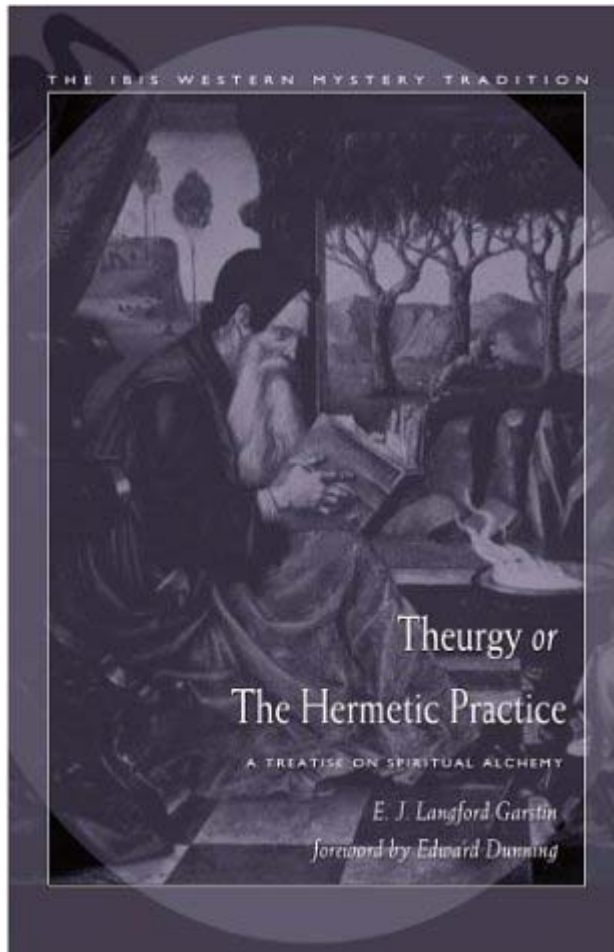


Theurgy, or the Hermetic Practice: A Treatise on Spiritual Alchemy J. LANGFORD GARSTIN (1930)



Publishers Notes

Theurgy means "the science or art of divine works." In alchemy, this process is called the "Great Work," which is the purification and exaltation of our "lower" nature by the proper application of esoteric principles, so that it may become united with its higher counterparts, whereby we may attain spiritual, and ultimately divine, consciousness.

Drawing on the teachings of the Egyptian, Greek, and Hebrew mystery schools and quoting extensively from important alchemic writers, Garstin details this process of purification. Students who are curious about alchemy but daunted by the body of its literature and its strange allegories will find this book to be an excellent introduction.

Garstin discusses source alchemic works and clearly explains what their esoteric symbolism means. With the information in this book, students of alchemy can then proceed to make a more informed exploration of the alchemical works and other writings of the Western Mystery Tradition.

- **Paperback** 160 pages (June 2004)
- **Publisher:** Nicolas-Hays
- **Language:** English
- **ISBN:** 0892540915

Bibliographical Notes [Marcus Katz, 2005]

Originally published 1930.

Definitions of Theurgy (Telstic Work), and Plato on Zoroastrian Magic ("The service of the Gods"). Theurgy as central kernel of religion, central teaching dealing with "rebirth, or birth from above".

Garstin as member of the Golden Dawn, Garstin as a suicide, publisher of *The Quest*, and *The Search* – both magazines/journals. Relationship with A.E. Waite through criticism of writing on Alchemical.

Mirandola's distinguishing of two forms of magic; Goetia and Theurgy.

[Should collate other definitions of terminology, perhaps cf. Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism]

The process itself involves the practitioner entering a state of trance: not the mediumistic or hypnotic trance states, but that form of trance "which was by the Greeks called the mantic state" (from the foreword, Edward Dunning, quoting Garstin in "The use of trance in Spiritual Development" (Occult Review 55, No.3 (March 1932))

[May be interesting to look at Mesmerism as an altered state - originally from magnetism as healing; what about the hand passes used by Shamans, as described by Carlos Castenda, etc? Now used in Induction of Hypnosis; eye tracking?]

See Chapter XII, particularly on trance states. Quotes Aegyptiacus (Synesius) "There are two sets of eyes in the Mysteries. The Lower are closed when the Higher are opened." Also, earlier stages referred to as 'muesis', from muo, to close the eyes. [cf. Two heads of Kabbalah, personal vision of 'Thoth' with two heads, and references to eyes being closed in Ergon and Parergon practices in Speculum sophericum rhodostauroticum (The 'Mirror of Wisdom' of Theophilus Schweighardt):

Adam Mclean's Alchemy site - <http://www.levity.com/alchemy/schweig.html> relevant quote:

"The best, however, is the soul's perfection which comes about when we rightly recognise the inner man, and contemplate his sin and impotence, be mindful of God's mightiness and mercy, put behind us all human thoughts, commending unto him all things, obey his will, hallow his name, pray, praise, call upon and glorify him without ceasing. This is the Ergon, the preliminary work, the greatest and foremost art and science of not only the brethren of the Rose-Cross but also of all Christ-loving men. To the eyes of the worldly-wise it seems slight, but they will find with ruth how glorious and precious this treasure is, which is no other than the perfect treasure of which St. Paul speaks (I Corinthians 13). When the perfect shall come, the partial shall cease. This perfect is a being that contains and comprises everything in him and in his being, without which and outside of whom no true constant being is, in whom all things have their being, for it is the being of all things and is in himself unchanging, unmoving, and yet changes and moves all things (Acts 13). But the partial or imperfect is that which arises from the perfect, and in which it has its origin and goes forth like a splendour and a shining flowing from the sun or a light, and is formed into whatever it may be, and is called creature or imperfect and among these imperfect things there is nothing perfect. And here is to be noted that the created soul of man has two spiritual eyes; the right eye can see into eternity, and the left eye can see into time and creatures. To recognise the difference between what is better or less, and what shall best give the body life and maintain it, that is the Parergon."

November 2005

425. Lex, Barbara. "Neurological Bases of Revitalization Movements." Zygon 13, 1978: 276-312.

Ritual trance, prophetic revelation and conversion experiences have striking neurological components, and may in part be explained in these terms. See also the following entry.

426. ———. "The Neurobiology of Ritual Trance." In *The Spectrum of Ritual* edited by E. d'Aquili, C. Laughlin and J. McManus. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1979.

Trance arises from the manipulation of neurophysiological structures, is potentially at least available to everyone and serves a homeostatic purpose. It may be a cultural universal, and it cannot be completely understood by considering the brain alone. Ritual tends to regulate trancing through its regular repetition of emotional stimuli: it evokes "emotional synchronicity" in its participants (p. 120). The otherwise unattainable behavioral states accompanying such rituals demonstrate and legitimize one's power through contact with the divine. Techniques for attaining this state are variable and well known. Dancing, music and flickering light, particularly in regular rhythm, have clearly marked effects on the sensorium, but "sensory deprivation" can have similar effects. These phenomena appear to be associated with cerebral hemisphere functions.

Similar phenomena can be evoked in carefully synchronized interaction like that common to ritual, and symbolization and symbol usage seem to be akin to these states. Periods of reversal, wherein otherwise antinomian behavior is encouraged and/or permitted, seem to have physiological as well as social consequences: patterns are shifted at both levels, and it is after such quasi-cathartic interludes that a new equilibrium is established, also at both levels. Abreaction is another example of this process at the personal level, however it is induced.

Lex, B.W. (1979). *The neurobiology of ritual trance. The spectrum of ritual: A biogenetic structural analysis.* E. d'Aquili (Ed.) New York: Columbia University Press.

[Note : Should try Exeter to get copy of Lex's often quoted study]

Reading recently about the length of processing in the brain of language, i.e. 3 seconds, which relates to Culture and results in different length of poetic metre in various cultures. Interesting link to NLP Hypnosis patterns, sentence fragments, confusional techniques, etc.

See THE NEURAL LYRE: POETIC METER, THE BRAIN, AND TIME

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