

Imaginal Studies of the Splendor Solis: A bit of the Story

Marie Angelo, Spring Equinox 2018.

I came upon the Splendor Solis (or rather it found me) a good twenty years ago now. It was 'as if' I knew the illuminations from long ago, meeting them as great teachers who wish to be seen and heard once more. They spoke in their wonderful alchemical 'language of the birds,' inspiring a grand project. Since then, I've spent my time exploring. They quickly revealed themselves as a full 'en-cyclo-paedia' (A-Z cycle of learning) of esoteric wisdom – an entrée to the imaginal languages, the Liberal, liberating Arts, and mystic practices that are 'the yoga of the West.' As great teachers, they celebrate 'the eternal return' of the seasons around and within us, always ready to take us further and deeper, once we are ready.

Along the way, I made and taught an MA course of Transpersonal Arts & Practice (university of Chichester), based on a pilgrimage through the illuminations, each explored in close-up. What fun we had! I gave dozens of illustrated talks, and published a few papers and chapters (I'll make a list sometime, find the book lists and archive of the original MA website - most beautifully made by alumnus Edwina Milner - and upload details on other pages.) Here's an example of the talks; the publicity information for one I gave for the wonderful Temenos Academy:

'TEMENOS ACADEMY HERMETIC IMAGINATION SERIES - PROSPERO'S SPLENDOR SOLIS: AN ADORABLE FIRE FOR OUR 'SO POTENT ART' – DR. MARIE ANGELO

Wednesday, November 23, 2016 - 18:30-20:30 The Royal Asiatic Society 14 Stephenson Way, London, NW1 2HD United Kingdom. The Temenos Academy 01233 813663 - www.temenosacademy.org

The golden age of renaissance alchemical art produced the *Splendor Solis*, famed for its beautiful hand-painted illuminations, particularly the 1582 Harley version which is a great treasure of the British Library. This illustrated talk will present many examples from the illuminations, particularly some astonishing close-ups and details not usually noticed. These 'Solis secrets' slow the busy modern eye, inviting us to 'create the sun and the moon' of transformed perceptions.

Along the way, we'll consider the nature of 'the imaginal' itself, alchemically a perpetual, joyous wedding day uniting Above and Below. Following the love of image in Corbin, Hillman and Hermeticism, we find it is that 'in-between' where traditional images are revealed as living powers whom we can meet as exalted personages, enter as landscapes and temples, experience in soma and psyche.

Marie Angelo designed and ran the MA 'Transpersonal Arts and Practice' at the University of Chichester, drawing on an academic background in Psychology and the Humanities, and a personal background in the Western Mystery Tradition.

A pathway of Transformative Arts took shape, inviting Hermes into the Academy. Each illumination of the *Splendor Solis* became a guest teacher of 'imaginal inquiry,' offering imaginative ways into the image for field-work in the imaginal cosmos of the alchemists.

After that busy decade, a five-year course, privately run, allowed the more poetic and mystical correspondences to speak their truths. The illuminations shimmered with the magic of Prospero's 'drowned books' rescued by a Miranda grown through love. They revealed the mysteries of the *Splendor Solis* as a garment of the beloved friend, the mystical 'Sun behind the Sun.'

All our 'Imaginal Studies' over the years have been recorded and transcribed, forming the basis for a series of illustrated texts, the first of which is soon to be published.'

Well, I've continued to teach and write privately, growing the project onwards, and the long-spoken-of first book now really is soon to be published. The manuscript finally went to the publishers, Alchimia, on New Year's Eve. This very Spring Equinox, its roots are firmly grown, shoots soon to show above ground. We expect full publicity here for the Summer Solstice!

Meanwhile, do read the School of Memphis page and the tributes – I've said a little more about the *Splendor Solis* in my tribute to my own very dear and revered teacher. In researching the history of ancient Memphis, it was not a surprise to discover a sensitive historian pointing out what we already knew from 'inside the image' – that the *Splendor Solis* themes of personal change and 'rebirth in the Light' can be traced back to the ancient Temple Schools of Memphis. Timeless themes clothe themselves in forms according to their age, continuing relevant to us today.

There will be so much more to explore as the website develops. But for now – thank you for your visit to this page – Marie.
