. It is also pertinent to talk a little about the historical period in which the silent revolution led by Debussy, perhaps in spite of himself, takes place.

It is not at all surprising that the musical moment of rupture, which was foreshadowed in the years immediately preceding the turn of the 20th century, contained a certain tendency toward liquefaction, we could dare say. Since the tonal-musical system, from its very birth, contained at its core the formula for its own dissolution, given its exhaustible possibilities, this dissolution could be accomplished in two ways: from the outside, by a vertiginous rupture of opposition and negation; or from within, by a disaggregation of its intrinsic logic, as happens to a living body in the twilight of old age, when its Vital Force abandons it and it ceases to be a suitable vehicle for the expression of life. From this point of view, there could not have been a more propitious moment for Western music to make a leap in perception, to add a supernatural element, because the momentum allowed and demanded the manifestation of a new reality.

It is nonetheless curious to observe that in Debussy, the one who played the decisive role in this 'change of frequency' to which we inexorably attach the word 'new', there was a sense not of worship but of *reverence* for the past. This is borne out by pieces such as *Hommage à Rameau* ('Tribute to Rameau'—a reference to the great French Baroque composer) in the ancient forms invoked in *Suite Bergamasque* (which features the famous *Clair de Lune* ('Moonlight'), or in the adoption of traditionally consecrated musical structures such as those in the suite *Pour le Piano* ('For the Piano') or the *Préludes*, which unequivocally reach out to a formal, inspirational past.

With Debussy, however, it is a matter of evoking, not of invoking: the substance that is coated with the established formulas is of an originality never seen in previous generational transitions. The clothing here does not define the content; it only gives it materiality. This coexistence of an original substance within a traditional structure undoubtedly contributed to the paradoxical subtlety of the musical revolution represented by Debussy: it is astonishing that one of his exact contemporaries, Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924), whose refinement and aesthetic sense also possess great originality, fell short of being a revolutionary.

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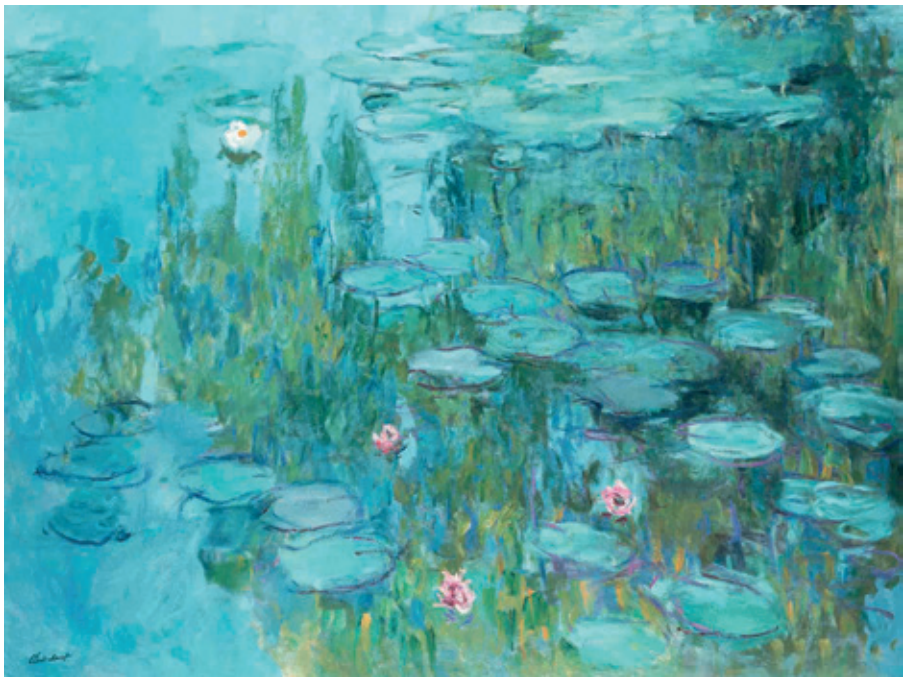
Man of War Rocks, Coast of Dorset *by John Brett.*
John Brett was a British artist associated with the Pre-Raphaelite movement.

However, there was something in the air, and analogous revolutions were also taking place in painting. Let us think for a moment of movements such as Impressionism and the recourse to Symbolism—embodied, for example, by the Pre-Raphaelites, with whom the French esotericists were particularly associated. René Peter, Debussy's friend in the 1890s, said of his music: 'To judge by his works, and by their titles, he is a painter and that is what he wants to be; he calls his compositions pictures, sketches, prints, arabesques, masques, studies in black and white. Plainly it is his delight to paint in music.'

Despite this pictorial pretension, often supported by highly suggestive and inducing titles, on other occasions the composer seems to want to distance himself from any prefabricated reading and subsequent listening. Notorious examples of this are the famous *Préludes*, the titles of which, in the manuscript and in the first edition, appear only at the bottom of the last page of each prelude, in brackets and after ellipses. This deliberation, eccentric to be sure, is practically an emancipation from the conventional 'title-consequent interpretation' arrangement. With this simple but decisive change in the position of the title (which will perhaps no longer be a title), the musical discourse is also emancipated from a predetermination dictated even before the first note resonates. It is a gesture of dissociation from the trodden path and a redirection towards something beyond the musical phenomenon itself. At this point, water serves us as a connecting element.

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Water Lilies, *c. 1915, by Claude Monet.*

Both Monet and Debussy were hailed as leading figures in the Impressionist movement, in art and music respectively.

Sailing Through Alchemical Waters

As we said in the introduction, water is alchemically associated with dissolution, which, applied to the context we are studying here, means a dissolving of the personalisation of 'canonical' music, so to speak, as it had been until then, and of its traditional and academic boundaries. From a holistic perspective, the interpolation of Asian music (especially Javanese and the pentatonic and whole-tone scales) into Debussy's compositional processes was no accident. This eventuality accelerated the fragmentation of the existing [musical] language and favoured the infiltration of a music that, according to the aforementioned Cyril Scott, had been inspired to him by the 'Higher Ones'.

From this perspective, the presence of water as a central figure in so many of Debussy's creations materialises this impregnation of the element in the foundations of music. Water no longer appears as a pictorial, framed notion of which the music merely 'speaks' but becomes the very substrate, the very materiality, of musical language. It is worth noting the symmetry of this approach with that proposed by François Jollivet-Castelot, an alchemist and Rosicrucian who gravitated in the same convivial circle as Debussy and who drew a parallel between the knowledge of matter and the spiritual path.

Water no longer appears as a pictorial, framed notion of which the music merely 'speaks' but becomes the very substrate, the very materiality, of musical language.

Debussy glimpsed, or at least felt in his core, this immaterial nature of music, or this latent capacity to transpose, at least in part, a Music (with a capital M) from a more subtle, suprasensory reality. In a letter to his publisher Jacques Durand, the composer stated: 'I am becoming more

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and more convinced that Music, by its very essence, is not something that can flow into a strict, traditional form…It's a very young art, both as a means and as 'knowledge'." This expansion of the formal boundaries of music was inevitable, but it required the existence of a genius like Debussy's. His choice of the verb 'to flow' (*couler* in the original French) also leaves a hint of slyness in the statement. Michel Imberty, a French scholar specialising in the psychology of music, notes: 'Debussy's water becomes the authentic dynamic of his work. Water possesses a material evidence of sound which, for him, is a fundamental archetype from which all other transformations, changes, and forms proceed.'

Cyril Scott, in his thought-provoking *Music and its Secret Influence Throughout the Ages*, argues that it is precisely this aesthetic reorientation that makes Debussy, above all others, the musician able to recreate, in the earthly form of music, its spiritual counterpart. He also advocates that further proof of this aptitude—or openness to another form of manifestation, we might say—is the way in which this 'new music', though revolutionary, imposed itself through subtlety, not through rupture or harsher contrasts with the musical production in force until then, characteristics that would become those of later musicians such as Stravinsky or Bartók, all tributaries in some way of the author of *La mer* ('The Sea').

Debussy himself spoke of music as 'a dream from which the veils have been lifted', and that one should have 'the courage to go on living in one's dream, and the energy to go on searching for the Inexpressible, which is the ideal of all art'. These are two ideals dear to the adept of mysticism. The capital letter itself in



The Great Wave off Kanagawa *by Hokusai. Japanese prints were one of Debussy's main sources of inspiration.*

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'Inexpressible' makes us think of a level of reality that cannot be accessed through objective and banal means. But let us return to the Debussyan water.

Reflections in the Water (or rather, *from* the Water)

In another letter to Durand, Debussy evokes a suggestive childhood memory of Cannes, where the train tracks seemed to emerge from the sea, or submerge in it. This is a curious analogy of the interpenetration of two worlds, for which achievement he would be the high priest. His compositions marked by the sign of water are numerous. Several of the famous *melodies*—such as *Il pleure dans mon Cœur* ('Tears Fall in My Heart'), *Le jet d'eau* ('The Water Jet') and *La mer est plus belle* ('The Sea is More Beautiful')—stand out, dating from the period of his closest contact with Joséphin Péladan and the Rosicrucian Order of the Temple and the Grail, but the aquatic element is also lavish in his output for the piano. For this instrument he wrote works that have become staples of the repertoire, such as *Poissons d'or* ('Golden Fish'), a delicate and ingenious figuration with an Asian flavour; *Jardins sous la pluie* ('Gardens in the Rain'), a masterful representation of Parisian gardens in the rain; 'The Snow is Dancing' or the *Ondine* from *Préludes*, in which a mythological aquatic figure is evoked in a hauntingly realistic way; and *Des pas sur la neige* ('Footsteps in the Snow'), a notable exception in which Debussy deliberately indicates, in writing on the score, the association of the rhythmic figure with a wintry landscape: water in its glacial state!

However, in Debussy's universe, water itself is subject to ambiguity. The title *Voiles*, the second prelude of the first series, is disconcerting for its ambiguity, as it can mean either 'veils' or 'sails'. Its little more than static pulsation suggests, if we think of the sails of a boat, a seascape lightly touched by the breeze. The marine association seems to prevail among performers and scholars, a notable exception being Siglind Bruhn, who, in her remarkable *Images and Ideas in Modern French Piano Music*, argues that the composer Edgard Varèse claimed that Debussy was actually inspired by an American dancer who was very fashionable in Paris at the time and who performed her numbers wearing tulle veils.

It is in this imprecision—or rather, in these illimitable possibilities—that lies the very key to the greatness of musical language, as well as to its accessibility. Each person receives the musical message with their own sensitivity, with the capacity of the spirit that animates them, and absorbs it, incorporates it, re-signifies it, and through it builds new phases of perception and experience. It is precisely this dynamic capacity that determines the endurance of musical discourse.

Debussy himself spoke of music as 'a dream from which the veils have been lifted',

Among the *Préludes*, *La cathédrale engloutie* ('The Submerged Cathedral') occupies a key position. This marvellous page of the Debussyan repertoire—much more symbolist than impressionist, by the way—offers significant aural sensations to even the least-prepared listener. According to British pianist Paul Roberts, an authority on Debussy, we have here the evocation of 'a potent image of water as a symbol of interior experience, of the subconscious (submerged) impressions of a dream'. It evokes the mysterious waters and the experience of the supernatural. In *Reflets dans l'eau* ('Reflections in the Water'), on the other hand, we have a somewhat nocturnal pianism, in which the interaction between water and image is mainly descriptive, through the compositional mechanisms to which we alluded earlier.

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Compositions like *La cathédrale engloutie*, however, suggest rather than depict ideas and realities—landscapes that are more interior than material and pictorial. Everything remains 'liquid', never explicit, never fully conscious, because it must be apprehended subconsciously. Odilon Redon, a painter friend of Debussy's who participated in the Salons de la Rose-Croix, left in this regard a reflection on his own work that echoes this artistic conception, as quoted in Paul Robert's *Images: the piano music of Claude Debussy*: 'My drawings are not intended to define anything: they inspire. They make no statements and set no limits. They lead, like music, into an ambiguous world where there is no cause and no effect.

Beyond the confines of the 88 ebony and ivory keys, *La Mer* ('The Sea'), which comprises three symphonic sketches for orchestra, is the most powerful musical translation of water produced by Debussy's pen. But it is interesting to note that two other elements are also present here: fire, represented by the midday sun in the first part, *De l'aube à midi sur la mer* ('From Dawn to Noon on the Sea'); and air in its cinematic manifestation, the wind, in the third part, *Dialogue du vent et de la mer* ('Dialogue of the Wind and the Sea'). The French philosopher and musicologist Vladimir Jankélévitch states: '[*La Mer*] is the immemorial dialogue between the elements, in which everything is placed on a cosmic scale and where only the voice of primordial nature resounds'.

With regard to the three *Nocturnes* for orchestra, Jankélévitch argues that Debussy celebrates three of the elements in them: air in *Nuages* ('Clouds'), fire in *Fêtes* ('Festivals') and, of course, water in *Sirènes* ('Mermaids'), where we once again have a mythical-peripheral association with the liquid element, concluding that, of all the elements, earth is the least Debussyan of all. We couldn't agree more.

Finally, the action of his only opera, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, takes place entirely in the vicinity of a sinister sea that foreshadows storms and departures. The microcosmic counterpart to this sea is a well of shallow, dormant water, which in the plot is said to restore sight to those who cannot see.



Nocturne: Blue and Silver – Chelsea *by James McNeill Whistler. Debussy and Whistler were mutual influences, with Whistler borrowing from musical vocabulary to name his pictures, while Debussy did something similar in reverse.*

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Dormant Waters, Deep Waters

Between 1903 and 1905, a period that coincides with the composition of *La Mer* and *Jardins sous la pluie* ('Gardens in the Rain'), among others, Debussy lived his own personal *solutio*, beginning with the crisis and dramatic end of his first marriage and ending with the birth of his only daughter, Chouchou. It is during this same period that he composed *L'isle Joyeuse* ('The Joyful Island'), a projection of a chimerical paradise of ecstasy and consummation that makes us wonder about the ideal whereabouts in which he rested his artistic-prophetic vision when he crossed to the other shore of the mercurial waters.

For Debussy, according to Jankélévitch, '...water is not transparent, but reflective; it is not a diaphanous crystal, but a mirror that restores to man his image and to his attentive self-awareness his concerns.' Water is an element that cannot be retained, that is fleeting, but whose traces are indelible. These are adjectives that apply to Debussy's work, which itself overflows its zeitgeist and is, in a certain sense, ephemeral in its originality since it has never been reproduced by any composer in any temporal window but has only been derived, quoted, and produced digressions. Yet his work is perennial by the very mark it has managed to chisel in the course of music since his time.

Rosicrucian philosophy advocates harmony between human beings and the universe. This search for a deeper connection with nature and the cosmos is mirrored in Debussy's work, which often reflects a subtle interaction with natural elements.Just as Rosicrucians seek inner understanding and spiritual evolution, Debussy explored complex emotions and sensations in his music, creating soundscapes that can be interpreted as introspective journeys.

In addition to the next generation of classical composers, it is in jazz that his footprint has been most fully amalgamated and metabolised. Born under the sign of fire, he will have reached the zenith of his genius sublimated by the complementary force of water, operating the mystery of the conjunction of opposites in such a masterly way that his pulse, his essence, and his mystique can still be felt today, more than a century after his transition.

Water is an element that cannot be retained, that is fleeting, but whose traces are indelible.

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Masters of Light

by **Fr Sagar Chaitanya**
Chinmaya International Foundation

With eyes half open
And breath so shallow
Let us hear the sound
Chin - Chin - Chin - Chin!

Ask: who is listening?
What is this silence?
Is this a silent state?
The womb of everything?

When lost in this poise
An awareness permeates
Lo! Is it any wonder
A mystery dwells here!

With questions such as:
Where do I come from?
Where are we all going?
Who is pondering this?

Who is breathing?
What are we doing?
Why are we all here?
Are we all Brahman?

Mystical eye unveils
The ecstasy esoteric
Entry into stillness
Becomes most loving

Steadiness of limbs with
Abiding sense of peace
Drowns the mighty ego
In the ocean of consciousness

No count of seconds
But an eternal state
Of all-pervading bliss
Has become our nature

The light now shines
For everyone to see
Our glorious work for
The God in heaven

This immortal quest
In the school of life
Has begun its making
Of Masters of light!

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My Rosicrucian Philosophy

By **Amorifer**

My own philosophy has always been 'Man, know yourself by yourself', and this knowledge is always changing and evolving. It is never definite but is always becoming better and grander, thus helping me to be contented and to always enjoy life. I feel that every conscious moment of life is for giving birth to something better, greater and more wonderful in thought, word or action.

We don't have to be very much concerned with the past—past incarnations and so-called past failures, imperfections and limitations—as these are only stepping stones to the present moment. We can always look at the present moment for its wonderful attributes of light, life and love, which are present in our own consciousness. Thus, we find ourselves aspiring for more knowledge, understanding and attunement with the great cosmic scheme of things and our place and purpose in this grand universe.

We can choose to live in a world of our own making. We can realise fully our weaknesses as well as our virtues. We can know and feel the impelling influence of our emotions and their subtle effect upon our reason. I know that as I think in my heart so am I, as is quoted in Sacred Scripture.

If we inquire into the physical universe in which we live, we may know it better and may employ it for the betterment of ourselves and our fellow human beings. If we inquire about our own inner or psychic nature, we may realise the grandeur and beauty of that which exists

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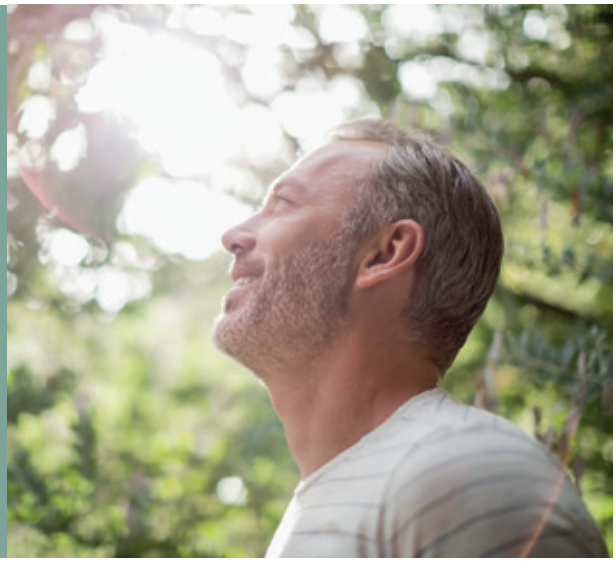
within. If we also inquire about the nature of knowledge itself and how to attain true and perfect knowledge, we become a 'walking question mark' and shall always be so. Experience and experiment are important avenues for receiving knowledge, but we can also fully realise intuitive knowledge and knowledge through revelation.

I know that I am growing from day to day and moment to moment, evolving in understanding of myself, of the universe and of the God of my comprehension who created me and the whole that exists. I am greatly thankful and full of gratitude for having life, consciousness and all its attributes showered upon me. I know that I am here for a purpose, a grand purpose, and have the wonderful privilege of serving and of being of some help to anybody and everybody whom I may happen to meet or who may cross my path. The ability to so feel is a wonderful and great privilege.

I realise that the God of all is impersonal and has created us and all other manifestations for reasons which perhaps we only very dimly understand. We are but a symbol trying to manifest part of God's great purpose, great wisdom, love, and power. We can always try to be conscious, as best we can, of what the Divine wishes us to do, hoping that it will reveal to us fully whatever is desired and whatever experiences it wants us to go through for its glory and for the service of humankind.

I know that to know is to remember that there is nothing entirely new under the sun, and that all that really matters is the state of our awareness and our consciousness of the ever-present yet fleeting moment in which we live and have our being. I thus must seize these wonderful fleeting moments and make the best of them according to what I know and understand, realising fully that I have always within me the God-given ability to cope, to benefit and to profit from this. I am confident that my Creator will reveal to me, in the proper place and time, what would best be thought, spoken or done under certain circumstances. Trials or difficulties, I realise, are a challenge for us to climb to higher levels for our evolution and perfection. Knowing this makes it easy for me, because I have been given many attributes by the Creator for overcoming them.

Realising fully that the whole is in one and the one is in the whole, and by daily setting aside a period for contemplation, meditation and concentration, we will gain in understanding and in the unfoldment of our Soul to Illumination. This is my philosophy of life.



istockphoto / Wavebreakmedia

'I am greatly thankful and full of gratitude for having life, consciousness and all its attributes showered upon me.'

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Hilma af Klint: *Mystic & artist ahead of her time*

The following article was written as a reflection on an exhibition of the work of Hilma af Klint, held in the Hamburger Bahnhof – Nationalgalerie der Gegenwart in Berlin in October 2013.



Hilma af Klint at her studio in Stockholm. c.1885

Hilma af Klint was born into a prominent aristocratic Swedish family in 1862 in Sweden and lived until 1944. She was one of the first artists to express mystical ideas in abstract artwork. The family lived in Karlberg Palace in Stockholm, the naval academy where her father was based, until Hilma was 10. At the palace, Hilma studied science, mathematics, art and other topics. During the summer, the family lived on an island in Lake Mälaren, where Hilma's fascination with nature began. She was knowledgeable about the scientific discoveries of her time, including quantum mechanics, electromagnetic waves and Einstein's theory of relativity, and sought to understand these theories in an artistic and spiritual way.

Had Klint not decreed that her works should not be published for up to 20 years after her death, she would almost certainly have been one of the most famous artists of her kind, and very likely her artwork would have been showcased in the most prestigious museums in the world. Her reason for withholding her magnificent legacy from the public gaze is that she was convinced that people were not ready for it. It would be more than forty years after her death when her paintings were exhibited.

As an artist who was far ahead of her time, Klint was the first major Western artist to paint abstract art. Some of her male contemporaries—the abstract artists Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Piet Mondrian

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Hilma af Klint self-portrait.

and others—are much better known, but her work pre-dates their earliest abstract art.

However, in the 21st century her works are making a triumphal march through many of the major museums of the world. In one of these museums, the Hamburger Bahnhof – Nationalgalerie der Gegenwart in Berlin, her work was exhibited in October 2013, right next to an exhibition of the works of the German artist Joseph Beuys. What Klint had in common with Joseph

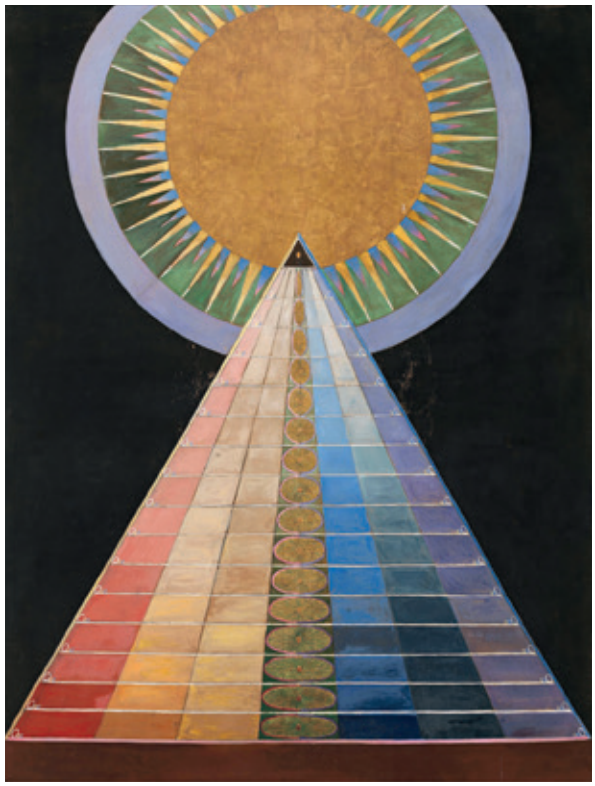
She was deeply inspired by Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy, a philosophy he developed after leaving the Theosophical Society.

Beuys was that, like him, she was deeply interested in esotericism and mysticism. She was certainly familiar with mysticism under the influence of Rosicrucianism, Theosophy and Anthroposophy, which is reflected in her work.

She was deeply inspired by Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy, a philosophy he developed after leaving the Theosophical Society. Before Klint's connection with Steiner, she had been an active member of the Theosophical Society since 1904, participating in group meetings and activities. Steiner, who led the German section of the Theosophical Society before founding the Anthroposophical Society in 1912, visited Stockholm for the first time in 1908, where they met. She attended his lectures and became a member of the Anthroposophical Society, adopting Steiner's 'wet-on-wet' watercolour technique and being influenced by his ideas about colour. He acted as a spiritual mentor who could validate her spiritual perceptions.

In her notebooks, Klint describes how she approached Steiner to ask if her work was influenced by the Rosicrucians. She expresssed how excited she felt by his discussions on topics such as the Rosicrucians—which she had always wanted to explore and contact.

However, Steiner, who favoured the approach of



Group X, No. 1, Altarpiece *by Hilma af Klint, 1915.*

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'spiritual science', disapproved of Klint's claim that she was working as a spiritual medium and purportedly discouraged her from showing her paintings, saying that the world would not be ready for them for another 50 years. In the art history world there is some controversy surrounding photographs of her work, taken by Steiner, which may have been viewed by Kandinsky and may have influenced his work whilst her work remained unknown.

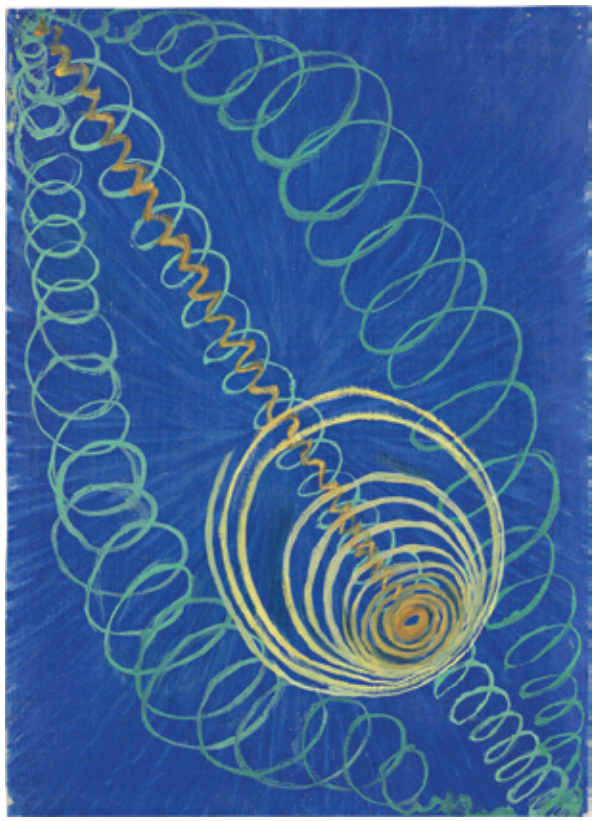
Klint was arguably the inventor of modern abstract art, due to the first abstract paintings she completed in 1906. However, it is far more likely that her spiritual interests—combined with her sound education in both physics and metaphysics—were the impulse for the abstraction in her work, rather than a preoccupation with a new style.

After a period devoted to caring for her elderly mother, and during her later years, Klint became concerned about the legacy of her work. She started creating journals and sketchbooks as well as cataloguing and photographing her paintings. During this time she reviewed her previous works and documented her practice. Since she felt that her works had been divinely inspired she felt it fitting to propose a suitable place for exhibiting them in the distant future.

istockphoto / tinnaporn



The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum of modern and contemporary art.



Hilma af Klint, 1906-07, 'Primordial Chaos - No 16'

Accordingly, in 1930 she produced sketch drawings of a circular building in which viewers would ascend a spiral staircase towards the heavens; noting that the building should be on an island, surrounded by water and imbued with a certain power and calm. It was therefore a moment of fulfilment when her works were exhibited in the spiralling Guggenheim Museum, which was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, took 15 years to build (from 1943 to 1959) and is located on the island of Manhattan.

Many of Klint's paintings exhibit Rosicrucian ideas about creation, such as we see in the painting *Primordial Chaos*, in which there is primordial emanation emerging from a single source of unity, which then becomes a duality with a third force.

Hilma af Klint saw herself as a medium, and she

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felt that many of her paintings were guided from a higher level:

> 'The pictures were painted directly through me, without preliminary drawings and with great power...'

> 'I am an atom in the universe that has access to infinite possibilities of development, and it is these possibilities I want, gradually, to reveal.'

In her impressive 'Paintings for the Temple – Primordial Chaos' series, she reflects her deep mystical understanding of Cosmic emanation out of the primordial chaos to the fulfilment of the divine creative mission. The series illustrates the emergence of a central force of creation, a moment of cosmic birth. In the Primoridal Chaos series no.16, there is a point of singularity, formed in the unity which is a primordial source and behind which are pre-existing dual forces (and another point of convergence). The painting therefore perhaps reflects cycles of evolution. A central and essential force, bearing the golden yellow active colour, is set against a homogeneous passive blue backdrop (perhaps alluding to the undifferentiated cosmic waters) yet containing filaments of 'the luminous'. The active, vital life-giving force causes the dualities to converge, unifying them once again. According to her own statements, Klint expressed the masculine principle in creation with yellow and the feminine principle in blue; however, when these are accompanied by the colour green it is clear to the mystical eye that she was expressing the connection between these two.

Her work reflects a mystical understanding of the Trinity, or a triune supreme unity...

Klint's work reflects a mystical understanding of the Trinity, or a triune supreme unity, which is similar to the Rosicrucian Order's ontology relating to the divine primordial unity.



Svanen *by Hilma af Klint, 1914.*

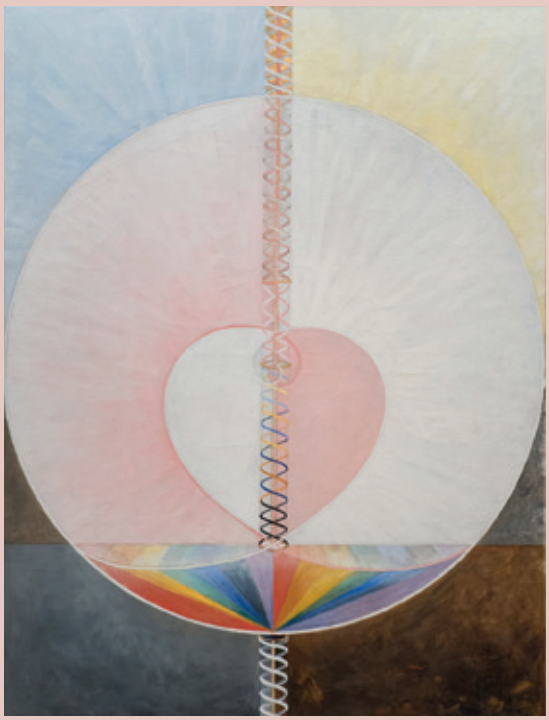


The Swan No. 1 *by Hilma af Klint, 1915.*

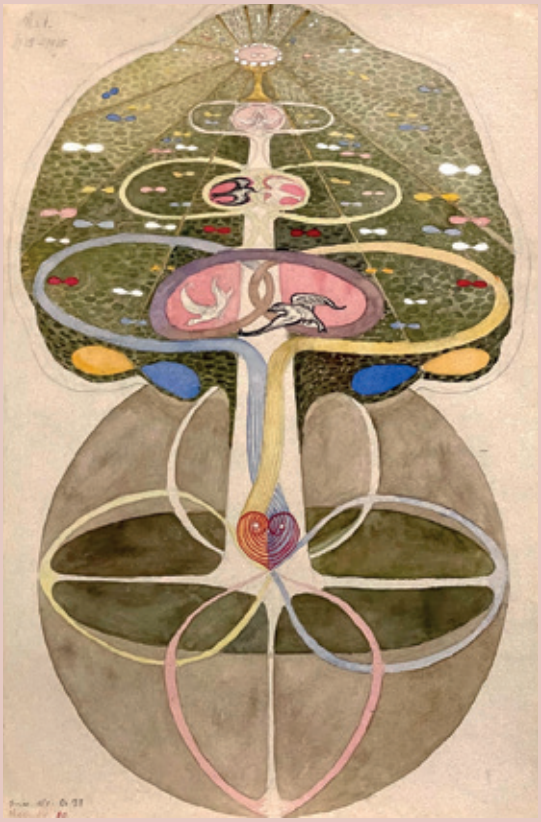
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Altar Piece No. 2 *by Hilma af Klint.*



The Dove, No. 1 *by Hilma af Klint, 1915.*



Tree of Knowledge – Number 1 *by Hilma af Klint.*

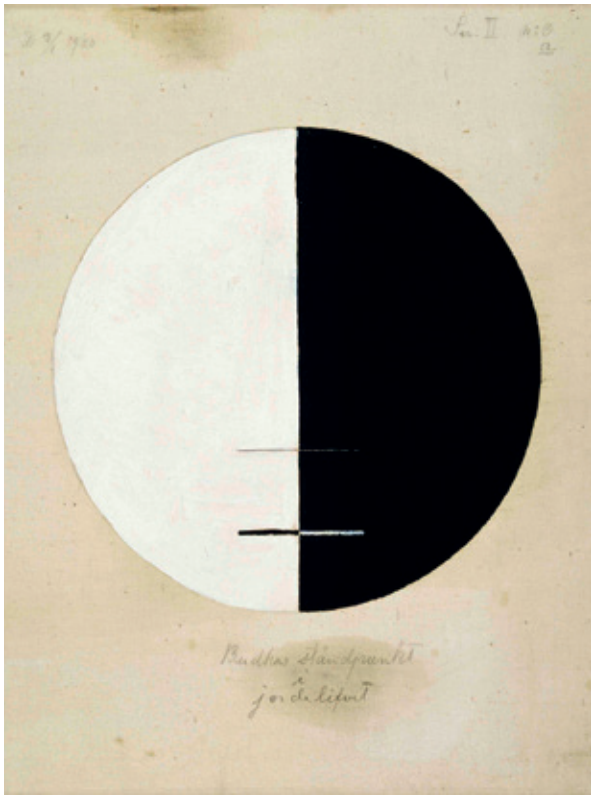


The Ten Largest – Number 1 Childhood *by Hilma af Klint*

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In Klint's works we sometimes find the duality of the human being depicted in the form of a white and a black swan. In her symbolic palette, the white swan stands for unfolding through devotion to wisdom and inspiration, while the black swan stands for unfolding in pure external knowledge and action. It is very easy for the viewer to self-examine which side he or she may lean towards.

Klint explored themes of the unification of dualities—good and evil, female and male, and light and darkness. She aimed to make seen the unseen forces that she believed shaped the world, transcending the limitations of purely visible reality. She explored the stages of human evolution and spiritual development, with the concept of the 'temple' referring to the human body as a vessel for the soul.



Buddha's Standpoint in the Earthly Life, No. 3a, Series XI *by Hilma af Klint, 1920.*

Her abstract symbolism employs a visual language of symbols. Spirals could represent evolution, development and cosmic energy. Colours could symbolise dual forces, such as masculine and feminine, and their combination creates the child of spiritual union. Other symbols, such as crosses and the six-pointed star, might convey ideas of the unification of the spiritual and material planes.

In Klint's three altarpieces we see how the involution and evolution of creation is symbolised as unfolding in pyramidal steps. In *Altarpeice No. 2*, it is tempting to relate the colour scheme to that of the alchemist's palette of black, white, yellow and red, representing the key stages of the Magnum Opus or the Great Work: Nigredo, Albedo, Citrinitas, and Rubedo. While in alchemical concepts these colours symbolise the transformation of materials from a base state to perfection, Klint's work may be aiming to reflect a form of spiritual alchemy; that is, the transformational processes within the inner life of a person as a reflection of a greater process at work in the universe.

Klint explored themes of the unification of dualities—good and evil, female and male, and light and darkness.

In *Altarpiece No. 2* we can also observe abstract two-dimensional pure geometrical forms of the square, the triangle and the circle being penetrated by one another and given movement and three dimensions by the spiral and its crescendos. It is as if the image is to be viewed from the turning sphere above, moving downwards towards the point of singularity, as well moving upwards from the point towards the harmony of the sphere.

Viewed from the point upwards, we sense that the work is expressing phases of creation—from light

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(point containing primary colours, joining to become white light) to life (upward spiral crescendos) to love (in the union of the polarities, creating the golden sphere of, perhaps, universal love). At the end point, or at the starting point, the three colours of creation, so important to her, can be found surrounding the golden circle of the divine: yellow for the masculine and blue for the feminine—an expression of the polarities of every human being.



To the attentive viewer, Klint's images constantly reveal the way of the heart and its striving for love and for alignment with what is true, beautiful and good until we become fully reunited with the divine.

Hilma af Klint quotations

'Only to one who is prepared to lose one's life in its known form life will appear newly robed in infinitely greater beauty and perfection. But to achieve such a state, silence must be acquired in both thought and feeling.'

'Life is an aberration if people don't serve the truth.'

'The atom has at once limits and the capacity to develop. When the atom expands on the ether plane, the physical part of the earthly atom begins to glow.'

'Those granted the gift of seeing more deeply can see beyond form and concentrate on the wondrous aspect hiding behind every form, which is called life.'



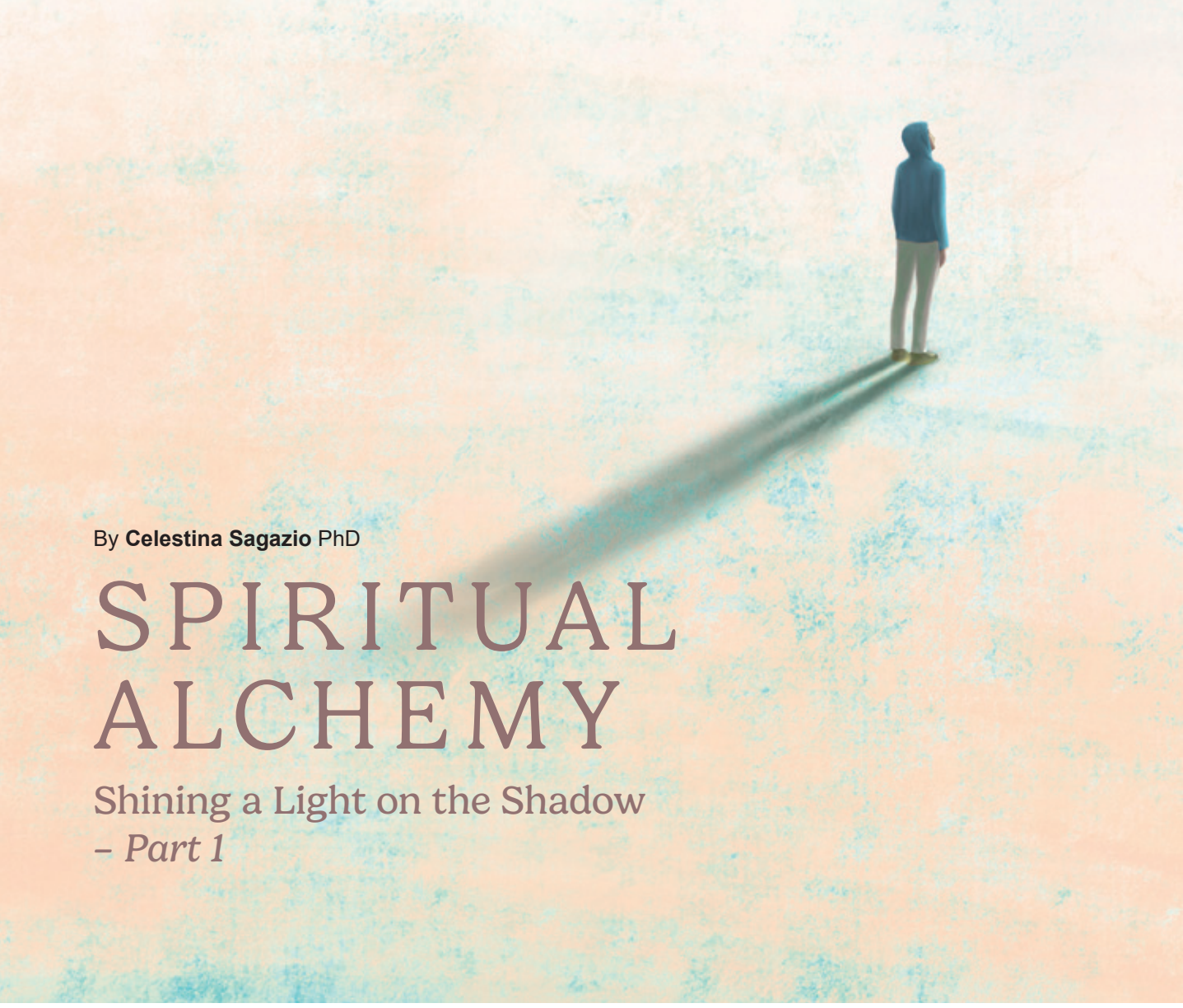
The Swan No. 12 *by Hilma af Klint, 1915.*

Klint's images constantly reveal the way of the heart and its striving for love and for alignment with what is true, beautiful and good...

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By **Celestina Sagazio** PhD

SPIRITUAL ALCHEMY

Shining a Light on the Shadow – *Part 1*

This article explores spiritual alchemy by examining illuminating concepts of 'shadow work', or deep probing into our psyche, across mysticism, psychology and Rosicrucian ideas and highlighting parallels in the work of Meister Eckhart, Teresa of Avila and modern spiritual thinkers, such as psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Carl Jung.

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Spiritual alchemy is the inner process of transforming our base human nature into a refined spiritual gold. The purification of our psyche, which has been described as the totality of the human mind, conscious and unconscious, involves aligning with the higher spiritual virtues such as love, wisdom and compassion. Carl Jung's idea of the *shadow* and the process of individuation for achieving 'wholeness' is a modern version of this spiritual alchemy. The Johari Window, which will be discussed below, is also a useful psychological model for understanding self-awareness and interpersonal relationships.

* * *

From a Rosicrucian perspective, we live in a world of duality, a sphere where we experience opposites such as light and darkness, masculine and feminine

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energies, active and passive forces. Yet these dualities arise out of a Divine unity that is omnipotent (all powerful), omniscient (all knowing) and omnipresent (present everywhere).

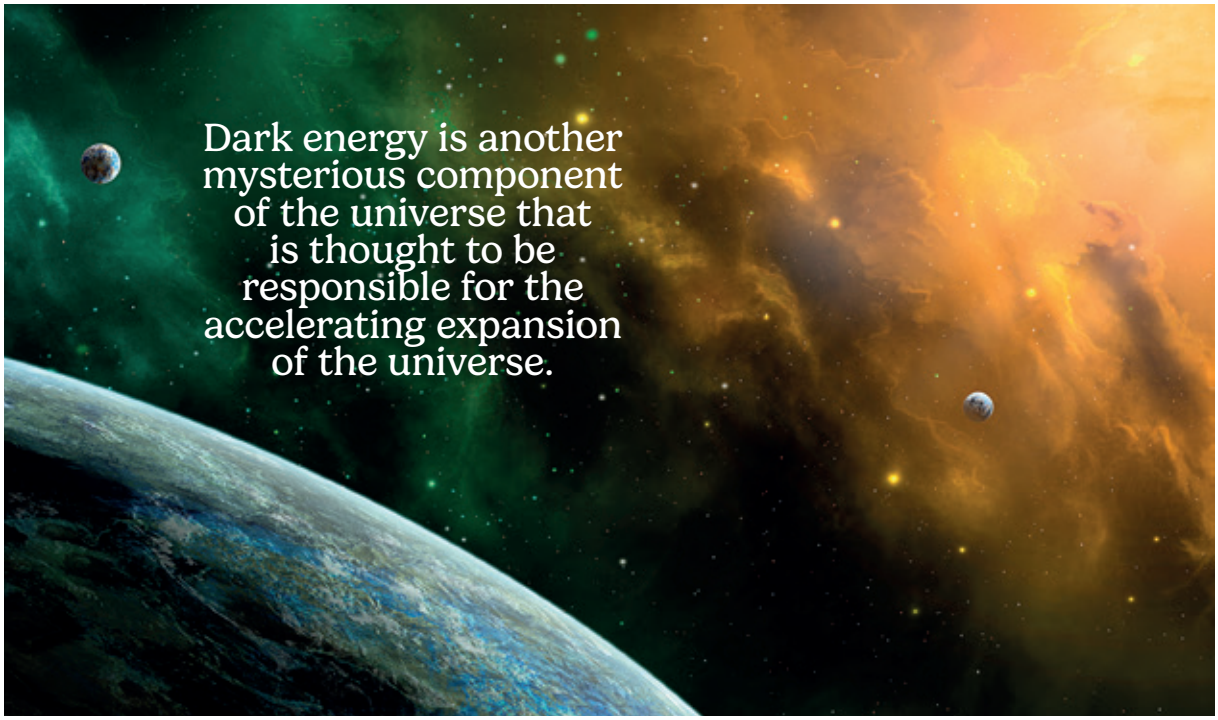
Scientists tell us that 'dark' elements make up most of the universe, while ordinary matter, such as stars, planets, and everything we can see and interact with, makes up only 5 per cent. *Dark matter* is a mysterious substance that interacts gravitationally but does not reflect light, making it invisible to us. It is estimated that dark matter consists of roughly 27 per cent of the universe's total mass-energy density. *Dark energy* is another mysterious component of the universe that is thought to be responsible for the accelerating expansion of the universe. It makes up the largest portion of the universe's mass-energy (about 68 per cent).

Human Nature

It is logical, then, to accept that the Divine is present throughout the universe, both in darkness and in light, including human nature with all its fascinating characteristics. Human nature is deeply mysterious and has ambiguous, contradictory and paradoxical elements. Only a tiny part of who we are is visible in the physical world.

Working with 'the shadow', or our imperfections, has been described by numerous commentators as being among the most important and difficult undertakings we will ever know. But this work is made much easier when we remember that we are never separate from the Divine, that the God of our Heart is always with us, both in our positive and negative aspects, and is waiting to be asked to assist us. Free will is highly valued by the spiritual world, and asking for and receiving direct assistance, such as through the valuable practices of intuition, prayer and meditation, is important.

Since ancient times, countless spiritual and religious teachers have examined our mysterious human nature and taught us about humanity's virtues and limitations, and they have provided valuable



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guidance in these areas. Many sages and mystics have proposed that there are imperfections within us and outside us; some have even spoken about an 'evil force'. Many religious authorities have extolled 'virtues' and 'proper conduct' and denounced 'sins' and 'evil' practices. These include the so-called 'seven deadly sins' of pride, greed, wrath, envy, lust, gluttony and sloth. They say that God is the force of light and there must be an opposing force of evil—the universe cannot be without the coexistence of both light and darkness, as represented by the wonderful yin and yang symbol.



The ancient religion of Zoroastrianism accepted a dualistic cosmology of good and evil, as did many other groups, such as the Essenes and the Gnostics. We are instructed that great masters like Jesus and Buddha faced 'demons' or challenges as a test of their spiritual progress.

Great Mystics

Many students of mysticism are well aware of the injunction to *'know thyself'*, which is a maxim inscribed on the pediment of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, together with the advice 'nothing in excess', inviting humankind to exercise moderation in life.

Many great mystics have left us magnificent teachings which have recorded their experiences of both higher consciousness and challenging aspects of their human nature. A notable example is the German medieval mystic Meister Eckhart, who has been described by the writer Matthew Fox as the greatest mystic of the West. Fox has brilliantly interpreted and promoted Eckhart's work for our benefit. Eckhart taught an advanced form of spirituality of creation and the benefits of deep meditation. He was in awe of the wonders of life, nature, creatures and our boundless innate creativity, and delved deeply into the psyche of humans. He has assisted us in developing a deeper understanding of the marriage of the Divine Feminine and the Sacred Masculine.

Meditation and mindfulness were extremely important to Eckhart, and he promoted the practice to his students and the public. He taught that inner

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Learning 'to let go' and 'letting be' meant we are capable of dealing with positive and negative things equally.



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Meister Eckhart

solitude required practice and discipline. Learning 'to let go' and 'letting be' meant we are capable of dealing with positive and negative things equally. He advised us to quieten the mind with its numerous negative concerns and be at one with peace. For example, he taught people to combat the temptation of greed and avarice by 'letting go'. He instructed us to be fully present at all times. He stated:

> When you are distracted by your sorrow, fear or anger, you cannot really be present to the people and things that you love.

By meditating deeply, Eckhart was accessing universal mystical truths in his psyche or collective unconscious...

Mindfulness cannot happen if we are not empty of distractions and are filled with projects and projections.

In speaking of awe, wonder and the glorious radiance of the universe, Eckhart viewed God as light, the God of all that is beautiful, the God of creation. He saw humans as co-creators, in that God gives birth to us, and we give birth to God. The Divine is also the God of history, which wants to liberate and redeem those elements of creation and humans that are less than true to their best selves. We can call this the ***Sacred Masculine***.

It is important to note that Eckhart also viewed God as without light, the God of darkness, the God who cannot be named or described. By meditating deeply, Eckhart was accessing universal mystical truths in his psyche or collective unconscious, not only via the deep and universal archetypes (patterns) of Christianity but also through a broader spirituality. Eckhart spoke plainly about the limits to our knowledge of God. God is in fact hidden, and deep within the Godhead lies a profound and dark mystery. While the God of history and creation is about words and doing, or actions, the mysterious Godhead is about being and silence. This is the ***Sacred Feminine.*** Eckhart even says that the Divine dwells therein, unknown to himself, in this extraordinary quote:

> God dwells therein, unknown to himself, and the light of the eternal Father has forever shone in there and the darkness does not comprehend the light.

Eckhart taught that 'the ground of the soul is dark' and that we should sink into the dark, as it is the ground of true humility. He was unafraid of entertaining the void and declared that 'God was born



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in nothingness'. However, his idea of nothingness is not something negative but something wholly Divine-like. He dived down in the nothingness of the maternal womb and came back to proclaim the Divine Feminine.

Eckhart helps us to navigate a journey downward into the dark, into the shadows or nothingness...

Most of all, Eckhart understood and welcomed the urge to explore the human mind and its many layers of consciousness, and so it was natural that he wanted to know what was going on most deeply in his psyche. Eckhart helps us to navigate a journey downward into the dark, into the shadows or nothingness, where he discovered a region that was an intersection between the Divine and the human. Eckhart knew that darkness there would be overcome by the light. He made that journey himself and came back to tell us about it, to visualise and describe it. He taught that it is important to seek vital truths present there, as without exploration and acknowledgement they will leave us subject to their control.

In his discussion of nothingness, Eckhart therefore urged us to face the imperfections in our psyche. He encouraged us to pay attention to our weak side:



Carl Jung



Teresa of Avila

> It is very silly for a person who fasts a lot, prays and performs great works and spends time in solitude if he does not mend his ways and is impatient and angry. One should find out one's greatest weakness and devote all one's energy to overcoming that.

Eckhart's teachings greatly influenced Carl Jung, whose ideas gained prominence in the twentieth century. The 'unconscious' represents what we are not conscious of knowing, but Jung argued that we can become aware of what the unconscious contains by letting go, by letting be and letting happen without judgement. This was Eckhart's teaching, and it provided Jung with the key to open the door to the psyche and collective unconscious.

It is clear why the great mystics cross paths with depth psychologists, as both are on a journey to find truth in the depths of selfhood and community...

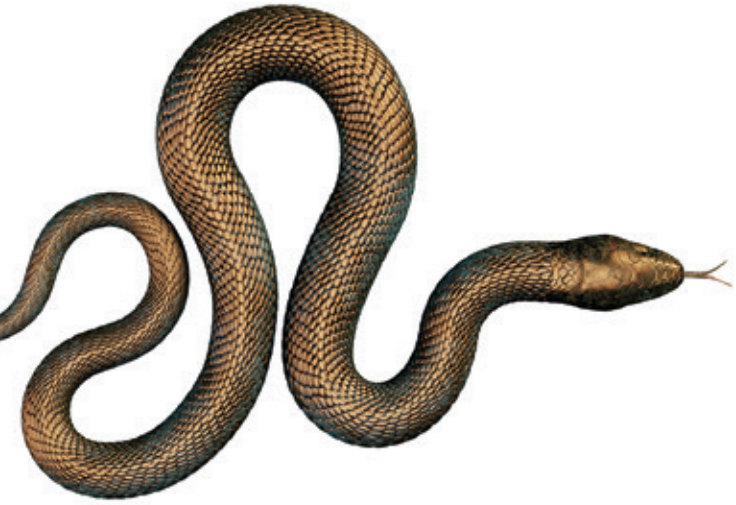
Psychology offers much healing and insight to people striving to be healed and liberated. It is clear why the great mystics cross paths with depth psychologists, as both are on a journey to find truth in the depths of selfhood and community—they delve into the 'inner person'.

The profound teachings of the Spanish mystic Teresa of Avila also assist us in understanding our deeper selves. Teresa wrote the brilliant work *The Interior Castle*[1], which offers fascinating and instructive insights into the human psyche, or soul, and the journey into self-knowledge. In her work, the 'crystal castle', which represents the soul, is entered by a seeker who begins a wonderful and at times harrowing journey. The outer environment of the castle is cold and dark, and there are snakes and other creatures. But as the seeker enters the castle and begins

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to penetrate its inner recesses, the darkness gives way to light, which is a glow emanating from the centre of the castle. The centre has a magnetic attraction that draws one through the dwelling places.

Among the other images presented in this allegory are water, serpents, devils, a butterfly, and marriage. Influenced by Meister Eckhart, Teresa had tapped into collective depths, and these images became the vehicles



for the reader's entry into his or her own archetypal depths. Numerous mystical commentators, Jung and subsequent Jungian experts agree on the meaning of such images. For example, serpents are Teresa's image for outer collective forces which hinder the inward journey. Jung found that such images also represent inner collective forces. Devils are one of the personifications of the neglected, inferior side of the personality which Jung called the shadow side. Teresa and Jung saw the butterfly as an allegory of the psyche as the self emerges through a series of transformations.

Spiritual Alchemy

In recent times, our understanding of the nature of the human psyche and human behaviour has deepened, and it is useful to examine the latest research and commentary. A common and well-regarded model in psychological and spiritual circles is one based on



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Jungian principles. Carl Jung greatly advanced our understanding of the psyche and its role in our personal transformation, which he called the process of 'individuation'. We should note that Jung proposed that the drive for individuation is a completely natural process, necessary for integration of all parts of the psyche.

Jung concluded that each of us is linked to a 'collective unconscious', which is the entire history of humankind with its desires, fears, memories and prejudices.

There is an innate part of us that wants this to happen for spiritual growth and ethical reasons; however, humans have struggled between the two internal impulses: divine and diabolical, sacred and profane. We need these opposing forces in our psyche, but they need to be balanced. Jungians argue that this balance—the ideal state—is 'wholeness'. But humans evade acknowledging their imperfections, and therefore the shadow has more power over us. Jung concluded that each of us is linked to a 'collective unconscious', which is the entire history of humankind with its desires, fears, memories and prejudices. The shadow also lives in this shared unconscious.



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Jung shrewdly saw many transformative aspects in alchemy that paralleled the nature of the psyche and our spiritual growth. The alchemist's belief in a unity or oneness of process is based on the notion of an 'essence' which pervades all creation and connects qualities as opposites. Alchemical thinking is concerned with opposite states that we know in our psychological being, such as good and evil, male and female, mind and body, love and hate, conscious and unconscious, spirit and matter, and left brain and right brain function.

To demonstrate some of these concepts, let us examine the first three processes of the seven alchemical stages. The process of *calcination* is the beginning stage in alchemy. To 'calcine' something is to burn it until it is reduced to ashes. This can be interpreted as burning our false identity or inflated ego to achieve a higher level of consciousness. The next stage, *dissolution*, represents a further breaking down of the artificial structures of the psyche by total immersion in the unconscious, irrational, 'feminine' or rejected part of our minds. The third stage, *separation*, represents a conscious process in which we review formerly hidden material and decide what to reject and what to reintegrate into our evolving personality. This shadowy material largely includes things we are ashamed of or were instructed to hide away by our parents, teachers and society.



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The rich alchemical tradition informs us that purification can take place within us on many levels. There are two excellent publications that were written on this topic by Rosicrucians and are worth examining: *The Emerald Tablet*[2] and *The Grail Quest.*[3]

Jung taught us that our shadow side (limitations) is the person we would rather not be. Our shadow is everything that irritates, repulses or disgusts us about other people or about ourselves, and we try to hide our shadow from others. It is made up of the thoughts, emotions and impulses we find too painful and embarrassing to accept. A characteristic of this model is the notion of 'projection', which is an involuntary defence mechanism of the ego. Instead of acknowledging the qualities in us that we dislike, we project them onto someone else. It is important to understand that whatever we condemn in another is really a disowned or rejected part of ourselves.

Our shadow is everything that irritates, repulses or disgusts us about other people or about ourselves, and we try to hide our shadow from others.

Another significant aspect of the Jungian model is the concept of *archetypes*, or universal patterns of influence, in our psyche. Archetypes provide a gateway between the conscious mind and the unconscious that could help us in becoming integrated human beings.

Jung was not the first to accept the existence of archetypes that hold the key to the real you. Plato believed in archetypes as mental forms embedded in the soul prior to birth, but it was Jung and his followers who popularised the notion, which has fascinated and baffled many over the years. In the Jungian interpretation, our behaviours are unconsciously influenced by countless archetypes, which are, for example, victim, saboteur, hero, mother,

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father, child, mystic and teacher. Acknowledging and understanding this cast of characters and their influence will benefit our spiritual journey.

There are countless works on the Jungian interpretation of the psyche and how we can benefit from understanding and transforming our limitations. The healing and liberating effect of 'illuminating the shadow' was significantly popularised in the respected 2010 publication, *The Shadow Effect: Illuminating the Hidden Power of Your True Self*.[4] This publication points out that our shadow, or that part of us that needs refinement, is associated with traumatic events in our life. The shadow is attached to our past, and we need to live in the present as much as possible. Our limitations were formed in childhood when we were shamed by people like our parents, teachers and friends for showing certain characteristics. Negative messages were deposited into our subconscious, causing us to hide aspects of our personality that we and others thought were shameful or undesirable. Each time our behaviour attracted harsh criticism or punishment, we unconsciously separated from our authentic self.

For our emotional survival, we covered up these behaviours and, with each rejection, created more and more internal separation. We created a façade or mask, and then we often overcompensate for what we feel are our deepest flaws. Without knowing it, we think we are superior to and different from others. Therefore, hidden in the psyche are our vulnerabilities and sensitivities—and often buried is our sense of knowing the truth of who we are. If left unexamined, our shadow will spring from the psyche to affect our life when we least suspect and wish.

It is argued that one day the walls of our illusory persona will collapse, and we will need to deal with such awakenings or revelations. At numerous points along the spiritual path, it is likely that these imperfections will come to the surface, and we will need to heal these aspects of ourselves and see the truth of our role in causing or reacting to past events

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and fractured relationships. When we are ready, veils will be lifted to assist us along the path to self-discovery. For example, certain traumatic events may be relived in our mind with the aim of showing us that we actually contributed to those events, and to help us let go of blaming ourselves and others.

When we are ready, veils will be lifted to assist us along the path to self-discovery.

Johari Window

Another useful psychological model, developed by psychologists Joseph Luft and Harrington Ingham in the 1950s, is the *Johari Window*, which shows that we have both a blind side and an unknown area (the unconscious). This supports previous interpretations of the psyche. The Johari Window uses four quadrants to designate areas of self-awareness, highlighting information and behaviours:

- The *open* area involves aspects of the individual that are known to both the individual and to others, for example, courage and intelligence.
- The *blind* area involves what others know of the individual, but the individual does not, for example, arrogance and judgement.
- The *hidden* area embraces what the individual knows of themself, but others do not, such as creativity and compassion.
- The *unknown* (unconscious) area involves aspects that are unknown to both the individual and others, such as emotional vulnerability and talents.

It is interesting that the most common shadow for the male is fear of being vulnerable, while for the female it is about how they appear. In the Johari Window, Jung's shadow notion relates to the blind self because others feel, for example, the domination, arrogance and other negative elements that are projected onto them. The unknown or unconscious parts also relate to the shadow.

* * *

All of this inner work may sound onerous and dispiriting, but working with our limitations will transform us, for to discover the true self we must face our imperfections. By acknowledging and embracing this part of ourselves we experience the whole of life as nurturing. It is ironic that whatever we have hidden away is the key to unlocking a self that we feel proud of. What has been hidden can in fact give us what we have been attempting to achieve. This is our most authentic self, where we recognise both our weaknesses and our strengths, leading to an appreciation of our gifts. Facing aspects of ourselves that need improvement clears the path to self-discovery.

Rosicrucians are encouraged to undertake deep inner reflection and to examine themselves with honesty and courage. It is through a comprehensive study course that integrates a huge number of exercises and techniques that we can find balance in the safe unfoldment of all aspects of our being and discover our spiritual nature. Many times, we are advised about the terrible effects of negative thoughts, words and actions on our spiritual progress, health and wellbeing. The notion of 'evil' raises questions throughout our Rosicrucian studies. Evil is generally described as the absence of light and good, such as the absence of positive qualities that can be expressed.

If we embrace the valuable notion of spiritual alchemy, the transformation of negative or

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unhelpful aspects of our personality and our bad habits can occur through the gradual harmonisation with our soul nature. In this sense, we can develop a feeling of urgency to transform unrefined traits as the light of spiritual nature is experienced more and more.

On a global level, it makes me wonder just how incredibly valuable our studies, prayer, meditation, attunement exercises, visualisations, and healing practices are towards the advancement of humanity, nature and the planet. These Rosicrucian practices, and those of other spiritual organisations, have incalculably transformed darkness into light in the world. But much, much more work can be done. In fact, this spiritual focus work is crucially needed during this challenging time when we are experiencing emotional, psychological and financial stresses and anxieties; environmental problems; the threat to nature and animal species; and countless other difficulties.

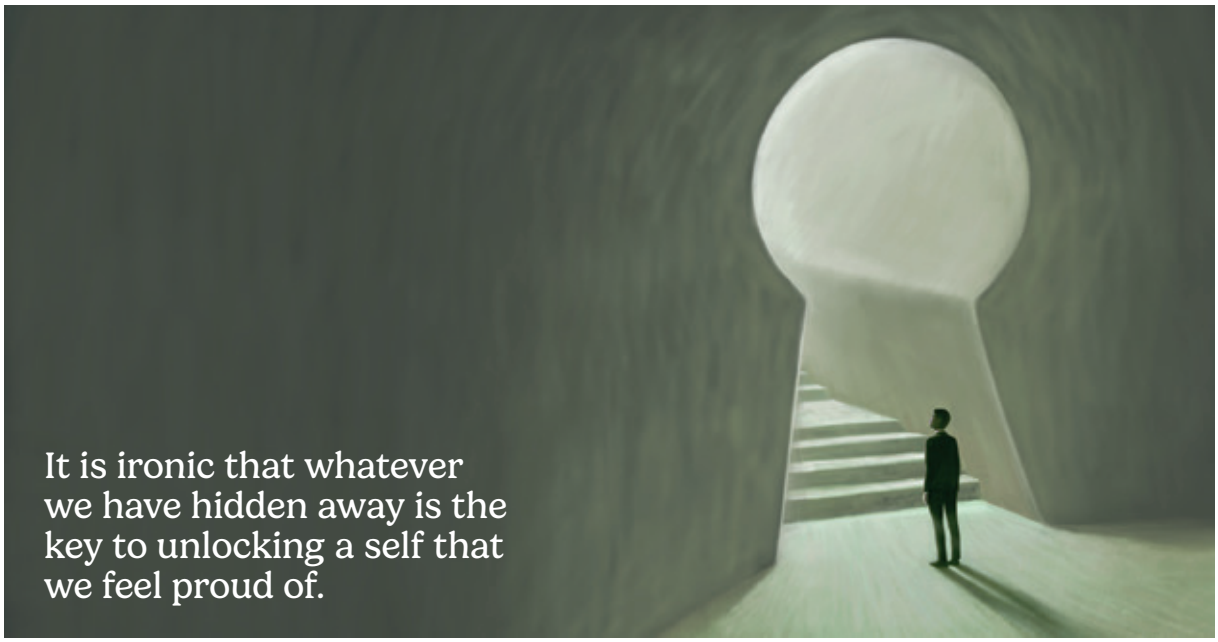
(This article is to be continued in part 2 in the next issue of* The Rosicrucian*, where we will discuss ways to work towards and achieve spiritual alchemy.)

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Our Place in the World

An excerpt from 'I Saw Your Light From Afar'

By **Claudio Mazzucco**
Imperator of AMORC

'Unhappy man, sorrow no longer here, I pray thee, nor let thy life pine away; for even now with a ready heart will I send thee on thy way.'

Homer,
The Odyssey, Book 5

This famous quotation from Homer refers to one of the significant moments in one of the foundational works of Western civilisation. *The Odyssey* narrates the adventurous voyage of the return of Ulysses to Ithaca, the island from which he had departed to participate in the Trojan War, where his wife, Penelope, and son, Telemachus, were awaiting him.

I would like to reflect with you on the life we lead and on our place in the world, beginning with the Greek vision of the Cosmos and particularly with

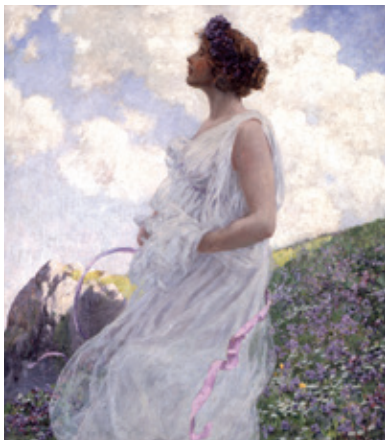
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that of Aristotle. Part of our teaching is dedicated to the Greek philosophers, knowledge of whom is important in understanding the path of what we call the *Primordial Tradition*, from the distant past, through history, down to our own times. We are speaking of an invisible thread that passes through many great civilisations, including Egypt, giving them a mystical and philosophical dimension from which arose many philosophers, such as the Greeks, and yet its true origins remain hidden deep within the human heart.

Cosmos and Cosmic

The word *'Cosmos'*, from which Rosicrucians derive the word *'Cosmic'*, describes a universal order and harmony containing the inherent quality of beauty—a nuanced concept, experts say, that only the Greek language could relate in a single word. The philosopher Aristotle described the universe as ordered, so that everything acts according to its proper function and has a well-defined place. The self-realisation of each human being—meaning to lead a happy life—consists in finding one's true place in the Cosmos. When one finds it, one experiences a feeling of joy, happiness and completeness, called '*eudaimonia*' in Greek. Aristotle observed that every human being is gifted with talents, and that being where these can be expressed means collaborating with the order of the Cosmos and, as such, finding one's true happiness. When this takes place, the whole world benefits.

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Calypso *by George Hitchcock*

To illustrate this, I recall that when I was a child television sets weren't like those of today. They were very large boxes with a lot of empty space inside and a collection of glass objects (vacuum tubes) that lit up when the television was turned on. When it broke, you called a technician who arrived on time, with a tool case, opened the television set and replaced one or two items, almost always the vacuum tubes. When the television set was closed, it resumed its normal function. To me, as a child, this process seemed almost magical. I wanted to be present when the technician arrived, to help with this 'ritual'.

By analogy, the vacuum tube, when properly installed, contributed to the harmony of all the other parts. A vacuum tube acquired its meaning when it was fully able to exercise its function. It didn't have a meaning alone but as part of the whole within the television set. And so it is with us. According to Aristotle, we human beings also have a place. We belong somewhere in the Cosmos, and only when we find our proper place and are able to express our talents can we be truly happy.

Ulysses weeps

In the chapter of *The Odyssey* cited above, Ulysses was kidnapped while returning to Ithaca and was held for seven years by the goddess Calypso on the island of

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Ogygia. The goddess Calypso is immortal and falls in love with Ulysses. But during the day, when she looks for him, she finds him sitting on a rock, looking out towards the sea and weeping. He weeps with pain and nostalgia and continually wants to leave the island and return to Ithaca. Calypso plays her last card in order to keep him: she promises him immortality if he remains with her—and it is no normal immortality. Instead of aging, our hero would remain forever as fit and healthy as he currently is. But even this doesn't work. In the end Zeus orders Calypso to let him go, and he, after building a raft, resumes his voyage. Philosophers point out that this passage is perhaps the first great lesson in Western philosophy.

For us as Rosicrucians, philosophy isn't so much an academic subject as a continual reflection on the meaning of our lives...

Philosophy as continual reflection

For us as Rosicrucians, philosophy isn't so much an academic subject as a continual reflection on the meaning of our lives, the choices we have to make, and how we conduct life so that the time allotted us in this world is put to the best use. The great lesson, we might say, is that Ulysses refuses to exchange his true place in the Cosmos, even for immortality. He knows that his real life is awaiting him and that he will find happiness only in Ithaca, his 'right' place in the world. Nothing can change this, not even the promise of eternal life.

It can happen that, at some point in their lives but unfortunately more and more rarely, people find a place, a job, some activity or other, or perhaps a place to live which they sense they were born for. They feel deeply that this is the place or state in which they wish to spend the rest of their lives. In that moment they experience a sense of realisation, fullness, the absence of unnecessary desires, completeness and happiness. They feel as if life has acquired a deeper meaning. It is a condition that requires no explanation. We simply feel it. And Aristotle tells us that every man and woman, whatever they undertake, is ultimately trying to reach this state.

I said that this condition is ever more rare because what we euphemistically call our *'lifestyle'* is really a way of life that tends to distance people from this state, limits our choices and hinders our finding our place in the Cosmos. Yet each of us inwardly feels that we have vocations, talents, and affinities with certain places, people and the sorts of jobs we would like. As a case in point, recently I was listening on the radio to a famous economist who was explaining the case of youth unemployment: young people at university study subjects that the labour market doesn't require. He was implying that people shouldn't seek to do what they feel to be their vocation but do what 'the market' determines to be their most appropriate roles in any moment. He was in fact proposing a humanity



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subservient to the market. In the story of *The Odyssey* this would be as if Zeus had said to Ulysses:

> Yes, okay, Ithaca is the right place for you, the place where you would be happy and find your wife, your son, the land where your ancestors rest. But you know, the market today wants immortals; therefore, go ahead and weep but here is where you must stay!"

This is clearly absurd and yet it is becoming the rule. This conflict between our inner feelings and forced choices in life leads us away from a healthy and mature spirituality and instead leads to a relationship that, even with the transcendent, is mediated by the market. Thus we see more companies that place courses of meditation and relaxation in their employee training programs, because it is seen that by doing so people produce more. Furthermore, we see a proliferation of courses, teachers and training centres of every kind that, for a nice fee, offer spiritual qualifications, open chakras, or teach astral projection. This is 'the market' dressed as spirituality. With this in mind, we understandably can't expect people to revolutionise their lives. From a Rosicrucian point of view, a revolution is never a healthy process anyway. But a gradual redirection, a significant making up of lost ground, a rediscovery of forgotten values—these are necessary. There must be a gradual reallocation of time to get to *'the right place'*.

Getting to the right place

Nobody thinking clearly can say this is easy or to be achieved over a weekend or instructed via YouTube. As with all processes, this reallocation of time requires a certain discipline. Only when we learn to do something well after repeating it many times can we do it automatically, without thinking or it costing us energy. Evidently we cannot learn this just by reading a book or participating in a course. These can certainly be useful stimuli, but after that there is work to do and a journey to undertake. Nobody can do this for us. Indeed, it is a journey that lasts a lifetime. On this journey it is well to remember that there will always be a Calypso who seeks to hold us back with promises of various sorts. Ulysses left the island of Ogygia to resume his journey, one in which many adventures and dangers awaited him before he reached Ithaca. But he could not do otherwise.



Plato (left) and Aristotle in Raphael's 1509 fresco, The School of Athens. *Aristotle holds his* Nicomachean Ethics.

And us? Once we realise that we too are on a voyage to our Ithaca, and that we are confronting dangers and obstacles of every sort, it is great to know that we are no longer on the beach, looking out to the horizon and weeping. Instead, we have already built our raft and we are together with others on this voyage. We know that many experiences still await us. But when we find our place in the Cosmos—the Promised Land, wherever we may find it—the whole universe will celebrate with us because it is to this that we are called.

As Aristotle reminds us in *The Nicomachean Ethics*:

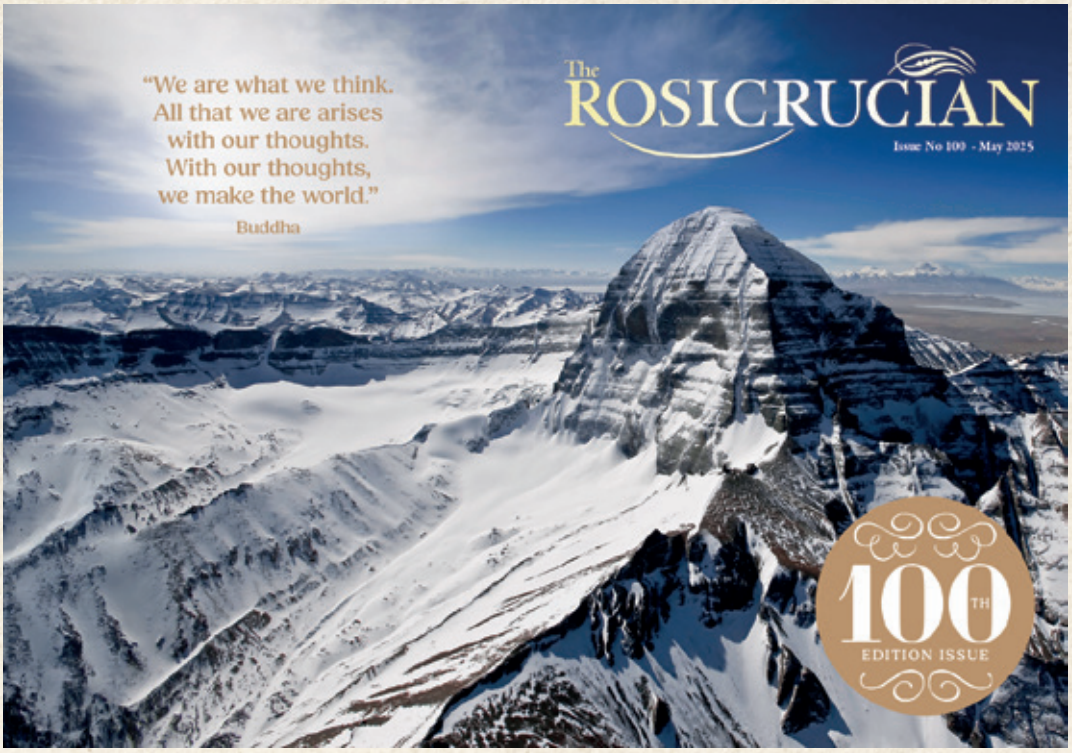
> 'And the highest good towards which all individuals tend is happiness.'

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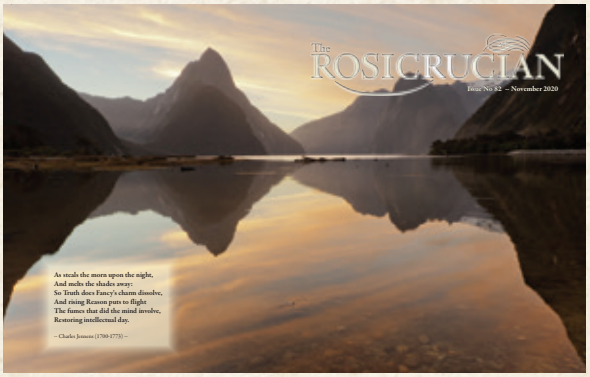
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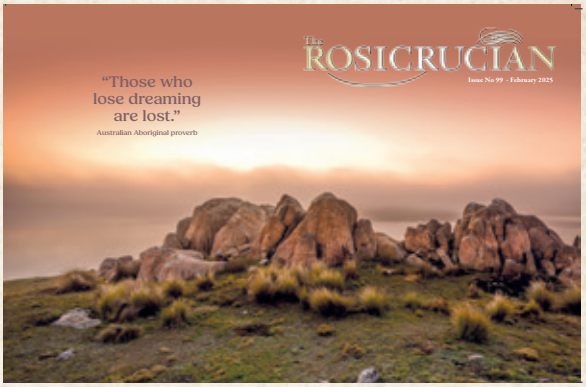
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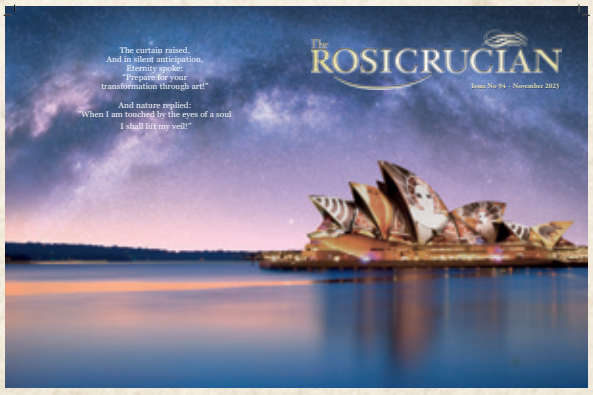


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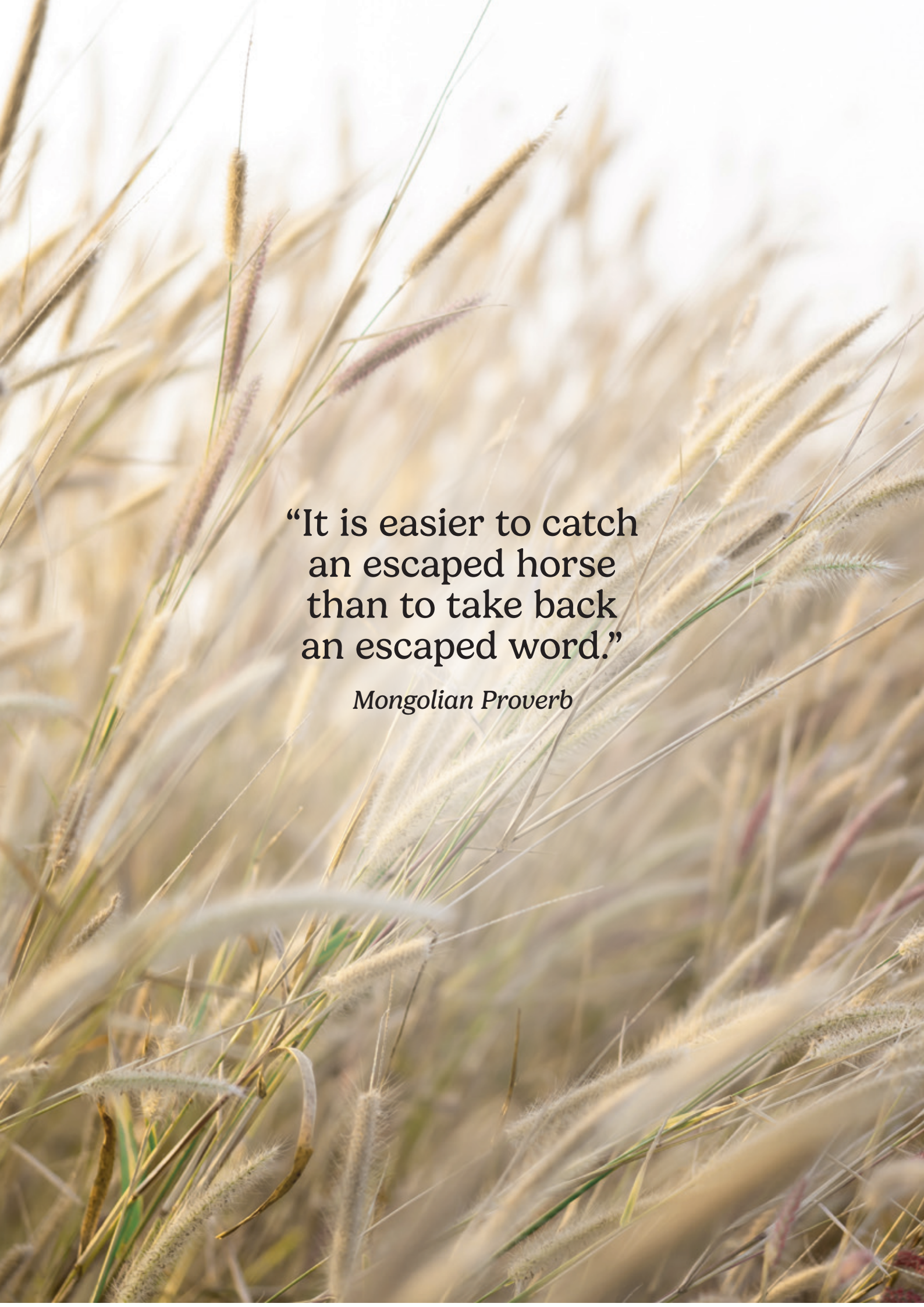








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“It is easier to catch
an escaped horse
than to take back
an escaped word.”
Mongolian Proverb