

A Sacred Marriage. Hierogamy in the Most Hermetic Art, from Alchemy to *The Sacrifice*, by Andrei Tarkovsky

Roger Ferrer Ventosa¹

Recibido: 20 de septiembre de 2021 / Aceptado: 28 de diciembre de 2021 / Publicado: 1 de marzo de 2022

Abstract. Many cosmogonies see the creation as a hierogamy, a non-dualist cosmogonic mytheme. It can also be found in alchemical engraving books, used in reference to one of the stages of the process, represented in iconography. In that phase, a woman and a man have sexual intercourse, like in the *Rosarium Philosophorum*. This iconographic type portrays a non-dual worldview, according to which the world needs to link both primary poles. This is achieved with resources inherent to visual art. Alchemy stands out as one of the few currents with a strong non-dual factor in Western schools. Subsequent artists were influenced by this iconography and the ideas represented in it, such as William Blake and surrealists like Leonora Carrington. It is also relevant as one of the most predominant motifs in the style of Andrei Tarkovsky, omnipresent in his work. It is in his last film, *The Sacrifice*, in which the alchemical universe is most present. In this film, the world is threatened by an apocalyptic Third World War, but a sexual ritual perhaps might reverse the crisis.

Keywords: Hierogamy; Alchemy; William Blake; Surrealism; Andrei Tarkovsky.

[es] El matrimonio sagrado. La hierogamia en el arte más hermético, de la alquimia a *Sacrificio* de Andréi Tarkovski

Resumen. Muchas cosmogonías explican la creación como una hierogamia, mitema cosmogónico no dualista. También aparece en los libros de grabados de alquimia para referirse a una de las fases del proceso, plasmada en un tipo iconográfico, en el que una mujer y un hombre tienen relaciones sexuales, como en el *Rosarium philosophorum*. Con dicho tipo se presenta una cosmovisión no dual, según la cual el mundo requiere de poner en una relación a los dos polos primordiales, algo que se logra con los recursos propios de las artes visuales. La alquimia destaca como una de las pocas corrientes con un fuerte componente no dual en el pensamiento de Occidente. Artistas posteriores fueron influidos por este tipo iconográfico y las ideas que vehicula, como William Blake o surrealistas como Leonora Carrington. Destaca igualmente como uno de los motivos predilectos en el estilo del cineasta Andréi Tarkovski, reiterado en varias de sus obras. En la última, *Sacrificio*, es donde el director se halla más cercano al universo alquímico. En esta película, el mundo vive una amenaza de III Guerra Mundial apocalíptica, pero un ritual sexual tal vez logre invertir la crisis.

Palabras clave: Hierogamia; Alquimia; William Blake; Surrealismo; Andréi Tarkovski

Summary. 1. Introduction. 2. The Tantric Union. 3. The Alchemical *Coniunctio*. 4. Subsequent Homunculi in the Matress of European Art. 5. A Levitating Love that Transfigures the World. 6. Conclusions. 7. Written sources and bibliographical references.

How to cite: Ferrer Ventosa, R. "A Sacred Marriage. Hierogamy in the Most Hermetic Art, from Alchemy to *The Sacrifice*, by Andrei Tarkovsky". *Eikón Imago* 11 (2022), 233-243.

1. Introduction

The cosmogonies of many myths share a mytheme in which two opposing principles or gods unite to create life or the world. The intention here is to analyse the visual representation of the theme of sacred marriage, expressed in different types of iconographies, above all in Europe, but without overlooking its Asian origins, in

a structuralist journey through the iconographic type of a couple making love, a type and theme that possess a metaphysical meaning.

The sacred marriage was a concept widely used in religious and anthropological studies at the end of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century, especially owing to the influence of James Frazer and his seminal *The Golden Bough* (1922). With

¹ Univeritat de Barcelona. This article has been carried out thanks to the support of the Spanish Ministerio de Universidades and the NextGenerationEU.

E-mail: roger.ferrer@udg.edu

ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2568-1271>

his theory, he contended that magical-religious rituals in which the king and queen of the forest, the gods or divine beings under other names, both embodied by humans or only one of them in person and the other in effigy or variants, sexually united to promote fertility, had been celebrated the world over². For example, he notes, “Thus the custom of marrying gods either to images or to human beings was widespread among the nations of antiquity”³. Yet, that theory has been debunked or qualified in recent years, although that is an academic debate that goes beyond the scope of this analysis.

The presence of hierogamy in so many religions, or spiritual movements, led Jung to assert that “we seldom find a high point of religious feeling where this eternal image of the royal marriage does not appear”⁴. For psychoanalysis, it essentially implies the union of the spirit with the soul and the latter with the body. The moral and mental beings combine in this unity in which one’s own shadow becomes the best master⁵.

In mystical love, understood in the non-dual sense, the specialist in comparing religions Jeffrey Kripal observes two variants. Firstly, the immanent in which the lover merges with his beloved, on which the expert in Sufism Henry Corbin remarked, “When the lover has become the very substance of love, there is no longer any opposition between subject and object, between the lover and the beloved. That is the metamorphosis of the subject expressed by the Neoplatonic identity of love, lover and beloved, and that is the divine form of love”⁶. As to the second variant, Kripal calls it “transcendent in which the lover is wounded or even ritually killed by the beloved, with the idea of submission and sacrifice”⁷. Both possibilities can be detected in the alchemical literature, with its king and queen who must die and their union in search of the primordial force.

The hierogamic religious idea is one of the aspects linked to European esotericism and mysticism, the former relating to ceremonial magic and the practice of sexual magic, and the latter to the drawing of parallels between the divine and the human and sexuality. At any rate, the sacred marriage was a precise iconographic type in the visual lexicon of alchemy, as will be seen, which has since spawned most of the art susceptible to magical thought, mysticism and theological heterodoxies.

The aim of this paper is to analyse how this type of alchemical iconography has developed for conveying non-dual ideas, since what is especially interesting about this topic is its meaning as a thematic and visual

expression of non-duality. Accordingly, the presentation that follows revolves around that theme and type and their structural analysis, while discussing creators with a sensitivity for the metaphysical who employed them in different ages. To this end, it will be necessary to touch briefly on Asian art, since in the East non-dualism carries a lot more weight, with Taoism in China, the Advaita Vedānta school in India and Tantrism in India and Tibet, before offering a number of examples in which the topic is presented visually for purposes very similar to those of European alchemy, but in the field of Tibetan Buddhism and Tantrism.

An important part of the analysis will be devoted to hierogamy in order to explain alchemical concepts, studying both its use in the lexicon of alchemical engraving books and its influence on both subsequent art and on Hermetic artists inspired by that cultural horizon, including William Blake and the surrealists. To end with, another twentieth-century author, Andrei Tarkovsky, will be discussed. Very much attracted to the supernatural, the spiritual and occultism, the Russian filmmaker also expressed the theme in a film adaptation of the iconographic type, with a scene of levitating love which is repeated in his symbolic lexicon, while recuperating intuitions very similar to the alchemical type to refer to the necessary union between opposites for regenerating life.

2. The Tantric union

To metamorphose the metaphysical idea that the two essential principles of cosmic dualism operate in relation to each other, there is an iconographic type with a huge visual potential in Tantrism as a whole. The mystical experience of the union between the feminine and masculine principles is reached through visualisation and meditation in a sublime *maithuna* (a mystical sexual union). In this motif, the god and the goddess copulate while expressing passionate states or vices, so as to atone for their desires⁸. The purpose of this representation is to stimulate meditation in relation to the pairs of opposites experienced during mundane experience.

The theme is very frequently found in Tibetan Buddhist art in an iconographic type that represents that *maithuna* between gods (Fig. 1), depicted in the midst of the sexual act, with figures that occasionally possess a great formal beauty and also an enormous complexity of meaning. Indeed, it stands out as one of the favourite iconographic types in Tibetan Buddhist art, with the possibility of visually depicting different gods and goddesses. It emphatically reflects the relationship between the two apparent opposites. Could this be visualised in a more compelling and effective manner? In any case, it is a striking way of representing this religious idea, in comparison with other world religions.

² James G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough. A Study in Magic and Religion* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK Frazer, 1990), 139-146.

³ Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 143.

⁴ Carl Gustav Jung, *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, vol. 14 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 166.

⁵ Jung, *The Collected Works...*, 470ff.

⁶ Henry Corbin, *The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism* (New Lebanon: Omega Publications, 1994), 88-89.

⁷ Jeffrey Kripal, *Roads of Excess, Palaces of Wisdom. Eroticism & Reflexivity in the Study of Mysticism* (Chicago / London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), 10.

⁸ Mircea Eliade, *Técnicas del yoga* (Barcelona: Kairós, 2008), 175-183. On the quest for a non-dual sexuality in the Tantra that does not separate the body from the spirit, see Kripal, *Roads of Excess*, 101. Jung also noted the union of the god and goddess in the Tantra (Jung, *The Collected Works...*, 405). They can be both Tibetan gods and the god Shiva who joins with the goddess Shakti in Tantrism and in the Hindu Shivaism and Shaktism.



Figure 1. Statuette of the god Vajradhara with his consort, anonymous, fifteenth century. Source: Courtesy of The Met Museum: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/460573>.

The type reflects something similar to the Taoist supreme polarity diagram or *yin-yang*, albeit in a much more figurative fashion. In that religion, with special historical relevance in China and Korea, *yin* intervenes as the feminine, the humid, the dark, the north face of the mountain, while *yang* does so as the masculine, the dry, the luminous, the south face of the mountain⁹. The idea of two complementary forces even involves the soul: one is *shen*, the breath going out, the *yang* soul, which is transformed into a bright light when a person dies; and the other soul, the *yin*, is *kuei*, which returns to the Earth when a person dies; this last soul links a person to his ancestors, who in turn are *kuei*. Magical invisible beings that, as with statues, possess both souls¹⁰.

The maximum duality of the supreme polarity diagram cannot be denied, but those dual forces unite in a whole. Moreover, a part of the *yang* in the heart of the *yin*, and vice versa, is located in what is supposed to be a total break with duality: the passive is present in the active and the other way round. In addition, the diagram evinces the intrinsic ambiguity of so many ancestral languages: the Chinese character *Jing*, the origin of the *yin*, signified both light and shade.

3. The alchemical *coniunctio*

Albeit in a much more sporadic way, there are also examples of non-dual *forma mentis* in Europe, above all in the esoteric heterodox currents, influenced by pre-Socratic philosophy, Neoplatonism, Alexandrian Hermeti-

cism and apophatic mysticism. This occultist ‘Hermeticism’ would form a subterranean vein in most European thought. As to hierogamy, in European cultures there are many examples among the Greek gods, the Roman pantheon and the Nordic deities, among many others. Indeed, the term refers to Greek hierogamy par excellence, that which unites Hera with Zeus¹¹. It was also often used in Christian mysticism to refer to the union of the Christian soul with God, as in the case of St John of the Cross.

Be that as it may, the focus will be placed here not on those but on the cultural frame of alchemical engraving books, since the Tantric *maithuna* reappears as an iconographic type to express the *coniunctio*, a stage of alchemy. In that cultural horizon, the theme is also, formally speaking, very important, with the same non-dual meaning of uniting a pair of opposites in a relationship, sulphur and mercury in the case of alchemy.

Klossowski de Rola already correctly associated Tantrism with alchemy. Clear parallels can be drawn between the two, despite the fact that he recommended caution when charting them: ‘The open-minded will find a certain profit in the study of the analogies between alchemy and the Tantras (both Hindu and Buddhist)’¹². In European cultures with a strong Greek influence, *hieros gamos*, sacred marriage, has called that *maithuna* syzygy, yoked, which unites opposites.

In an allegorical interpretation, the scholar on magic Eliphas Lévi, fundamental for establishing the beginnings of nineteenth-century occultism, considered that the alchemical quintessence corresponded to ‘the equilibrating centre of the two-fold polarity’¹³, perhaps the androgynous son of the king and the queen in the alchemical lexicon. Therefore, he was already making a non-dual interpretation, like that defended here. In point of fact, some of the most famous adagios of the practice are plainly non-dual: that which is above is like that which is below or it is necessary to materialise the spirit and spiritualise matter, the alchemical *coincidentia oppositorum* of the complementary, the two principles that are therefore integrated into the set of interrelations.

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, alchemical literature was well received by readers, insofar as it was a highly respected science among both intellectual and popular audiences. The spotlight will be placed here on alchemy books containing emblems. Emblematics is a part iconic, part textual –also called logoiconic– cultural phenomenon in which two codes operate: the iconic code and the linguistic code, as images were frequently accompanied by sayings or proverbs, catering

¹¹ Aphrodite A. Avagianou, ‘*Hieros Gamos* in Ancient Greek Religion: The Human Aspect of a Sacralized Ritual’, in *Sacred Marriages. The Divine-Human Sexual Metaphor from Sumer to Early Christianity*, ed M. Nissinen M.; & R. Uro (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 158ff.

¹² Stanislas Klossowski de Rola, *Alchemy. The Secret Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), 17. In the same vein: Nadia Choucha, *Surrealism & the Occult* (Oxford: Mandrake, 2015), 104-106. Françoise Bonardel, « L’alchimie. La philosophie “par le feu” », in *20 clés pour comprendre l’ésotérisme*, A. Faivre; F. Bonardel [et altri] (Paris: Albin Michel, 2013), 55-62.

¹³ Eliphas Lévi, *The Mysteries of Magic* (London: George Redway, 1886), 212.

⁹ Jung, *The Collected Works...*, 470.

¹⁰ Ioan Petru Couliano, *Out of this World. Otherworldly Journeys from Gilgamesh to Albert Einstein* (Boston: Shambhala, 1991), 74ff.

to cultured audiences¹⁴. Alchemical engraving books are large compendiums of visual forms that, among other things, represent non-dualism as no other Western representative group has done. For this reason, the ideas expressed are not only conveyed through verbal discourse, but also through a visual one. With these alchemical engraving books, which experienced their heyday from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century, the adherents of the science of Hermes shared their knowledge, as visible as its meaning was veiled.

There are many references to non-dual cosmic metaphysics in visual alchemical grammar. For instance, the representation of an ouroboros formed by two dragons, one winged and the other wingless, can be found in works such as Abraham Eleazar's *Uraltes chymisches Werk*, which includes an eighteenth-century (1760) engraving (Fig. 2).



Figure 2. A. Eleazar, *Uraltes chymisches Werk*, 1760, p. 285. Source: Courtesy of the Foundation of the Works of C.G. Jung: <https://www.e-rara.ch/cgj/content/zoom/1476343>.

Another non-dual symbol in the alchemical baggage is to be found in Emblem XLVII of *Atalanta Fugiens* (1617), depicting a fight between a dog and a wolf, an emblem borrowed from Arab sources, which also included a motto according to which the wolf comes from the East, while the dog originates from the West¹⁵. The struggle of dualism has to be transformed into a non-dual relationship.

Another alchemical iconographic type reflecting non-dualism consists of two opposing dragons, one white and the other black, the former winged and the latter wingless, in reference to the volatile and the fixed. Both are essential for spiritualising matter and for em-

bodying the spirit, *solve et coagula*, to dissolve the body and to coagulate the spirit¹⁶.

An image of the fifteenth-century manuscript *Aurora consurgens* illustrates that idea (Fig. 3), although to this end it resorts to a lion and a griffon, a hybrid between an eagle and a lion, a reference to the mercury of the griffon (due to its dual nature) and to the sulphur of the lion, which is a matter of course in this symbolic corpus. Riding them, the brother Apollo confronts the sister Diana, both as in the *yin-yang*, incorporating elements of their opposite: the sun on the shield of selenic Diana and the moon on that of Apollo. Additionally, there is an evident colour play in the same sense.



Figure 3. Anonymous, *Aurora consurgens*, fifteenth century. Source: Wikipedia.

Of all the different iconographic types that depict non-dual ideas in the alchemical cultural context, the focus will be placed here on the adaptation of the sacred marriage or hierogamy, which is central to its practice, to its horizon. The characters involved can vary greatly: a king and a queen or Apollo and Artemis¹⁷, as in Urbigerus' *Aphorismi urbigerani* (1690), or Hermes and Venus, as in Emblem XXXVIII of M. Maier's *Atalanta Fugiens* (1617), who are celebrating a wedding (Fig. 4). This emblem, in fact, features both the sacred marriage and the androgyne or hermaphrodite, a figure that appears above the couple, a non-dual character par excellence and the central figure in another iconographic type for expressing that cosmic-theological notion¹⁸.

The *Atalanta Fugiens*, in which this emblem appears, stands out among alchemical books. It was published in 1617 by Theodor de Bry, one of the most active editors in Europe at the time. Thanks to the work of the engravers and the elegant combination of additional images and musical fugues, plus Maier's commentaries, it is one of the most outstanding works on the subject.

¹⁶ Klossowski de Rola, *Alchemy. The Secret Art*, 16-17.

¹⁴ Fernando R. Flor, *Emblemas. Lecturas de la imagen simbólica* (Madrid: Alianza editorial, 1995), 22. Carlo Ginzburg, *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 64ff.

¹⁵ Laurinda S. Dixon, & Petra Ten-Doesschate Chu, "An Iconographical Riddle: Gerbrandt van den Eeckhout's Royal Repast in the Liechtenstein Princely Collections", *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 71, no. 4 (1989): 623.

¹⁷ Marriage between siblings is a platitude in many cultures, such as those of Iran, Greece, the Jews and India, among others: Raimon Panikkar, *Mite, simbol, culte* (Barcelona: Fragmenta, 2009), 49-50, n. 14 and 15. In the Indian myth of Yami and Yama of the Hindu *Rig Veda*, she makes sexual advances towards her bother, who rejects her: Panikkar, *Mite, simbol, culte*, 253-263.

¹⁸ Roger Ferrer-Ventosa, "Andrógino: una persona no dual. Representaciones en el arte y la alquimia", *Revista Goya*, no. 377 (2021).

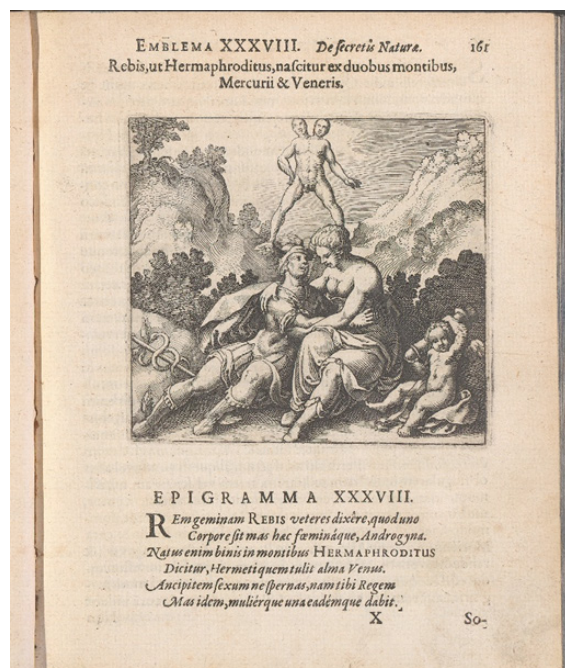


Figure 4. M. Maier, *Atalanta Fugiens*, 1617. Emblem XXXVIII. Source: Courtesy of the Foundation of the Works of C.G. Jung: <https://www.e-rara.ch/cg/content/zoom/1906140>.

Another of the masterpieces of emblem books of this type, featuring non-dual alchemical imagery, is the *Rosarium Philosophorum*, of which there are several editions. The *Rosebush of the Philosophers* established a reference model within the genre. In the version published in Frankfurt in 1550 (Fig. 5), the process is visually described with one of the iconic images of alchemy, one of its favourite types, around which this analysis revolves: the copulation between the king and the queen (*coniunctio*), a motif which, as already noted, is one of the most frequently used in Tibetan Buddhist art, together with the *maithuna*, in that case the sexual amorous embrace between gods; something that is also to be found in the context of the alchemical Great Work¹⁹. It is a type of which there are already examples as of at least 1300, but which was ultimately popularised in the aforementioned *Rosarium Philosophorum*, given its success.

The real marriage between the *sponsus* and the *sponsa* symbolises the two poles of energy necessary for any creation, described as if they were the two poles of electricity, positive and negative, without these terms having any moral connotations²⁰, and the cooperation between both that gives rise to the androgyne and its integrating nature. The wedding of the divine or royal *sponsus* and *sponsa* is the reason behind the seven mythical days that elapse in Christian Rosenkreutz's *The Chymical Wedding* (1616), a legendary text that, along with others, gave cause for Rosicrucian fraternity.

In the chemical wedding, the supreme union between the two main opposites takes place, the ultimate goal of the process of transmutation²¹, a symbolic wedding between the king and the queen, sulphur and mercury, the sun and the moon, described by Burckhardt as the principal symbol of the practice; it would ultimately be the wedding of the spirit –in the sense of the divine universal essence– and the individual soul, according to the thesis defended by him²².

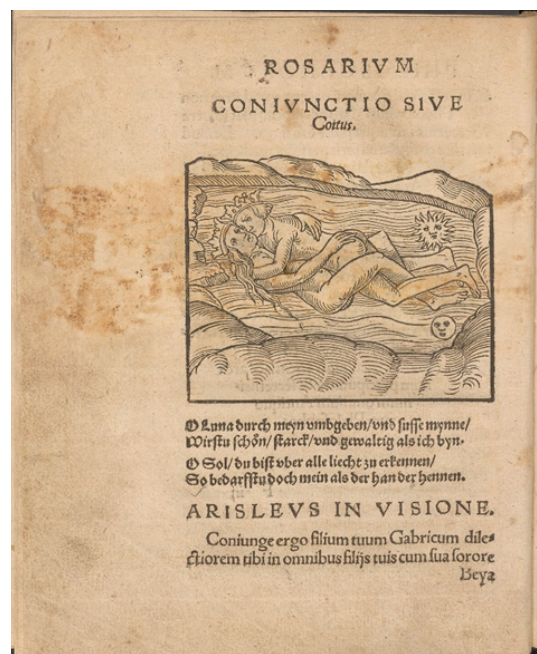


Figure 5. Anonymous. *Rosarium Philosophorum*, 'Coniunctio', 1550. Source: Courtesy of the Foundation of the Works of C.G. Jung: <https://www.e-rara.ch/cg/content/zoom/3179425>.

Therefore, the two principles essential to the Great Work are united: sulphur and mercury and their combination in the androgyne²³, a veiled meaning in the symbolism of the figures of the king and the queen or the sun and the moon. It is to that *mysterium conjunctionis* that these engravings are referring, which portray the conjunction of the two vital tendencies that, complemented, lead to the obtaining of the philosopher's stone.

Those elements intervene in complementary opposites; sulphur, an active substance, warm, dry and masculine; whereas mercury is the other key element, passive, cold, humid and feminine²⁴, to which Paracelsus would then add salt. In another sense focusing on metals, but just as symbolic, combustion and coloration are embodied in sulphur, therefore, the impurity of those metals, while mercury represents the

¹⁹ Jung, *The Collected Works...*, 92.

²⁰ Titus Burckhardt, *Alchemy. Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1972), 149-156.

²¹ Ferrer-Ventosa, "Andrógino: una persona no dual", 344.

²² Jacques Lenep, *Arte y alquimia. Estudio de la iconografía hermética y de sus influencias* (Madrid: Nacional, 1978), 26; M. E. Warlick, "Fluctuating Identities: Gender Reversals in Alchemical Imagery", in *Art & Alchemy*, ed. J. Wamberg (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2006), 103. Sally Metzler, "Artists, Alchemists and Mannerists in Courtly Prague", in *Art & Alchemy*, ed. J. Wamberg (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2006), 133ff.

¹⁹ Jung, *The Collected Works...*, 457ff; Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Reverie. Childhood, Language, and the Cosmos* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 71 and 75-77.

²⁰ Patrick Harpur, *The Philosophers' Secret Fire* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2003), pos. 3784ff.

opposite, namely, pureness, malleability and lustre. One of the first operations was to create philosophical mercury, a purification achieved by purging sulphur by fire²⁵.

The two active substances, whose tension generates the movements of vital energy, share centre stage in the prints in a story that involves their ‘death’, with their bodies in decomposition; from which the soul emerges, which will then ascend to perfect itself, in the print ‘Impregnatio’. The text reads as follows: ‘Here, the four elements are distributed. The soul then swiftly separates itself from the body’²⁶. Jung summarises this process, which he considers to be ‘the miracle of the coniunctio’²⁷.

As generally occurred in alchemy of that period – but not always in the following one– although referring to some chemical material processes, an analogical-spiritual key should be added, central, for example, to whatever is related or influenced by the Rosicrucian realm. Adepts understood, without the profane grasping the real meaning of the drawings, at least in theory, that the information that they contained served to protect them from the risks of theological dissension. Thus, information symbolised in some or other image –with a prescribed meaning that only adepts understood– was shared and, at the same time, despite being in full view, the Great Work contained occult meanings²⁸, at a time when every precaution had to be taken to avoid ending up in prison (logically, the alleged ability to create gold from another metal was highly appealing) or being burnt at the stake (for the theological implications and the persecution of heterodox currents).

For this reason, and referring to alchemists, Espagnet wrote the following: ‘Philosophers express themselves more freely and more significantly with enigmatic characters and figures [*typis et figuris aenigmaticis*], like a mute discourse, than with words’²⁹. The images with symbols and allegories in these emblems served to explain the conceptual principles of alchemy. Whoever did not know the representative code of the figures could hardly guess their symbolic meanings, which allowed for open and enigmatic meanings.

The Reformation and the Council of Trent and the subsequent Counter-Reformation altered this cultural horizon, even more so during the Thirty Years’ War, which affected the Central European states in particular, where the main engravers of alchemical books plied their trade. This was followed by the gradual spread of a more modest code of representation, which was careful not to depict indecorous nudes with pagan echoes and suspicious

of any theological idea that might seem heterodox. The iconographic type of the spouses in *coniunctio* underwent changes.

In 1622, J. D. Mylius published his *Philosophia reformata* in Frankfurt, in which he recovered images from the *Rosarium Philosophorum* presented in three prints, with a total of 12 images, inspired by them (Fig. 6). Nevertheless, it is clear that something had changed drastically. The king and the queen are depicted chastely in bed, with the sheets covering their chests and a puritanical curtain that is about to descend on the scene.



Figure 6. J. D. Mylius, *Philosophia reformata*, 1622. Image in the top left-hand corner. Source: Courtesy of the Foundation of the Works of C.G. Jung: <https://www.e-rara.ch/cgj/content/zoom/3262223>.

In sum, the marriage between the inferior and the superior, between the spirit and matter, between the sensitive and the intelligible, is a *topos* in the history of culture close to magical thought, even more so in that which is closer to non-dualism, including alchemy, plus the examples that will be described below.

4. Subsequent homunculi in the matress of European art

During the following centuries, other artists addressed the topic of hierogamy, even going so far as to employ iconographic types inherent to alchemy. One of the most cited (and controversial) is Hieronymus Bosch, with his many groups of humans in amorous postures and with even some featuring a heterosexual couple inside something similar to a matress.

Laurinda Dixon had already observed the similarities between the figures of the fountain in the central panel

²⁵ Laurie Dahlberg, “The Material Ethereal. Photography and the Alchemical Ancestor”. In *Art & Alchemy*, ed. J. Wamberg (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2006), 86.

²⁶ In Raimon Arola, *Alquimia y religión. Los símbolos herméticos del siglo XVII* (Madrid: Siruela, 2008), 122.

²⁷ Jung, *The Collected Works...*, 337.

²⁸ Roger Ferrer-Ventosa, “Pensando en imágenes jeroglíficas: de la tradición hermética en el Renacimiento a las vanguardias hasta el arte contemporáneo”, *Arte, individuo y sociedad*, vol. 30, no. 2 (2018): 314ff.

²⁹ In Arola, *Alquimia y religión*, 87.

of *The Garden of Earthly Delights* and the matras in which the sacred marriage occurs (Fig. 7). The artist was probably influenced by engraving books, given the prestige enjoyed at the time by works on alchemy and natural history³⁰; given the date, Hieronymus Bosch would not have had access to the *Rosarium*, but he might have indeed browsed previous examples or other engraving books.

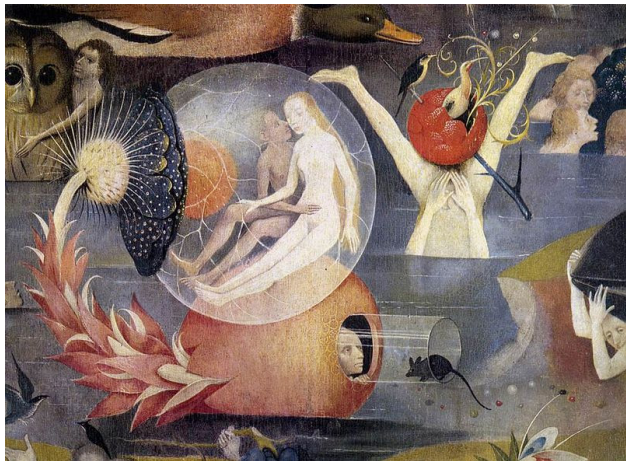


Figure 7. Hieronymus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (detail), 1503. Source: Wikipedia.

The use of the iconographic type and theme prevailed in the following centuries. For instance, in one of his first works, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1793), a sort of version of alchemical hierogamy, William Blake advocates for abandoning the dual code of the two main antagonists, faith and reason, heaven and hell, good and evil, to focus on a hierogamy that follows the core alchemical postulate of *The Emerald Tablet* of uniting the lowest with the highest, a marriage between *yin* and *yang*, with two principles that should be used simultaneously, since the friction between both is highly creative:

Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence.

From these contraries spring what the religious call Good and Evil. Good is the passive that obeys Reason. Evil is the active springing from Energy³¹.

³⁰ Laurinda S. Dixon, "Bosch's Garden of Delights Triptych: Remnants of a 'Fossil' Science", *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 63, no. 1 (1981), 101-102, 113. Also in Pere Salabert, *Spahiros. Geografía del amor y la imaginación* (Barcelona: Laertes, 2005), 41-44.

Curiously enough, so as to explain the possible meaning of the triptych Gómez de Liaño cites elements of Tibetan Buddhism, the *kalachakra* and the Tantric iconographic motif of the gods in the *maithuna* for recommending that a literal interpretation of the central panel of *The Garden of Earthly Delights* should be avoided: Ignacio Gómez de Liaño, «La "Variedad del mundo" o el tríptico de la Creación». In *El Bosco y la tradición pictórica de lo fantástico*, F. Calvo Serraller, I. Bango Torviso [et alii] (Madrid: Galaxia Gutenberg / Circulo de Lectores / Fundación amigos del Museo del Prado, 2006), 209-210. He thus delves into those parallels that have been drawn between both spaces, the Tantric and the alchemical.

³¹ William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (copy in Houghton Library) (London: William Blake, 1790), 3.

Heaven and Hell are two dimensions of the real that do not cancel one another out, expressed in an idea of good and evil that integrates them and does not reject them. In the interpretation of Kathleen Raine, humanity in the Blakean manner encompassed life as a whole, both heaven and hell, reason and energy, darkness and light in a holiness and a whole beyond that which humanity calls good and evil, according to the moral laws of this world³². Being human now implies, to a certain extent, the idea of the diabolical, given that it is the spirit within the flesh, while the angels are disembodied spirits, without their souls being affected by the five senses.

In a way, the first condition of the spirit is precisely Luciferian, because it observes itself outside God, at least at the beginning of conscience³³. Without opposites in conflict and mutually counterbalancing one another, there cannot be any progression. As a matter of fact, this results in creativity. So, it is not a question of subverting values, but of integrating inevitable complementary tensions in order to form a creative whole.

In addition to alchemy, Gary Lachman suggests that the artist might have understood the relevance of the idea of the combination of opposites from the occultist mystic Swedenborg, who in turn might have been influenced by the Cabala³⁴. Other sources in which he might have found inspiration include the mystic Jacob Böhme—also a reference for esotericism—, Neoplatonism, and some of the Hindu classics that Blake had begun to translate in England, such as the *Bhagavad Gita*, to which should be added the influence of Tantric ritual sexuality, from the studies of Orientalists like Edward Moor, one of the first British Indologists, and travellers who explained aspects of the Tantra. Blake gleaned part of this information not only from Swedenborgian circles, but also from his own research and that of his friend George Cumberland³⁵.

These are the reasons why the author not only called one of his first works, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, which has an important bearing on this analysis at hand, but also included the iconographic type of a man and a woman entwined making love on both the cover of this engraving book and in other books of his (Fig. 8).

Since the avant-gardes, this idea has often been expressed more or less explicitly. In one of the many series that one of the pioneers of abstraction, Hilma af Klint, made in a state of inspiration, she reflected alchemical ideas on a conjunction of opposites, although in an even more symbolic way, employing the same representative animal as in these books: the swan, a bird that metamorphoses the stage of *albedo*, purification, in which the *coniunctio* that will unite the opposites occurs. The series has some more figurative works and others that are

³² Kathleen Raine, *Golgonooza. City of Imagination. Last Studies in William Blake* (New York: Lindisfarne Press, 1991), 94.

³³ Jung, *The Collected Works...*, 168-170. On Luciferianism in Blake: Patrick Lepetit, *The Esoteric Secrets of Surrealism. Origins, Magic and Secret Societies* (Rochester / Toronto: Inner Traditions, 2014), 376.

³⁴ Gary Lachman, *A Dark Muse. A History of the Occult* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2005), 19.

³⁵ Marsha Keith Schuchard, "William Blake, George Cumberland, and the Visionary Art of Exotic Erotica", in *Esotericism, Art, and Imagination*, eds. A. Versluis; L. Irwin; J. Richards & M. Weinstein, M. (Minneapolis: New Cultures Press, 2008).

more abstract, the former including the one entitled *The Swan* or No. 17 (1915) ([link](#)). Even though they are not exactly the iconographic type of *coniunctio*, there is indeed a clear allusion to non-dualism or the conjunction of opposites, in this case the subtle with the physical or variations on the theme³⁶. The white has to unite with the black, the spirit with the soul and this with matter, one pole with the other, but instead of using two bodies, she depicts two swans.



Figure 8. William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, cover (copy of 1794).
Source: The William Blake Archive.

Or in surrealism, many of whose authors' works are replete with esoteric references. The cosmic dimension of the alchemical marriage of heaven and hell influenced many of its artists with a knowledge of alchemical engraving books, like, for example, Max Ernst. Non-dual themes also appear in many of Leonora Carrington's paintings, one of which is the late *The Lovers* (1987) ([link](#)), which includes all those cultural references in a clearer way. This painting portrays the sacred marriage of hierogamy of the alchemical tradition which has been described in this section. The two central figures are painted in the two colours that can express this idea, that is, red and blue, but the artist curiously reverses them: the red for the woman and the blue for the bearded man, perhaps due to an influence of the Japanese culture. This is an idea similar to that of the white and black of the supreme polarity diagram of Taoism or *yin-yang*.

³⁶ Anna Maria Svensson, "The Greatness of Things / The Art of Hilma Af Klint" in *Hilma af Klint*, ed. J. Hutchinson (Dublin: The Douglas Hyde Gallery, 2005), 21.

Similarly, there are four elements symbolised by four animals at the foot of the bed: a flying bird, a watery serpent, a terrestrial mammal, perhaps a dromedary, sitting on the floor, and a frisky, yellow solar feline. Furthermore, the microcosmic dimension of the lovers is combined with the macrocosm that can be seen through the opening of the tent, represented by a starry sky.

5. A levitating love that transfigures the world

To conclude this analysis of the sacred marriage that unites the cosmic dualism and thus transfigures the world, as it has been represented in the visual arts, one of the favourite motifs of Andrei Tarkovsky, which appears in several of his films, is a good example: a levitating love that acquires different forms and meanings in each one of those films. Specifically, the accent will be placed here on that scene in relation to his last film, *The Sacrifice*, in which it clearly appears with the meaning of the alchemical iconographic type and theme of hierogamy discussed here.

In his films, Tarkovsky employed both the theme of transfiguring love and a filmic equivalent of the iconographic type of *coniunctio* in his last film, with a love scene in which two entwined bodies levitate. Moreover, there are few filmmakers that have focused their attention on Renaissance art as much as the Russian did, who even converted works of that period into objects of filmic fascination, as in *Solaris* (1972) and *Nostalghia* (1983), with scenes in which the camera scrutinises, mesmerised, paintings of the period.

Tarkovsky has often been described as a filmmaker of ideas. Bykov, an analyst of his oeuvre, referred to him as a cinematographic philosopher who in each film proposed a central theme³⁷. Rafael Llano has also underscored that Tarkovskyan aesthetic inclination towards being a filmmaker of ideas, but not only as a verbal expression of those ideas, but, quite to the contrary, always expressing them by cinematographic means, representing them in the most effective ways offered by the medium³⁸, namely, with visual resources. That of *The Sacrifice* (1986) is expressed in its title. In this case, what is striking is that those ideas are presented with images, appealing not only to an abstract, but also iconic, intellection, more to the mythical than to the logical.

In *The Sacrifice* in particular, the filmmaker reflects on one's sacrifice for the good of all, following criteria full of both religious mysticism and esotericism. He considered himself to be a religious person; he understood art as prayer³⁹, as a spiritual act relating to an inner religiosity⁴⁰. It was not for nothing that he chose a painter of iconostases as the main character of his

³⁷ In Rafael Llano, *Andréi Tarkovsky. Vida y obra. (I)* (Madrid: Mishkin Ediciones, 2017), 320.

³⁸ Llano, *Andréi Tarkovsky. Vida y obra. (I)*, 23.

³⁹ Stuart Minnis, "Andréi Tarkovsky (1932-1986)", in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Film*, ed. E. Mazur (New York: ABC - Clio, 2011), 423.

⁴⁰ Rafael Llano, *Andréi Tarkovsky. Vida y obra. (II)* (Madrid: Mishkin Ediciones), 1143.

second film, *Andrei Rublev* (1966). One of the actors with whom he worked, Banionis who starred in *Solaris*, revealed that the director believed in an unknown force and that he saw mysticism incardinated in the most quotidian issues⁴¹.

As to esotericism in particular, about his interest in the topic, his study of it and its expressions in his films there are as many examples as those relating to religious mysticism. Probing for details in his diaries, he writes about reading books relating to occultism, like those of the anthroposophist Rudolph Steiner⁴², on Indian philosophy, such as a classic by Radhakrishnan⁴³, on the neo-shamanism of the ultra-famous Castaneda, who he rereads and whose book he calls 'marvellous and very true'⁴⁴, or his first experiences of transcendental meditation⁴⁵, following the method of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.

When analysing Tarkovsky's track record, it can be observed that love is one of his favourite themes of reflection, a core notion in his spiritualist worldview, tantamount to understanding it as a redeeming force capable of transfiguring the world, of purifying it. Furthermore, and in a crucial aspect of Tarkovskyan aesthetics, his thoughts on the subject are expressed more through images than through discourses, with a special relevance for his idea that this leads to 'flying', something that already appears in a realistic context in his first film, *Ivan's Childhood* (1962), set in the horrors of the Second World War. The more realistic context signifies that, far removed from a metaphysical perspective, here a man and a woman become acquainted with one another through the army, in the midst of the destruction (Fig. 9). They meet in a forest and hug and kiss on top of a hole, the woman suspended.

There is a similar account of love in *Andrei Rublev*, specifically in its pagan party. It is not the religious institutions that are closer to the divinity, but the people who are closest to nature, and notwithstanding ecclesiastic inflexibility, the locals still celebrate spring and the emergence of life with a magical ceremonial orgy. In terms that seem to be the iconic expression of interpretations of Frazer, the people experience that ritual in a spontaneous way, which links nature to love and this to sexual rites.

In *Solaris*, there are also similar themes and scenes, with the Hari created by Solaris sacrificing herself to help the human Kelvin. It is love that Solaris uses to connect with human life. In addition, the Tarkovskyan recourse to love that levitates appears for the first time in

this film, making the most of the science fiction theme, due to the space station in which the scene of the embrace between the man and the woman occurs. In his next film, *The Mirror* (1975), it is only the woman who floats (Fig. 10); in this film, the dreams, the memories, what the main character experiences and fears combine in the narrative.



Figure 9. Photograph of *Ivan's Childhood*, A. Tarkovsky, 1962. Source: Mosfilm.

As to *The Sacrifice*, the starting point of this film was the script of *The Witch* (1981), which was subsequently included in the premiered version and already showed the centrality of transfiguring love in its origins. That initial draft deploys an argument with evident common points. In the film, the main character, going by the same name, is diagnosed with a malignant tumour. A fortune-teller recommends that he visit a witch with supernatural powers. As it seems to be the last hope, he does so, sleeps with her and is cured. But the witch asks him, in exchange, to renounce his wealth and his bourgeois life and to live with her⁴⁶.

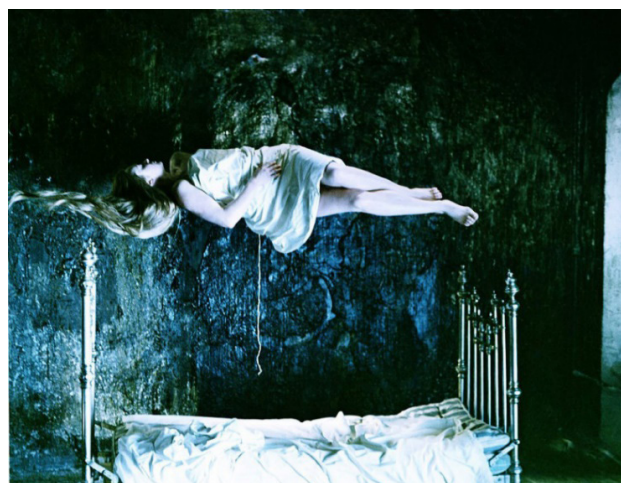


Figure 10. Photograph of *The Mirror*, A. Tarkovsky, 1975. Source: Mosfilm.

In the final version of the film, for its part, spectators watch how a group of characters are experiencing personal crises and, at the same time, what one may call the

⁴¹ Llano, *Andréi Tarkovsky. Vida y obra. (II)*, 1063.

⁴² He was always closely related to anthroposophists, claiming that he would make *The Gospel according to Steiner*: Llano, *Andréi Tarkovsky. Vida y obra. (II)*, 1202. He even tried to cure the cancer that was killing him in an anthroposophical clinician.

⁴³ '6 September 1978', in Andrey Tarkovsky, *Time within Time. The Diaries 1970-1986* (London: Faber and Faber, 1994), 156.

⁴⁴ '27 January 1979', in Tarkovsky, *Time within Time*, 169. Regarding Castaneda, he toyed with the idea of making a film about him ('23 December 1978 and 15 April 1979', in Tarkovsky, *Time within Time*, 160 and 181), while publically praising him at a conference on the Apocalypse: Llano, *Andréi Tarkovsky. Vida y obra. (II)*, 1194-1195.

⁴⁵ The first on 31 July 79, followed by further ones some days later: '31 July 1979', in Tarkovsky, *Time within Time*, 194ff.

⁴⁶ Llano, *Andréi Tarkovsky. Vida y obra. (II)*, 1054.

outbreak of a world war, which in a world with atomic weapons points to an apocalyptic end; a cataclysm in the macrocosm, a world war, combined with failure in the microcosm of the life of the main character and those of others. The characters are plunged into a despair which they experience in personal ways.

Alone and disheartened, the main character Alexander prays for a solution. Tarkovsky imagined Alexander as a person with a religious culture, but without being so now, who could be fascinated by Steiner and anthroposophical issues, but not now by Christian orthodoxy. But in the hour of the world's misfortune he again turns to God to find a solution. He describes it precisely in those terms⁴⁷.

He is at a loss to know what to do, until he is joined by his friend Otto. In the drama, this character plays the role of a Hermetic messenger, who transmits spiritual and magical ideas to the rest of the cast, representing the supernatural. According to him, cosmic death can still be reversed, there is still hope of regeneration; the maid of the household, Maria, holds the key. He proposes a strange plan to him: to visit this Maria, a woman who does his housework, to beg her to make love with him and thus manage to resolve the current problem. The proposal is even more extravagant because Alexander is married and has a small son who he adores.

Under conventional logic, that recommendation is senseless, but under that of esotericism of a sexual nature, ritual magic or paths to the left, it has an enormous *raison d'être*: the union will generate new energy and will initiate a new cycle; having said that, under the causal logic of reason it is madness, senseless, as Alexander laughs. Despite the fact that his recommendation seems at first ridiculous, he finally decides to take notice in light of the lack of alternatives, before finally accepting.

The alchemical *coniunctio* will renew the cosmos and will give the new king fabulous energy. When Alexander propositions her, the maid at first refuses, but in view of his threat of suicide, she finally complies. So, this leads to metaphysical love with a scene in which the two entwined bodies levitate (Fig. 11). This levitation emphasises the metaphysical aspect of that *coniunctio*. The metaphysical quality of the levitation of love should not rule out the photogenic quality that scenes of this type possess in Tarkovskyan grammar.

The scene allows for highlighting the director's tendency to employ the finite to reveal the infinite⁴⁸. The sacred marriage uniting Maria and Alexander combines opposing forces, required by any process of creation, even more so when this involves the supreme forms or archetypes; a new cosmogony gives rise to a new reality; in alchemical non-dualism sulphur and mercury of the archetypal couple combine in the process of mythical chemistry. With the elaborated, complex and symbolic Tarkovskyan language, spectators are shown that something in the apocalyptic world at war has effectively changed.



Figure 11. Photogram of *The Sacrifice*, A. Tarkovsky, 1986. Source: Argos / Svenka Filminstitutet.

Following the scene and after another act of sacrifice performed by Alexander, who renounces all of his possessions, it could be said that the world seems to be transfigured and that the world war has been a nightmare from which those involved have now awoken, notwithstanding the fact that the filmmaker leaves the question open and that the film can be interpreted in other ways, since according to him,

I knew that the film would be open to a number of interpretations, but I deliberately avoided pointing to specific conclusions because I considered that those were for the audience to reach independently. Indeed, it was my intention to invite different responses. I naturally have my own views on the film, but I think that the person who sees it will be able to interpret the events it portrays and make up his own mind both about the various threads that run through it, and about its contradictions⁴⁹.

To conclude the commentary on *The Sacrifice*, in the film the *coniunctio* is clearly metaphysical, by means of the cinematographic recourse of showing it in a scene in which two levitating bodies are making love, something which is impossible according the laws of gravity. With that union, Alexander's world will return to the start of the cycle with renewed strength. To express this in the alchemical terms with which Tarkovsky was so familiar, the union between the king and the queen –however much she be socially a maid– in a cosmic *coniunctio* has managed to reverse the universal *nigredo*. As a result, the cosmic cycle is renewed and new energy emerges; the androgynous son of the main character, the new king in the language of alchemy, will enjoy a new world thanks to the sacrifice of his father, who has renounced him so that his kin can continue with their lives.

6. Conclusions

In this paper, I have commented on the representation of hierogamy in the visual arts, with the accent being placed on alchemical engraving books and Tarkovsky's last film. With these and other examples, I have described an alchemical iconographic type and its heirs, which allow for expressing a non-dual idea through the union of opposites in such a categorical way as a man and woman in the midst of the sexual act.

⁴⁷ Llano, *Andréi Tarkovsky. Vida y obra. (II)*, 1279.

⁴⁸ Prakash Kona, "The Spiritual Cinema of Andréi Tarkovsky", *Off-screen Film Journal*, vol. 14, no. 12, (2010).

⁴⁹ Andrey Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989), 223.

7. Written sources and bibliographical references

- Arola, Raimon. *Alquimia y religión. Los símbolos herméticos del siglo XVII*. Madrid: Siruela, 2008.
- Avagianou, Aphrodite A. "Hieros Gamos in Ancient Greek Religion: The Human Aspect of a Sacralized Ritual". In *Sacred Marriages. The Divine-Human Sexual Metaphor from Sumer to Early Christianity*, edited by Nissinen M.; & Uro, R., 145-172. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2008.
- Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Reverie. Childhood, Language, and the Cosmos*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1971.
- Blake, William. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (copy in Houghton Library). London: William Blake, 1790.
- Bonardel, Françoise. «L'alchimie. La philosophie "par le feu"». In *20 clés pour comprendre l'ésotérisme*, Faivre, A.; Bonardel, F. [et altri], 55-62. Paris: Albin Michel, 2013.
- Burckhardt, Titus. *Alchemy. Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul*. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1972.
- Choucha, Nadia. *Surrealism & the Occult*. Oxford: Mandrake, 2015.
- Corbin, Henry. *The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism*. New Lebanon: Omega Publications, 1994.
- Couliano, Ioan Petru. *Out of this World. Otherworldly Journeys from Gilgamesh to Albert Einstein*. Boston: Shambhala, 1991.
- Dahlberg, Laurie. "The Material Ethereal. Photography and the Alchemical Ancestor". In *Art & Alchemy*, edited by Jacob Wamberg, 83-100. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2006.
- Dixon, Laurinda S. "Bosch's Garden of Delights Triptych: Remnants of a 'Fossil' Science". *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 63, no. 1 (1981): 96-113.
- Dixon, Laurinda S., & Ten-Doesschate Chu, Petra. "An Iconographical Riddle: Gerbrandt van den Eeckhout's Royal Repast in the Liechtenstein Princely Collections". *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 71, no. 4 (1989): 610-627.
- Eliade, Mircea. *Técnicas del yoga*. Barcelona: Kairós, 2008.
- Ferrer-Ventosa, Roger. "Pensando en imágenes jeroglíficas: de la tradición hermética en el Renacimiento a las vanguardias hasta el arte contemporáneo". *Arte, individuo y sociedad*, vol. 30, no. 2, (2018): 311-328. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5209/ARIS.56941>
- Ferrer-Ventosa, Roger. "Andrógino: una persona no dual. Representaciones en el arte y la alquimia". *Revista Goya*, no. 377 (2021): 340-355.
- Flor, Fernando R. *Emblemas. Lecturas de la imagen simbólica*. Madrid: Alianza editorial, 1995.
- Frazer, James G. *The Golden Bough. A Study in Magic and Religion*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1990.
- Ginzburg, Carlo. *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989.
- Gómez de Liaño, Ignacio. «La "Variedad del mundo" o el tríptico de la Creación». In *El Bosco y la tradición pictórica de lo fantástico*, edited by Calvo Serraller, F.; Bango Torviso, I. [et altri], 185-216. Madrid: Galaxia Gutenberg / Círculo de Lectores / Fundación amigos del Museo del Prado, 2006.
- Harpur, Patrick. *The Philosophers' Secret Fire*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee [e-book], 2003.
- Jung, Carl Gustav. *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung. Vol. 14*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977.
- Klossowski de Rola, Stanislas. *Alchemy. The Secret Art*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1973.
- Kona, Prakash. "The Spiritual Cinema of Andréi Tarkovsky". *Offscreen Film Journal*, Vol. 14, N. 12 (2010). http://offscreen.com/view/spiritual_cinema_tarkovsky [last access 27-12-20].
- Kripal, Jeffrey *Roads of Excess, Palaces of Wisdom. Eroticism & Reflexivity in the Study of Mysticism*. Chicago / London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001.
- Lachman, Gary. *A Dark Muse. A History of the Occult*. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, [e-book], 2005.
- Lenep, Jacques. *Arte y alquimia. Estudio de la iconografía hermética y de sus influencias*. Madrid: Nacional, 1978.
- Lepetit, Patrick. *The Esoteric Secrets of Surrealism. Origins, Magic and Secret Societies*. Rochester / Toronto: Inner Traditions, 2014.
- Llano, Rafael. *Andréi Tarkovsky. Vida y obra. (I)*. Madrid: Mishkin Ediciones, 2017.
- Llano, Rafael. *Andréi Tarkovsky. Vida y obra. (II)*. Madrid: Mishkin Ediciones, 2017b.
- Lévi, Eliphas. *The Mysteries of Magic*. London: George Redway, 1886.
- Metzler, Sally. "Artists, Alchemists and Mannerists in Courty Prague". In *Art & Alchemy*, edited by Jacob Wamberg, 129-148. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2006.
- Minnis, Stuart. "Andréi Tarkovsky (1932-1986)". In *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Film*, edited by E. Mazur, 419-423. New York: ABC – Clio, 2011.
- Panikkar, Raimon. *Mite, símbol, culte*. Barcelona: Fragmenta, 2009.
- Raine, Kathleen. *Golgonooza. City of Imagination. Last Studies in William Blake*. New York: Lindisfarne Press, 1991.
- Salabert, Pere. *Spahiros. Geografía del amor y la imaginación*. Barcelona: Laertes, 2005.
- Schuchard, Marsha Keith. "William Blake, George Cumberland, and the Visionary Art of Exotic Erotica". In *Esoterism, Art, and Imagination*, edited by A. Versluis; L. Irwin, L.; J. Richards & M. Weinstein, 125-144. Minneapolis: New Cultures Press, 2008.
- Svensson, Anna Maria. "The Greatness of Things / The Art of Hilma Af Klint". In *Hilma af Klint*, edited by J. Hutchinson, 12-30. Dublin: The Douglas Hyde Gallery, 2005.
- Tarkovsky, Andrey. *Sculpting in Time*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989.
- Tarkovsky, Andrey. *Time within Time. The Diaries 1970-1986*. London: Faber and Faber, 1994.
- Warlick, M.E. "Fluctuating Identities: Gender Reversals in Alchemical Imagery". In *Art & Alchemy*, edited by J. Wamberg, 103-128. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2006.