

Money Grows on the Tree of Knowledge

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The symbol for the dollar is familiar throughout the world. The same symbol that's used in the USA is also used for other forms of the dollar, such as in Canada and Australia. There are several different theories about the origin of this symbol, although I don't believe that they are mutually exclusive. The first "dollars" to circulate in the American colonies were actually Spanish coins. In the year 1695, the British government stopped exporting coins outside of its borders, even to its own colonies. Thus, the British colonists in North America were forced to acquire coins from the Spanish colonies in Mexico.

The coins that were circulating there had been designed in 1497, not long after their hireling Christopher Columbus had returned from his first voyage to America. At that time, to celebrate the vast wealth of gold and silver that they had just discovered and were busy hauling back home, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of the Spanish House of Habsburg had a silver coin issued called a "peso," the value of which was an eighth of a "real."



The Pillar Dollar

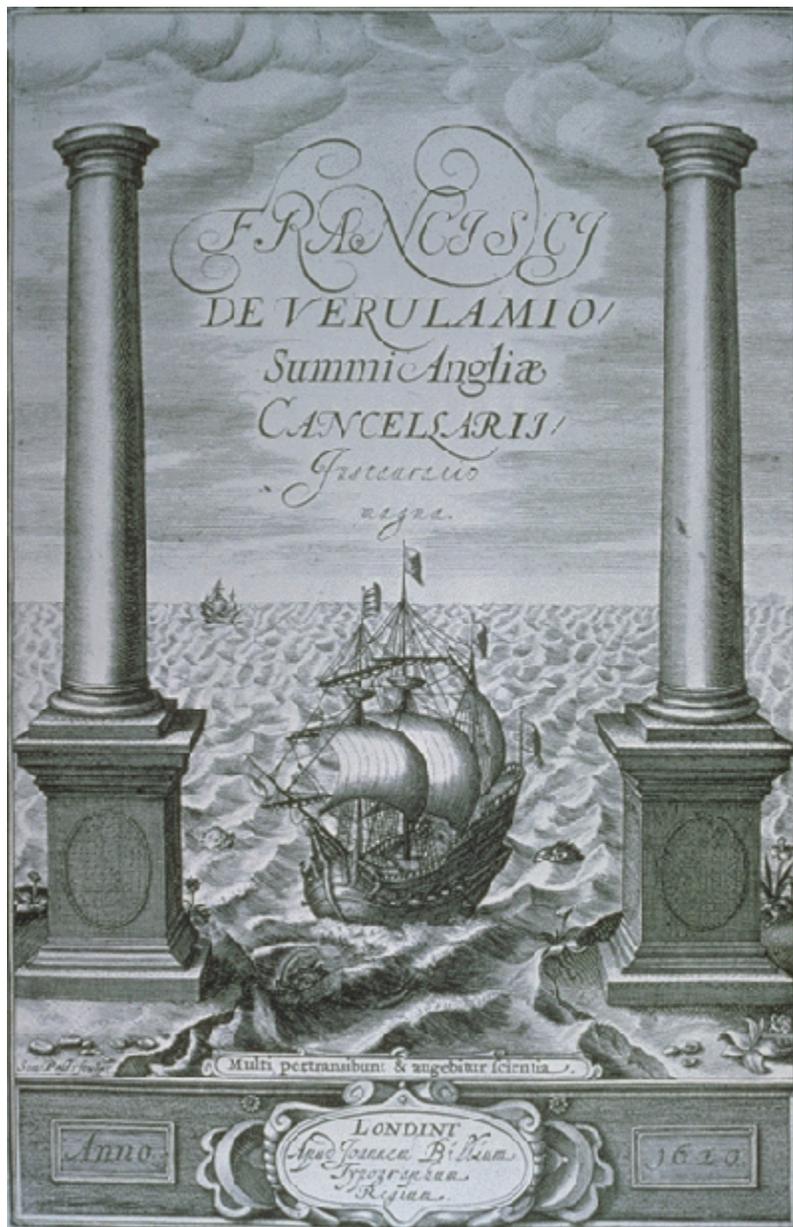
This coin featured the Pillars of Hercules and the words "Plus Ultra," Latin for "There is More Beyond," with each word written on a banner that was coiled around one of the pillars. In other words, the monarchs were saying to their subjects, "You see this piece of silver? There's more where that came from, Baby." When the Spaniards opened a mint in Mexico (soon to be one of the largest in the world), they began circulating these

coins.

The “Plus Ultra” peso became the most widely used coin amongst the thirteen British colonies, and the Scotch-Americans who used them called them “pillar dollars” after the “taler,” the name of a type of silver coin that circulated in Europe. The Americans didn’t establish their own mint until 1794. Even after that, since gold and silver were hard to come by, and the minting process expensive, the United States continued to circulate mostly Spanish silver dollars throughout much of the 1800s. So even though the U.S. did issue its own coins, the pillar dollar remained the “coin of the realm” for some time.

It is from the image on the pillar dollar that the dollar sign (\$) is said by some historians to have been derived, originally made with two slashes through the “S,” instead of one, as is commonly done now. So the dollar sign would then represent a pillar, or pillars, encircled with a banner.

This would then encompass, within a simple glyph, all which is implied about America by the words “Plus Ultra” and the Pillars of Hercules -- that it is the great New World dreamt of by the philosophers of old. It was here that Sir Francis Bacon had envisioned that we would build a “philosophic empire” that would lead the world in the pursuit of knowledge of “the 6 days’ work”-- that is, the hidden secrets of God’s creation.



Frontispiece to *The New Atlantis*

An earlier prototype of this design comes from shekel coins made on the ancient Phoenician island of Tyre, which feature both the Pillars of Hercules, and a serpent coiled around a tree, ala the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden. It is with this that some authors, such as Ignatius Donnelly, see the true origins of the dollar sign.



Shekel from Tyre featuring serpent, tree, and Pillars of Hercules

However, there is still more to discover about this symbol if you go just a little bit *beyond*. To me, the dollar sign is more reminiscent of the caduceus, the magical wand of Hermes, a staff with a serpent entwined upon it, which has long been a symbol of alchemical transformation and healing (thus its use by the medical profession). This was its meaning in ancient Greece, as well as Rome, where it was associated with Mercury, the Roman equivalent of Hermes and the patron deity of alchemists.



Caduceus, as used by medical industry

The caduceus was literally a magic wand that the god used to transform reality, as an alchemist transmutes one substance into another. A simplified version of this symbol was used in astrology to denote the planetary power of Mercury, and in alchemy to denote the substance of mercury, otherwise known as quicksilver. This symbol looked almost identical to the dollar sign.



An alchemical symbol for the philosophic mercury

But interestingly, this symbol also has a similar meaning in the Judeo-Christian tradition. It is found in the story of the Nehushtan, the brazen serpent mounted on a stick that Moses used to heal the people of Israel after they had been bitten by “fiery serpents” sent by the Lord. In Christian theology, this symbol of the “crucified serpent” is seen as analogous to Jesus being hung upon the cross, which healed the sins of

mankind.

The crucified serpent was one of the central images featured in the alchemical manuscript *The Sacred Book of Abraham the Jew*, famously translated by Nicholas Flamel. It represents the secret of the Philosopher's Stone that can transform any thing into any other thing at will. All of this is related intimately to the history of the word "dollar" and the origin of the dollar sign.

In the year 1516, just five years before the Spaniards began looting silver and gold from America, Count Stephan Hieronymus Schlick discovered major silver deposits near his ancestral home in Jachymov, Bohemia (now in the Czech Republic). He began not only mining the silver, but minting it into coins as well. These coins were soon being circulated all over Europe, where they became known as "talers," after the "tal" or "valley" from which they were minted.

In 1527, Georgius Agricola was hired as the "mine physician" for Joachimstal. Agricola had spent his education studying alchemy. Over the years he had become frustrated with his studies, but, as Jason Goodwin writes in the book *Greenback*, "in Joachimstal... he saw something more interesting: incontrovertible proof that men could turn dross into silver. Mining, he decided, was what alchemy was meant to be." Agricola went on to write the first scientific treatise on the subject of mining, and became known as the "Father of Mineralogy."

But here's the really interesting thing: some of the talers that came out of that valley actually featured the Nahushtan crucified serpent on one side, and a crucified Jesus on the other. The alchemical connection to the later US dollar, and the most direct origin yet for the dollar symbol, could not be more obvious.



Taler from Joachimstal featuring crucified serpent

In the Bible, the invention of metallurgy is credited early on in *Genesis* to the figure of Tubal-Cain. He was among the accursed race of Cainites, descended from the world's first murderer, Cain, who killed his own brother. Thereafter, he was cursed to be a "fugitive and a vagabond" for the rest of his days. Cain himself was said to be the inventor of agriculture, described in *Genesis* as "a tiller of the ground." His name, which appears in the histories of many other ancient Semitic cultures besides the Hebrew, has contributed to the formation of words in English and other languages that mean "grain," "corn," "bread," or "cane."

But in Hebrew, "Cain" meant "to acquire, to create, to fashion, to produce, or to accomplish." When used as a noun, it meant "smith"; that is, "one who makes things." Thus it seems easy to say that "Cain" is at the root of the word "coin." For in addition to being a noun indicating a metallic token, "coin" can also be used as a verb, meaning "to invent." The noun "coin" is derived from the verb definition, for a coin is an object that has been "coined."

Both Cain and his descendant Tubal-Cain are portrayed in Judeo-Christian literature as evil geniuses, too smart for their own good. There is something sinister about their accomplishments -- the invention of

agriculture and metallurgy -- and of their selfish desire to create things, no matter how wonderful those creations may be.

This reflects an attitude displayed by God towards man throughout the *Book of Genesis*. Thus we read about two other seemingly positive acts: the obtaining of ultimate wisdom from the Tree of Knowledge (Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden), and the building of a magnificent tower leading to Heaven (the Tower of Babel). Both of these acts were portrayed in the Bible as sins. The message of *Genesis* (a word that means “creation”) is that creating things is God’s job, not man’s. Therefore mankind has no need to learn the principles of creation.

But in a sense, this rebellion, the original sin of obtaining forbidden knowledge in the Garden of Eden, was necessary for man’s development. Without it, we would have remained naïve and ignorant, never accomplishing anything. The wisdom (symbolized by the forbidden fruit) which was given to Adam and Eve “opened [their] eyes,” made them see things “as gods.”

This is the very power of creation and transformation that was sought by the alchemists, and which they symbolized by a serpent on a staff. Sometimes, as with the caduceus of the Greeks, there were two serpents, just as the Jewish mystics, the cabalists, say there were really two serpents in the Garden, Lilith and Samael. Actually, they say that these were the male and female halves of a single Hermaphroditic being. Sometimes, as in the design from the Tyrian shekel described earlier, there were shown two pillars, just as in the Garden of Eden there were two sacred trees mentioned: the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and the Tree of Life. The caduceus and the dollar sign both, then, really point to this same hidden wisdom that was passed down to mankind in the Garden: the power of God’s creation.

Now there were a few examples of predecessors, but really, historians consider the origin of coin money to be from around 3000 B.C. in the temples of Ishtar in ancient Mesopotamia. It was created for use in the public religious rite of “sacred prostitution.” The priestesses of the fertility goddess served her by offering themselves as representatives of her to male worshippers. It was thought that if the men simulated intercourse with the goddess, this would stimulate fertility in the land.

A very important part of the ritual was the donation that occurred beforehand. The worshipper was expected to make offerings to the goddess in the form of wheat. This was fitting, since wheat was the main agricultural product that they were asking the goddess to stimulate the production of.

During religious festivals, worshippers would bring a portion of their yearly wheat crop to the temple. After being symbolically offered to the patron god or gods, the offerings were used to feed all of the priests, priestesses, and temple support staff. In exchange, they received one coin for each bushel of wheat, and each coin would entitle them to a visit with one of the priestesses.

This is how the coin got its name: “shekel” means “bushel of wheat.” The coin featured a sheaf of wheat on one side, and a depiction of Ishtar on the other. This identification of money with wheat continues into the present day, where words that translate as “bread” all over the world are used as slang terms for money.

This is exactly how and why coin money was produced by the ancient Greeks as well. Beginning in 1000 B.C., the Greeks minted coins as tokens given to the worshippers of Dionysus in exchange for the donation of a bull to the Dionysian temple. These bulls would all be sacrificed at the annual celebration known as “the sacred feast,” to which Dionysus himself was invited. Half of the meat would be burned in honor of the god, while the rest was shared by the congregants -- all those who could furnish a coin as proof of their donation.

When the large-scale minting of coins in Rome began in 269 B.C., this too had a connection to the divine. The new silver coin, called the “denarius,” was minted in the temple of Juno Moneta. Juno was the wife of Jupiter. “Moneta” means “to warn.” This appellation of Juno’s stems from an incident in which the sacred

geese at her temple allegedly warned the Romans of an impending attack from the Gauls.

The Romans saw Juno as the protectress of the state. The issuance of money was one of the activities in Rome that she was thought to preside over. It is from Juno's title of "Moneta" that the English words "money," "monetary," and "mint" are derived.



Coin minted in the temple of Juno Moneta

So that is the origin of coin money. In the ancient world, the amount of money circulating in a society was necessarily limited by the amount of gold and silver available to them to mint. This restricted the velocity of money, and thus, the economic growth potential. Even if you did obtain economic growth through the increased availability of money, it could easily vanish if the coins were used to purchase imported goods.

Thus the Spanish, who looted the ancient temples of South America, covered with gold and silver, ended up losing it all within a few decades by trading with Holland and Britain. The Spaniards ended up cash-poor, and the huge influx of coin created a historic period of inflation for Britain called "the Great Price Revolution."

Now this is both the blessing and the curse of coin money: the value is in the coin. So if you spend it, lose it, or have it stolen from you, that value is no longer in your hands. This was a major problem in the ancient and medieval world: highway robbery. Every time you went anywhere, there was some thug waiting around the corner to rape your women and steal your silver. Robin Hood and his Merry Men couldn't have robbed from the rich if the rich didn't go around carrying hefty sacks full of cash. Around the thirteenth century someone finally invented a solution to this problem, and, no surprise, it came from a religious "temple" of sorts: specifically, the Poor Knights of the Temple of Solomon.



Official seal of the Knights Templar

Known in common parlance as the “Knights Templar,” this was an elite fighting force of Catholic monks at the forefront of the European struggle to capture and control the Holy Land in the early twelfth century. Some of their original founders and patrons were the very people essentially responsible for getting Europe involved in the Crusades in the first place. The Church granted them a charter that basically established the Templars as a law unto themselves, accountable to no one but the Pope. Thus they were able to operate autonomously at their various bases throughout Europe.

The Templars began to amass wealth and power quickly. Their membership was taken from the cream of European aristocracy, and they were expected to take a vow of poverty upon joining. So each new initiate remitted to the order what was often considerable money and property. Wealthy families from all over Europe also donated lands and money as the Second Crusade mounted. The Templars set up “preceptories” throughout the continent. These were conducted like semi-autonomous city-states, where the knights farmed their own food, ran their own hospitals, and engaged in the manufacture of arms, textiles, and other goods. Perhaps most importantly, this allowed them to issue loans with interest, circumventing the rules against usury in other Christian nations.

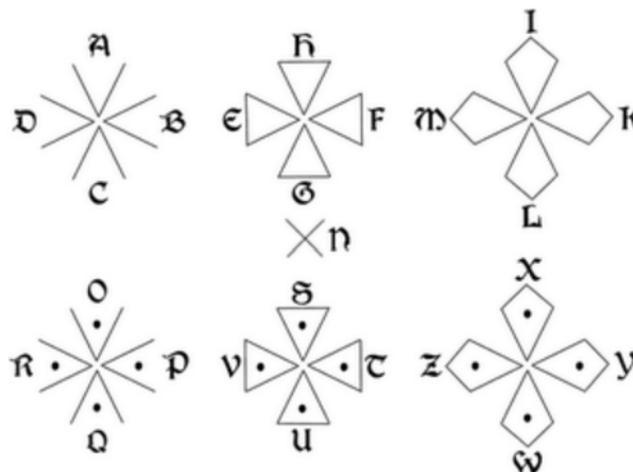
Previously, only Jews in Europe were permitted to charge interest, since their souls were considered lost already. At various times and places there were even laws actually forcing Jewish merchants to engage in no other trade except banking. It was a role the community needed someone to play, but the Jews became the scapegoats when the debts got too high and people needed to default. This happened frequently enough, and was the true cause for many medieval anti-Semitic pogroms. This is the role that the Templars essentially took over, with the blessing of the Church, at least in the beginning.



Medieval depiction of Jews practicing moneylending

The Templars were, first and foremost, the official guardians of pilgrims en route to the Holy Land. This was supposedly the reason why the Order was created in the first place. In this capacity, they devised a system to protect pilgrims from robbery. Instead of loading themselves down with gold and provisions, which were likely to be stolen, the pilgrims would simply deposit some money in the form of gold or silver at the Templar preceptory nearest to their point of departure. From there they would make their way to Jerusalem along a pre-selected route consisting of a series of churches and cathedrals. These were themselves associated with nearby Templar preceptories, each featuring banking services.

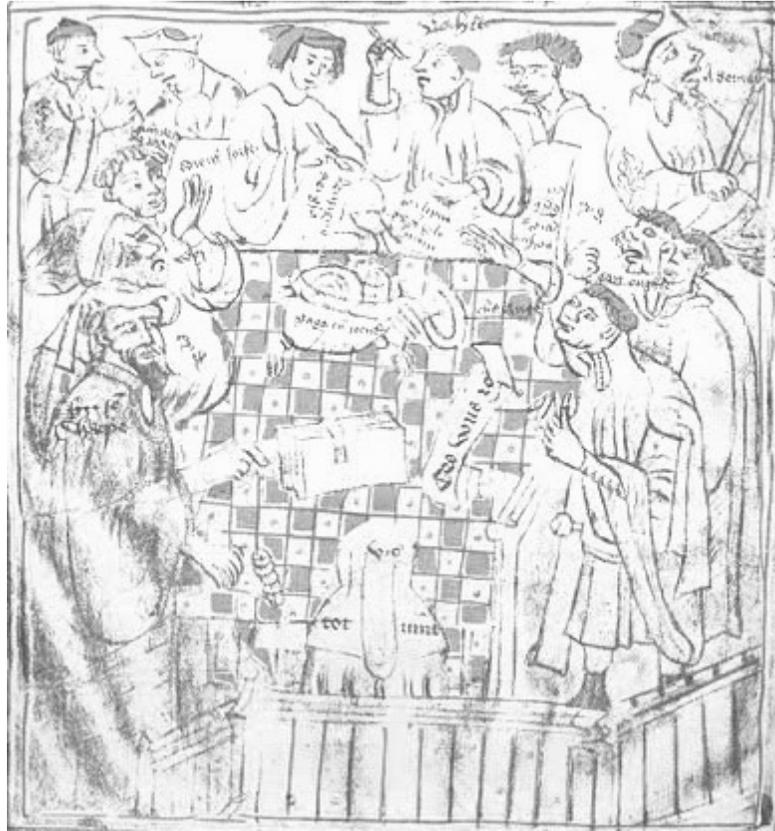
At this point the pilgrim would present the banker with a “chit”: a piece of paper that was encoded with ciphered information regarding the pilgrim’s deposit at the originating bank. The pilgrim could then withdraw from the bank at his current location the amount of money he needed to pay for his stay at that particular stop on the route, or to make donations to the various churches. He could leave the rest in his “account.” He could also make direct charges to the account for any goods or services which the Templars themselves were able to offer the pilgrim. The complex ciphers used by the Templars to encode their chits became famous, and one is still in use in Masonic lodges all over the world.



A Templar cipher

It is thus that the word “cheque” entered into the English and French languages. Indeed, a great many Middle English words pertaining to banking and commerce seem to have originated in one way or another with the

Templars. In the case of “cheque,” it came from the chequerboard clothe which Templar merchants and bankers used to square their accounts -- to “check” their assets and liabilities.



The exchquor of Ireland

It was thus by donations, money-lending and industrial trade that the Templars were able to expand their empire and become Europe’s most powerful economic force. They were able to maintain this even after the Holy Land was finally lost in the Eighth Crusade in 1271.

But now they were without a cause. Some of Europe’s kings and nobles, and well as many within the Church, began to wonder what the Templars were going to do next. They had money, property, authority, horses, weapons, and a standing army with nothing to do. Many European crown heads were heavily indebted to the Templars financially, and since they were also banned by papal decree from exercising any political authority over the knights, many of these kings understandably felt threatened.

There was another potential threat as well, of a more metaphysical nature. Not everyone understood exactly how the Templars had become so wealthy and powerful. It was thought that there must have been a secret to this. One rumor was that the original nine founding Templars had discovered a treasure within or beneath the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, where they had once housed their headquarters.

Theories of a secret Templar treasure have been the subject of hundreds of books throughout the years, and this idea is even at the heart of some rituals performed by modern Freemasons. It is often suggested that the knights might have found the lost Ark of the Covenant underneath the Temple Mount. How this would have made the order wealthy, however, is something that really remains unexplained by the theorists.

Another rumor floating around at the end of the thirteenth century was that the Templars acquired their wealth because their founders had made a pact with the Devil. According to this theory they allegedly kept the Pope under their control and compelled others to give them money through the power of witchcraft. Stories had begun to leak from disgruntled ex-knights about secret initiation rituals. Word was getting around

that there was an inner circle of Templars running the show with a hidden agenda. They were said to practice bizarre rituals of idol worship.

At dawn on Friday, October 13th, 1307, the Knights Templar in France were arrested en masse by King Philip IV's seneschals. Philip was out to get the order. He owed them a lot of money, and they had embarrassed him by refusing him membership to their club. Now he planned to use his influence on the papacy to have them disbanded. He had already sent in spies to join the order and see if the rumors were true -- that there was something unholy about the Templar initiation ceremony. What his spies reported back would make anyone's hair stand on end.



Philip the Fair: King of France and enemy of the Templars

When the stories of the spies are combined with the confessions of the tortured knights, a remarkably cohesive, if horrific, pattern begins to form. At initiation new recruits were forced to kiss the naked behind of one of their new brothers, although sometimes the backside of a goat or a cat was substituted. They were made to spit upon the Cross and revoke their Christian baptism. Some confessing knights said they were taught by their superiors that John the Baptist was the true Christ, not Jesus. They were then introduced to their new savior, whom they were to worship. It was a "head" of some sort named "Baphomet." None of the inquisitors knew what that meant at the time, and no translation was offered by any of the confessors.



Templars defiling the cross

This “Baphomet” head was variously said to be that of a goat, a bearded man, a woman, or an androgyne, and it was said that it had leathery skin. Some said that it had two or three faces, or that it had “feet.” While it was generally described as a mummified flesh-and-blood relic of some sort, others said that it was a skull, or that it was made of brass or gold, or that it was merely a painting of a head. All witnesses agreed that it was terrifying to behold. They said that the head “prophesied” to them during the ceremonies, and gave them “wisdom.” They believed that it “made them rich” and “caused the land to germinate.”



Image of a male head found on Templar property

By November 1307, even the Grand Master of the Templars himself, Jacques de Molay, had confessed to these charges, and more. Pope Clement had heard enough. He issued a bull ordering the arrest of all Templars

in eight countries, including England, Ireland, Portugal, Italy and Germany. On August 12, 1308, he drew up a list of 127 offenses with which they were charged. In addition to the various acts of blasphemy and heresy already discussed, they were also accused of homosexual orgies, baby sacrifices, and of treasonous dealings with the Muslim enemy, the Saracens.

Trials dragged on for another five years. Many recanted their confessions, including that of the Grand Master, and those knights who did so were put to death in brutal ways. As he burned at the stake in 1314, Grand Master Jacques De Molay uttered a curse against Pope Clement and King Philip, prophesying that they would both die within a year. They did.

Other knights stuck to their confessions, and were rewarded with lenient sentences of monastic penance not much different from the ascetic lifestyle they were already used to. The order was officially disbanded by the Pope, its property given over to other monastic orders. So ended what was once the greatest military and economic power in Europe.



Templars burnt at the stake

Over seven centuries later, the legend of the Templars, and the mystery of Baphomet, is alive more than ever before. Hundreds of secret societies and religious orders claim descent from the Knights Templar in some form or another. Almost all Hermetic groups claim to be perpetuating the Templar tradition, including various Masonic groups, Rosicrucian groups, and ritual magic orders, such as Aleister Crowley's O.T.O, or "Order of Oriental Templars." Rituals involving references to goats are still performed by Masons, and many Masonic

scholars have written about Baphomet as being central to their mystic rites. Crowley even took on the name Baphomet as a magical title for ritual purposes. Later, Anton LaVey from the Church of Satan made use of an image of the Baphomet goat-head within a pentagram as a logo for his pop culture devil cult, The Church of Satan.



Eliphas Levi's Baphomet sigil



Photograph of Crowley, signed as Baphomet.

But how did this image come to be the personification of the heinous Templar idol? The writer responsible for our modern understanding of Baphomet was a mid-nineteenth-century occult author named Eliphas Levi. Monsieur Levi's main thesis was that all forms of occultism and mysticism held a common, secret doctrine. Ritual magic, he said, utilized the existence of what he called the "Astral Light," defined as:

"... a natural and divine agent, at once corporeal and spiritual, an universal plastic mediator, a common receptacle for vibrations of movement and images of form, a fluid and a force which may be called, in a sense at least, the imagination of nature."

It was this agent which reflected the magician's will, expressed during a ritual, and actualized it into existence. He illustrated this concept with a hieroglyphic form which he called "Baphomet," claiming that this was the spiritual principle secretly revered by the Templars. Levi used this picture as the frontispiece for a number of his books.



Eliphas Levi's depiction of Baphomet

Levi's image of Baphomet is virtually synonymous in the common mind with the image of Satan enthroned in Hell. That's only because the most modern depictions of the Devil are based on the card of the same name in the popular Rider-Waite tarot deck, and this card is itself based on Levi's depiction of Baphomet. Certainly the creature presented by Levi looks demonic and evil, with the head and legs of a goat, along with a human torso sporting both male and female sexual organs. On its forehead is that foremost symbol of witchcraft, the pentagram, and between its horns issues forth an enflamed torch.

Levi repeatedly stated that Baphomet was not the same as the Devil, however. Rather it was a symbol of a transcendental power beyond good and evil, man and beast, or male and female energies. Baphomet was in Levi's view the synthesis of all energy, both on Earth and in Heaven, forming something greater than the sum of its parts, capable of performing any transformation of matter which the human mind could conceive.



Depiction of Baphomet appearing in a Masonic lodge

It is really by looking at the architectural motifs that decorate the Templar properties, and the items left within them, that we can get a clue as to what their secret doctrine actually was. The first place to look to is a series of depictions of similar creatures discovered on Templar properties by a nineteenth-century Austrian Orientalist scholar named Joseph, Baron von Hammer-Purgstall, presented in his book *Mystery of Baphomet Revealed*. In it he documented a number of objects discovered at Templar properties throughout Europe.

Von Hammer-Purgstall's "Baphometric Idols," as they were later called by other authors, consisted mostly of statuettes, coffers and cups presenting strange images of inhuman figures. Seven of the images show only a head, and in two of these cases it is a head with two faces, much akin to the descriptions given by some Templars of the Baphomet head. Many of them were decorated with scenes of bizarre pagan sex rites.



Sex ritual depicted at Templar preceptory

One image in particular, from the lid to a coffer found in Burgundy, looks most especially like it might have influenced Eliphas Levi's depiction of Baphomet. It shows a female figure crowned with towers, just like the goddess Cybele of the ancient world. She is holding in each hand a chain, and connected to each chain, floating in the air and upside-down, are the figures of the Sun and the Moon. Below the figure's feet are a 7-pointed star and a pentagram. Between these is a human skull.



Image of Mete from Templar preceptory



Image of goat demon from Templar preceptory

This combination of images was not unique, but rather turned up repeatedly at Templar properties. In other versions the figure is shown with a beard, making it quite clear that it was meant to be taken as androgynous, just like Levi's Baphomet.

A possible origin of the goat-headed aspect can be found in the Von Hammer-Purgstall collection as well. This is a depiction of a winged and goat-headed figure with human legs seated upon an eagle. Arabic, Greek, and Latin inscriptions were found among these images too. One in particular brings to mind the confessions of the Knights Templar about Baphomet. Von Hammer-Purgstall translated it thus:

“Let Mete be exalted, who causes things to bud and blossom! he is our root; it is one and seven; abjure, and abandon thyself to all pleasures.”

You will recall that some confessing Templars said Baphomet “caused the land to germinate.” Von Hammer-Purgstall believed that the Templars had been secret practitioners of Ophite Gnosticism. The word “Ophite” comes from the Greek word for “snake.” They revered the serpent of Genesis as the one who bestowed wisdom upon mankind.

Like most Gnostics, the Ophites believed that the physical universe was a prison created by a demon named Ialdabaoth. “Boath” comes from “Bythos” or “Behut,” and means “chaos” or “the deep.” It is connected to

our modern words like “bath” and “baptize.” Chaos was called “the Abyss, or “the primeval waters,” and was analogous to the “First Matter” that the alchemists believed creation came from. “Yalda” means “son of.” In Gnostic cosmology, Yaldaboath was the son of Sophia, or Wisdom. The implication is that chaos, the First Matter, is wisdom, and is the mother of creation.

There is plenty of evidence that the Templars did practice Gnosticism, including a coin that has been found with the words “Templi Secreti” or “Secret of the Temple” written upon it. On one side there is an unmistakable depiction of the Gnostic deity Abraxas. He was viewed as the “Great Archon,” the union of good and evil, masculine and feminine. Like Baphomet, he is a chimera, with a hawk’s head, a man’s body, and serpents for legs. On the other side of the coin was a serpent with a lion’s head, a common Gnostic depiction of Ialdaboath.



Abraxas on Templar coin

The word “Mete,” found written next to the Baphometric idols surveyed by Von Hammer-Purgstall, was a Greek word for “wisdom.” He believed “Baphomet” was an allusion to the Gnostic rite of “Bapho Metis,” the “Baptism of Wisdom.” Also, “Mete” has been connected by some linguists to the name of the sun god Mithras, worshipped by some Gnostics as an incarnation of divine wisdom. Aleister Crowley believed that it meant “Father Mithras.”

More recently, Dr. Hugh Schonfield, known for his work on the Dead Sea Scrolls, also proffered an interpretation that again led back to this concept of divine wisdom or gnosis. He said that “Baphomet,” when transliterated into Aramaic and fed through a cipher, yields the word “Sophia,” another Greek word meaning “wisdom.”



Depiction of Sophia Mercurius from an alchemical text

Idries Shah, in his book *The Sufis*, wrote that the image of the goat head with a candle between its horns comes from the disciples of Abu el-Atahiyya. He was a famous Arab poet and mystic who led a cult called “the Revelers,” or “the Wise Ones.” Their insignia was this goat head, said to represent their tribe, the Aniza, meaning “goat.” Another one of their signs was the pentagram.

However, another thing that comes to mind with the image of a candle between the horns is that that miners used to mount candles on top of their helmets when they were down in the mines. This may connect the Aniza goat with the Azazel goat, the king of the jinn, or demons, who is worshipped as the true God by the Yezidi sect in Iraq.

The jinn are thought to live underground, and are believed to have invented mining and metallurgy. Azazel, like Hephaestus to the Greeks and Vulcan to the Romans, was considered the patron deity of mining. Other legends link them with the children of Cain and Tubal-Cain in the Bible, who were likewise credited with inventing these vital arts of civilization.

With this in mind, it is worth noting that Shah sees the Aniza goat as the inspiration for the goat-headed god worshipped by medieval European witches. Believed by the Church to be the Devil, they reveled in their secret unions with a figure they sometimes called the “coal-black smith.” Like the Templars, their rituals also involved kissing a goat’s behind and trampling on the cross. Like the Templars, they believed their hidden deity could bestow upon them fertility and wealth.



Fig. 66. THE RITUAL KISS OF THE SABBATH
Guaccius, *Compendium maleficarum*.

Kissing the Devil's behind at the Witches Sabbath

This word “Azazel” is reminiscent of the word “Azoth.” This was a personification of the alchemical “Alkahest,” also called the “Universal Agent,” the “Philosopher’s Stone,” the “Quintessence,” or “the Fifth Element.” This was the original substance from which, they said, the whole universe was formed. The alchemists believed that it was to be found within the “prima materia,” or “First Matter mentioned previously.” It was believed that this substance could be used to transform any one thing into another.

Again, like Baphomet, the Azoth was a chimera of different creatures, an androgynous being in whose body all of the disparate elements of the universe were united to form a whole. The A and Z in its name represented the beginning and end of the alphabet. Aleister Crowley pointed out that “A” or “Aleph” is the first letter of both the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew alphabets. “O” is like “Omega,” the final letter of the Greek Alphabet, and “T” or “Tau” is the final letter in Hebrew. So in every way possible, this creature represents the totality of existence combined, the sum of all knowledge collected all over the world in every culture. The name may be related to the Arabic “al-za’uq,” which means “the mercury.”



The Azoth

A variety of similar chimera creatures were used by different alchemists throughout the centuries to represent this idea. One thing that they all have in common is that they are androgynous. Most of the archons in the Gnostic creation myths were said to be androgynous. In the cabala, along with other Jewish and Islamic folklore, the first Adam and Eve were a united being. They only separated after being seduced by the serpent, who was also a Hermaphroditic being, made up of the male Samael and the female Lilith. There are even hints of this in *Genesis* itself.



The Divine Androgyne of Alchemy

The word Hermaphrodite comes from Greek mythology. Hermes and Aphrodite were said to have had a son, Hermaphroditus, whose body became merged with that of a water nymph, to become both male and female.

Generally he was depicted as a woman with male genitalia. Interestingly, Aphrodite is the equivalent of the Roman Venus, or the Babylonian Ishtar, in whose temple money was invented, as a form of payment for the sacred prostitutes that were her priestesses. In other words, a Hermaphrodite is a union with the goddess of love and wisdom with the god of commerce, communication, wisdom, magic, and alchemy. Their union is represented by the two serpents on the caduceus.



Hermaphroditus

The serpent staff turns up in another Greek myth of interest, that of Tiresias. He is said to have come upon a couple of serpents mating on a stick while walking through the woods and interrupted them, whereupon the goddess Hera cursed him by turning him into a woman. He stayed a woman for seven years, working as a sacred priestess or prostitute in Hera's temple.

The staff of Hermes can be found on Eliphas Levi's depiction of Baphomet, with his phallus forming the pole that the serpents are wrapped around. A connection between Baphomet and Hermes seems obvious, since Hermes was a satyr, half-man and half-goat. He was the father of this race of satyrs, seemingly equivalent to the seirim, or goat-demons of the Hebrews, of whom Azazel was seen as the progenitor. On Cyprus he was represented in the form of Herm. A herm was generally a pillar, on top of which was a bust of Hermes, or sometimes a full torso, with an erect penis sticking out. Worshippers would rub it with their hands (or worse) for good luck



A female satyr using a herm

Another place the caduceus turns up is right on the frontispiece for *De Re Metallica*, the book about metallurgy written by alchemist Giorgio Agricola, who was in charge of the silver mining at Jachimov Valley in Bohemia, where the first talers, or dollars, were minted. In this case it's the personal device of the printer, Johann Froben. Notice the two left hands holding the staff. The left, or sinister hand has always been associated with the Devil, whose mysteries are called the left-hand path of initiation.

GEORGII AGRICOLAE

DE RE METALLICA LIBRI XII QVI

bus Officia, Instrumenta, Machinae, ac omnia denique ad Metallis
tam spectantia, non modo luculentissime describuntur, sed & per
effigies, suis locis insertas, adiunctis Latinis, Germanicisque appella-
tionibus ita ob oculos ponuntur, ut clarius tradi non possint.

E I V S D E M

DE ANIMANTIBVS SVBTERRANEIS Liber, ab Autore reco-
gnitus: cum Indicibus diuersis, quicquid in opere tractatum est,
pulchre demonstrantibus.



Frontispiece for Georgius Agricola's *De Re Metallica*

According to the old alchemical manuscripts, it is the element of mercury that acts as the true agent of this transformation. They say that mercury, added to sulphur and salt through a very specific, very arcane process, is the “universal solvent” that can extract silver and gold from lead. This is symbolized with a serpent impaled upon a cross. As the alchemist Fulcanelli wrote in *The Mystery of the Cathedrals*:

“The snake indicates the incisive and solvent nature of the mercury, which avidly absorbs the metallic sulphur and holds it so powerfully that the cohesion cannot later be overcome. This is the ‘poisoned worm, which infects everything with its venom’ ... This reptile is the aspect of mercury in its first state, and the golden wand is the corporeal sulphur, which is added to it.”

In truth, mercury really does extract silver and gold from lead, and is used for the purpose every day. However, although chemistry, metallurgy and alchemy were at one time basically the same study, it is believed that the alchemists were talking about something more than the mundane process of mining and refining precious metals from the ground.

It is often assumed that they were performing some atomic process where they switched the number of electrons in the atoms around to transmute the metal. Indeed the modern concept of the atom was contributed to largely by alchemists, such as Robert Boyle. This type of alchemy is now possible with the use of modern particle accelerators, although the amount of energy needed to do it makes it cost-prohibitive. It certainly would not have been possible in the medieval times with any known contemporary technologies.

In fact, the alchemists tried to distinguish what they were doing from normal metallurgy and chemistry. The mercury they used was not the regular kind, but the “philosophic Mercury,” which produced the “Stone of the Wise,” or “Philosopher’s Stone.” This was the gold that was the end-matter of the work, which they took pains to distinguish from “common gold.” Again, from Fulcanelli, we read:

“The solution of the sulphur, or, in other words, its absorption by the mercury, has given rise to a great diversity of emblems; but the resulting body, which is homogeneous and perfectly prepared, retains Philosopher’s Mercury as its name, and the caduceus as its symbol. It is the first class matter or compound, the vitriolated egg, which requires only gradual cooking in order to be transformed first into the red sulphur, then into Elixir, and the third time into the universal Medicine. ‘In our work,’ the Philosopher’s affirm, ‘Mercury alone is sufficient.’”

Some modern snake oil salesmen have alleged that the Philosopher’s Stone is a form of gold that exists in a higher dimension, which they call “monatomic gold.” It has different atomic properties, they say, and they sell bottles of it to the gullible as a dietary supplement. They claim that it will cure all manner of ills and make people forever young, just as the original Philosopher’s Stone was said to do. Many of these charlatans have been unmasked, their magic elixir shown to be nothing but common table salt. Several people have died from liver failure after consuming large quantities of it over a long period of time.

The ironic thing is, these snake oil salesmen may have done more to understand and employ the true secrets of alchemy than the compilers of those strange medieval manuscripts ever did. Because the key to transforming that which is base or common into something of value is really an instance of mind over matter. As any successful salesman will tell you, the process of making money is really just a confidence trick.

Alchemy is considered the principle Hermetic science. Hermes , a.k.a. Mercury, was the messenger of the gods, the mediator between mankind on earth and the lords who sat atop Mount Olympus. Perhaps most importantly, Hermes was the primordial teacher and heavenly scribe, the bringer of divine wisdom. As such, he was the patron of alchemy. He was also known as “the trickster.”

He was thought to have been incarnated at one point in an Egyptian figure known as Hermes Trismegistus. This person is credited as the author of the so-called “Emerald Tablet of Hermes.” This was a mystical interpretation of the structure of the universe: how it came into being out of nothing, and how these principles of creation could be applied to transmogrify the phenomena within the universe according to the will. In short, it was a treatise on magic.



Hermes Trismegistus

Whether we are talking about stage magic, or the practice of ritual magic from which it is derived, the principle is the same: illusion. In stage magic, the magician pretends to pull a rabbit from a hat, or to saw a woman in half, and does it so convincingly that the eye is deceived into believing that it's real. Everyone knows that it's a trick, but the purpose is achieved, because the audience is impressed and happy to have bought their tickets.

Ritual magic is similar. Through quasi-religious rituals, superstitious acts, prayer, meditation, and the repetition of magic words, the magician tries to convince himself, and the others involved in the working, that he has done something to change reality, or that the gods have done it for him. He chooses to suspend disbelief, to not be critical, to not worry about whether the desired change will literally occur, or how it will manifest.

This, supposedly, is the key to the magic: pretend that something is real, and sooner or later, it becomes real. Various attempts have been made to explain how this supposedly comes about, resorting to theories of quantum mechanics or the collective unconscious. But to anyone who has ever knowingly, deliberately, and successfully utilized this principle in their own life, it doesn't really matter how it happens. It only matters that it does.

What I am describing here is the true creative power of the human imagination, which can literally alter physical reality by tricking itself into believing that reality has already changed. This is the principle at the heart of the Hermetic arts. It must, then, be the principle at work in alchemy. Let me show you now how these alchemical principles can be applied to modern economics.

As we know, the Knights Templar invented the banking and checking system in the late Middle Ages. Instead of trading with gold and silver coins, they mainly traded in coded chits: paper that represented a promise to pay, and the right for the recipient to collect their payment, in gold or silver coin, at the bank branch of their choice.

Later this developed into fractional reserve lending. This practice was pioneered by medieval European goldsmiths, who, in addition to forging gold and silver coins in their shops, also frequently acted as community bankers. The concept is quite simply this: If ten people deposit gold bars in a vault for safekeeping (the original purpose of a bank), odds are that only one of them will come to withdraw from their accounts or to inspect their gold and silver holdings at any given time.

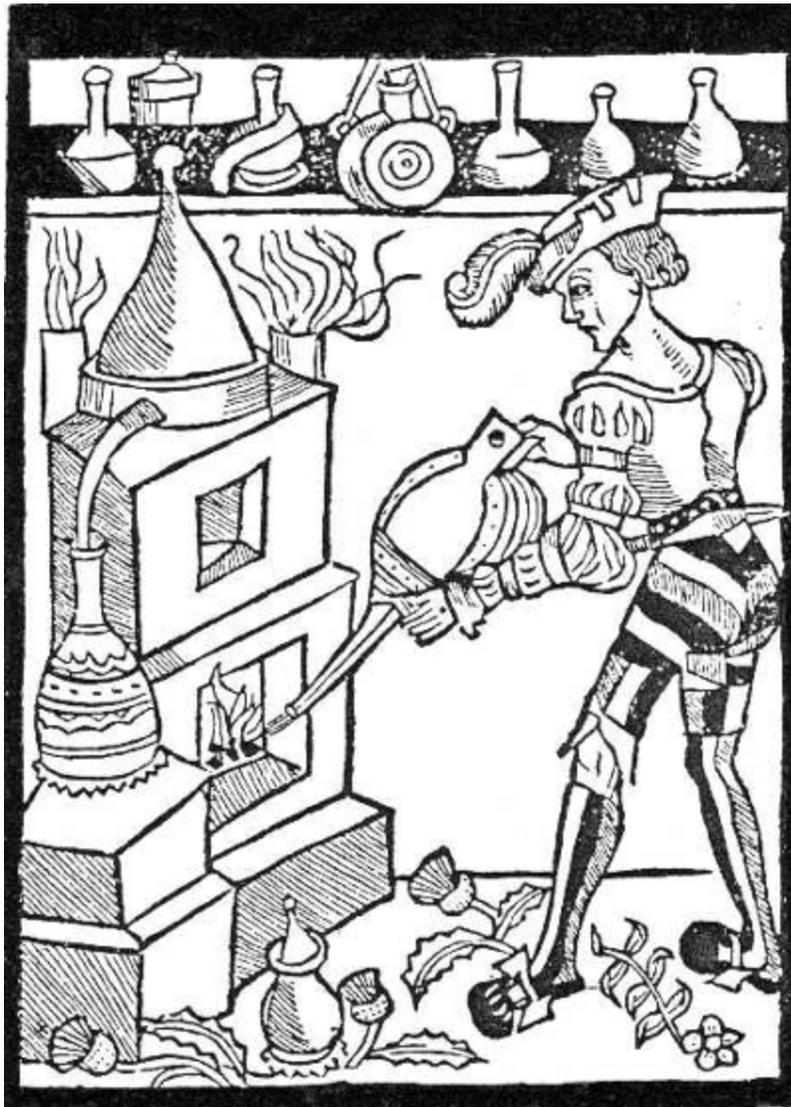


15th century depiction of usury from Brant's Stultifera Navis

The goldsmiths then surmised that it would be OK for them to loan out the gold so that the bank could make money on interest. They issued lines of credit, written on paper, to new clients, drawing on the gold holdings they had gotten from the depositors. This is but a slight augmentation upon what the Templars had already been doing with their network of preceptory banks.

On the surface, it would certainly seem that loaning out to other people money that has been given to you for safekeeping is a form of fraud, the classic ponzi scheme. But because people believed that the paper loans they were given represented real money in the vault that could be extracted at any time, the certificates were in effect “as good as gold.” This belief was reinforced when they went to withdraw from their accounts and were able to receive real gold or silver upon demand. As long as no more than one out of ten depositors withdrew all their money at any given time, the scheme could continue.

The advantage of this is that the loans are paid back in real money with interest, which increased the wealth holdings of the banker. The certificates can be traded around just like real money, which increases the money supply of the community, thus boosting the economy. It’s a win-win situation for everybody -- just so long as nobody audits the bank, and only a certain ratio of money is ever withdrawn at any given time. But if either of those things do happen, the entire house of cards comes crashing down all at once.



An alchemist at work

In 1705, Scottish philosopher John Law wrote in his book, *Money and Trade Considered with a Proposal for Supplying the Nation with Money*, that he had discovered the Philosopher's Stone of the alchemists. The key to alchemy, he said, was the printing of paper money. In 1715 he was hired by the French government to put his theories into action.

Law was put in charge of France's national Banque Royale, as well as the Mississippi Company, which gathered investments from French citizens to finance operations in French Louisiana, promising the investors profit payments. He set up a paper-passing scheme between the bank and the company, in which investors could borrow paper money printed by the bank to invest in the company. They were expected to pay the bank in gold, while the company paid their profits in the bank's paper money, which was supposedly redeemable in gold.

Based on fractional reserve lending, the scheme worked for a while, and the bank profited immensely while the investors' holdings seemed to exponentially increase in value with every passing day. But predictably, the whole scheme collapsed dramatically in what became known as "the Great Mississippi Bubble," when depositors got wind that there wasn't enough gold to redeem their notes. Law fled in disgrace, dying shortly thereafter. But his ideas went on to influence German writer and Freemason Wolfgang von Goethe.



Goethe's classic play *Faust* is replete with alchemical allegories, and the main title character is indeed an alchemist, seeking, with the Devil's help, the mysteries of creation. In one of the story's subplots, Faust and his teacher, the demon Mephistopheles, gain the favor of the emperor by offering him the secret of alchemy: how to create wealth by printing paper money. They convince the emperor to issue promissory notes based on gold to be mined in the future. Soon the emperor presides over a robust economy and a licentious, materialistic people. But the currency eventually collapses, just as all the Devil's creations turn out, in this play, to be illusions.



Faust and Mephistopheles

This is the alchemy that underpins our modern economy. For now almost every country on Earth is run by a central banking system that practices fractional reserve lending. In the United States, this central bank is called the Federal Reserve, and it is actually separate from the Treasury Department, a quasi-governmental corporation with shares held by private banks. Each of these member banks is practicing fractional reserve lending as well.

Here's how the scheme works in modern times: a bank can take the money from its depositors' accounts, and lend it out to various persons or institutions on interest. It can loan out the vast majority of the money deposited (classically ninety percent), leaving only a fraction (ten percent) in the bank's vaults. This fraction is called the "reserve," and it is the only actual money sitting in the bank, backing all of the various loans. It is the only money that is really ready to be withdrawn, should the depositors choose to take money from their accounts.

When the loans are paid back, the bank earns a profit from the interest. Thus, the bank has caused its depositors' money to multiply, and has kept the difference for itself, essentially creating money out of nothing. If the bank has loaned money to another bank or financial institution, that institution can then loan it out and create even more money out of nothing. Or they can loan it to a person or business who can use it to earn more money by producing goods and services that are sold. This money is then spent into the economy again.

Thus the aggregate money supply multiplies exponentially, and the economy itself acts as a money multiplier, a manna machine. Money can always be used to make more money. This corresponds to an alchemical principle: "To make gold you must take gold." Like Christ with the loaves and fishes, alchemists believed they were able to take a small sample of gold (the "metallic seed," as they called it) and use their magical chemical processes to increase it exponentially.

A work called *His Exposition of the Hieroglyphicall Figures which he caused to bee painted upon an Arch in St. Innocents Church-yard, in Paris*, published in London in 1624, is alleged to have been written by Nicolas Flamel. It is supposedly his commentary upon the decorations he had commissioned for the entrance to the Cemetery of the Innocents near his Parisian home. There he is believed to have embedded some of his alchemical secrets in allegorical form, based upon images from *The Book of Abraham the Jew*. In it he seems to refer cryptically to this multiplication principle.

"Multiply the budding and encreasing natures: for look how often thou shalt dissolve and fix, so often will these natures multiply, in quantity, quality, and vertue, according to the multiplication of ten; coming from this number to an hundred, from an hundred to a thousand, from a thousand to ten thousand, from ten thousand to an hundred thousand, from an hundred thousand to a million, and from thence by the same operation to Infinity."

Elsewhere in the same document, the author also states, as a general rule, that "the stone augments tenfold."



Nicolas Flamel

The US monetary system operates on a similar principle. Since the Federal Reserve is the point of origin for this money, the load initially injected into the system is sometimes called “high-powered money,” because it effects the whole economy. It is the (comparatively) tiny seed which causes the rest of the money supply to grow. The interest rate which the Fed chooses to set for the money it lends determines how much money will be borrowed by other banks at that time, and also determines the rate that those banks will charge for loaning money.



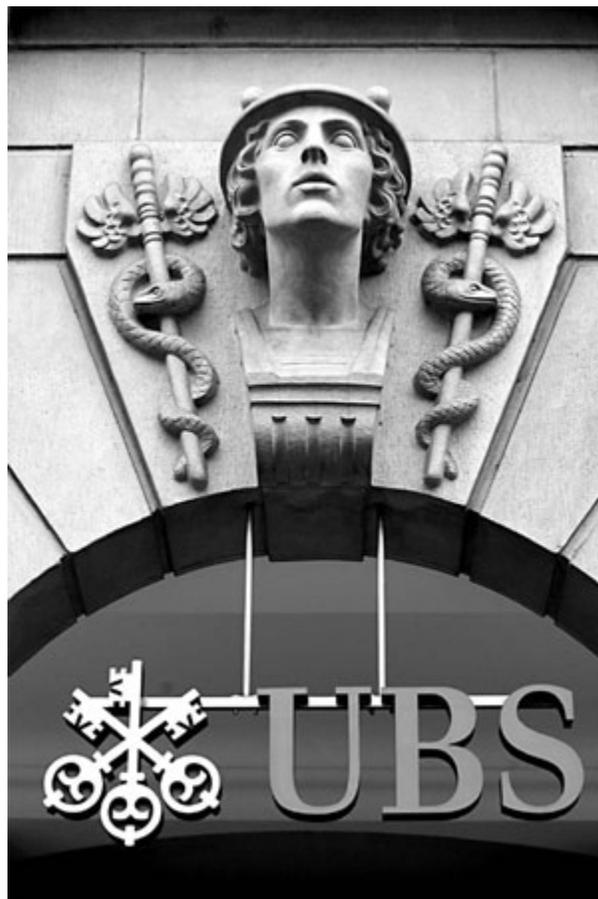
Caducei on the door to the Bank of England building

This is the primary way in which the Federal Reserve controls the money supply, and thus, as much as possible, the American economy. Too much money being loaned out (and thus created) leads to inflation, and too little causes recession. When the Fed first loans it out to the member banks, the money is “created,” and each time those banks lend it out, they are breeding more. As Martin Mayer writes in *The Fed: The Inside Story of How the World’s Most Powerful Financial Institution Drives the Markets*:

“... The Fed’s actions were always necessarily pretty small by comparison with the effects desired, and their effectiveness was explained by the operation of a ‘multiplier’ inherent in a system where banks had to keep ‘reserves’ against some fraction of their liabilities. The bank that received the Fed’s ‘high-powered money’ might lend 90 percent of it, and the bank that received the proceeds of that loan would lend 90 percent of that, producing deposits in another bank that

would lend 90 percent of that, etc ...”

But here’s the real magic: they’re not even lending out certificates redeemable in gold. It’s a pyramid scheme based solely on paper. The fractional “reserves” are just “Federal Reserve Notes” -- pieces of paper printed by the Treasury Department on behalf of the central bank. This is what we now refer to as “cash.” It is called “fiat money,” fiat being a Latin word that means “by declaration.” A dollar bill is money only because the banks and the government declare it as such, and we agree to use it as such. Unlike gold or silver, it has no intrinsic value beyond what our minds put into it.



Mercury and caducei at entrance to United Bank of Scotland

So the dollar that we now use is one backed entirely by faith alone -- the public’s faith in the US economy, and America itself. The economies of other nations are dependent upon this faith as well. For if no one believed in the power of the dollar -- if it was not universally accepted as a form of payment -- then it would have no value. As Jack Weatherford writes in *The History of Money*:

”The government will not redeem a dollar bill for anything other than another dollar bill. The dollar is simply fiat currency. The dollar rests on the power of the government and the faith of the people who use it -- faith that it will be able to buy some thing tomorrow, faith that the US government will continue to exist and to accept dollars in payment of taxes and pay them out in expenses, and faith that other people will continue to believe in it. Aside from that faith, nothing backs up the dollar.”

Likewise, William Greider wrote in *Secrets of the Temple: How the Federal Reserve Runs the Country* that:

“Above all, money [is] a function of faith. It [requires] an implicit and universal social consent that [is] indeed mysterious. To create money and use it, each one must believe, and everyone must believe. Only then [do] the worthless pieces of paper take on value. When a society [loses] faith in money, it [is] implicitly losing faith in itself... The money process... [requires] a deep, unacknowledged act of faith, so mysterious that it could easily be confused with divine powers.”

The Federal Reserve was created in 1913, and over the next 17 years, managed to pump the country up into an inflationary stock market bubble that crashed in 1929. This led to a national bankruptcy, and the most protracted economy depression the country had ever seen. When the US federal government went bankrupt in 1933, the creditors, represented by the Federal Reserve, demanded payment in gold. So the government gave them pretty much all of the gold they had, including all of the gold belonging to its citizens, which it seized by force. People were given paper dollars in exchange, which were immediately devalued a few weeks later when the government announced that the dollar would be removed from the “gold standard.”



Lady Liberty (a.k.a the goddess Columbia) with caduceus outside the Federal Reserve building in Washington, D.C.

Paper dollars would no longer be redeemable in gold for the average citizen (although the US dollars held by the central banks of other countries were still redeemable.) The price of gold increased substantially at that point, and at any rate, people were forbidden to own gold or do business with gold. They were forced by law to believe in the magical power of the dollar, made “as good as gold” by government fiat.



Announcement proclaiming the government's confiscation of gold in 1933

This was the beginning of a radical new approach to government, one that was taking place on both sides of the Atlantic simultaneously. The great influence on this was British economist John Maynard Keynes, an unofficial advisor both to Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt. A student of alchemy, it was he who purchased Sir Isaac Newton's secret alchemical manuscripts at a Southerby's auction. (Newton, by the way, served for a time as England's Chancellor of the Exchequer.)



Newton's dog burns his Alchemy writings in 1693

Newton the alchemist

Keynes was interested in finding a way in which the alchemy of paper money would be more than just mere trickery and illusion. He devised a way in which he believed that the government could produce as much money as it wanted to, through fiat currency creation and fractional reserve lending. This money would be merely "in potentia" until it was actually spent on goods and services. Only when it is actually used for something does it become real, and he believed that as long as these things were produced in equal quantity to the amount of money created, inflation would not be a problem.

Keynes thought that you could use this process to inject new capital into a nation's economy. Furthermore, it almost didn't matter what the money was spent on: wars, public work projects, etc. The government merely needed to create programs to absorb these newly-created fiat dollars as payment for labor and materials. The laborers and the contract companies would then use the money they received, and the alchemy would be perfected.

To this end, Roosevelt created an amazing collection of new bureaucracies to regulate every major aspect of American life. Most important for our present inquiry is the way in which labor laws were drafted. It became

artificially codified that 40 hours of work per week was the proper amount for full-time employment. A minimum wage was instituted as the proper amount that someone should get paid for that work. This formula -- of a minimum wage and a 40-hour work week -- was then used as a factor in deciding nearly every other economic policy, including acceptable inflation rates, taxes, and cost-cutting adjustments for government benefits, such as Social Security, which was also created at that time.

Later, new welfare programs would be developed in the US that are likewise tied to the same formula. At present, for the most part, social assistance to the non-disabled and non-elderly is restricted to single mothers who work full-time at minimum wage. It is presumed that if an individual isn't working at least 40 hours a week, or isn't getting paid the minimum wage for the work they do, then they must not be trying hard enough.

Furthermore, if someone earns more than minimum wage, or work more than 40 hours a week, they make too much money to qualify for social assistance. In many subtle ways, the economy is tethered by the 40 hour work week and the minimum wage. Society is being engineered to make this wage and work week the universal lot of almost everybody.

To do this, the engineers work to reduce the wages of those who make more than this, and to take away any wealth they have accumulated. They also strive to weed out those who are, for whatever reason, not willing or able to work 40 hours a week or can't get paid at the minimum wage for doing so. There is actually an international movement afoot amongst bureaucrats to unify the economies of all countries so that we can institute a single wage and set of labor codes throughout the entire world.

The result of this is that, for all intents and purposes, the gold standard has been replaced with a time standard. The phrase "time is money" has been rendered literally true. But is this alchemy? Let's have a look once again at the alchemical process, as explained by Flamel's commentary on *The Book of Abraham the Jew*.

One of the central images found in this volume shows the figure of Chronos, or Saturn, having an encounter with Mercury. Saturn is shown in his guise as Father Time, represented by the hour glass. Chronos is the lord of chronology, of the passage of linear time, of cause and effect, and because of this was a personification of Death. In the allegory of alchemy, each planet represents a metal, and Chronos or Saturn is equated with lead.

The planet Mercury, as we know, is associated with the metal of the same name, also known as quicksilver, because it is silver-colored and liquid at room temperature. These qualities were long considered analogous to those of the Roman deity of the same name, typically shown with wings upon his cap and sandals. With few exceptions, the Romans usually showed Mercury as a sprightly young man, able to run swiftly and, with the help of his special gear, glide effortlessly through the air. Thus he was able to pass messages back and forth between Heaven and Earth.

In the picture presently under discussion, Mercury is brandishing his magical caduceus at Saturn, as if to dispel his power over life and death. Saturn, meanwhile, is holding his scythe, with which he is about to cut off Mercury's feet. This image is explained by Flamel as a stage in the transformation process. The "philosophic mercury," when added to lead, helps to extract the essence of gold from the lead, but in so doing, becomes "fixed," and loses its fluidity. Alchemical metaphors can always be seen to function on a number of different levels. Given the relationship between alchemy and the modern monetary system, it's worth looking to see how this metaphor can be applied to our economy.

down.” A recession isn’t merely a lack of money in existence, but a lack of velocity. The approach that the US government has taken over the last few decades -- to inflate the money supply while decreasing domestic production and employment -- leads to a distortion of time perception by the public.

As the value of money goes down, you have to earn more of it in order to get by. But because the minimum wage keep the amount you can earn mostly fixed relative to time, you have to spend more time earning it. But of course you have a fixed amount of time available in a day. So as the economy gets worse, time seems to go faster, and your youth drains away from you quicker. The action that is really regulating the velocity of the time-money continuum is this nebulous concept, so often blindly idealized: work.



The arm and hammer symbol

When you think of communism and socialism, what do you think of? The glorification of the worker, of course, often represented by a hammer and sickle. Sometimes work was symbolized in the form of a gear or a bolt. Similar symbols include an arm holding a hammer, or a wheel. The minimum wage was first set during the Roosevelt administration by the National Recovery Administration, whose symbol was a blue thunderbird holding one of those gears. Sometimes the wheel is shown with wings, as it appears, along with Mercury, on vintage American stock certificates. Again, this symbol has a correlation with alchemy, and it is explicitly associated with time. As Fulcanelli explained in *The Mystery of the Cathedrals*:

“... the wheel is the alchemical hieroglyph of the time necessary for the coction of the philosophical matter, and consequently of the coction itself. The sustained, constant, and equal fire, which the artist maintains night and day in the course of this operation, is for this reason called ‘the fire of the wheel.’ Moreover, in addition to the heat necessary for the liquefaction of the philosopher’s stone, a second agent is needed as well, called the secret or philosophic fire. It is this latter fire, sustained by ordinary heat, which makes the wheel turn and produces the various phenomena that the artist observes in his vessel.

So the wheel is the machine that, over time and through work, generates the heat necessary to transform the base matter into gold. The energy that keeps the wheel going is this secret philosophic fire. This perhaps links up with the famous magical incantation, popular in medieval times, that said:

SATOR
AREPO
TENET
OPERA
ROTAS

This translates roughly to “The farmer Arepo works the wheels.”

Elsewhere in his book, Fulcanelli mentions that “Alchemy was ... called celestial agriculture, and its adepts were called Labourers.” He also mentions that alchemy was the science perfected by God himself when he created the Heavens and the Earth in 6 days, culminating in Adam, Eve, and the Garden of Eden. But as you may recall, the Bible says that God created Adam to “keep the garden” and “to till the land.”

Now why would God need Adam to work for him? Is there anything Adam can do that God can’t do for himself, effortlessly? Well, God “works” in mysterious ways, and apparently he needs to employ a surrogate to do the actual work for him. There is, indeed, a magical principle at work here (no pun intended).

This metaphysical concept of work goes beyond the mundane, purely utilitarian interpretation of the word. In ritual magic, Hermeticism, and alchemy, the practice of the art is referred to as “the Great Work.” Note also the term “witchcraft,” and that Freemasonry is called “the Craft.” The Masons use the imagery of the original trade guild of architects and builders that they came from, but freely admit that these are merely symbols of the greater, more metaphysical “work” that they are engaged in.



Poster for the National Recovery Administration

The reason why each of these traditions so ambiguously defines the “work” that their system entails is because in many cases it is really only the concept of work in itself that is needed, and it doesn’t really matter what the type of work is. Ritual magic often involves the incantation of “barbarous names” of gibberish, as well as bizarre activities that seem to have no practical purpose. This is because their real purpose is as a sort of placebo.



The Ancient of Days, by William Blake

The point is that, if you are willing to go through all that nonsense in order to achieve your end, you must really believe in the power of the magic. If you didn't believe at the beginning of the ritual, you certainly will at the end of it. The "secret philosophic fire" is the fire of the imagination. The real purpose of work in this context is to create an ego release and a suspension of disbelief. You become one with the process of your endeavors, and cease to focus so much on the object of your work. In this way, work becomes a form of meditative yoga, and indeed, work is used in this manner in the tradition of karma yoga, or "the discipline of action." As the *Bhagavad Gita* states:

"In the bonds of work I am free, because in them I am free from desires ... In whatever work he does, such a man in truth has peace: he expects nothing, he relies on nothing, and ever has fullness of joy ... He has attained liberation: he is free from all bonds, his mind has found peace in wisdom, and his work is a holy sacrifice. The work of such a man is pure."

Or, as the sign said at the entrance to the concentration camp at Auschwitz: "Arbeit macht frei": that is, "Work sets you free."



Entrance to Auschwitz

It is my belief that the modern economy has been set up so as to literally force the individuals involved to engage in some form of work, no matter how practically useless it may be, in order to complete the alchemical transformation of turning paper into gold. The system is set up to try to get individuals to unwittingly allow themselves to be absorbed in the process, just as youth (Mercury) is absorbed in the alchemical transformation.

The fact is that money can be, and is, created out of nothing. But in order for us to have faith that it actually exists, we need to go through some sort of travail in order to achieve it. Human beings instinctively don't believe that something can be created out of nothing. They need to go through the process of work in order to satisfy the logical part of the mind, to make themselves believe that creation has indeed taken place.

So the economic system is set up to make that happen. The bank may create money from thin air, but you are going to have to either pay it back with interest, if you borrow it, or earn it through working for someone who has borrowed it from the bank and is obligated to pay it back with interest. In this system, individuals don't get anything for free, and the human perception of the law of conservation, as they believe it applies to money, is preserved.

The reality is that, because of technological advances, every year a smaller and smaller percentage of the world's population is actually needed in order to produce the goods consumed by the rest. Karl Marx addressed this when he talked about the problem of surplus labor. With each passing generation, more and more humans become obsolete. Since fewer workers are needed relative to the population, more workers go jobless. Those who remain are under constant pressure to accept smaller wages, and to be more productive. Marx believed that this would create a dissatisfaction among the working class, and thus lead to the revolution of the proletariat that he thought was inevitable.

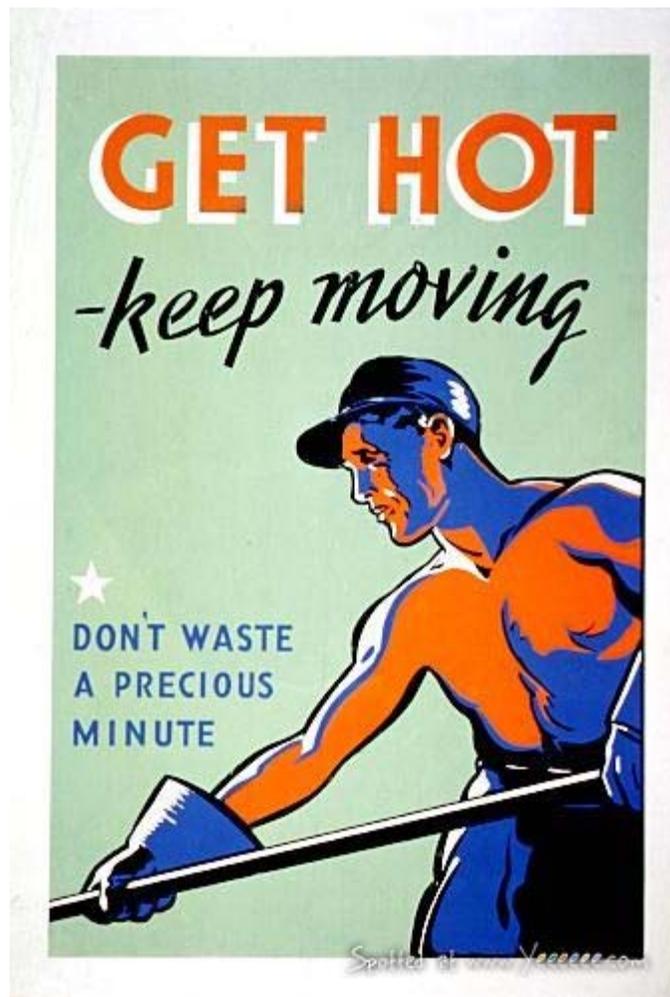
John Maynard Keynes' approach to this problem was to artificially create work in whatever way possible, so that banks could create money and circulate it in the economy to stimulate it. It mattered not to him what sort of work was done. We can see the evidence of this approach in the types of projects that our government chooses to fund. We can also see it in the never-ending propaganda we are subjected to from birth onward glorifying work as an end in and of itself.



Modern pro-work propaganda

Ninety percent of our time in public school is spent doing what can only be described as mindless busywork, meant to make the kids, and their parents, feel like they are doing something. In addition, parents are encouraged to keep their kids busy with after school programs, sports, clubs, band practice, volunteer work, etc., under the belief that “idle hands are the devil’s plaything.” Unless they are made to be busy with some form of work (or structured play) at all times, it is believed that kids will get involved with drugs and gang activity out of boredom.

As we move into adulthood, many of us find ourselves working for people and institutions who approach business this same way. Bosses want you to be busy at all times, because they are paying you by the hour. So you had better find something to do when the phone isn’t ringing, or the customers aren’t coming. “If you’ve got time to lean, you’ve got time to clean,” the boss says.



WWII-era pro-work propaganda

This has led to many a scene of a convenience store clerk nervously stirring dirt around in a circle on the floor with a mop for twenty seconds at a time in-between customers. This is why the aisles of the store are always blocked with boxes of stock that hasn't been unpacked, and the clerk is never at the front when you are ready to check out. Because it's the clerk's job to somehow do all of the stocking and cleaning during his "down time" while minding the store, no matter how busy the store is.

Some people find themselves in a job position with way more work required than they can possibly do in the time allotted, but are also discouraged from putting in extra hours. They are encouraged to lower the quality of their work in order to meet the quotas. If you can't cram an ever-increasing amount of work into the time you have sold him, then the boss feels like he isn't getting his money's worth. Because what he has purchased from you isn't merely your labor, but a time period of servitude, in which he is allowed to do with you whatever he will, even if his demands are literally impossible.

In other situations, people who work quickly and efficiently are told to "pace themselves," to work at the same rate as the other workers. Because what's important isn't just the work, but the time spent doing it. People don't say "Work is money." They say "Time is money." We all instinctively understand this, but we also know deep down that there is something wrong with it.

This value system has led people to have totally neurotic attitudes about money and work. They judge themselves wrongly, and they judge others wrongly, because of it. People with a moderate income are considered better than people with less, because it is believed that they worked harder for it. People who can't pay their bills are automatically labeled as irresponsible and lazy, because it is perceived that they

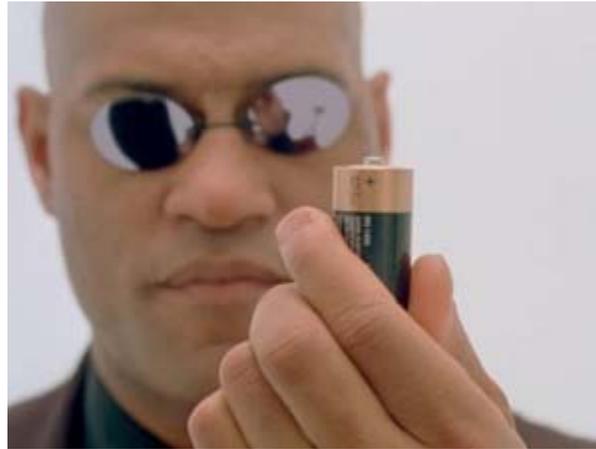
should have worked harder to earn the money to pay them. But by the same token, people who are thought to have “too much” money are judged negatively because it is thought that they couldn’t possibly have earned it through “hard work.”



Incentives

Good credit comes not just from having money, but specifically from having a regular income that continues over time. People with substantial sums of money in the bank but no regular income to replenish it continually will still have trouble renting or borrowing. People who own property outright find that they still have to pay “rent” to their local government in the form of property taxes. This forces them to sacrifice their time continually to earn more income, to pay the never-ending tax on property they have already purchased.

But tax is the way governments have devised for draining what they deem to be excess wealth from the system, not only to curtail inflation, but also to maintain the median income and average standard of living that they want, for whatever possible social and economic engineering strategy they happen to be pursuing at that time. To be an acceptable member of society, you must be a “hard-working, tax-paying citizen,” because that is the role that has been developed for you within the machine. However, it’s not enough to sacrifice your own youth to feed the secret fire of economics alchemy. You are going to have to toss your progeny into the flames as well.



Your value to the system

The sacrifice of one's own child, particularly that of the first-born, was always seen as one of the highest sacraments in the ancient world. Going back to the oldest cults in history, people sacrificed their own children to the gods. Priests, kings, and even the gods themselves offered up the fruit of their wombs. In reward for this, they believed they would receive blessings from Heaven: prosperity, fertility, health, and protection from evil.

In the Old Testament, God condemns child sacrifice, but only because it is part of the customs of rival cults -- because the sacrifices are not done unto him. Burnt offerings to Baal-Molech, in which babies were placed inside of an oven made in the shape of the bull-horned god of the Phoenicians, are mentioned repeatedly throughout the Bible, always as an abomination.





Images of Baal-Molech

However, it does appear the the spiritual principle of child sacrifice is an inseparable part of religion, and the Lord of the Hebrews demanded that it be observed in substitute form if nothing else. This is demonstrated by the story of God's test of Abraham, demanding the sacrifice of his son Isaac to see if he would go through with it. When God provided the ram as a substitute, he was instituting a religious tradition that Abraham's descendants would continue to observe for many generations to come, although it would mutate in a number of ways. It was also a metaphor for the real sacrifice of Abraham's first-born son that is described in the text of Genesis just before this incident.

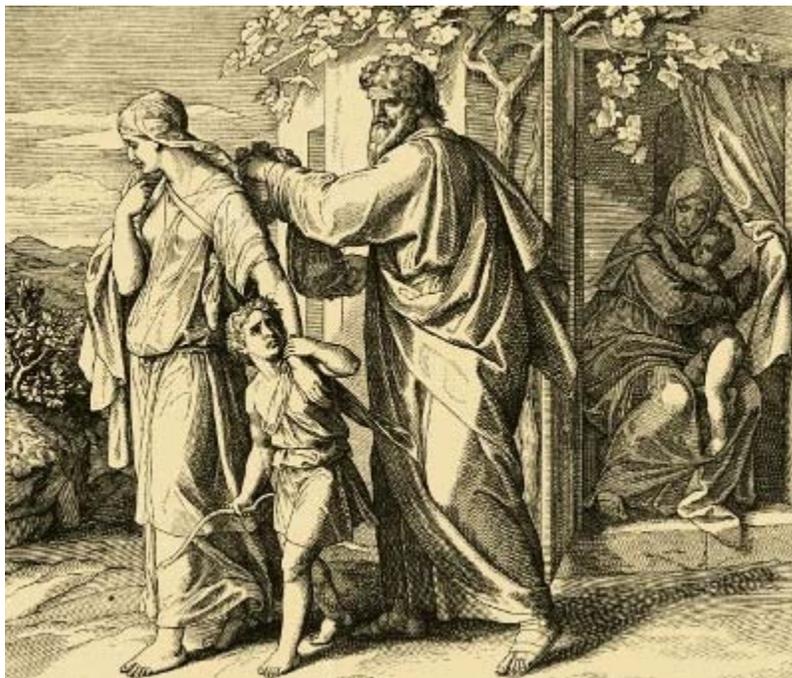




15. *Sacrificio di Isacco*, xilografia dai Responsi Rituali (*Sheelot w-teshuvo*) di Asher b. Yechiel, Costantinopoli, s.e., 1517.

The sacrifice of Isaac

Abraham's other son, Ishmael, was the eldest, and the rightful heir to the birthright blessings that came with Abraham's covenant with God. But Ishmael's mother was Abraham's slave woman, Hagar. So when Abraham's wife Sarah became pregnant as well, Hagar and Ishmael were cast off into the wilderness, and left to die. They were only saved by the intervention of God, who laid a blessing upon Ishmael that his sons were to be the princes of twelve tribes. However, these descendants were also cursed to be subservient to the twelve tribes that would descend from Isaac, condemned to ever be a slave race to them.



Ishmael and Hagar being cast out into the wilderness.

Foreshadowing of many of these themes can be found in the earlier story of Cain and Abel. Cain's sacrifice of grain was not accepted by God, but Abel's blood sacrifice of a lamb was accepted. This made Cain angry, and supposedly led him to murder Abel out of jealousy. Thus, not only did the Lord demonstrate that the shedding

of blood was necessary for sacrifice, but he also inadvertently achieved the sacrifice of both of Adam's first-born sons.

After the murder, Cain was branded with a mark of protection by God, to prevent others from killing him in revenge. He was then cast out into the wilderness, to the "land of Nod," cursed to be a "fugitive and vagabond" for the rest of his days. Parallels can clearly be seen between this and what later happened to Ishmael.



The story of Cain and Abel illustrated. Note how it looks like Cain is literally eating his brother alive.

Later still, when the Hebrews were attempting to escape captivity in Egypt, God decided to take as a sacrifice to himself all of the firstborn of the land, except for those of the Hebrews who sacrificed a lamb and painted the blood on their front door. The Angel of Death passed over these houses, but from that point onward, the Hebrew tribe of Levi was taken by God as a living sacrifice. They were to have their inheritance taken away from them, and were forbidden to own property or practice a trade. They were to serve solely as the slaves of God in the priesthood. As it says in *Numbers 18*:

”And the LORD said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons ... shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood ... And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel: to you they are given as a gift for the LORD, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation....

”But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance. But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as an heave offering unto the LORD, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.”

So once again we see thematic similarities. There are multiple layers of substitution for the sacrifice of the firstborn son going on here. First, the demand for blood is being met with the animal substitute: the Paschal

Lamb, the ram in the thicket, etc. Secondly, the tribe of Levi is being disinherited and enslaved, just as Ishmael's bloodline had been, as a substitute for the principle of the firstborn. Thirdly, tithe offerings made to the temple by the congregation were seen as a way of crediting the sacrifice that the Levites were making to the whole community. People were expected to give one-tenth of their harvest, their flocks, and their money in support of the priesthood. Later they also came to be expected to donate their first-born sons or daughters to serve in the temple, a practice that was continued in medieval Catholic Europe, usually with second-born children.

On Yom Kippur, another substitute animal sacrifice would occur. One goat would be killed in the Temple to atone for the sins of the people. Those sins were then laid upon the head of a second goat, the scapegoat. This poor creature was then cast out into the wilderness to die of thirst in the desert: just like Ishmael and Cain were cast out, just as Adam and Eve had been cast out of Eden, and just as the Hebrews as a group were forced to wander the desert after the Passover.

It is possible that this reveals a truth behind the Cain story: that Abel was sacrificed to appease the bloodlust of God, and Cain was cast off to bear the blame of the sacrifice. Interestingly, the Yom Kippur scapegoat was said in the Bible to be a sacrifice to "Azazel," a Middle-Eastern goat god I mentioned previously as being analogous to the goat-demon Baphomet worshipped by the Templars.

The very same principles seem to be at work in the story of Jesus. Here God chose to sacrifice *his own* firstborn son, and then laid the blame upon Judas Iscariot, who exiled and sacrificed himself through suicide afterwards. The Gnostics saw Judas as playing an important sacramental role, sacrificing his own soul willingly in the fires of Hell in order to make the Gospel story happen. He then suffered the iniquity of being the outcast, the scapegoat of Christianity.

Supposedly, since the death of Christ, all need for blood sacrifice has ceased and God now only demands tithes to the church to appease him. Every Sunday priests and pastors across the world tell their congregation that they will be blessed with prosperity, health, and safety from evil if they just give 10% of their income to the Church. There is no further need for either child sacrifice or animal sacrifice because the sins of all mankind have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, Jesus. But there have always been those who see in the rite of child sacrifice a power that can be utilized for practical purposes.

There are veiled references to child sacrifice in the allegories of alchemy, and particularly in the work attributed to Nicolas Flamel regarding *The Book of Abraham the Jew*. We can see this in the hieroglyphic pictures from it which he had reproduced in stone at the entrance to the Cemetery of the Innocents just outside of his home in Paris.

In the annals of alchemical research, from medieval to Renaissance times, each coded manuscript that has been written describing the process has done so in its own way, with its own set of symbols. To this day almost none of them have been fully decoded. However, there are certain commonalities to be found amongst most of them.

As we know, Nicolas Flamel's manuscript made use of an image of Saturn cutting off the feet of Mercury. One of the other images in Flamel's manuscript also involves Saturn. Flamel said that it showed King Herod and the Massacre of the Innocents from the Gospel story. However, in the very same passage, Flamel himself remarks that Herod is made to look like "Saturn devouring his own children." In the myth of Saturn, known to the Greeks as Chronos, he was said to have eaten his own children in an attempt to prevent a prophecy from coming to fruition.



Massacre of the Innocents from The Book of Abraham the Jew

It had been predicted that Chronos would be usurped by one of his progeny, so when his consort Rhea gave birth to their children, she was ordered to hand them over to her husband immediately to be devoured. Zeus managed to escape the massacre because his mother, Rhea, gave Chronos a stone wrapped in swaddling clothes and told him that it was their son. Zeus was then raised in hiding by a she-goat named Amalthea.



Cronos or Saturn eating his children.

Chronos was in fact just continuing a family tradition. His father, Ouranos (Uranus), had likewise resented his children, the Titans, and imprisoned them underneath the Earth in order to keep them from threatening his rule. Since his consort's name was Gaia, or Earth, this really means he was imprisoning them inside of her. Indeed some versions of the story refer to Ouranos shoving his children back into their mother's womb as a way of jailing them. It was Gaia who then put Chronos up to the task of slaying his father, and she gave him the sickle to do it with. It thereafter became one of his signature fetishes, associated with both his patronage of agriculture, and his role as Father Time, the reaper of souls.

When he grew to manhood, Zeus disguised himself and became the royal cupbearer to his father's throne. This allowed Zeus to slip a poisonous concoction into Chronos' drink one day. The poison caused Chronos to vomit out the children he had swallowed, as well as the stone that had acted as a decoy standing in for Zeus.

Then followed a long and brutal war against Chronos and the other Titans. Eventually Zeus dethroned his father just as the prophecies had predicted, and from that point on, the dynasty of Mount Olympus took over from that of the Titans. The decoy stone became known as the "Omphalos," the navel of the world, and was used for oracular purposes at Delphi for centuries to come.



Rhea handing Chronos the Omphalos stone as a decoy

Interestingly, Saturn's reign was called in Roman myth "the Golden Age," when all of the wealth of the Earth could be obtained without labor, and nobody had to work for a living. Everything was held in common, and there was no need for written law. In Virgil's poem *Georgics*, he wrote of the Golden Age:

Fields knew no taming hand of husbandmen To mark the plain or mete with boundary-line. Even this was impious; for the common stock They gathered, and the earth of her own will All things more freely, no man bidding, bore.



The Golden Age, by Lucas Cranach the Elder, 1530

Likewise, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, he wrote:

"The Golden Age was first; when Man, yet new, No rule but uncorrupted Reason knew: And, with a native bent, did good pursue. Unforc'd by punishment, un-aw'd by fear. His words were

simple, and his soul sincere; Needless was written law, where none opprest: The law of Man was written in his breast.”

So Saturn ruled over a Golden Age of anarchy, when rule was not even needed. This may explain why his festival of Saturnalia, celebrated at the end of December, was a time of temporary libertinism, much like Carnival. It was seen as a ritual homage to this mythical Golden Age. Seventh-century Greek poet Hesiod, in his *Works and Days*, described the Golden Age as being followed by the Silver Age, the Bronze Age, the Heroic Age, and the Iron Age, each ruled by a different race of beings.



Saturnalia

There is a connection here with the Freemasonic and Neo-Platonic Enlightenment philosophy that inspired the creation of the United States. The Great Seal, seen most famously on the back of the one-dollar bill, contains the words “Novus Ordo Seclorum,” translated variously as “New Order of the Ages” or “New World Order.” This is supposed to have been inspired by a passage from Virgil’s fourth Eclogue, where he again speaks of the Golden Age, this time prophesying a return of a new Golden Age in the future.

Now the last age by Cumae’s Sibyl sung
Has come and gone, and the majestic roll
Of circling centuries begins anew:
Astraea returns, Returns old Saturn’s reign,
With a new breed of men sent
down from heaven.

When Sir Francis Bacon wrote *The New Atlantis*, about what he believed to be the spiritual destiny that lie ahead for the New World in the Americas, he described the continent as one day being the seat of a “philosophic empire.” This would be a nation of freethinking men working together as equals to pursue the mysteries of the universe, and they would have penetrated the secrets of nature to such an extent that human labor would no longer be necessary. Thus they would have nothing but time on their hands to study at what he called “The College of the 6 Days’ Work.”

This of course is a reference to the six days that God took in *Genesis* to create the universe. Bacon predicted that at one point alchemists would have created technologies that would bring man perpetual plentitude and

ease, allowing him the luxury of time to devote to the full contemplation of science. He also predicted that America would be the seat of the “shining city on the hill” that would lead the world in this effort. Later, the Freemasons that guided the destiny of the burgeoning republic of the United States looked to Bacon’s vision as an inspiration.

Perhaps the most fascinating thing about the myth of the Saturnian Golden Age is the idea that Chronos is not really dead, but merely asleep. Supposedly he will one day awaken and return to the Earth to rule over a new Golden Age. As Julius Evola writes in *The Mystery of the Grail*:

”...according to classical tradition, after having been the lord of this earth, the king of the Golden Age, Kronos-Saturn, was dethroned and castrated... he still lives, though asleep...”

This is part of a recurring theme throughout the myths of the world. It is the legend of “Le Roi du Monde” -- the benevolent King of the World who lies in a death-like slumber in a sacred tomb hidden at “the Center of the Earth,” waiting to be discovered by the right person. The body in the coffin has been variously identified as Adam, Osiris, Hermes, Prester John, Christian Rosenkreutz, and even as the female goddess of love, Venus. The tomb is often said to be lit by an “inner sun.”

In alchemy, the lead or “prima materia,” identified with Chronos, is sometimes called the “Black Sun,” or the “hidden stone.” There is a famous alchemical mnemonic maxim hidden in the word “VITRIOL” that reads: “Visita Interiora Terrae Rectificando Invenies Occultum Lapidem.” This is Latin for “Visit the Center of the Earth. There you will find the hidden stone.” The graves of Hermes Trismegistus and Christian Rosenkreutz, the mythical founder of the Rosicrucian brotherhood, are both said to contain this hidden stone.



V.I.T.R.I.O.L.: The Hidden Stone in the center of the Earth

This corresponds to a folk legend popular amongst the cultures of the Himalayas pertaining to an alleged underground kingdom, populated by a quasi-human race of beings, and lit by a “black sun” that resides at the “center of the Earth.” Adolf Hitler and Heinrich Himmler took this myth seriously, which is why the inner

circle of the SS was called the “Black Sun.” They sent out teams of people to scour the Far East looking for the entrance to this hidden kingdom.

To alchemists, however, the black sun was the base matter waiting to be transformed. As Evola writes:

“... In the Hermetic tradition, Saturn-Kronos is the deceased who must be resuscitated; the royal art of the heroes consists in freeing lead from its ‘leprosy,’ namely, from its imperfections and darkness, transforming it into gold, thus actualizing the Mystery of the Stone.”

If we turn our attention now to the European myth of the Holy Grail, a pattern begins to emerge. The Fisher King rules over a hidden dream-like “Otherworld.” Although it was at one time a paradisaical garden of delight, full of prosperity, peace, and happiness, it has turned from a dream into a nightmare. The king was wounded in battle, in the thigh, or, in more explicit versions of the tale, in the genitals. The wound festers and will not heal, but keeps the king in a state half-way between life and death. All of the courtiers, too, are in a similar death-like state. Outside of the Grail castle, the crops are failing and all of the people are starving. This is connected, in a metaphysical sense, to the suffering of the king. The kingdom, now called the “Wasteland,” suffers by sympathy.



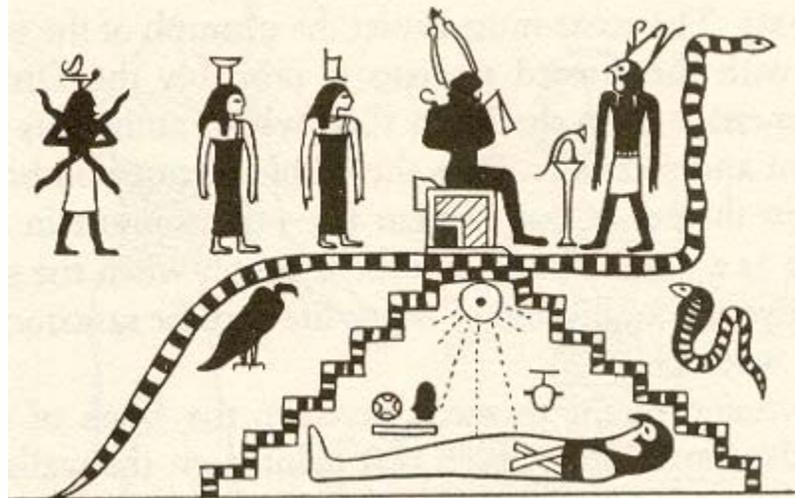
Amfortas, the wounded Fisher King

The only thing that sustains the king and his court is the power of the Holy Grail, which is under his possession. From the Grail they are able to obtain the sustenance that they need, as food regularly comes forth from it each day. The “power” of this Grail food also helps to alleviate the pain of the king’s wound, although that pain gets worse whenever the planet Saturn is ascendant in the heavens. The job of the hero Parzival in the Grail myth is to discover the secret of the Grail and somehow use it to either heal the wound or allow the king to finally die. This then heals the Wasteland by sympathy, and it becomes a thriving peaceful kingdom once again.



Food from the Grail, served by children

The Fisher King clearly represents the castrated Saturn or Chronos, sleeping in his tomb in the center of the Earth, ruling over a hidden kingdom of non-existence, or existence in potentia. I believe this is the same thing represented by the “land of Nod” that Cain was banished to. Likewise, Osiris, who slept in his tomb in a mountain at the center of the Earth, was never really “alive” in the earliest myths. His story begins with that of his wife and son seeking revenge for his death. The Underworld was a fictional bizarro zone of negation, a no-man’s land where the Sun went to die each night. Osiris only truly existed when he was “reborn” as his son Horus.



Osiris in his tomb at the center of the Earth, lit by an inner sun

In the bas reliefs discussed by Fulcanelli in *The Mystery of the Cathedrals*, the alchemists’ athanor is represented by a castle, which he describes as “the occult furnace with two flames -- potential and actual...” These perhaps can be viewed as the two opposing states of the alchemical matter: that of the Black Sun -- the lead, or “nigrido” or gold in potentia -- and the Golden Sun -- the Philosopher’s Stone, the end matter of the work. But the Philosopher’s Stone is hidden in the bowels of the Earth, hidden within the Black Sun or the lead. It must be brought out by the universal solvent, just as Zeus brought his siblings, and the Omphalos stone, out from his father’s gullet with the poison coction he served him.



The Nigrido, or Black Sun, from *Splendor Solis*

Returning to the Grail myth, we should now wonder about what this magical food is which is said to come forth from the Grail to perpetually nourish the Fisher King, and to keep him in a zombie-like state. It is never said outright, but represented in code in each of the variants of the tale. In some versions, a bleeding lance or sword is seen dripping eternally into the Grail cup. In another, a dove flies down from heaven each day and places a wafer inside of the cup. The wafer then becomes a human child. All of this seems to be indicating something very specific. Considering that the king represents Chronos, and Chronos is famous for eating his own children, it seems to me that we should turn ourselves once again to that topic.

Nicolas Flamel and his wife Perrenella lived next to something called the “Cemetery of the Innocents,” as I mentioned before. According to the aforementioned confessional treatise attributed to Flamel, after they became wealthy through alchemy, they used a great deal of their money for charitable purposes. One of these acts of charity involved rebuilding the entrance to the cemetery.

It was on the archway that Flamel had the seven images from *The Book of Abraham the Jew* reproduced. These included the image portraying the biblical “Massacre of the Innocents,” which Flamel himself allegedly commented upon as being representative of Saturn devouring his children. The blood of the slain is shown

being collected in a barrel. Flamel's commentary explains, in veiled language, the purpose of this:

“On the last side of the fifth leaf there was a King, with a great Fauchion, who made to be killed in his presence by some Soldiers a great multitude of little Infants, whose Mothers wept at the feet of the unpitiful Soldiers, the blood of which Infants was afterwards by other Soldiers gathered up, and put in a great vessel, wherein the Sun and the Moon came to bathe themselves.”

This image of the sun and the moon, or a king and a queen bathing in some liquid coction is found in several other alchemical manuscripts. Apparently there is a representation of the same concept also on the walls of Notre Dame in Paris. Fulcanelli explains the image and its meaning in *The Mystery of the Cathedrals*, referring to the work of Flamel in the process:

“It synthesizes and expresses the condensation of the universal Spirit, which, as soon as it is materialized, forms the famous Bath of the Stars, in which the chemical sun and moon must bathe, change their natures and become rejuvenated. Here we see a child falling from a crucible as large as a jar. This is supported by a standing archangel with a halo and outspread wing, who appears to be striking the innocent. The whole background of the composition is occupied by a night sky studded with stars. We recognize in this subject a very simplified form of the allegory, dear to Nicholas Flamel, of the Massacre of the Innocents...



The Bath of the Stars at Notre Dame

So what is the substance of this “Bath of the Stars” which rejuvenates those who dip themselves in it? Fulcanelli comes right out and says it:

“Without entering into details of the operative techniques -- which no author has dared to do -- I will, however, say that the universal Spirit, embodied in minerals under the alchemical name of

Sulphur constitutes the principle and the effective agent of all metallic tinctures. But one cannot obtain this Spirit, the red blood of the children, except by decomposing what nature had first assembled in them. It is, therefore, necessary that the body should perish, that it should be crucified and should die, if one wishes to extract the soul, the metallic life and the celestial Dew imprisoned therein. And this quintessence, transfused into a pure, fixed and perfectly digested body, will give birth to a new creature, more splendid than any of those from which it proceeds. The bodies have no action on one another; the spirit alone is active.”



From *Rosarium Philosophorum*, 1550

So are we literally talking about infanticide and brephophagy (the eating of babies)? I believe that is the prima materia of alchemy, both literally and metaphorically. Flamel, in his commentary, seemed to allude to it, and his allusions hint at a deeply felt guilt about the matter. He stated that while some diabolical alchemists might use the blood of children, he would never do such a thing, and can't even speak of it for fear that he may inspire others to engage in the process. Says Flamel:

“... because that this History did represent the more part of that of the Innocents slain by Herod, and that *in this Book I learned the greatest part of the Art, this was one of the causes why I placed in their Church-yard these Hieroglyphic Symbols of this secret science*. And thus you see that which was in the first five leaves. I will not represent unto you that which was written in good and intelligible Latin in all the other written leaves, *for God would punish me*; because I should commit a greater wickedness than he who (as it is said) wished that all the men of the World had but one head, that he might cut it off with one blow.”



Massacre of the Innocents

Flamel goes on to explain that the first image of the book, showing Saturn cutting off the feet of Mercury, “represented time, which devoured all.” Mercury is of course the universal agent of the alchemical process, the “Argent Vive” (literally “live silver” or quicksilver), of which, he wrote:

“...they could not fix, nor cut off his feet, that is to say, take away his volatility, save by that long decoction in *the purest blood of young Infants ... I tried a thousand broulleryes, yet never with blood, for that was wicked and villainous ...*”



The Sun and Moon copulate in a bath

Flamel here seems to protest too much. I think he’s actually confessing that the blood of young infants is in fact *exactly* what he used for his alchemical transmutations. The Cemetery of the Innocents may have been the quarry from which he obtained his hidden stones, for with a name like that it was undoubtedly the local burial ground for young children who died of illness and accidents, or who died in birth, or who miscarried. It would also be the perfect place to bury the unused remains of other infant bodies that Flamel may have had another source for.



The homunculus baby boiling in the athanor

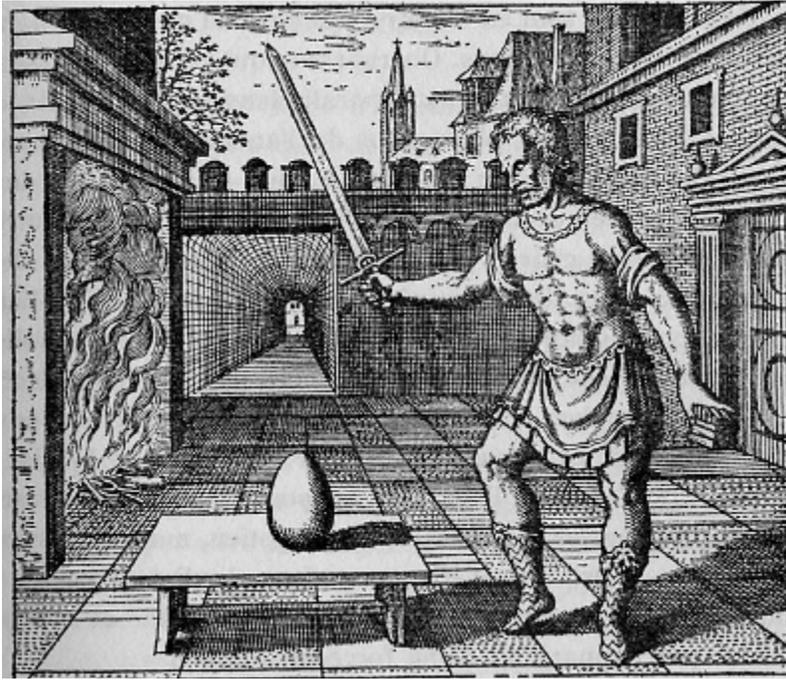
Flamel practiced his alchemical works in secret, but he did not work alone. His partner was his wife Perrenella, as he repeatedly stressed in his commentary:

“I may speak it with truth, I have made [the Philosopher’s Gold] three times, with the help of Perrenella, who understood it as well as I, because she helped in my operations, and without doubt, if she would have enterprised to have done it alone, she had attained to the end and perfection thereof...”



Nicolas Flamel and his wife Perrenella

Many have speculated that alchemy is just a metaphor for sex magic, and that Flamel was practicing tantric sex rites with his wife. It certainly is possible that sex magic was taking place. Sex magic in modern times involves the breeding of “magical children,” and this is usually taken to mean spiritual children. But flesh and blood are believed in all cultures to be a source of spiritual power, particularly that of innocent youth. Perhaps Perrenella’s womb was the original “athanor” of this alchemist.



Sacrifice of the fertilized egg, from *Atalanta Fugiens*

While publicly the Flamels are said to have died without children, it is quite possible that children were produced, but only as a source of raw materials. Nicolas said that it was because they were without children that they devoted themselves to charity, because “the change of evil into good takes away from him the root of all sin.” He also warns those who would aspire to the Royal Art of alchemy to be humble, “...remembering himself that he learned this secret amongst the bones of the dead, in whose number he shall shortly be found...”

The images on the cemetery archway include several of children being slaughtered, their blood drained into a barrel. One shows gardeners tilling the Earth in a garden that looks like it is really a graveyard, with several fountains erected in the field. It is as though he is depicting people digging up and/or planting the alchemical substance in a graveyard. This would correspond with images in other alchemical texts that show alchemists planting gold coins in a field, with the Sun King and the Moon Queen laying down on the ground as if dead, while an angel nearby blows a horn, calling souls forth from the grave to judgment. Another one of the images from Flamel’s cemetery archway shows a man praying in repentance before an angel with a sword, surrounded by a banner that says “De Le Mala Que Feci”: “Blot out the evils that I have done.”



It takes gold to make gold

It seems from the writings of Flamel and Fulcanelli that they believed blood to contain the essences of each of the seven major metals they were working with. Each one of these metals also corresponded to a planet, and they seemed to be saying in their writings that the spiritual essence of these planets, these “wandering stars” as they were once called, could be brought down into the alchemical mixture of babies’ blood that they called the “Bath of the Stars.”

There are numerous versions of this image of the “Bath of the Stars” to be found in old alchemical literature. Frequently these pictures include the image of a pelican stabbing its own breast to obtain blood to feed its young. This isn’t what pelicans actually do, but in medieval times there was a folk legend that they did, so this image was adopted by the Church as a symbol of Christ’s blood sacrifice. It was apparently adopted by alchemists as well for similar reasons. Other images used to represent this part of the process include a lion eating a bleeding sun.



Green lion eating the bleeding Sun

In his book *Magic: A History of Its Rites, Rituals, and Mysteries*, occultist Eliphas Levi described the mystical properties of blood, and seemed to be saying that it is in fact the source of the alchemists' gold. Referring to the "occult medicine" used by Paracelsus, a famous sixteenth-century physician and alchemist, Levi writes:

"This truly Universal Medicine is based upon a spacious theory of light, called by adepts fluid or potable gold ... light, astralised in the stars, animalised in animals, humanised in human beings; light, which vegetates in plants, glistens in metals ... this is that light which exhibits the phenomena of magnetism, divined by Paracelsus, which tinctures the blood, being released from the air as it is inhaled and discharged by the hermetic bellows of the lungs. The blood then becomes a true elixir of life, wherein ruby and magnetic globules of vital light float in a slightly gilded fluid. These globules are actually seeds ready to assume all forms of that world whereof the human body is an abridgement. They can become rarified and coagulated, so renewing the humours which circulate in the nerves and in the flesh encompassing the bones. ... Its globules are bisexual, magnetised and metallated, sympathetic and repelling. All forms and images in the world can be evoked from the physical soul of blood."

The alchemical gold, in addition to making one wealthy, was also said to be a cure-all for disease. Consuming it allegedly made one live forever. Alchemists like the

Compte de Saint Germain were said to have been witnessed appearing at different times and places over the course of several hundred years. Stories like this circulated about the eighteenth-century figure Johann Conrad Dippel, the alchemist who inspired Mary Shelley's story of Dr. Frankenstein.

Certainly the concept that drinking blood or bathing in it will bring eternal youth is nothing new. This is of course at the heart of the vampire myth. Elizabeth Bathory, the famous "blood countess" of sixteenth-century Hungary, was said to have killed up to 600 young virgin girls for the purpose of bathing in their blood, which purportedly gave her skin an eternally youthful appearance. Similar activities took place at the castle of Gilles de Rais, a French army leader who served under Joan of Arc. He purportedly kidnapped, raped, murdered, dismembered, and bathed in the blood of hundreds of children out of a maniacal quest for the Philosopher's Stone of the alchemists. Eternal youth was one of the objects he hoped to achieve from bathing in the "Fountain of Youth": the blood of innocents.

Benjamin Franklin, in addition to his many other interests, was also a student of metaphysics, and a member of several secret societies, including the debaucherous Hellfire Club. This group was said to practice the "black mass," a Satanic parody of the Holy Mass of the Church. In it, the rites of the Church were mocked, and an unheavenly host was consumed that supposedly contained, amongst other horrible things, the blood of unbaptized infants.



The Black Mass

In 1998, the *Times of London* reported that the bones of six children were discovered underneath the floorboards of Franklin's old home near Trafalgar Square, where he lived while he was ambassador to England. It was during this time that his participation in the Hellfire Club occurred. The skeletons showed that the bodies had been cut up, and some of the skulls had holes drilled into them.

This brings to mind stories I have heard of a mythical substance called "occultum," described as having all the same properties as the Philosopher's Stone. This substance allegedly could be obtained from human bones, particularly skulls. However, "live occultum," the freshest, most potent kind, supposedly can be obtained from the freshly-harvested pineal glands of live humans. Rumors, probably false, circulate that this is the true secret behind the giant skull collection at the headquarters of the Skull and Bones Society of Yale University. In alchemy, the Prima Materia was frequently symbolized with the image of a "death's head" (a skull and crossbones).

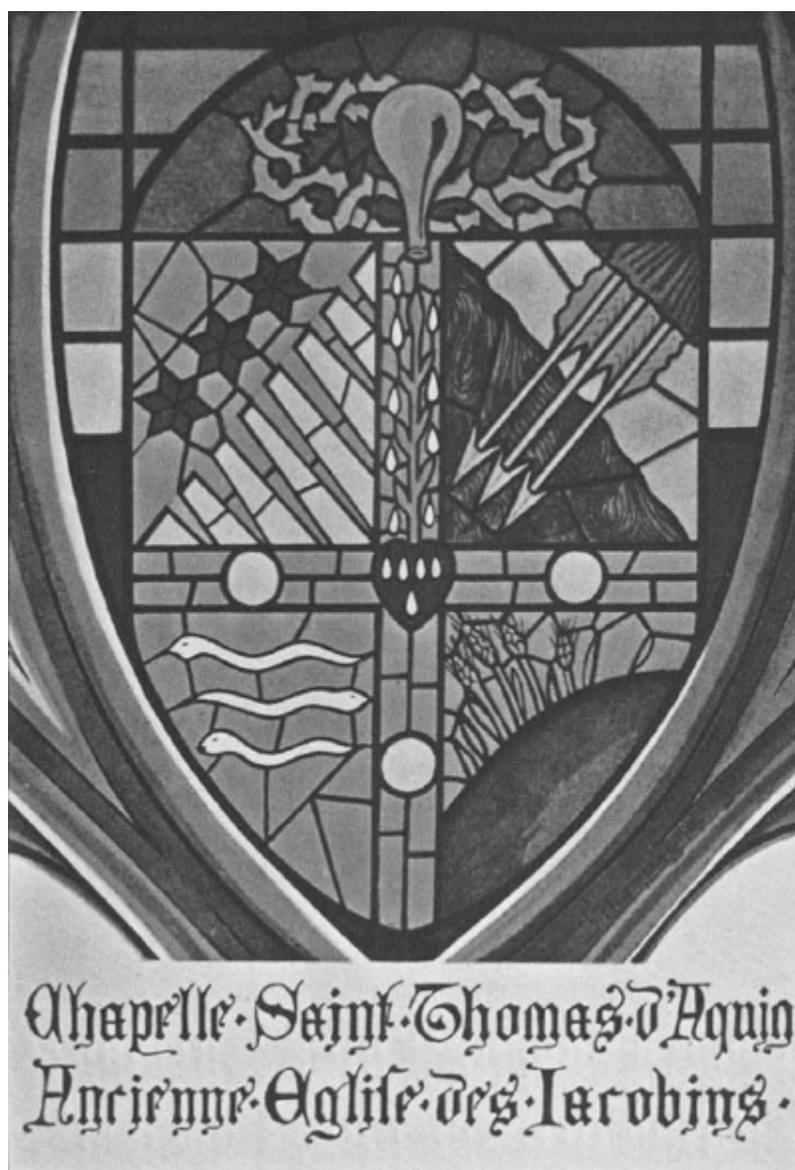
Consuming human flesh, particularly that of babies or fetuses, for the purposes of obtaining health and vigor is still disturbingly common in the world. It is part of traditional medicine as practiced in some parts of China, where there is an underground market for human fetuses and deceased infants. There is also an endless supply available due to the country's stringent one-child policy. In Southern Africa, human body parts are referred to as "muti," and are traded at high value on the black market for use in witchdoctor ceremonies. The most expensive and sought-after parts are the heads and genitals of young children. Virgin's blood is believed to cure all maladies, including AIDS.

But in addition to the fetus or baby, the placenta and other substances that coagulate within the human womb have long been valued by alchemists, magicians, and practitioners of traditional medicine. Here we touch upon a profound mystery. As Malcolm Godwin writes in *The Holy Grail: Its Origins, Secrets, and Meaning Revealed*:

"At the time when the Grail legends first appeared it was generally accepted that the blood women spilled at the moon was responsible for new birth. Blood which was retained in the womb was believed to coagulate into a child. Even Aristotle claimed that human life is a coagulum of menstrual blood, while the Roman Pliny, author of the encyclopedic *Natural History*, insisted that it formed the material substance of generation. The curious notion was still taught in European medical schools only two hundred years ago. Far earlier, the ancient Mesopotamian Goddess Ninhursag was said to have created humankind out of clay mixed with her 'blood of life.' The Jews, the Muslims and the Christians borrowed this and similar creation myths to form their own. Even the name Adam can be traced to the feminine 'adamah' meaning bloody clay."

This corresponds with the theories of Nicholas de Vere, who writes in his book *The Dragon Legacy* that the true primal matter of alchemy is menstrual blood. He wrote

of a tradition of “Royal Witchcraft,” passed on through aristocratic families going all the way back to the beginning of history, that involves the consumption of menstrual blood and other female substances. This, he says, was called “starfire” by European witches, and was ritually imbibed during secret sexual ceremonies that, according to him, constitute the central mystery of the Western esoteric tradition. This would connect with the “Bath of the Stars,” and the belief seemingly expressed in the alchemical texts that the essences of the stars are drawn down into the bloody mixture. Considering that people at that time believed that the stars ascendant in the heavens could permanently affect the lives of children born under them, this is not such an unusual concept.



The Dew of May -- womb blood -- at St. Chapelle

Royal witches, who come from blueblood stock and believe themselves to be descended from the gods of the ancient world, have purportedly kept the tradition in the family so that the blood consumed would contain the most potent magical essences. De Vere claims that people from certain bloodlines have a greater quantity of certain neurotransmitters and hormones that he believes have an enlightening effect upon the brain, and an enlivening effect upon the body.

In a similar vein, Malcolm Godwin writes about the traditions surrounding the drinking of menstrual blood:

“... In most cultures men view this life-essence with holy dread ... But many magical and mystical initiations of the hero, from the Hindus of India to the Norsemen, have the theme of drinking, bathing in or worshiping a vessel filled with the magical stuff in order to transform the initiate. In Greece it was called the supernatural red wine. In India the goddess Kali invited the gods to bathe in and drink in the flow of her womb in order that they might rise blessed to heaven. The Norse God Thor reached the mystical land of enlightenment by bathing in the moon-blood of the Primal Matriarchs. And Soma, the archetypal drink which transforms, heals, and allows glimpses of the Otherworlds, was secreted by the moon-cow. In India the Goddess of Sovereignty, Lakshmi, gave her menstrual blood to Indra, who on drinking it became, like the Goddess, the Mount of Paradise with its many hued rivers... In the north any Celtic king could become immortal by drinking the ‘red sovereignty’ and to be stained red with it signified being chosen as Sovereignty’s consort.”



The queen pours her essence into the fountain

Similar reports are made about the rituals of the Gnostic sects known as the Ophites. As I mentioned previously, the Knights Templar were believed by Orientalist scholar Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall to have operated a secret Ophite cult within their inner circle of initiates. Some of the Templar preceptories had rooms with walls on which images of strange sex orgy rituals were depicted. People were shown fornicating in front of their goat-headed demonic idol, Baphomet. This may have been the Templars’ version of the Ophite “Agape” rite, which Saint Epiphanius of Salamis described thusly in the fourth century :

“...The wretches mingle with each other and after they have consorted together in passionate debauch the woman and the man take his

ejaculation into their hands and offer to the Father, the Primal Being of All Nature, what is on their hands, with the words, ‘We bring to Thee this oblation which is the very body of Christ.’ ... They then consume it in shame saying, ‘This is the Body of Christ, the Paschal Sacrifice through which our bodies suffer and are forced to confess to the sufferings of Christ.’ Even when the woman is in her period they offer up her blood in the same fashion.”

In his book, *The Mystery of Baphomet Revealed*, Von Hammer-Purgstall featured a line drawing of an image he had found at a Templar preceptory of a winged goat-demon thought to be Baphomet. On either side of the demon there was an athanor or womb-shaped vase. The one on the left had a penis descending into it. The one on the right had a baby emerging from the top.

Baphomet’s name, as I mentioned before, has been interpreted to mean “Baptism of Wisdom.” The etymological ancestry of the words “baptism,” “bath,” and “baby” are all entwined. These are also connected with the words “brother,” “brood,” and “breed,” as well as “broth” and “imbibe.” Furthermore, the word “met” is related to words in several languages that mean both “wisdom” or “mind” and “mother.”

So is the Baptism of Wisdom referring to a baptism of blood? Specifically, one of menstrual blood, sacrificed babies’ blood, and/or afterbirth? According to Nicholas de Vere, all of the above are true. Also, at least one modern Templar order, out of Germany, is known to still perform rituals to Baphomet in which the goat-demon is referred to with the name “Mother of Blood.”

Even Aleister Crowley, who took on the title of “Baphomet” as the high priest of his own sex magic cult, said that the best blood to use for communion rituals was that “of the moon, monthly,” followed by “the fresh blood of a young child.” He wrote of sex magic rituals in his *Book of the Sangraal*, likening it to the creation of the Holy Grail, and to alchemy. The end result of the rite was the creation of the “Elixir of Life,” made from the mixture of male and female fluids, which he described as the red and white “tinctures.” He also likened them to the Sun and the Moon, and to gold and silver. These are all terms he borrowed from the vocabulary of alchemy.

As gory as all of this is, the truth is that it is no different than what the earliest Christians in Rome were accused by their detractors of doing. For the “agape” ritual was not just confined to the Ophites, but was practiced by many Gnostic sects, some Christian and some not. Clement of Alexandria said that Gnostics ate fetuses for Passover and consumed menstrual blood with semen for their Eucharist. These stories were the cause of many rumors and accusations that this was what the Christian communion rite consisted of. Apologists had to constantly explain that Jesus was being metaphorical when he told his followers to “Eat of my flesh and drink of my blood.”

Is this, then, the secret of the “fruit of the Tree of Knowledge” which Adam and Eve were forbidden to eat? It certainly could be, especially if we interpret this symbol as referring to carnal knowledge and procreation. After eating the fruit, Adam and Eve realize they are naked. They are cast out of the Garden. Then they “know” each other carnally and Eve becomes pregnant. They have two children, but one of them is killed and the other one disappears. Noteworthy, perhaps, is the frequent depiction

in alchemy books showing trees and bushes with fruits or flowers on them that look like the heads of small children. Often they are made in the likeness of little sun faces or moon faces, which could indicate male and female infants.



The Divine Androgyne next to a tree of baby heads

In the 1960s, neo-pagan feminist Merlin Stone published the book *When God Was a Woman*. In it she proposed the theory that a primordial goddess figure was at one time the main deity worshipped in the ancient world. She was remembered and worshipped by various cultures as Inanna, Ishtar, Isis, Venus, Aphrodite, and Astarte. She was viewed simultaneously as a harlot and as a virgin, a mother, a lover, and a young maid. She was also a goddess of wisdom, just like the later figures of Athena in Greece, the Gnostic Sophia, and the Semitic demoness Lilith were also viewed. She was frequently shown with an owl as a companion or familiar spirit.

Ms. Stone argued that the earliest civilizations were dominated at one point by a matriarchal culture that worshipped this goddess. Women were in control of their own lives economically, she said, and were able to engage in whatever business they chose. She described the kings who ruled the various city-states of Mesopotamia at that time as merely the husbands of the queens, who, as representatives of the goddess, were truly in charge.

Piecing together various goddess myths, Ms. Stone was able to decode the basics of the original legend that they were all based on. As the story goes, the goddess married her own son when he was very young, probably still a child. Later she had him killed in a fit of narcissistic rage because he had disrespected her in some way. Afterwards she mourned his death with much weeping, but the story got changed over time so that someone else was to blame for his death.

Stone believed that in the earliest times, queens ruled and passed on their birthright to the next generation, but that kings were temporary. This was indeed something practiced by many Neolithic cultures, and is discussed most thoroughly in Sir James Frazer's book *The Golden Bough*. Frequently the king was a lad, much younger than the queen, and he would be sacrificed shortly after the wedding, sometimes a few days later, sometimes a few years later. He was immediately replaced by another

young man who was made to play the same role. This was done as a fertility rite, and in ritual remembrance of the original relationship between the goddess and her husband/son.

It was ultimately this same goddess who was worshipped through the practice of sacred prostitution that I described earlier. As I stated, the origin of coin money can be traced back to this practice. It was probably from the fruit of these unions with the temple prostitutes that the temporary kings were taken.

At some point, though, as Merlin Stone explained, the goddess cult and culture was overthrown by a patriarchy that worshipped a male god. She described a possible foreign invasion from the north, perhaps coupled with an internal revolt by a prince who did not wish to be merely a “temporary” king. One of the supplanting male gods was Baal-Molech, who was seen by the Greeks as analogous to Chronos.

“Baal” means “husband,” and his marriage to Astarte was, according to Stone, the original source of his divinity. He too had a myth about being slain, and the goddess mourning his death. It was to him that babies were sacrificed in the fiery belly of the Moloch oven, built in the shape of a bull. Interestingly, Sumeriologist L.A. Waddell believed that the biblical figure of Abel was the same as the Babylonian figure of Baal. If this were true, it would certainly lend credence to the idea that the story of Cain murdering Abel is a cover-up for a story of children sacrificed by one or both their parents.

Perhaps this is what is at the heart of the myth of Chronos killing his father, taking the throne, and then eating his own children. Perhaps it describes a revolution of this sort by a son of the royal court who refused to be sacrificed in honor of the goddess. After achieving victory over his elders, he may have demanded that the first-born of each house be sacrificed in order to eliminate potential political rivals with royal birthrights and loyalty to the goddess cult.

One of the popular cults that existed contemporary with early Christianity was that of Mithras Sol Invictus. It was a solar cult with many mythological, theological, symbological, and ritual similarities to Christianity. Emperor Constantine himself, who made Christianity the official religion of Rome, was said to have been a member of the Sol Invictus cult until the day he died.





Mithras slaying the bull

Blood is drained from bull into barrel as Mithras points his caduceus wand at it

Mithras allegedly was born from a rock, and created the world from the blood of a bull that he slew. Afterwards, the sun god descended from Heaven to eat the bull meat with him. From that moment on, the two became one, the Father and Son. This concept influenced the later development of the Christian trinity. In the rites of Mithras, his followers would sacrifice bulls, then revel and bath in the entrails as a baptism of blood. Afterwards they would eat the flesh together as a form of communion. This may be related to the Christian concept that sin can be “washed away” with the blood of a sacrificial victim.

It also seems possible that this myth of slaying the bull was in some sense a cultural memory of the slaying of Baal. Perhaps also, the murder of Baal was in some way being paid homage to by the sacrifice of babies in the Moloch oven. According to Julius Evola, the Knights Templar were accused of making similar offerings to Baphomet. In *The Mystery of the Grail* he wrote:

”... Typical is the distortion behind the charge that the Templars used to burn before their idol the children that they begat in sin. All this probably amounted to a ‘baptism of fire’...”

European witches were often targeted with accusations from Christians of a similar nature about what went on at their supposed “witch’s sabbath.” So it is interesting to note that the stereotyped “witch’s brew” steaming in the cauldron in children’s fairy tales often was said to include the bodies of children. The modern Hebrew translation of “sabbath” is “day of rest,” and it is not unrelated to the concept of refreshment through bathing. Even in modern parlance, the word “bathroom” and “restroom” are used interchangeably. This may be because, until recent times, people rarely bathed. In societies where they did regularly bathe, it was usually a once-a-week occurrence that was scheduled for Saturday, just as the modern sabbath, Sunday, is laundry day now in many households. In Scandinavian countries, the word for Saturday is “lordag,” or something like it, meaning, literally, “bath day.”

As sick as it may seem, those practicing child sacrifice may have been under the impression that they were raising the child up to a higher level of being, just as the

alchemist dissolves the prima materia and cooks it, by degrees, through various processes, until it is perfected as the Philosopher's Gold. One bizarre and disturbing aspect of the myth of the harvest goddess, Demeter, seems to indicate that this was a belief that at least some people had in the ancient world.

In the myth, Demeter, disguised as an old woman, was searching the Earth for her lost daughter, Persephone, who, unbeknownst to her, had been kidnapped and taken to the underworld. Along the way Demeter came to Eleusis, and was taken in by the household of King Keleos. She was put in charge of babysitting the king's infant son, who she became so smitten by that she decided she was going to make him immortal.

She went about this by feeding him ambrosia each evening, and then roasting him slowly every night on the hearth. As each day went by, a little bit more of his mortality burned away. Eventually he would have become a god, just like the Philosopher's Gold might be created from lead through repeated distillations. Unfortunately for Demeter, the process was intercepted by the queen, who was horrified to find her son roasting alive on the coals.



Demeter

Perhaps this connects with the myth of the phoenix, the sacred bird of Phoenicia, where Baal-Molech was worshipped. The phoenix allegedly descends from Heaven down to the “firestone” and is burned to ashes. But then, by virtue of the stone, a new egg is formed out of the ashes, and from it the phoenix is born again. Similarly, in Wolfram von Eschenbach’s version of the Grail myth, the Holy Grail is the firestone. As Malcolm Godwin sums it up:

“The hermit tells Parzival that many Templars abide with the Grail in Montsalveshe. They live by the virtue of a stone called lapis exilis. By the power of the stone the phoenix is burned to ashes, but the ashes restore it to life more beautiful than before. The stone nourishes, restores and promotes youth... lapis exilis derives from lapis exilii, which means The Stone of Death...”

The etymology of “Holy Grail,” called in French the “Sangreal,” is one of contention, and many believe it was a play on the French words “Sang Real,” meaning “royal blood.” Another argument that has been made is that “greal” comes from the French “gradale,” a dish used for serving a meal with several courses. According to the Online Etymology Dictionary, this French word is also related to the words “griddle,” “gridiron,” and “grill.” In other words, we are talking about cooking something over an open flame through a succession of processes.

As for the alchemists, however, they cooked their babies in the athanor, a word which literally means “digesting furnace.” The most commonly-used athanor was the “balneum marie,” (now known commonly as the “bain-marie”), a double-boiler invented by Maria Prophetessa. Sometimes called “Mary the Jewess,” she was one of history’s most influential alchemists, active during the second century. The name of the object comes from “balineum,” the Latin word for “bath” or “bathhouse.”



Homunculus boiling in balneum marie

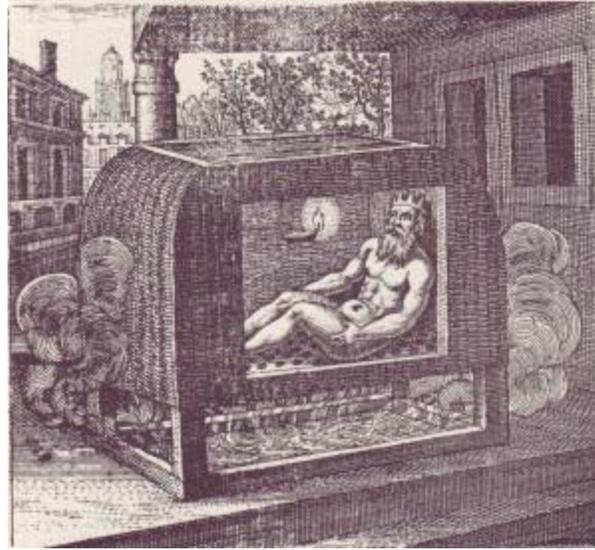
Mary the Jewess was said by some to be an incarnation of Miriam, the sister of Moses, about whom there is a legend that Hermes gave her the Emerald Tablet for safekeeping. Others relate her in some metaphysical sense to Mary Magdalene, who famously transformed a white egg into a red egg as part of a miracle she performed for the Emperor Titus. Mary Magdalene, of course, has been interpreted by some as the living “Holy Grail,” as they believe she carried the sacred royal blood of Jesus in her womb.

Mary the Jewess wrote a poem describing the alchemical process that became known as “Mary’s Cry.” It states: “One becomes Two; Two becomes Three; and out of the third, comes the One as the Fourth.” Alchemy consists of a series of unions, births, deaths, and rebirths. This procreation and sacrifice symbolism is central to the whole art. The image of a baby, the alchemical homunculus, or “little man,” boiling in the upper chamber of the balneum marie is one of the most commonly reproduced among the alchemical manuscripts. At a certain stage in the process, called the “red stone” or “the reddening,” the child is referred to as the “red baby” or the “red man.” This brings to mind a newborn or fetus covered with afterbirth, as well as a child whose skin has been made red by being cooked over a flame.



The Red Man, from *Splendor Solis*

Other aspects of the alchemical process, as described allegorically in the old manuscripts, match up quite handily with the old pagan fertility rituals recreating the goddess' marriage to, and then murder of, her son, the dying and reborn sun god. Almost always, the process is described as involving a "chemical wedding" of "the king and the queen," or "the sun and the moon." The moon is associated traditionally with silver, and is considered female, related to procreation. Meanwhile, the sun is equated with gold, masculinity, and semen. Sometimes the king and the queen are said to represent sulphur and mercury. At any rate, shortly after the "wedding," the king is sacrificed, and his body dissolved.



Cooking of the king

In *The Mystery of the Cathedrals* by Fulcanelli, there is a photograph of a relief on the central porch of Notre Dame in Paris, which the author labels “The Queen Kicks Down Mercury, Servus Fugitivus.” Within the text he provides a more complete description of it: “... a queen seated on a throne kicks over the servant, who comes with a cup in his hand to offer her his services.” This could just as easily be a depiction of the goddess of the ancient world abusing her young husband, who was in reality her sex slave. “Servus Fugitivus” means “runaway slave.”



The Servus Fugitivus at Notre Dame

Matheus Franciscus Maria van den Berk wrote about this concept in his alchemical analysis of Mozart’s opera *The Magic Flute*. He said that Mercury was the “universal agent,” whose “blood” was used as a solvent to “wash” gold from out of

the dross of other metals, and was also viewed as a coagulant that could unite elements to turn them into gold. Alchemists thought this was possible only because, in their view, Mercury contained within himself both lunar and solar essences, and was thus naturally hermaphroditic. Because of his work as a mediator, Mercury was viewed as a slave by alchemists, and was literally called a “Servator.” This is a term now used by ceremonial magicians to refer to demons that can be captured and bound to serve the master’s wishes, like the proverbial “genie in a bottle.”



King and Queen in the Fountain of Youth

Likewise, in keeping with Mercury’s reputation as a trickster god, alchemists were warned that the philosophic mercury needs to be somehow imprisoned or kept on a leash. As seventeenth-century alchemist Eirenaeus Philalethes put it: “You must be very wary how you lead him, for if he can find an opportunity he will give you the slip, and leave you to a world of misfortune.” Mercury was described in terms very similar to that of the devil. This makes sense when you consider that the earlier Greek legends of this god as Hermes depict a man that was half-goat and looked very much like the modern conception of Satan. The admonition to alchemists about the importance of imprisoning Mercury could be a warning to trap the mercury vapors that are emitted during the chemical process, rather than breathing them in, which famously causes madness.

This was done via the “Vas Hermeticum,” or vase of Hermes, closed air-tight, to prevent mercury leakage (which is the actual origin of the term “hermetically sealed.”) This was part of what was called “fixing” the Mercury, and this is the

practical reason why Chronos is shown in the manuscripts chopping off Mercury's feet: to prevent his escape. As Van den Berk notes, alchemy involves breaking these substances down into their base components, which he believes is the reason for the profusion of alchemical images depicting violent death and dismemberment. "The substance must fall apart completely, be smelted and die in order to be fertile again afterwards. Especially Mercury needed to be tortured."



Dismemberment of the body, from *Splendor Solis*

It is important to realize that there are many layers of meaning to each alchemical symbol, and even when different interpretations seem to conflict, upon reflection is usually discovered that they complement each other. "Alchemy" is really a term that describes the process of creation and transformation in general. It is the way that a baby is made, the way God formed the universe, as well as the way enlightenment is achieved, and it can be used for many other purposes as well. Ultimately the "prima materia" of creation can be found anywhere, because of the primal transcendental spiritual power that connects every particle in the universe. The Emerald Tablet of Hermes refers to this as the "One Thing," and says of it:

“Its parents are the Sun and the Moon. The Wind carries it in its belly;
 Its nurse is the Earth. ... In this way was the Universe created. From this
 comes many wondrous applications, because *this is the pattern.*”



The One Thing

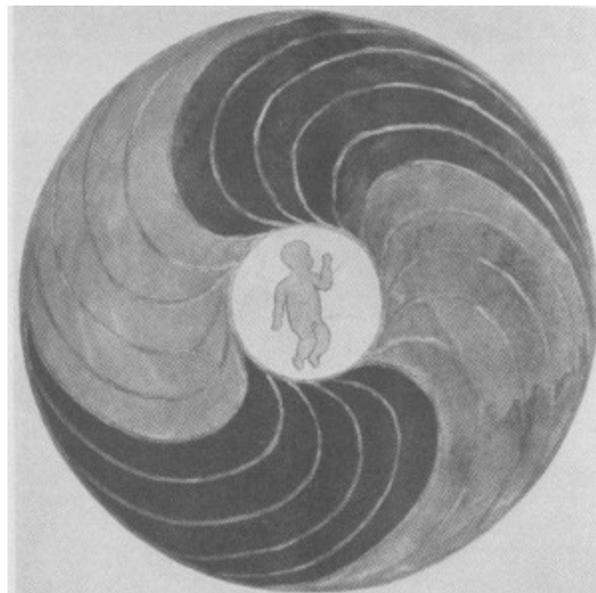
The practice of Taoism, which has been called “Chinese alchemy,” revolves around this concept of the “One Thing” that is within all and has the power to transform all. The Taoist text *Secret of the Golden Flower* speaks of an “immortal spirit-body” of gold formed in the “germinal vesicle” of the solar plexus through meditation by cultivating one’s chi (astral light, or vital fluids) within the body. Eventually this body crystallizes and becomes a perfected, independent being, a little man (just like an alchemical homunculus) which will live forever after you die. In so doing, he will release you from the obligation to incarnate into *future births*.



The immortal spirit-body, from *Secret of the Golden Flower*

The recommended method of achieving this, according to *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, is to mentally reverse the flow of energy going out of your body, and force it to circulate back inward. This is related to the concept of Tantric sex magic, in which

the “golden” essences of the sperm are retained within. The thought that this would somehow form a baby, spiritual or otherwise, within the man’s own body may be related to the ancient concept that there was actually a homunculus, fully formed but smaller, inside of each sperm. (This was of course conceived back when sperm could not even be seen with microscopes and were merely theoretical.) By following this logic to its natural conclusion, those spermatic homunculi might also contain within them the spiritual essence of all of their potential descendants. So by retaining the sperm within, you are keeping all of that spiritual power for yourself by preventing others from being born.



The germinal vesicle, from *Secret of the Golden Flower*

Conversely, in the world-view of European alchemists, if you choose to deposit that little bit of gold (associated with the sun) into the womb of a woman (associated with the moon, and thus with silver), it coagulates into a baby, the Philosopher's Gold. As they say, “it takes gold to make gold.” The golden homunculus in the sperm is turned into a golden child through the alchemical process of gestation. Eating that child after it is produced would then have a similar, but more potent effect on the practitioner as compared to someone practicing Tantra, or Taoist meditation ala the *Golden Flower*.

Knowledge of these secrets brings new meaning to some of the memes of modern pop culture. For instance, in the earliest episodes of “The Smurfs,” Gargamel is an alchemist on the quest to create gold through ritual magic. According to the magical grimoire he uses, the secret of alchemy is to find these miniature people called “Smurfs” who live in the forest, and through arcane processes, transform them into gold. Prior to the invention of Smurfette, the Smurfs were originally asexual, just like the alchemical homunculus is often an androgyne. In later episodes, Gargamel’s goal is to eat the Smurfs, and whenever he manages to catch them, he always attempts to boil them alive in his witch’s cauldron.

So would people in medieval times have sacrificed their own children, or even those of others, for the selfish goal of manufacturing gold or obtaining eternal youth? They certainly would, and indeed, they would sacrifice their children for much lesser goals as well. Children, up until modern times, were merely disposable resources to be used by their parents, or by other adults in the community who had authority over

them. An excellent authority on this subject is *The Origins of War in Child Abuse* by Lloyd de Mause, in particular chapter 8, entitled “Infanticide, Child Rape and War in Early States.” Here are some vivid descriptions of what life used to be like for the most innocent members of society:

“Mothers are usually described by witnesses as being furious, out of control, ‘fierce and eager upon the child, striking, flinging, kicking it, as the usual manner is.’ Most children in antiquity would have agreed with Xenophon who said he would ‘rather bear a wild beast’s brutality than that of his mother.’ *Mothers would dress up as monster dummies and terrorize their children, saying they were ghosts/Lamias who would eat them up.* Ovid describes how children were often terrorized by saying they would at night be eaten by witches, strigae....

“Most children in antiquity would ... have watched their mothers drown, suffocate and stab their siblings to death. Mothers often simply gave birth to their babies in the privy, smashed their heads in and treated the birth as an evacuation. *Romans reported watching hundreds of mothers throwing their newborn into the Tiber every morning.* So many infants were killed that even though mothers had eight or more babies the populations of antiquity regularly decreased... Children playing in dung heaps, rivers and cess trenches would find hundreds of dead babies, ‘a prey for birds, food for wild beasts to rend’ (Euripides). Those few exposed children who were rescued were raised as slaves or prostitutes...

“In antiquity, since ‘women were an alien and inferior species,’ sex with wives was a rare duty engaged in mainly to provide offspring, and men were addicted to raping young children, both boys and girls, in order to prove their virility and dominance. Their rapes were almost always agreed to by their parents, who often pimped their children and slaves for a price, rented them out to neighbors as servants to be raped, sold their virgin daughters for marriage for fifty pieces of silver, gave their children to pedagogues for sexual use, made their children serve at their banquets so they could be raped after dinner, went to war in order to rape the children of enemies, and *handed over their children to the brothels, bath-houses and temples that could be found in any city of antiquity.* Physicians advocated the rape of children as a way to overcome depression and as a cure for venereal disease... Parents taught their children that ‘the teacher’s thrusting his penis between his thighs or in his anus is the fee which the pupil pays for good teaching.’...

“Parents in early ancient states proudly sacrificed their children to avenging deities. As I have documented in detail: ‘*Child sacrifice was the foundation of all great religions.*’ Maccoby’s book, *The Sacred Executioner*, portrays the entire history of religion as based upon a vengeful, bloodthirsty executioner with a child figure, from Isaac to Christ, being killed for the sins of others. Mass burials of thousands of sacrificed infants have been discovered in early states from Germany and France to Carthage, where archaeologists found one cemetery filled with over 20,000 urns containing bones of children sacrificed by their

parents, who would kill them if the gods would grant the parents a favor -- like if their shipment of goods were to arrive safely. As Quintilian said, *'To put one's own children to death is at times the noblest of deeds.'*

“... Sacrifices are always necessary whenever independence and success is achieved and the avenging Killer Mother goddess must be placated. *Even when people built new buildings or bridges, little children were usually sealed in them alive as 'foundation sacrifices' to ward off the avenging maternal spirits who resent the hubris of building the structure.* Not even ancient Greeks could dispense with human sacrifices; early reports of burning and eating of children in human sacrifices were followed in classical Athens by the practice of keeping victims called Pharmakoi who were ritually stoned to death as scapegoats for the sins of others.”

This, then, is the past from which we have supposedly “evolved” into a civilized society, where child abuse and rape, while still quite common, is at the very least frowned upon, and even punishable by law. But the notion that true power lies in the sacrifice of one's own child is still at the heart of our religions and our public institutions. It is one of the most closely-guarded hidden truths of the ancient mystery schools, the ceremonial magicians, the alchemists, the Rosicrucians, and other secret societies.



The sport of the ancient world

The truth is that, at the very foundation of our modern systems of government, which are controlled by banking and finance, there lies a terrible secret that is in fact the cornerstone of the whole edifice: a child sacrificed to appease the spirits of the otherworld, in order to acquire wealth and accomplish great achievements. Modern particle physicists who have succeeded in increasing the mass of a particle in a vacuum theorized that maybe the extra mass was obtained from the future through inter-dimensional time travel. The alchemical production of money (artificial gold) by the banking system, seemingly out of nothing, is actually based upon the use of youth, and future progeny, as resource material to create wealth that can be enjoyed today by their parents. More importantly, that wealth can then be taken by the people whom those parents are obliged to serve.

A perfect metaphor for how this works can be found in the fairy tale *Rumpelstiltskin*. A young girl's father brags to the king that his daughter has the ability to spin straw into gold. The king then demands that she do it for him, and so her father puts her in a room with a spinning wheel and demands that she somehow produce gold. In her despair, the girl is contacted by a "little man" (clearly a demon) who promises to spin the gold for her if she promises him her first-born child.

This is similar to how the state enslaves humanity by demanding taxes that are impossible to pay with the money we presently have. So the demand gets passed down the line to future generations. In the story, the state (represented by the king) demands an impossible payment of gold from one of his subjects. That subject then presses his young daughter into servitude, demanding that she figure out some way to produce this gold, magically. This requires her to sacrifice her first-born child to a demon.

In the story *Hansel and Gretel*, children are kidnapped by a witch who fattens them up for weeks in a cage, and then tries to cook them in an oven. This happens after their parents abandon them in the woods because it is too expensive to feed them. Realizing their fate, the children work together to outwit the witch, and shove her in the oven instead. After the children kill the witch, they return home to discover that their mother has died while they were gone. This leads many analysts to believe that the witch was really the mother all along.

What we find when we examine mythology, religious traditions, folk legends, and mystical teachings is a recurring theme of the ruling class sacrificing their own children in order to obtain or retain youth, wealth and power. They are also shown forcing the underclass of society to sacrifice their children to the god and/or goddess of the state, so that the rulers can steal whatever is benefitted therefrom.

In fact, we find that the underclass are, in some societies, really the descendants of elders from past generations who sacrificed their children by selling them into slavery. This sacrifice can also take the form of abandonment to the "wilderness," as in the story of the scapegoat, and the exile of Ishmael. Eventually the abused children rebel against their parents, ally with their enemies, overthrow them through warfare, and then immediately create a slave class of their own to abuse, so that they can stay in power.

Just look at the story of the Annunaki gods of Sumer. They were said to have created humans beings as a slave race by interbreeding with lower primates. One of the activities their slaves engaged in, interestingly, was mining, something that children in particular have always been recruited for, because they can fit in tiny spaces. The Annunaki then continued to interbreed with select humans over generations to create a race of kings and queens more closely allied genetically with their own race. These were bred to rule over the lesser humans, and to do some of the more skilled tasks.

Is this perhaps how the "Golden Age" of Saturn or Chronos was maintained: through the enslavement and sacrifice of the youth? Is this a memory of a time when nobody had to work because they had somebody to do it for them? No laws were necessary because they were free to take out their aggressions on those who were weaker. Perhaps the rulers never grew old because they could always bathe in the fountain of youth, filled with the blood of infants.

This could be why Saturn is remembered as the personification of death. Maybe this is why he is shown by Nicolas Flamel as having hobbled the flight-footed young Mercury with the swing of his blade. It was to keep the young man from trying to get away, because Mercury was his slave. He needed Mercury to make the gold.

This could also explain the famous Cremation of Care ritual performed each year at the Bohemian Grove summer encampment in Northern California. This is a secret club to which many of the most powerful people in the United States belong. At the ritual, which takes place on the traditional pagan feast day of Midsummer, a mock baby sacrifice is performed with a bundle of sticks, which is thrown into a fire in front of a depiction of a giant owl.



The Cremation of Care

This ritual has rightly been compared by outsiders with the sacrifice of infants to Baal-Molech, especially since the owl, like Baal, was the companion of Astoreth, the baby-killing goddess. Most telling, however, is the name given to the sacrificial victim, which also provides the name of the ritual. It is called “Dull Care.” The participants are casting aside all of their worldly concerns. Through the sacrifice of the youth of others, they can relax now. As the ritual states: “Midsummer sets us free.”

Just like those who came before us, we have been sold into slavery by our ancestors, who were simultaneously plied with promises of blessings and threatened with curses, until they agreed to offer their children up for sacrifice. As we know, in 1913, the Federal Reserve was created. Known colloquially as “the Fed,” or “the Temple,” they magically created a gold-pegged money supply out of nothing through fractional reserve lending, using the multiplier effect, and allowed the other banks in the country to do likewise. It was this faith that was the secret ingredient in the magical recipe that allowed the alchemy of fiat currency to work. This process involved selling bonds, backed with the full faith and credit of the United States government.

But what did this “faith” really represent? Well, just like the temples of the ancient world, the Federal Reserve demanded sacrifice. The priesthood of Israel instituted a financial tax scheme as a substitute for the traditional sacrifice of the first-born child.

The Federal Income Tax was created for this very purpose -- at the exact same time as the Federal Reserve was born -- with the passage of the 16th Amendment to the US Constitution (which may not have ever been properly ratified).

This enabled the bank to sell the US Treasury's debt with promises of interest payments, paid for by the taxes of every American. Each dollar created by the banking system represents debt owed to the government's creditors. This puts pressure on Americans, not just to obtain money and property for their own comfort, but to have a regular income, so that a portion of that income can be sacrificed to the banking system.

This meant that the Fed was able to create money out of nothing only by enslaving the population, like Mercury having his wings cut off by Saturn. In order to enjoy the imagined benefits of the central bank's alchemical magic, each American would need to become a wage slave. But in the process of creating money out of nothing, which involves conjuring it from thin air, loaning it out on paper, and having it paid back with interest, the banking system sows the seeds of its own demise.

This is because the population at large cannot make money out of nothing. They have to either earn it through work, or sell something in exchange for it, or somehow take it from someone else. That means there will always be more money owed to the banks than the banks have put into the system, even though they are the only ones who can do so. This money owed will always get exponentially larger over time, because of compound interest. When people cannot make their payments any longer because they have exhausted their ability to earn or steal the magic paper that banks create at will, they default. Then the banks take ownership of their property instead, and garnish their future wages.

This is exactly what happened in 1933, when the US government declared bankruptcy and defaulted on its debts. As I explained previously, all of the privately-owned gold held by American citizens was confiscated. Furthermore, as part of the Joint Resolution 192, "To Suspend The Gold Standard and Abrogate The Gold Clause," all of the private property held by citizens of the United States was "hypothecated" to the creditors of the US Treasury. That is why we only own "real estate," a term that indicates land belonging to the king (the state), for which we pay rent in the form of property taxes. By definition, a person who is forbidden to own property is a slave.

This status was solidified with the creation of the Social Security system. Ostensibly this was created to ensure that the old and frail were not left homeless by their Depression-ravaged families, who were unable to take care of them. In reality, however, it turned each individual citizen into a securitized asset, owned by the banks that own the government. Each time we fill out a birth certificate for our newborn child, we are having our baby marked with a UPC code and selling it to the banking system.

As noted most vociferously by the so-called "sovereign citizens' movement," the assignment of a Social Security number to a government subject creates a corporate entity in the name of that particular person. The word "corporation" means "body," and it is legally viewed as an artificial person. Sovereign citizens call it the "Straw Man." I find it quite similar to the alchemical concept of the homunculus.

For each one of us, there is essentially a bank account number assigned to that corporate Straw Man. It is given a credit value, based on the assumption that the person associated with the account will have a job, and will sacrifice a portion of each paycheck to the Social Security fund. The government can then spend the money that is paid into it now, and borrow against the money that will presumably be paid in the future.

This is how we were given over as property to the corporate state by the elite of the so-called “Greatest Generation,” who bathed the world in blood during World War II. But the slave grid was going global. In July of 1944, 730 delegates from the 44 Allied nations met at the Mount Washington Hotel in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire for the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference. At this conference, the infamous International Monetary Fund (IMF) was created.

The meeting secured a promise from each country to maintain the exchange rate of its currency within a fixed value of gold. It had always been the right of governments to set their own trade tariffs and quotas up until that point, but the international banking cartel wanted to have total control over that themselves. They used the Great Depression and World War II to break down the resistance of the world’s governments. Harry Dexter White, chief American economist and designer of the Bretton Woods system, put the bankers’ threat this way:

“... the absence of a high degree of economic collaboration among the leading nations will ... inevitably result in economic warfare that will be but the prelude and instigator of military warfare on an even vaster scale.”

The nations were lulled into this trap by being told that economic interdependency would bring peace. US Secretary of State Cordell Hull embraced the notion, stating:

“...if we could get a freer flow of trade ... freer in the sense of fewer discriminations and obstructions ... so that one country would not be deadly jealous of another and the living standards of all countries might rise, thereby eliminating the economic dissatisfaction that breeds war, we might have a reasonable chance of lasting peace.”

Well, it was a nice thought, but unfortunately, what Hull and other delegates got the United States involved in at Bretton Woods has had exactly the opposite effect. Instead it has depressed living standards globally by shackling nations with incurable debt and brought not peace, but a global police state. What the cartel sold to us all as “free trade” is in fact a complex system regulating the “balance of trade” among nations. Thus an international body decides whether or not a particular nation will be allowed to be prosperous at any particular moment, and when their prosperity will be abruptly cut off. It is exactly the opposite of economic freedom.

At the Bretton Woods conference, the agents for the cartel, viewed by the rest of the world as representing American interests, essentially dictated the terms for all of the other countries, and used desperately-needed aid money to bribe them into agreement. One of the British delegates at the conference was John Maynard

Keynes, who recommended the creation of a world currency unit called the “Bancor,” backed by a collection of 30 commodities, including gold. For the last two centuries, Western governments had tended to base their currencies on a fixed relationship to a gold standard, which was useful not only for stabilizing the currency but for maintaining exchange rates for international trade. International accounts were settled from one country to another using gold.

Roosevelt was not at all opposed to the concept of a global currency, and told his Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau (who had helped him design the mysterious one-dollar bill) to prepare possible designs for a currency he called the “Unitas.” But at Bretton Woods, the bankers decided that, rather than have a global currency based on gold, they would just use the US dollar as the world’s reserve currency, and force the rest of the world’s governments to connect the value of their currencies to the US dollar’s relationship to gold.

In return, the United States agreed to allow the central banks of other countries to convert their dollars to gold at any time at the fixed price of \$35 per ounce, regardless of the market value of gold at the time. This arrangement gave the United States tremendous economic advantages in the short term, but in the long term only the banks themselves came out on top, as we shall see.

This was because the US dollar was not just a currency but a debt instrument in itself. The creation of every dollar earned interest for the Fed even as it multiplied into ever more interest-earning dollars ad infinitum. Because they convinced our government to agree to redeem the Federal Reserve notes for foreign banks at \$35 an ounce, it could be used, just as gold had been, to settle international accounts between central banks. To maintain the “balance of payments” needed to calculate a proper exchange rate, the central banks of other countries could simply buy or sell dollars. They just had to agree not to ever adjust the value of their currencies beyond plus or minus 1% of the international “pegged rate” without IMF approval.

But notice what this means is that the central banks of other countries, as well as the IMF, were given rights to convert American money to gold which American citizens themselves did not have. They then sold that gold off to their own central banks throughout the world, as well as the IMF, for \$35 an ounce, perpetually. That’s \$35 in the Federal Reserve’s *own* notes. Those banks could then sell that gold on the open market at many hundreds times profit, depending on the street value at the time.

When the International Monetary Fund was created, the member nations were asked to chip in a certain quota of money, related to the assessed size of that nation’s economy. This contribution was to be made 75% in that nation’s own currency, and 25% in gold, or in “currency redeemable in gold” -- in other words, the dollar. So the creation of the IMF on its first day alone resulted in the sale of billions of US dollars to foreign central banks. This was so that they could be placed in a fund controlled from an office on US soil, and owned by the same group of stockholders that own the Federal Reserve which issued the dollars in the first place. Of course, those with a vested interest in the Federal Reserve would prefer to do business in US dollars because the mere creation of dollars bears interest to the Fed due from the US Treasury.

The money and gold amassed from these quotas was then used as reserve funds to

make loans to the very countries that had contributed the quotas in the first place. If they could no longer make the interest payments on these loans, they could draw out 25% of their own quota money, but this time as yet another “loan” from the IMF. Yes: a loan from the IMF to help them make the interest payments on their other IMF loans, which were made to them using the members’ own money as a reserve. If that country still needed more money to make their interest payments, they could make agreements to borrow from other countries, using the IMF and/or its numerous associated institutions as intermediaries -- for a percentage, of course.

The IMF’s sister group, the World Bank, forces loans upon countries in situations of need. If they can’t afford to make their interest payments on the loans they have already got, the bank loans them more money to make those payments. In exchange, of course, they demand complete control over the nation’s economy. Because of this, a small handful of people now dictate the price of goods, the wages of workers, and the value of the money they are paid, in countries all over the globe.

What they have built is a global economic machine that allows them to create the most favorable terms possible for the world’s largest multinational corporations to become larger, at the expense of everyone else. When countries get into too much debt, or experience economic hardship, the IMF comes along to implement “austerity measures.” This means cutting public expenditures and increasing taxes so that the government can make larger interest payments on its debts to the banks. Through the IMF, the banking cartel controls governments, who in turn control the lives of their subjects according to the will of their private corporate masters.

**PROSPERITY
NOT
AUSTERITY**



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**FREE THE MARKETS:
ARREST THE BANKSTERS!**

Protesting IMF austerity

The IMF, and the international monetary system that it oversees, has accomplished its first purpose, which was to unite most of the world’s national economies into a whole so intertwined that mutual destruction would be assured if any major players backed out of the system or refuse to play by the rules. The excuse for doing this back in 1944 was to eliminate war. Now, violent global police actions are engaged in

by the US and European powers in order to enforce compliance with the global monetary regime. But they are never called “wars,” officially. None of the participating countries have any political sovereignty left, so they are forbidden by international treaty from officially declaring war, which the United States Congress and President have not done since the beginning of World War II.

The other purpose of the international monetary system is to reduce the price of all goods in all countries to the lowest possible level, by managing the world as a global supply chain. Each region has its own resources, its own economic strengths. The goal is to have each country contribute whatever it has at the lowest price possible, to form the perfect, most efficient assembly line possible. This includes obtaining labor at the lowest possible price. This is the purpose of things such as the WTO (World Trade Organization), GATT (the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), and NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement).

One of the effects of this system is to create surplus labor, the very thing that Karl Marx said would bring about the downfall of capitalism. This, by its very nature, brings unemployment and low wages, destroying a country’s standard of living, and plunging its population into deep poverty. It has turned the planet into a giant slave labor prison, where everyone who is lucky enough to have a job has to work at an ever-increasing level of productivity for an ever-decreasing value of remuneration in order to compete.

Before you can even get a job in the present system, you have to first prove that you are an ideal slave. You must be in good health (and submit a DNA sample to prove you don’t have any bad habits). You must have a record of always obeying the law, always paying your debts, never quitting your jobs, never getting fired, and never having any lapses in your employment. You must be willing to sacrifice your family, your wealth, and even your health (which is supposedly so important) in order to fulfill your master’s wishes. You must anticipate his needs before he speaks them. Most importantly, you should have no personal ambition, but be overzealous in your desire to achieve your master’s goals for him. If you cannot meet these requirements, there are 1000 other eager slaves waiting to take your place.

Those who cannot compete are cast out of the system, like Cain, forced to play the role of the vagabond and the fugitive. Like the righteous in the *Revelation of St. John the Divine*, those who refuse the Mark of the Beast are not allowed to buy or sell. They must beg, borrow, and steal to get their bread. They are not permitted to sleep anywhere, and are always in violation of some law, merely for existing, merely because they cannot afford to bribe the authorities they run into at every corner who demand a toll for passage, or rent for staying put.

The book *Who Moved My Cheese* by Spencer Johnson is used frequently in corporate training, especially for Human Resources departments. It is supposed to teach you that the marketplace is always changing, and thus you have to constantly adapt to where the “cheese” (i.e. the income opportunity) has moved to.

The book depicts your life as that of a mouse trapped inside of a maze controlled by scientists from the outside. These all-powerful scientists decide each day where in the maze to place the cheese that the mice get to eat, and how much. Then the mice have to use their instincts to try to sniff out where the cheese has moved to that day. Some of the mice are lazy, slow to change, and complain about having to find new

cheese every day. In the course of the story these mice are beaten into submission through starvation until they learn to accept their fate, and begin to hunt for the cheese every day like all of the others.

Amazingly, the term “rat race” is never used throughout this entire book, but that is clearly what is being described. What’s truly odd about the book is that the question in the title is never really answered. Who did move the cheese anyway? Who are these scientists that control everything? Who appointed them? Did we elect them? Were they chosen by God? How did we get inside of the maze, and who made that decision for us?

Of course, in most situations, a mouse who finds cheese lying around is being lured into a trap. The word “maze” means “delusion,” or “bewilderment,” and is related to the Norwegian word “mas,” meaning “exhausting labor.” In the West, the most well-known, most culturally archetypal maze is the Labyrinth of ancient Crete. Traditionally, at the center of the Labyrinth lived the Minotaur, a bull-headed beast to whom children were sent as tributes from subject nations and sacrificed each year.

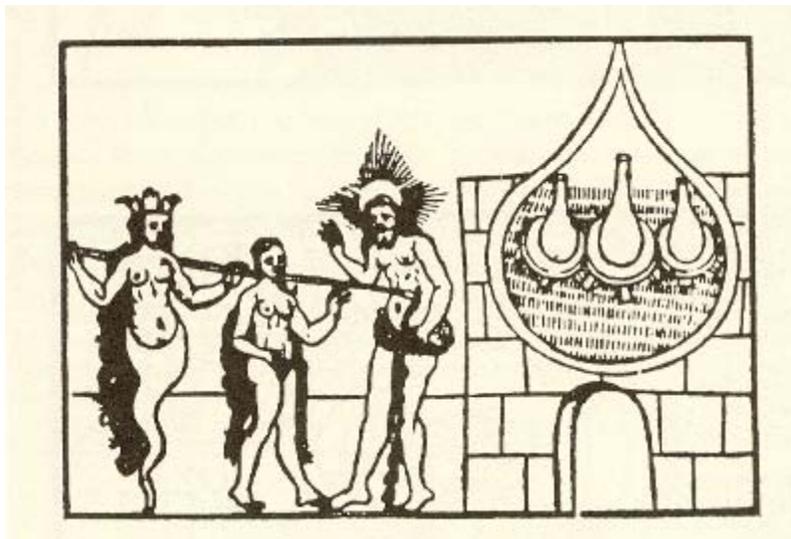
In the film *The Matrix*, machines have taken over the world. The Sun’s light has been blotted from the sky, and the machines are using human bodies as batteries. The humans are kept in vats of goo with electrodes connected to them. They are forever asleep, forever living in an artificial dream world, controlled, at least partially, by a computer. The whole system runs on cannibalism. The dead slaves are “liquefied and fed intravenously to the living.”



The Matrix: A Gnostic parable describing our economy

The word “matrix” means “pregnant animal,” “womb,” and “source,” or “origin.” It is a fitting term for the state and bank-controlled slave system we all live in. From Pallas Athena of Greece to the modern figures of Columbia, Britannia, and Marianne, the state has always been represented by a goddess figure as the seat of sovereignty, the repository of royal wisdom. In Egypt, the name “Isis” literally meant “throne.” A later definition of “matrix,” which you will remember from math class, is as an “array of possible combinations of truth-values.”

In his book *Aion: Researches Into the Phenomenology of the Self*, Carl Jung wrote of the alchemical “Matrix” or “vas naturale,” an array of glass alembics “immersed in a cooking pot,” inside of which “the son of the philosophers is begotten.” They contain “tincture, blood, and egg.” In one alchemical illustration from 1588, the Matrix is shown next to a picture of Christ being speared in the heart -- the Son of God sacrificed -- with blood and water pouring out.



The “Vas Naturale” from Carl Jung’s *Aion*

For our purposes, the Matrix can be seen as the womb-like prison in which we are fattened before we are thrown into the gullet of Father Time (Chronos). It is the machine in which we must work as slaves, turning the metaphorical wheels, plowing the metaphorical fields, rolling the rock up the hill, only to have it fall roll back down to the bottom again. Our seemingly futile labor creates the energy supply that is used to create the artificial gold that our masters demand for us to spin out of nothing.

The connection between money and sacrifice, including slavery, imprisonment, and death, is inherent in many of our financial terms. “Finance” comes from the French “finer,” meaning “to end, settle a dispute or debt.” The word “mortgage” means “death pledge.” A “bond” was originally a “a serf or tenant farmer” in Middle English. It still implies being handcuffed, shackled or tied up. It still implies economic slavery.

The global economy has become a gigantic pyramid scheme built for channeling the life-energy of the many into the hands of the few. Through an alchemical transmutation process, in a giant machine where we work the levers, we produce wealth for them to enjoy. When we work at our jobs, pay our taxes, consume goods and services, deposit our paychecks at the bank, register for selective service, for Social Security, or for welfare, we are feeding the beast.

The true energy source, the true prima materia from which the alchemical gold is produced is, in this instance, our blood, sweat and tears: our youth, and that of our descendants. Our faith in the system is what allows the magical transformation to occur that changes our sacrificed energy into gold for the benefit of our corporate government overlords. We know that we will eventually be consumed in the belly of Moloch, but to stave off that day as long as possible, we throw our babies into the fire as a substitute for the full price that is required of us.

It is amazing to think about how much of our economic activity is centered around the old sacrificial customs. In the USA, the “fiscal year” begins with the harvest in October. But in our present system, money is the real harvest. October is when the Christmas shopping season begins. This is the period when “consumer sales,” upon which the entire system is dependent, are expected to jump dramatically.

Retail businesses operate “in the red,” as a loss, all year long, expecting to make it up and go “into the black” during Christmas season. This is because mothers who feel guilty about being separated from their children by their slave wage job try to make it up by charging up debt they can’t afford to buy their kids plastic crap made by child slaves in China. This is an echo of the first Christmas, when the Wise Men gave gifts to the newborn babe that they knew was destined to be sacrificed.

This is all so very fitting when you consider that Christmas is really none other than the continuation of the Roman festival of Saturnalia. This is all a commemoration of the alleged “Golden Age” of Saturn, the planetary ruler of the sign of Capricorn, which presides over this portion of the month of December. Supposedly during the Golden Age, the year was 360 days long, the Earth’s axis was not tilted, and the planet’s orbit was perfectly circular (each day corresponding to a one-degree movement along the orbit.) There were no seasons as we know them now, and the Earth was perfectly temperate. This explains why no work needed to be done. Food grew on its own in abundance. Some Roman chronicles even say that there was no death, no sexual generation, and really no time as we presently know it.

When this situation changed, and the seasons began, and the year was lengthened to its present form, the ancients celebrated the extra five days at the end of the year as “non-days,” and attempted to recreate the circumstances of the Golden Age. No work was done, and on the Italian peninsula, a figure called the “Lord of Misrule,” representing Saturn, was elected as a temporary king. At Saturnalia, slaves and masters switched places, and everyone wore the red Phrygian hat or liberty cap, the symbol of a freed slave.

The King, and all of the children, were showered with gifts during this time period. Often the King was the one giving the gifts to the children. A baby, representing Dionysius, and the coming newborn year, was paraded about town by the Lord of Misrule and a young man, described much like the typical depiction of Mercury. At the end of the 12 days of Saturnalia (perhaps representative of the 12 children swallowed by Chronos), the Lord of Misrule would be sacrificed.

Clearly, the Lord of Misrule, Saturn, is represented in modern times by Santa Claus. Like his predecessors, he drives a chariot across the sky, wears a liberty cap, and lives in the North Pole, which is associated with the center of the Earth, the Black Sun, and tomb of the sleeping Saturn. (For more details on this, read *Arktos: The Polar Myth*, by Joscelyn Godwin.) Santa has an army of child slaves (elves) who make the toys with which he plies young children to sit on his lap.

As Santa, Saturn now comes down the chimney like a witch and eats the votive offerings of milk and cookies left for him by children (perhaps as a substitute in the hopes that he won’t eat the children instead.) In exchange, he leaves toys for the ones that have been well-behaved throughout the year. Kids are told that they had better be good, because Santa’s keeping a list of their sins.

Then, on Christmas Eve, when the stockings hang by the fire (implying perhaps the threat of the children themselves roasting on the fire), the bad kids will be given a lump of coal (i.e. be turned to charcoal). This may also be a ritual remembrance of the stone wrapped in swaddling clothes that saved Zeus from getting eaten by Chronos. (Coal, of course, is mined from the Earth, and can be transformed into precious stones through heat and pressure, which makes for a very alchemical metaphor indeed.)

The end of the calendar year also marks the end of the tax year. But taxes are not actually due until April 15th of the following year. This happens to be the same date as the Roman fertility festival of Fordicia. The name comes from “fordae caedendae,” Latin words meaning: “the pregnant cows which were to be slaughtered.” As the god Faunus told King Numa Pompilius in a dream: “By the death of cattle ... Tellus must be placated ... Let a single heifer yield two souls for the rites.” So just as the Romans gave up their best cows, and the unborn calves within them, to the bloodthirsty gods, so we sacrifice our future every April 15th.

The Gnostic sect known as the Manicheans believed that the Demiurge (the “artisan” or “public worker”) had created mankind to be eaten. As Willis Barnstone writes in *The Other Bible: Ancient Alternative Scriptures*:

The most pessimistic version of [Manichean] creation concerns the creation of Adam and Eve. They are the pawns of the King of Darkness in his strategy to defeat the Unknown Father. Their birth was described by the Manicheans as an abomination, and abortion, a ruse, in which the Creator reveals cannibalism for his own offspring.

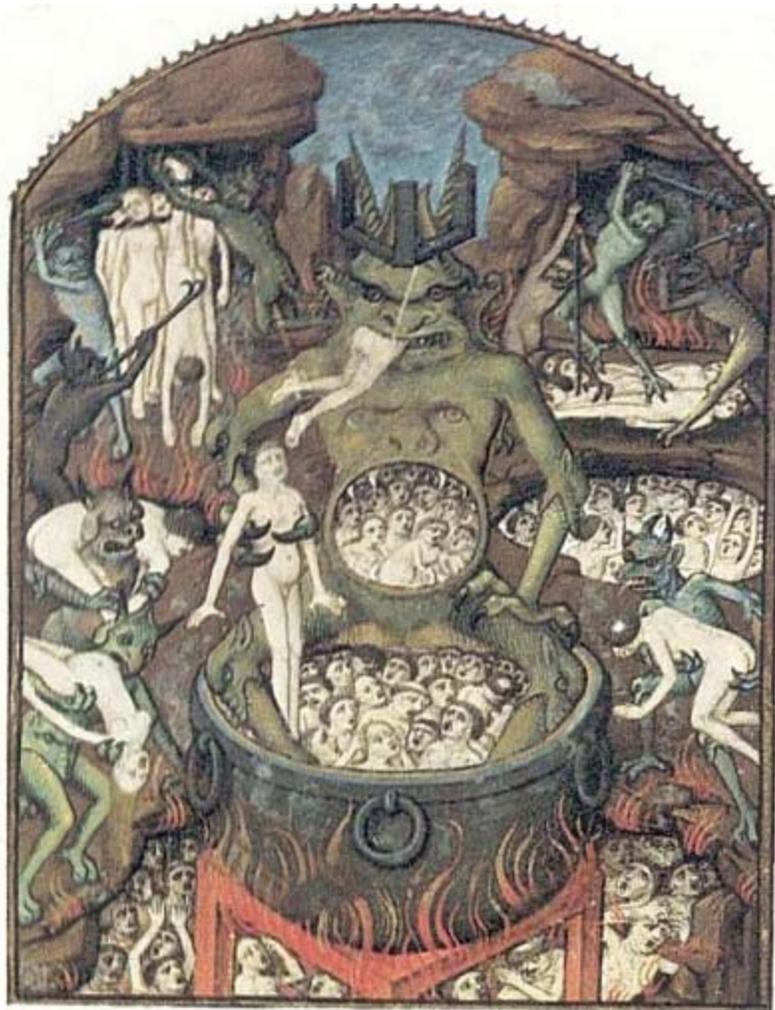


The Manichean creation

Creation, they believed, was really just a prison. We are essentially trapped inside the bodies of our creators and being digested by them. The author continues:

“... a common notion is that the world was created by the Archons, including its master Yahweh, the Prince of Darkness. The flesh and skin of the Archons were stretched out to form the firmaments and the mountains were formed from their flesh and bones. Into this impure matter the soul was mingled: thus Manichean pessimism, which finds human life a prison of the soul in the powers of Darkness.”

This is very similar to Dante’s depiction of Hell, inside the body of Satan, where the damned are eaten and digested for eternity. The only difference is that in this view, Hell is everywhere. As Mephistopheles said to Faust when asked if he was a creature from Hell: “This is Hell. Nor am I out of it.”



Hell, or the present situation

Whether or not the gods ever really existed, or any particular theology is correct is incidental to our inquiry. What is important about these myths is that they portray society as the maladapted stepchild of a dysfunctional family that has lived through thousands of years of intergenerational abuse. Everyone alive has grown up in a system where the main goal was to take power away from others and abuse others less powerful than they were: eat them, before they eat you.

Historically we have put up with this, and participated in it, out of the irrational belief that it was necessary to achieve prosperity and security for ourselves. We have been traumatized, hypnotized, and conditioned into believing this. We feel trapped and imprisoned, but we also believe that there is no life outside of the prison, and greater punishment to come if we try to escape. So we never do. But the situation is changing. The brutal, cannibalistic matrix that has nursed us for so long is dying.

The right of other countries to redeem their dollars in gold at the fixed price of \$35 an ounce was the lynch-pin of the Bretton Woods international monetary system agreed to in 1944. But this became quite a problem over the years for the United States. The issue was that in order for the system to actually work, the US would need to very strictly control the value of its currency. This meant that America couldn't go printing money willy-nilly whenever they needed to pay for more social programs, or for military adventures. But of course, that was exactly what the US

Congress proceeded to do over the next three decades.

By 1971, the dollar had inflated considerably, and foreign central banks had looted the US gold reserves, so that there was only enough to cover 22% of the dollars in existence. West Germany and Switzerland pulled out of the Bretton-Woods system, and the demand for gold payment from other central banks increased even more, because those banks could then turn around and sell the gold on the open market at tremendous profit. The US dollar was standing on a precipice.

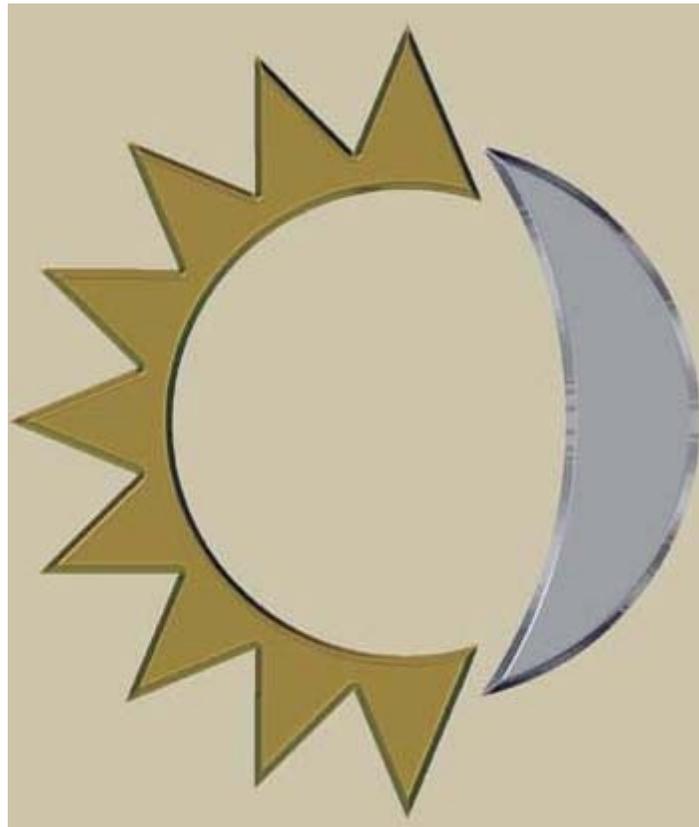
This was what motivated President Nixon that year to make a unilateral decision, without consulting the IMF, to close the “gold window” and stop redeeming dollars in gold. This was the final nail in the coffin of the Bretton Woods system, and unhinged the value of the dollar from gold completely. This is at the center of a controversy that, as I write these words, threatens to topple the currencies of the world simultaneously.

At present, large quantities of gold are still traded between central banks via the IMF, much of it at below street-market value, in order to “settle international accounts.” IMF-controlled central banks are allowed to report their gold certificates (representing the gold that they have “leased out” or dishoarded) in the same column on their balance sheets where the gold reserves themselves are reported. So nobody actually knows how much gold is in reserve at these banks.

An organization called the Gold Anti-Trust Association has presented evidence that the street price of gold is being purposely manipulated by central banks through the counterfeiting and sale of these gold certificates. It is merely another form of alchemy through fiat paper. But in this case, it is being done to mask the other form of alchemy: the paper and electronic money being produced by central banks as national currency.

Because fiat currencies tend to have a naturally inverse relationship to the price of gold, and silver as well, depressing the price of both metals helps to hide the depreciating value of both currencies. This is important, because we need those currencies to have perceived value. Otherwise, nobody will buy the bonds that they are based on, international trade will stop, people will stop using the money for domestic commerce, and the whole system will be destroyed in a very short span of time.

GATA has specifically named J.P. Morgan Chase as being heavily involved in the scam, as well as the London Bullion Market Association. This is the organization responsible for “fixing” the international price of gold and silver each day. Their corporate logo is a half-sun in gold, combined with a half-moon in silver. Their official quarterly publication is called *The Alchemist*.



Logo for the London Bullion Market Association

GATA's revelations have set off a global demand amongst holders of gold and silver certificates to receive their bullion in hand, right now. This is largely what is behind the surge in gold and silver prices that is now occurring at this writing. It would be front page news if it were not for the fact that all Hell is breaking loose on every other economic front as well.

The civilized world is presently waking up to the fact that the illusion of prosperity experienced by some people over the last few decades came by selling assets for far beyond what they were worth to people who couldn't afford them, saddling them with a debt they could never repay. These debts were then treated as though they had actual value, just as our treasury debt is treated as though it is gold. Mortgages were chopped up and resold in pieces to new creditors, often multiple creditors at the same time. Now nobody knows who actually owns the paper on those properties anymore. But the debts still exist, a hunger in the banking system that demands to be fed but can never be satisfied.

Today, the number of debts that exist on paper exceeds the number of assets that exist on Earth by exponential and ever-increasing amounts. The Federal Reserve is buying the US Treasury's debt on its own through a process called "quantitative easing." They now create unprecedented amounts of money and loan it out for free (near 0% interest) to banks and financial institutions, who use it to pump up the stock market.

70% of stock market transactions are now created through something called "high-frequency trading," where banks use this cheap borrowed money to trade stocks with computers, utilizing algorithms, back and forth between each other several times a minute. With this, they are able to actually "front-run" everyone else's

transactions and control the entire market to their own benefit.

Not only does it provide them with tremendous profit, and a game that is rigged so that they can't lose; it also serves to mask the sickness of the economy at large. Like a crackhead mother who's too busy getting high and playing Everquest to make dinner for her kids, the lords of finance who control the corporate government are putting a DVD on to keep us entertained and ignoring our cries of hunger. But eventually it will catch up with all of us. The global economy, as we know it, is dying. And we don't know what will replace it.

According to Ovid, there have been four ages of man. The first was the Golden Age, ruled by Saturn, previously discussed. Afterwards came the Silver Age, ruled by Jupiter (the Roman Zeus), in which agriculture was introduced. There followed two ages where men ruled themselves, each more degenerate than the next: the Bronze Age, and the present Iron Age. Only after the death of the Iron Age can a new Golden Age come about. This corresponds to the myth that Saturn will awaken from his ancient sleep within his tomb, rising to rule the Earth with misrule and peaceful, prosperous anarchy.

The Hindus have a similar legend, attributing to the ages the very same metals, and the same concept of the degeneration of civilization over time. As Fulcanelli explains in *The Mystery of the Cathedrals*:

“The entire cycle of human evolution is figured there in the form of a cow, symbolizing Virtue, [and] each of whose four feet rests on one of the sectors representing the four ages of the world. In the first age, corresponding to the Greek age of gold and called the Creta Yuga or age of innocence, Virtue is firmly established on earth: the cow stands squarely on four legs. In the Treda Yuga or second age, corresponding to the age of silver, it is weakened and stands only on three legs. During the Touvabara Yuga, or third age, which is the age of bronze, it is reduced to two legs. Finally, in the age of iron, our own age, the cyclic cow or human virtue reaches the utmost degree of feebleness and senility: it is scarcely able to stand, balancing on only one leg. It is the fourth and last age Kali Yuga, the age of misery, misfortune and decrepitude.

“The age of iron has no other seal than that of Death. Its hieroglyph is the skeleton, bearing: the attributes of Saturn: the empty hour-glass, symbol of time run out, and the scythe ...



The Kali Yuga

The Kali Yuga is named after the man-eating Hindu goddess of death and time, whose name is related to our word “calendar.” But death, in alchemy, in mythology, and in reality, is a necessary part of the cycle of life, as well as the magical process of transmutation. Only through the death of the present sick system can the Earth be fertilized and the true green shoots of prosperity sprout up again. The system will die when we stop feeding it: when we recognize it for the vicious, man-eating beast that it is.

As mentioned earlier, *The New Atlantis*, Sir Francis Bacon predicted a future return of the Golden Age in the form of a “Philosophic Empire,” where man would be free from toil and spend his days in artistic and intellectual pursuits. One of the illustrations in this book featured an image of Saturn snatching a naked woman from out of a cave. It included the Latin words “Tempore Patet Occulta Veritas”: “In time, the mysteries will be revealed.”



From *The New Atlantis* by Sir Francis Bacon

The woman clearly represents Venus, or Isis, that “Sleeping Beauty,” who, like

Saturn himself, was said in the myths to rest in a death-like slumber in her tomb in a sacred mountain. Here she is said to lie nude, behind a veil that “no man hath yet uncovered.” This represents the Hermetic mysteries of magic and alchemy, time and space.

Only true initiates get to peak behind the veil and see the lady Venus naked, as Christian Rosenkreutz did in the alchemical story named after him. It is the revelation of unbridled truth, known by the Latin phrase “Eripitur persona, manet res”: “the mask is snatched away, the rest remains.” This phrase was explained by Jeremy Taylor in *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying*, from 1651, in the following way:

“...we take pains to heap up things useful to our life, and get our death in the purchase; and the person is snatched away, and the goods remain. And all this is the law and constitution of nature, it is a punishment to our sins, the unalterable event of providence, and the decree of heaven. The chains that confine us to this condition are strong as destiny, and immutable as the eternal laws of God.”