

Magic, alchemy etc

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 03 Nov 1999

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David Duffy — 03 Nov 1999, 05:53

Briefly delurking, I couldn't help but bite at the mantic comments wrt alchemy. A brief search gives several images that *might* inform UotNS (I don't have any primary references here but all this rings a bell).

(from <http://www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/Hangar/3474/alchemy.html>)

the process leading up to the alchemical marriage is blackening -> whitening -> reddening (gold and purple).

Black

...a

night journey below the sea in which the hero, often compared to Jonah, is swallowed by a monster. But the belly of Leviathan becomes a matrix: an egg forms around the imprisoned man; it is so extremely hot there that the hero loses all his hair; ejected by the monster he springs forth from the primordial sea, bald as a newborn babe.

White

* In the vegetal symbolism frequently employed by alchemy, the work of whitening corresponds to the bursting forth of spring: after black winter, all the colors are manifested in a profusion of flowers, but blend little by little into the white offering of a lily.

* In animal symbolism, while the work of blackening corresponds to the "flight of the raven," the work of whitening begins with the unfolding of the "peacock's tail" (pavonis) and is completed in the paradisaical vision of a white swan sailing on a silver sea.

* In Gichtel's symbolic representation, the albedo seems to correspond to the "marriage of Mars and Venus," that is, to the union of the masculine center...with the feminine center. Here Venus is the goddess of Divine Love, not of the erotic; she is the "heavenly Venus," lovingly receptive to the spiritual presence. One begins to see the role which these concepts must have played in the medieval worship of the Lady, especially if we remember that alchemy often adopted the symbolism of the "Quest" which always culminates in a "feminine" image of the Soul of the World: the Golden Fleece or the Chalice of the Grail.

Red

* Then "philosophical incest" and the great hierogamy of the nuptiae chymicae are celebrated: the Sun is united with the Moon, the Sulphur "fixes" Mercury; in man, the Spirit restores life and makes it fruitful.

* This is the ceremonial meeting of the Red King and the White Queen. The King is crowned in gold, clothed in purple; he holds a red lily in his hand. The Queen is crowned in silver and holds a white lily.

From now on the silent presence of the alchemist is a benediction on all beings. He is the secret king, the consciously central being who relates heaven and earth and ensures the good order of things.

That is the seeker after truth starts in the black, is bent, folded and mutilated several times, and ultimately comes to a sunny disposition after coming to terms with his own feminine side, and then the feminine side of the universe. (Some of this seems to come from Dante or is it vv). There is supposed to be a marriage of some sort associated with each transformation (Juturna? Thecla Dorcas [Valeria] Burgundofara Apheta Burgundofara [Valeria] contra Dante).

Wrt good v evil science, I am reminded of Tolkein and others' dichotomy of subtle, ecologically sound elvish magic ("not magic at all") [botany] versus the technological magic of Sauron and co [head transplants ;)].

I also had a po-mo v mo comment. Which is it if you present multiple internally consistent explanations for the same event? I hasten to add that many times, the materialistic explanation seems a bit feeble -- the person involved explaining away what they don't want to believe (eg the physician ?name and Latro).

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