

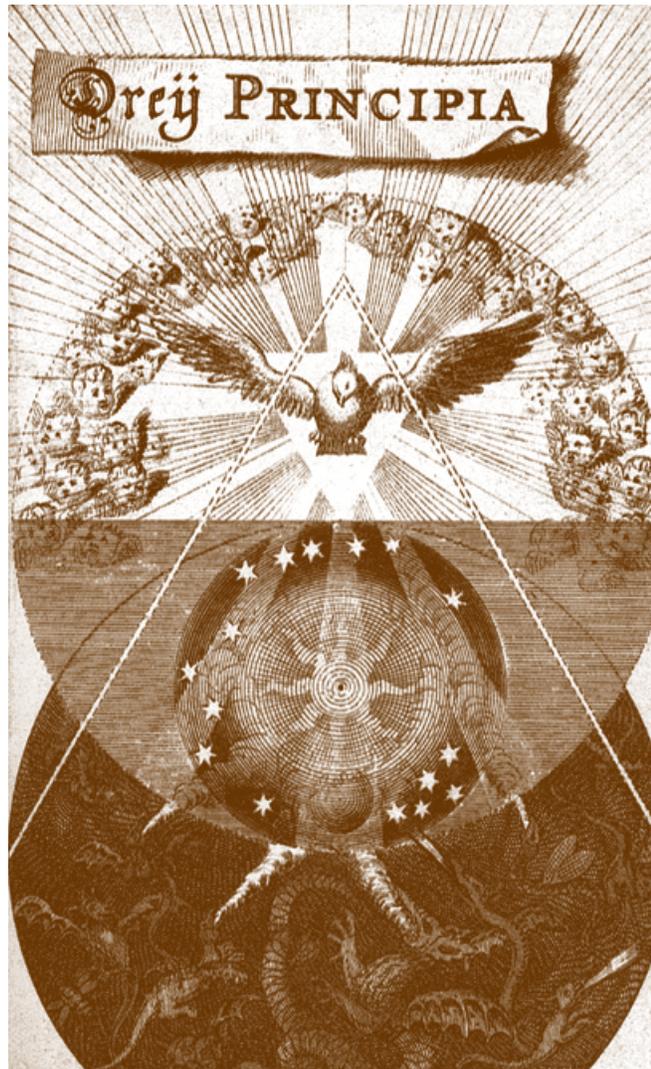
The Mystic and the Occult in Max Heindel's Writings

Part 5

ONE WOULD EXPECT the two volumes containing Heindel's answers to student's questions to have many references to the occult because intelligible information pertaining to the higher worlds is being sought.

In *Rosicrucian Philosophy in Questions and Answers, Vol 1 (IQ&A)* occult is used forty-three times, *mystic* is used nine times. The author dictated the text of this book to a stenographer in 1910 as he read questions from slips of paper submitted during his earlier lecture tours. We learn that the Bible translators "possessed no occult knowledge" (40), but the occultist "has the key" to the Bible's meaning (149). In "pearls of occult truth are hidden what are often hideous garments" (156). All occult schools are divisible into seven, one for each class [or Ray] of Spirits (47). In answering one question on the rejection of Cain's offering, Heindel narrates part of the "legend of the occult free masons" (175). The reader is told that "The feasts of the year have the very deepest occult significance" (178). This is Heindel's earliest description of events for which he later gave a "mystical" interpretation (Easter and Christmas). As observed when studying these two events, mysticism does not give interpretations, certainly not scientific explanations, as Heindel does in both of these short studies. Moreover "occult tradition" requires that Easter, a "moveable feast," be held on a day that satisfies three criteria (2Q&A 449).

What are "blind laws" to the materialist the occultist sees as great Spirits (IQ&A 179). Heindel is implying here that the occultist possesses es-



Drey Principia, Jacob Böhme, Amsterdam, 1682, Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg

Under Rosicrucian inspiration, Jacob Böhme's mystic visions contained true occult knowledge. Above, Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit correlate with Chaos, Cosmos, and Creation.

oteric knowledge *because* he sees and hears in the invisible worlds. Then he processes his supersensible visions and auditions with logic and reason and articulates his conclusions. Higher "senses or [clairvoyant] faculties are the means of investigation used by occultists. They are their 'open sesame' in searching for truth" (*Cosmo* 34). In reference to the "music of the spheres," Heindel says "the occult scientist hears it" (*Cosmo* 122).

We have previously traced the etymology of

occult. The root of this word is Latin *cultus*, which means care or cultivation, and derives from *colere*, meaning to till or cultivate (the earth). The original meaning of *cult* is “a system of religious worship or ritual.” When it became expedient to conceal or obscure that system, it was occulted or hidden. What is spiritual is by its very nature hidden or occult. When Max Heindel seeks to reveal facts pertaining to the spiritual worlds, his explanations are occult and yet they are accessible to reason. They are not perceived but conceived. For instance, it is “patent to the occultist” that wars serve a positive purpose of cleansing the blood of the races (*IQ&A* 205). This action can be seen and proved by the occultist. His explanation gives the results of his first-hand investigations.

In the second volume of *Questions and Answers*, compiled by Mrs. Heindel and copyright in 1947, *occult* is used sixty times and *mystic* twenty-four times. In her prefatory remarks, Mrs. Heindel writes that the book contains “much valuable occult information.” Again we cite a few of the more notable instances of the two terms in context.

One who has esoteric understanding of the significance of the initials INRI has the “occult key to the mystery of crucifixion” (256). Mysteries remain obscure, mysterious, until, as His disciples told Jesus, one can speak plainly, rather than figuratively, about a matter. Heindel usually implies, and sometimes explicitly states, that the occultist is in possession of positive clairvoyance and clairaudience. For instance, the “occultist sees” blood as a gas inside the body (257). “In occult orders, like the Rosicrucians,” musical “keys” or incantations are intoned at each degree. Such keys “are used in all occult orders and for all occult purposes” (284). Heindel quotes a statement that appeared in *The Theosophist*, the official organ of the Theosophical Society, written by its editor Annie Besant, that the *Cosmo* “clearly represents a definite occult tradition” (461).

While the Catholic Church serves the need of mystics by appealing to devotion and faith, the rit-

ual they observe is “occultly inspired” (534) by an “occultly informed Catholic Hierarchy” (537) which was in possession of “occult facts” (536).

If the Rosicrucian initiations “endeavor to blend the mystic with the occult” by “directing attention to the Christ,” “a little more stress is laid perhaps upon the mystic side” because Christ is the embodiment of the Father’s love for his children, humanity (229). And since Christ Jesus is the ideal of the Fellowship student, “perhaps” this point alone would explain Heindel’s calling the Fellowship “An Association of Christian Mystics.” The fact

remains that the Teachings are fundamentally occult in nature. For example,

when “the light of occultism” is directed on the problem of sorrow, it becomes “one of the strongest rays of hope to the one who is blessed with this knowledge” (73). Moreover, precisely because the occult student has chosen consciously to pursue the straight and narrow path to

the Kingdom of Heaven, he may expect an acceleration of trials and may regard them as a “sign of progress and a cause for great rejoicing” (*LS* #72, “The Reason for the Trials That Beset the Occult Student”).

The truths of the *Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception* are described as “mystic teaching” (89). Again we encounter a substitution for the more common and fitting *occult*, since the teachings can only be called *mystic* in that they are not obvious. But their clarity and intelligibility more correctly identify them as occult. Likewise, the term “mystic reason” (276) couples antithetical concepts. And the “mystic significance” (337) of Jesus apparently eating fish and honey is really an occult significance, for which Heindel gives an occult explanation. Rasputin’s “mystic overlordship of the imperial mind” (509) is better described as “occult” because knowledge and will were used in exerting this influence. Mystics do not control others in this “magical” way. As Heindel says, the “true mystic” will “look to the God within and pour himself or herself out in voiceless adoration” (560).

Mystics, “led by the devotion to Christ, simply

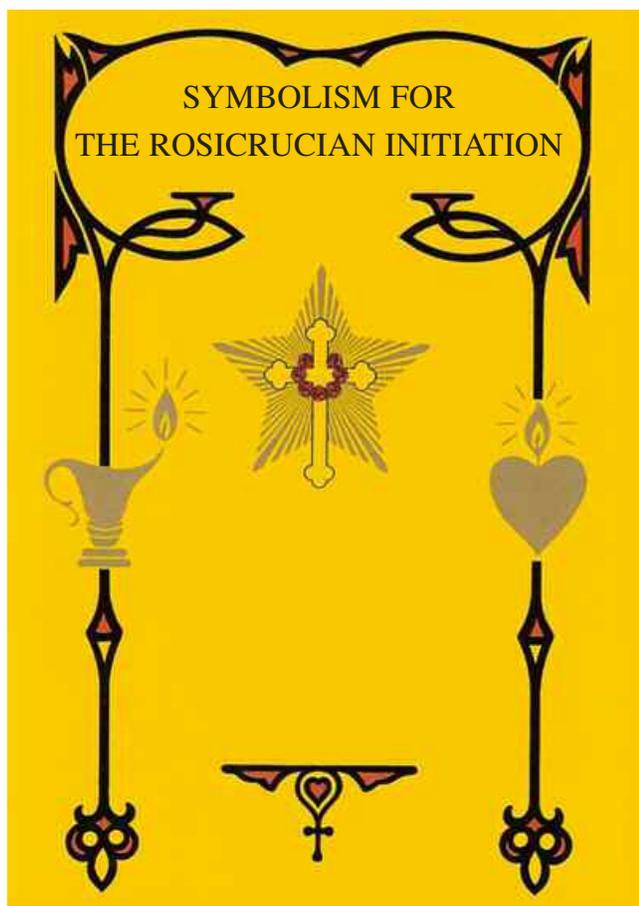
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follow the dictates of the heart in their work of love for their fellows” (*GM* 17). On the other hand, “mind is the predominating feature” of Rosicrucian occultists, who practice the exercises of retrospection and concentration to advance “scientifically toward the goal of initiation” (*GM* 19).

“Students of the occult philosophies [as Western Wisdom Teachings] ought to familiarize themselves with the astronomical facts so that they may be able to give an intelligent reason for their beliefs” (*2Q&A* 356). Mystics cannot give “intelligent reasons” for their beliefs because their beliefs are not based on reason but faith, or even indubitable intuition. They may know, but their knowledge is not in a transmissible form. Heindel firmly states that our duty is to “give a reason for the faith” which is within us, as St. Paul exhorts us to do (*TI* 34).

Christ’s injunction to His disciples was to preach the Gospel and to heal the sick. This, not surprisingly, is also the Rosicrucian Fellowship’s mission. The teachings of occult Christianity could have been given without a permanent location, but the Fellowship’s healing mission required an actual site for a healing Temple, a Healing Department, and, at least as originally conceived and used for a period of time, a healing facility, called the Sanitarium, which opened in 1939. Heindel enunciated occult principles of healing in many forms, including books, lectures, and letters. He knew that the Rosicrucian Teachings themselves have a salutary effect on those who try to understand and use them. “The study of the highest philosophy will always tend to better one’s health because...the more we know, the better we are able to cope with all conditions” (*IQ&A* 286).

Heindel regarded astrology as critical to effective healing. In fact, “this science is the backbone of the teaching” (*Letters to Probationers* 35). Obviously mystics do not teach astrology. Holy mystics, such as some of the saints of the Catholic Church, possessed healing powers, but these were gifts of the Holy Spirit and were not the result of the systematic application of physical sciences and occult principles. Heindel believed that “all methods of healing are adequate only to the degree that they take into consideration the stellar harmonics



Both the occult and mystic paths of initiation transmute the unused sexual energies by raising them through the head and heart, respectively, resulting in the ability to speak the creative word, symbolized by the trumpets. The Rosicrucian initiation aims to balance the head and heart paths, as shown by the heart within the winged (etheric) sign for mental Mercury.

and discords expressed in the wheel of life—the horoscope” (*TI* 159). The Rosicrucian system of healing is based on “a knowledge of the planetary disharmonies which cause disease and the correcting influence” (*TI* 160).

For Heindel knowledge is absolutely therapeutic. The imperative in the old mystery schools to “Know Thyself” is the Rosicrucian student’s first priority. Knowledge and health are intimately related: “Disease is a manifestation of ignorance, the only sin, and healing is a demonstration of applied knowledge, which is the only salvation” (*TI* 131-132). These are categorical terms!

Heindel’s enthusiasm for astrology knows no bounds. It “helps as nothing else can in the development” of the supreme virtue of love (*RM* 61). This is certainly not a sentiment or proposition

advanced by a mystic. Astrology teaches understanding and understanding promotes fellow feeling and forgiveness, as in “to know all is to forgive all.” While the material astronomer regards the zodiacal constellations as aggregates of chemical elements, “to the occultist the twelve signs [star clusters] of the zodiac are the visible vehicle of the twelve Creative Hierarchies” (*RCL* 170). Ordinary humanity directs prayers to God which “at the present time are mostly selfish and ignorant.” If they are answered, it is generally by invisible helpers. The “occult astrologer, however...addresses the ambassadors of the star-Angels directly and obtains his desires more easily” (*IQ&A* 324).

We are now in a position to conclude our study of Heindel’s thought relative to his own mystic and occult tendencies and his writing on these two life orientations. That both are vital approaches to the one Reality is shown by the Rosicrucian symbolism that is depicted on the cover of most editions of Heindel’s books published by the Fellowship. The two streams of evolving humanity are designated by the lamp and the heart. The creative power of the occultist ascends directly to the head where the intellect is developed. The creative force of the mystic ascends through the heart. The head path is considered positive (nine rays issue from the lamp) and masculine (right side), while the heart path is negative (the heart is shown emanating eight rays) and feminine.

The union of the head and heart signify the Perfect Man (Human) and it is the ideal of the Rosicrucian Fellowship, as it is the purpose of Heindel’s central work, the *Cosmo* (18), to promote this union. Even so, its author stated that the publication of this book “marked a new era in so-called ‘occult’ literature” (*RM* 11). And the Fellowship teachings are preponderantly occult, intended for the intellectual needs of the Mercury (hermetic)-oriented seeker after wisdom. While the *Cosmo* is not “the ultimate of occult knowledge” (*Cosmo* 8), it is the most comprehensive volume of occult knowledge specifically formulated for the developmental needs of Western humanity. Heindel himself sets the keynote by defining “the first and central requisite the aspirant to occult knowledge must possess—an unswerving desire, a

burning thirst for knowledge” (*Cosmo* 22). This burning thirst characterized the author’s own quest for the teachings embodied in the *Cosmo*. However, “the supreme motive for seeking this occult knowledge must be an ardent desire to benefit humanity” (22).

The *Cosmo* is “only for the [then—1910] few” who have “freed their minds from the shackles of orthodox science and religion” and are ready to accept its truth “until they have proven it wrong” (*RCC* 514). Those who free their minds in pursuit of truth will find it, and that truth will make them free. For it teaches them “how to escape [all forms of] restraint by mastering self” (*TI* 143).

For the occultist, it is not enough to say, as does the mystic, that he believes. He must *know*, and he will know—“there can be no question” (*Cosmo* 47). When Carl Jung was asked why he believed in the human soul, he replied, “I don’t believe, I know.” The occult path is often characterized as cold and heartless. Yet most who pursue it sooner or later realize that they are seeking to fulfill the First Commandment of the Christ—to love the Lord God with all their mind. The mind is given humanity to know the deep secrets of God and in so doing to better give God glory. Knowledge may puff up—if it is personal knowledge. But wisdom, by its very nature, is mind identified with living truth. It is soulful participation in the being of celestial Beings, who are expressions of the “thoughts” of God. As Max Heindel writes: “Wisdom, wisdom everywhere! So grand, so great that one who looks with an observant eye is filled with amazement and reverence” (*Cosmo* 79).

While mystics obtain their clairvoyant faculty as a gift from Jehovah, “trained occultists” acquire their extrasensory powers “by their own will” (*RM* 74). Speaking of his fellow occultists, Heindel writes “self-mastery is our goal, and not mastery over others” (*RM* 74). This is the motto of the ethical occultist.

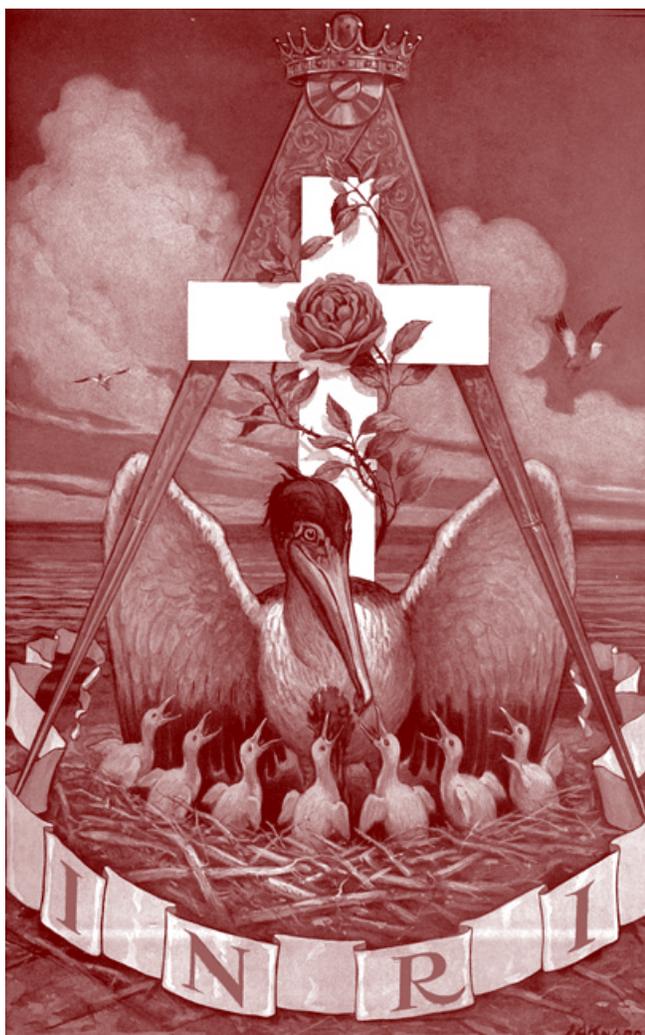
The mystic is a poet. He lives and comprehends intuitively, unmediated by sequential reasoning. He knows analogically, in a fell swoop. The archetypal mystic bypasses the Holy Spirit and on Seraphim wings flies directly to the heart of God, to the center of universal Love abiding in the World of Life

Spirit. At the same time, the mystic path is fraught with its own perils. Since the heart-based aspirant is steeped in emotions and is both subject to great temptations and, lacking in knowledge, he is prey to every kind of illusion and deception.

The mystic ignores and even seeks to escape the conscious personal self, which attempt often results in his becoming more (not less) involved in subjectivity. He may also try to dissociate himself from the dense physical body through various ascetic practices in an after-echo of his mystic Eastern brothers. But the occultist subdues and uses the personal self as a tool. Self-mastery is his goal, not self-cancellation (*Cosmo* 273).

It was Fellowship practice during Heindel's tenure to hold weekday classes for intellectual nourishment and Sunday evening addresses devoted to the heart's development through ardent exhortations, which were meant to apply to the speaker as well as his listeners. In other words, Heindel's vehemence on certain points stemmed from their personal relevance to his own experiences—be it Eastern breathing methods (he tried them); to the evils of a carnivorous diet (he partook of meat until his mid-thirties); to conservation of the sex force (which up to a crisis point of radical conversion, again in his mid-thirties, he did not observe).

Heindel was a man of action. His actions were informed by what he knew, and he suffered from what he didn't know. The need to know, first-hand, was a driving force in his life. He was a pioneer, an explorer; he needed to get to the heart of a matter, to master a skill (be it printing, navigation, or mechanics); to know the principle behind the manifestation—be it gravity, electricity, harmonics, the physics of light and color, crystallography, cryogenics, etc. After all, he was a self-confessed spiritual son of Lucifer, Cain, and Hiram Abiff. He was an epigeneticist, a creator. For him it did not suffice to have Solomon's wisdom that can draw the blueprint, conceive the archetype for the Temple, but cannot build it with earthly materials. For *that* the wisdom of Solomon had, reluctantly, to defer to the practical expertise, the "masonic" experience, of Hiram, the master builder, the architecton. There is, in other words, a wisdom that is not from above, that does not pre-exist but must be



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The Jewel of the Rose Croix

The pelican, wounding itself to feed its young, symbolizes: (1) the Solar Christ whose light rays "feed" the seven planets, and (2) the Incarnate Christ, whose blood redeems sevenfold (by planetary Ray) humanity. In Masonic symbolism the pelican's blood stands for the secret Work by which man is raised from the slavery of ignorance to the freedom of wisdom.

generated by applying knowledge to human experience in the physical world. The striving to know is not an end but a means to do better, and to do and be better for others. Here the heart directs the action; it is not a doing for self.

In view of the foregoing observations it may have occurred to many readers of this study that Max Heindel and St. Paul have more than a little in common, including: a radical conversion to the Christian occult path; an intense desire and a tireless zeal to serve the Lord Christ; the attainment of initiate status; the compelling need to bring the

esoteric truth of the Gospel to as many people as possible; and the commitment to making manifest “the mystery which hath been hid from the ages and from generations...which is Christ in you” (Col 1:26-28). The old man is to be “renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him: where...Christ is all, and in all” (Col 3:9-11).

Paul sought to make public his own special knowledge in a clear manner that appealed to reason. He was disseminating a new teaching; so was Max Heindel. Since many others were issuing teachings purporting to be true, Paul adjured his listeners to “prove all things and hold fast to that which is good.” These very words enveloped the text of the *Cosmo*’s first two editions: “Prove all things” was placed as an epigraph and “hold fast...” functioned as a postscript.

One can prove the Teachings, both Paul’s and Heindel’s, because they are logical, even if they are occult. In other words, according to the world’s thinking, they may be foolishness, but as esoteric doctrine, they are wise. Through his occult transmissions, Heindel made possible the fulfillment of the words “It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven” (Matt 13:11). Like Paul he would say “I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery” (Rom 11:25).

The frequency with which the two terms *occult* and *mystic* are used in Heindel’s complete opus may be seen to fairly reflect the emphasis he placed on the twin aims of the Fellowship and its Teachings, and, indirectly, the Rosicrucian Order itself, as they pertain to the head and heart involvement in spiritual development. Simply from the quantitative point of view, the overwhelming emphasis in Heindel’s writing is on knowledge intended for implementation—on working truths. The Teachings are a form of spiritual pragmatism. Occult knowledge can be shared and disseminated. Mysticism cannot, not directly, except in figurative and evocative forms such as poetry, myth, paint-

ing, and music. This does not diminish the importance of the mystic venture. But its light is obscured to others who want to participate in the mystic experience. While the heart’s wisdom and the mind’s clear knowing are both essential for fully developed spirituality, in the Aryan Epoch emphasis is placed on the cultivation of reason and the unfolding of the mind’s potential, which is directed toward the attainment of uttering the Creative Word.

The Rosicrucian Teachings are particularly earmarked for the disaffected thinker, the rationalist beleaguered by the meager offerings of theoretical materialism. When the alienated mind is re-engaged and opened to the cosmic truths enunciated

in Western Wisdom Teachings, the uncommitted heart may also be engaged and a working love for all creation will manifest as the spontaneous desire to improve the lot and advance the cause, through Christ, of the four life waves evolving on Earth.

The Aquarian Age, of which the Rosicrucian Fellowship is the herald, “will bring out all the intellectual and spiritual

potencies in man which are symbolized by that sign” (*RM* 12). The watery Piscean mysticism will be increasingly supplanted by the objective occultism of Aquarius. Impersonal love will succeed a love at once sacrificial and intensely subjective. Love is not a feeling, as commonly understood. Feelings are not reliable guides to truth and certainty. “Pythagoras demanded that his pupils study mathematics because he knew the value of raising their minds above the sphere of feeling, where it is subject to delusion, and elevating it toward the Region of Abstract Thought, which is the prime reality” (*RM* 83).

When the mind is trained in abstract thought it is elevated “above the sordid things of concrete existence, helping the imagination to soar beyond the hampering toils of self-interest” (*Cosmo* 202). The Region of Abstract Thought is “beyond the influence of Feeling and the mind is directed upward towards the spiritual realms and liberation” (*ibid*).

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“[T]he twin feelings, interest and indifference, obscure the Truth and bias us....[Therefore] remembering that logic is the best teacher in any world, it is certain that the individual who succeeds in entering into the superphysical World by means of such studies in abstract Thought, will not become confused, but will be able to give a good account of himself under all circumstances” (*Cosmo* 203-4).

In answering a student’s question, Heindel wrote that “it is necessary to be an occultist to...study... the unexplained [mysterious] laws of nature and the powers latent in man. Therefore, the Rosicrucians recommend that all thoughts be centered upon living such a life and practicing such exercises as will develop the latent powers in each pupil so that he may see and know the invisible worlds whence came the causes we see manifested here” (*IQ&A* 359). Here is an explicit statement describing the Rosicrucian path, which is in some ways opposite from the mystic path, for it is a path of knowledge, ensouled knowledge. When the Rosicrucian student “has become capable of reaching the consciousness of the inner worlds,” he attains to at least a partial realization of the mystic’s goal, for “the unity of life” is seen by him as a fact, as is universal brotherhood (*ibid*).

In *Mysteries of the Great Operas*, Heindel explains that modes of artistic expression, including myths and allegorical pictures, work on the human subconscious. “Particularly in Europe, we find still the atmosphere of mysticism brooding over the land. There, people love the ancient myths which speak to them in a manner incomprehensible to the Westerner” (73). We recall that the Elder Brother told Max Heindel that he would want to rewrite the *Cosmo* once he left the mystical environment of eastern Germany and re-entered the United States. Indeed, “in the etheric atmosphere of the Pacific Coast these mythical pictures have almost faded away” (73). The intellectual needs of the contemporary Western human who aspires to higher knowledge are best served by the logical presentation of occult truths. Mystical truths are obscure, impressionistic, allusive, and virtually antithetical to scientific formulations, whether they refer to visible or superphysical reality.

There are those who feel that the explanation of a thing demeans or destroys that thing. Many people do not believe that the deep longings of their souls can be answered by anything that can be clearly understood. Their convictions lead them to conclude that beside what can be known in the world there must always be something that defies cognition. While in absolute terms this feeling may have some merit, it acts as a deterrent and impels the “subjectivist” to reject what is known by occult scientists as irrelevant, misleading, or sinister. Occult science is not a “hidden” science but one whose object of inquiry is concealed. It is a science of *revealed* mysteries, and therefore a systematic body of knowledge of the supersensible worlds. As Heindel writes, “It is thought that moves everything, and when we look upon the hidden or occult side of effects, we get a far deeper understanding of causes” (*TI* 195).

Let us recapitulate our study by quoting a key passage from the *Cosmo*: “The Rosicrucian Order was started particularly for those whose high degree of intellectual development caused them to repudiate the heart. Intellect imperiously demands a logical explanation of everything—the world mystery, the questions of life and death. The reasons for and the *modus operandi* of existence were not explained by the priestly injunction not to seek to know the mysteries of God” (439). To this priestly injunction the mystic is obedient. Not so the occultist. The world mystery will be resolved. The reasons for existence will be explained. The intellect will find answers, occult answers, to its questions. The Rosicrucian Order has made this possible, this occult revelation—and more, has advanced the ability to prove the truth of these occult facts by providing exercises and describing a way of living that enable the student to enter the spiritual worlds at the earliest time in their development consonant with safety.

In conclusion, knowledge, as desirable, indeed essential, as it may be, is not the Rosicrucian student’s final goal. Rather does higher knowledge fit the student to better serve his or her spiritual Self, to further the well-being of others, and to fulfill the Father’s will through Christ. □

—C.W.