RESTRICTED

“A SPECIES OF FIRE”: PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO OCCULTURAL GNOSIS

RESTRICTED

DR. JEFF HOWARD

-

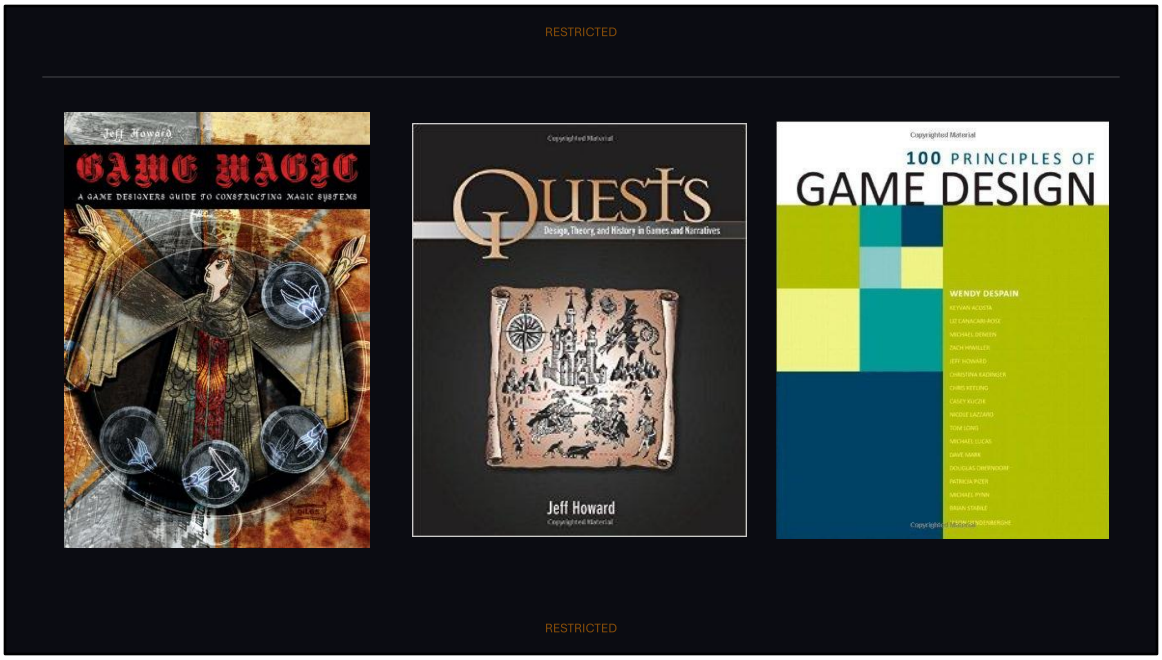
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF GAMES AND OCCULTURE

Howard has presented on games and the occult at a variety of international conferences, including Berlin Occulture, Trans-States, and ESSWE9. Howard studies Sabbatic Craft at the intersection of the Left Hand Path and the Typhonian current. Through his scholarship and creative practice, Howard is an ambassador for the power of play as a transformative and transcendent practice.



jeff.howard@falmouth.ac.uk

FALMOUTH UNIVERSITY



I've written these books on game design and have my own law "Howard's Law of Occult Design." The 2nd edition of my book on Quest design was published this April.



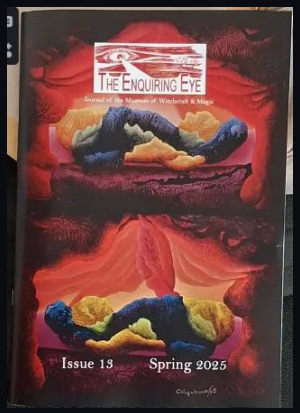


CORE TEAM MEMBER: APOCALYPSE STUDIOS

RESTRICTED

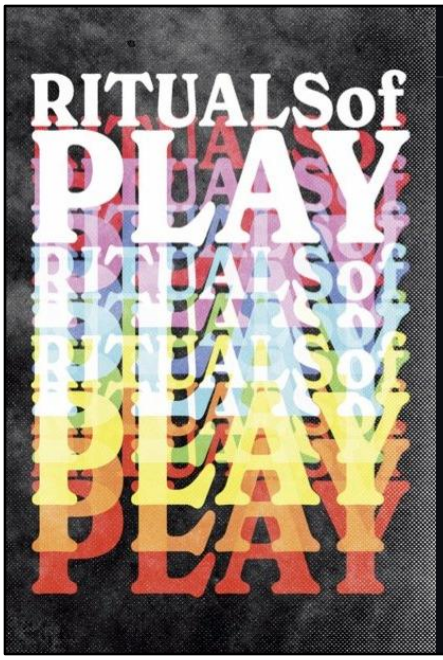
RECENT **OCCULT** PUBLICATIONS ON **ANDREW CHUMBLEY** AND **KENNETH GRANT**





RESTRICTED

Consider adding MMU rituals of play



RESTRICTED

My article “Playful Occultism”

Is in the Rituals of Play zine

Based on my keynote at the MMU Rituals of Play Conference

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

In *On the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Assyrians*, Iamblichus (in the role of the Egyptian magician Anebo) declares that "a species of fire is seen by the recipient, prior to the spirit being received." These words suggest an early form of occultural phenomenology: an attempt to describe the mystical experiences associated with a particular occult practice. Two millennia later, at Berlin Occulture 2023, Bernd-Christian Otto proposed a multi-step framework for the study of esoteric practices. Whilst the later steps of this process leverage standard social science methodologies and methods, such as autoethnography and predictive coding, the first step hearkens back to Iamblichus' phenomenological approach, with phenomenology defined as the introspective study of experience.

Drawing upon both ancient and contemporary examples, the talk will explore how occultural phenomenology might illuminate practitioners' experiences in relationship to the transcendent and the otherworldly. In so doing, the talk will explore early phenomenology in Heidegger, as well as the psychological work of William James in *Varieties of Religious Experience*. The talk will connect this early work to recent work by practitioner-scholars, such as Ian C. Edwards, whose tetralogy *Being and Non-Being in Occult Experience* gestures toward a future for phenomenological approaches in occulture. By working at the convergence of past and future, the talk will seek ways in which practitioners can rigorously reflect upon and communicate their experiences without compromising their transcendent aspects.

In pursuing this seemingly paradoxical goal, the talk will draw upon the proto-phenomenological meditations of Zen Buddhism through the Kyoto school, as well as the Western esotericist concept of *gnosis*: direct mystical experience constituting a form of knowledge. The quest will pose a central question: how can a phenomenological approach address mystical forms of knowledge without lapsing into "unverified personal gnosis"?

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

I. Phenomenology
II. Gnosis
III. Occulture

RESTRICTED



In *On the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Assyrians*, Iamblichus (in the role of the Egyptian magician Anebo) declares that "a species of fire is seen by the recipient, prior to the spirit being received." These words suggest an early form of occultural phenomenology: an attempt to describe the mystical experiences associated with a particular occult practice.

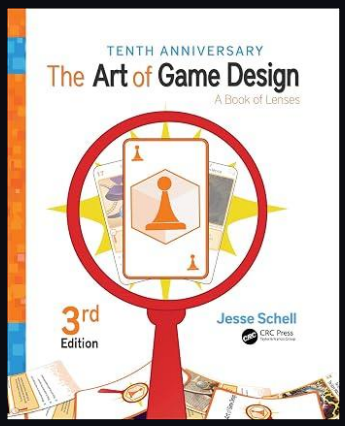
RESTRICTED

JESSE SCHELL ON PHENOMENOLOGY IN THE *ART OF GAME DESIGN*

SCHELL ARGUES THAT WE CAN REFLECT INTROSPECTIVELY ON THE EXPERIENCE WE HAVE WHEN INTERACTING WITH A SYSTEM

"THE SEEMINGLY SIMPLE ACT OF EXAMINING YOUR OWN THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS—THAT IS, YOUR OWN EXPERIENCES. WHILE IT IS TRUE YOU CAN NEVER TRULY KNOW THE EXPERIENCE OF ANOTHER, YOU CAN CERTAINLY KNOW YOUR OWN. IN ONE SENSE, IT IS ALL YOU CAN KNOW" (15).

HE COMPARES THIS ACT OF INTROSPECTION TO THE "ZEN PRACTICE OF SELF-OBSERVATION," E.G. OBSERVING SUBCONSCIOUS OR AUTONOMIC PROCESSES



RESTRICTED

And that moment in Iamblichus started me thinking about phenomenology, which I enter (as I do many things) through games. It is revealing that Schell's illustration of phenomenology is a Zen monk practicing zazen, or seated meditation.

The Kyoto school of philosophy explored the intersections of Ian C Edwards talks a lot about this. There was a brief moment of intersection between Western phenomenological traditions and Zen Buddhism

RESTRICTED

THIS APPROACH WORKS FOR GAMES BECAUSE THEY ARE COMPLEX *INTERACTIVE* SYSTEMS

THEY ARE SYSTEMS OF PRACTICE, ARTEFACTS THAT AREN'T ACTIVATED UNTIL THEY ARE INTERACTED WITH

SO STUDYING AND MAKING THEM REQUIRES A FORMALIST ATTENTION TO TEXT, AN ETHNOGRAPHIC ATTENTION TO PLAYER AS GROUPS OF PEOPLE, BUT ALSO AN INTROSPECTIVE (AND MAYBE MEDITATIVE) ATTENTION TO ONE'S OWN INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCE, WHICH IS ONLY ACCESSIBLE TO ONESELF

"ALL THAT'S REAL IS WHAT YOU FEEL," IS A MOTTO THAT SCHELL USES TO EMPHASISE THE SUBJECTIVE, EXPERIENTIAL NATURE OF PLAY

COULD THIS ALSO BE THE CASE WITH MAGIC, WHICH IS NOT NECESSARILY AN ARTEFACT BUT ALSO A BODY OF PRACTICES AND (CRUCIALLY) THE SUBJECTIVE, LIMINAL, ALTERED STATES ASSOCIATED WITH THOSE PRACTICES

TO BORROW A WORD FROM MY COLLEAGUES, THEIR "TRANS- STATES"

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

PHENOMENOLOGY: THE FIRST STEP IN A METHOD OF ESOTERIC STUDY PROPOSED BY BERND-CHRISTIAN OTTO AT BERLIN OCCULTURE 2023 AND ESSWE9



1: PHENOMENOLOGICAL OBSERVATION OF EXPERIENCES DURING THE PRACTICE

2: AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC CODING

3: COMPARISON WITH INVENTORY OF EXPERIENCES

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

"Phenomenology refers to the philosophical and scientific study of consciousness and the objects of direct experience." (Rivera *Explaining Phenomenology*)

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

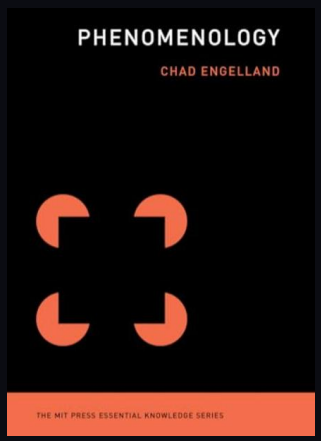
“Phenomenology is the experience of experience.” Chad Engelland *Phenomenology*

RESTRICTED

Phenomenology is not a new method, but everything old is (or can be) new again

- NOT A NEW METHOD
- MOST POPULAR IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY
- IN *EARLY PHENOMENOLOGY*, HARDING AND KELLY TRACE ITS HISTORY BACK TO 1900, FROM EDMUND HUSSERL IN *LOGISCHE UNERSUCHUNGEN* TO MARTIN HEDIEGGER, THEN TO SARTRE AND MERLAU-PONTY
- BUT IT MIGHT BE SLIPPING OFF THE RADAR
- IT IS ARGUABLY A COMPONENT IN OTHER METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS (E.G. AUTOETHNOGRAPHY)
- BUT IT IS EASY TO SKIP PAST IT IN THE DRIVE TOWARD MORE EASILY VERIFIABLE QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE DATA
- IT ALSO HAS A POWERFUL RELATIONSHIP TO FRAMEWORKS OF PRACTICE-BASED RESEARCH.

RESTRICTED



PHENOMENOLOGY IS THE PHILOSOPHICAL STUDY OF EXPERIENCE THROUGH INTROSPECTION.

“PHENOMENOLOGY IS THE EXPERIENCE OF EXPERIENCE.”

WE INVESTIGATE ASPECTS OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE

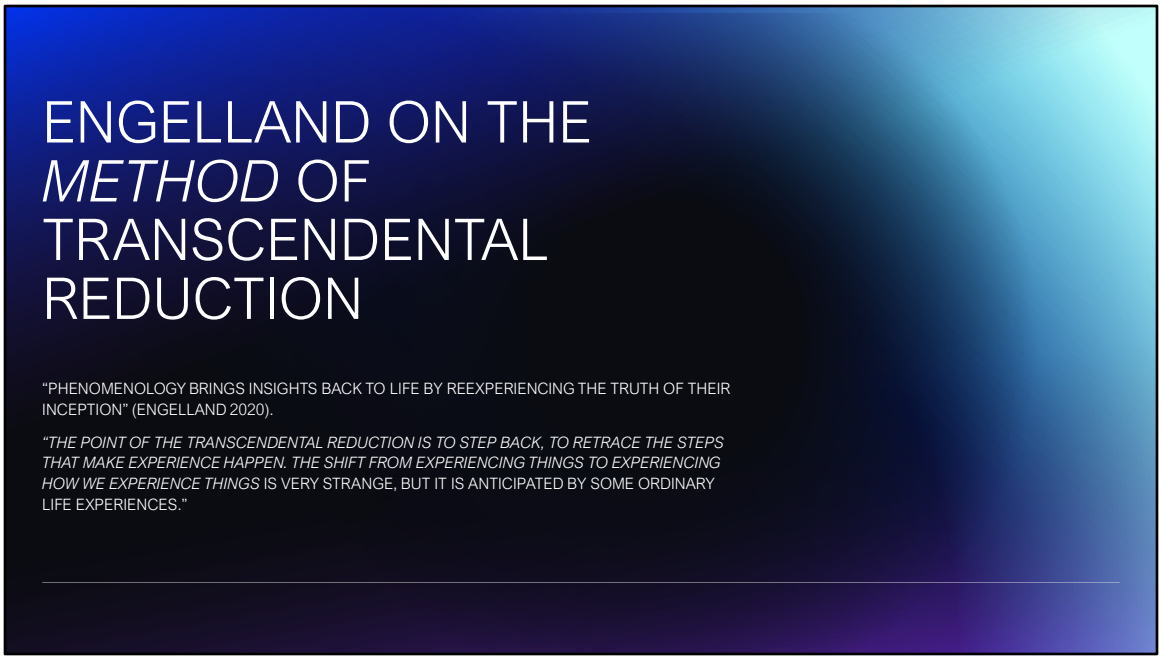
FLESH

LOVE

WORLD

SPEECH

RESTRICTED



"How can we wonder about presence as such? The answer is phenomenology's transcendental reduction. It is called "transcendental," because it focuses on the relational structure of experience rather than any of experience's content. "Transcendence" means to "step beyond," and our experience steps beyond ourselves and runs up against things. It is called a "reduction," because it traces back something we experience to the experience that makes it present. "*The point of the transcendental reduction is to step back, to retrace the steps that make experience happen. The shift from experiencing things to experiencing how we experience things* is very strange, but it is anticipated by some ordinary life experiences." (Engelland 2020, emphasis mine)

RESTRICTED

Ian C. Edwards

MASTERFUL USE OF **PHENOMENOLOGY** AS METHOD IN HIS FOUR VOLUME SERIES

HIGHLIGHTS "THE SORCEROUS FLESH"

A PHENOMENOLOGIST PAR EXCELLENCE, AS EVERY BOOK IN THE SERIES OPENS WITH ONE OF **EDWARDS' EXPERIENCES WORKING MAGICK**

EDWARDS RETURNS TO THESE EXPERIENCES AS KEYS TO ANALYSING CENTRAL TEXTS OF EACH MAGICIAN

IN PARTICULAR, THE EXPERIENCES OF BEING AND NON-BEING



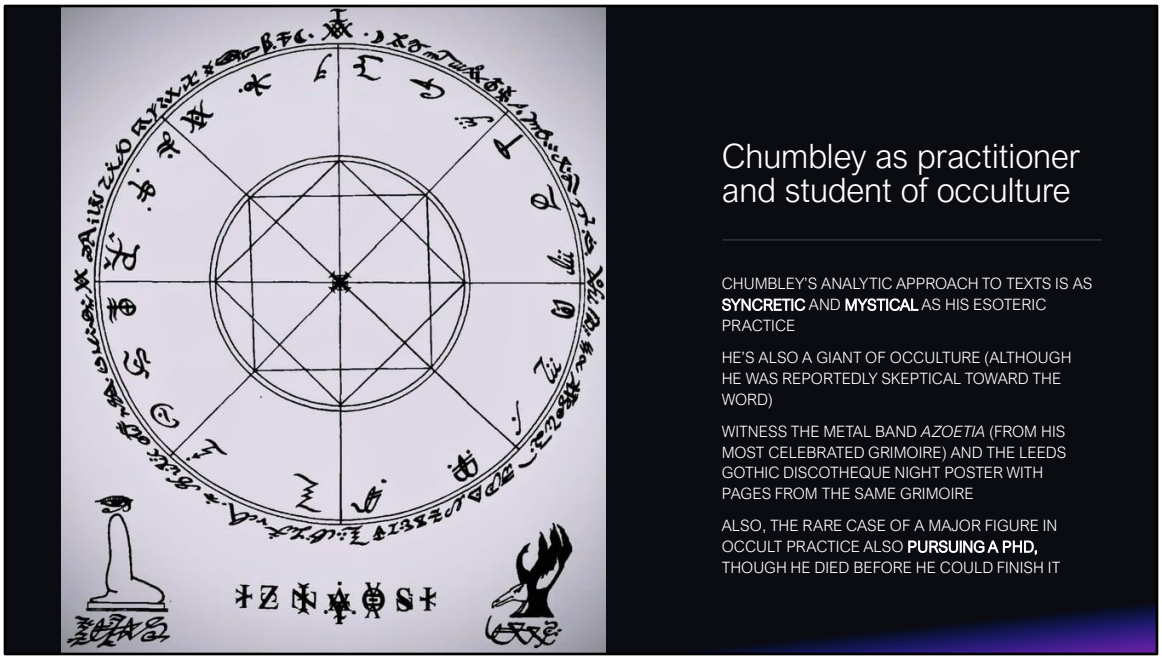
RESTRICTED

BY STEPPING BACK FAR ENOUGH, EDWARDS DISTILS PRACTICES DOWN TO THEIR EXPERIENTIAL CORE

FOR EXAMPLE, THE EXPERIENCE OF THE **"SORCEROUS SELF"** AT THE CROSSROADS OF BEING AND NON-BEING, AT THE EDGE AND INTERSECTIONS OF WHAT IS AND WHAT IS NOT

EDWARDS MAY BE ENGAGING IN PHENOMENOLOGY'S **TRANSCENDENTAL REDUCTION**





One of Ian C Edwards' key figures is Chumbley. Chumbley thought about phenomenology as a method. This would be comparable to Spare or Crowley enrolling for a PhD. So it's worth thinking about the method that he is using

RESTRICTED

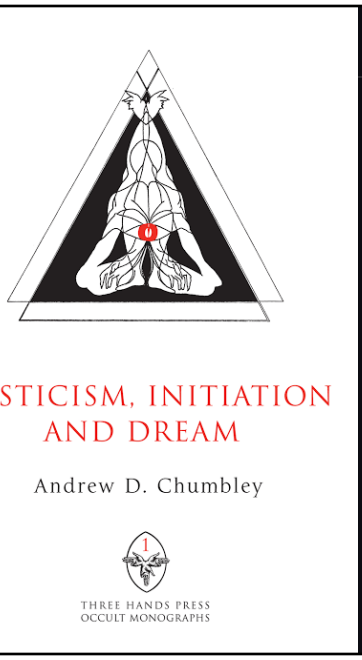
CHUMBLEY'S QUASI-PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH TO DREAMS

CHUMBLEY'S PRIVILEGING OF *THE EXPERIENCE OF THE DREAMER* IN *DREAMS, MYSTICISM, AND INITIATION* (AN EARLY DOCUMENT ASSOCIATED WITH HIS OWN PHD)

CHUMBLEY ESCHEWS ANY PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH (OUTSIDE OF A BRIEF REFERENCE TO JUNG, BECAUSE "HIS **WORKS TEND TOWARD A MORE EMPATHIC COMPREHENSION OF DREAMING (20), I.E.** HE RESPECTS THE EXPERIENCE OF THE DREAMER N CHUMBLEY'S ESTIMATION)

DRAWS UPON HIS OWN EXPERIENCES WITH SABBATIC PRACTICE (LIGHTLY ALLUDED TO BUT DRAWN UPON AS A FORM OF EVIDENCE)

RESTRICTED



"the dream is an experiential universal for humanity." (11)
"and yet, irrespective of interpretation (which usually comes after the event of dreaming), the fact of the matter is that when we dream of a person they act "as if" they were independent from the dreaming self - they assume a distinct autonomy and thus remain "other" to us." (13)
Chumbley spells out that he is using "the phenomenological method" as one of his three methods (the other two being historical and participatory) (20)
He defines this accordingly "By phenomenological method I imply that an attempt will be made to deal empathically with out subject-matter, without undue imposition or bias by the student" (20)
Also, participatory doesn't mean for him "having participants," but rather based on his own experience. "By participatory I mean I shall draw upon data from personal experience, namely that resulting from my own involvement in religious conexts where the significance and role of dream initiations has been directly experienced or has been communicated to me" (21).
In a footnote, he describes his sources. "9. The phenomenological method is described by Van der Leeuw, Otto, Bleeker,

Kramer et alia. See article in Eliade, 1987: Phenomenology."
Notably, he sources all of this back to Mircea Eliade

RESTRICTED

CHUMBLEY'S STATEMENT OF METHODOLOGY

CHUMBLEY SPELLS OUT THAT HE IS USING **"THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHOD"** AS ONE OF HIS THREE METHODS (THE OTHER TWO BEING HISTORICAL AND PARTICIPATORY) (20)

HE DEFINES THIS ACCORDINGLY "BY PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHOD I IMPLY THAT AN ATTEMPT WILL BE MADE TO DEAL EMPATHICALLY WITH OUT SUBJECT-MATTER, WITHOUT UNDUE IMPOSITION OR BIAS BY THE STUDENT" (20)

ALSO, PARTICIPATORY DOESN'T MEAN FOR HIM "HAVING PARTICIPANTS," BUT RATHER BASED ON HIS OWN EXPERIENCE. "BY PARTICIPATORY I MEAN I SHALL DRAW UPON DATA FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCE, NAMELY THAT RESULTING FROM MY OWN INVOLVEMENT IN RELIGIOUS CONTEXTS WHERE THE SIGNIFICANCE AND ROLE OF DREAM INITIATIONS HAS BEEN DIRECTLY EXPERIENCED OR HAS BEEN COMMUNICATED TO ME" (21).



RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

PHENOMENOLOGY OF INITIATORY DREAMS

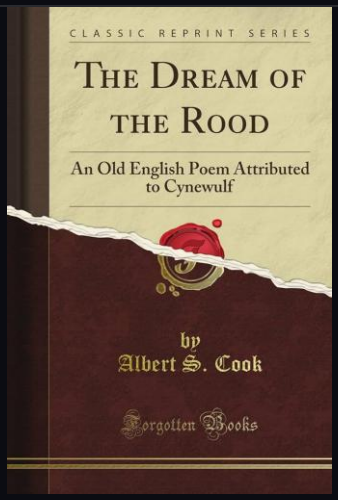
ENTITIES IN DREAMS ARE EXPERIENTIALLY OTHER AND THEREFORE ABLE TO GRANT INITIATION

"THE DREAM IS AN EXPERIENTIAL UNIVERSAL FOR HUMANITY." (11)

"AND YET, IRRESPECTIVE OF INTERPRETATION (WHICH USUALLY COMES AFTER THE EVENT OF DREAMING), THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS THAT WHEN WE DREAM OF A PERSON THEY ACT "AS IF" THEY WERE INDEPENDENT FROM THE DREAMING SELF – THEY ASSUME A DISTINCT AUTONOMY AND THUS REMAIN "OTHER" TO US." (13)

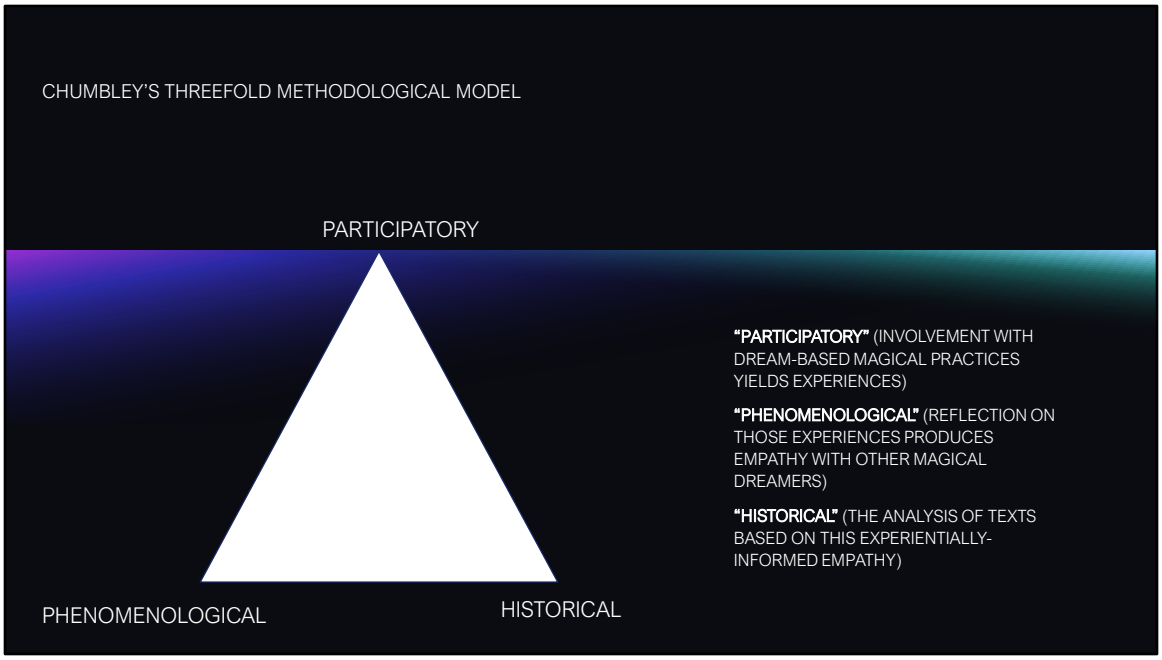
THROUGH PHENOMENOLOGY, CHUMBLEY DISTILS INITIATORY DREAMS DOWN TO "**REIFICATION"** (SOMETHING IN THE DREAM BECOMES REAL IN THE MATERIAL WORLD, AS THROUGH PROPHECY) AND **"RAREFACTION"** (TRANSCENDENCE TO A MORE SUBLIME SPIRITUAL LEVEL THROUGH THE DREAM)

CHUMBLEY ANALYSES TEXTS THROUGH EMPATHY WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF DREAMERS, BASED ON HIS OWN EXPERIENCE OF INITATORY DREAMING



RESTRICTED

CHUMBLEY'S THREEFOLD METHODOLOGICAL MODEL



"PARTICIPATORY" (INVOLVEMENT WITH DREAM-BASED MAGICAL PRACTICES YIELDS EXPERIENCES)

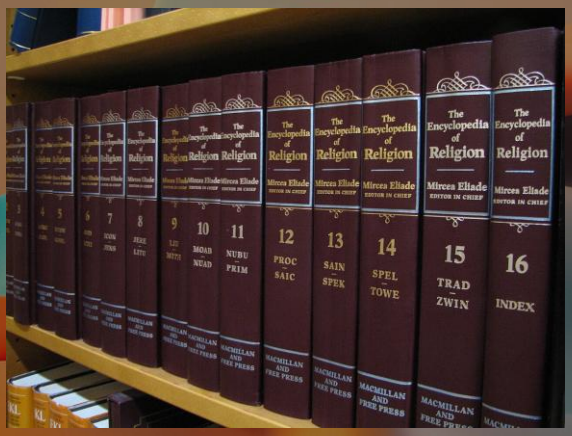
"PHENOMENOLOGICAL" (REFLECTION ON THOSE EXPERIENCES PRODUCES EMPATHY WITH OTHER MAGICAL DREAMERS)

"HISTORICAL" (THE ANALYSIS OF TEXTS BASED ON THIS EXPERIENTIALLY-INFORMED EMPATHY)

CHUMBLEY'S FOOTNOTE EXPLAINS THE ORIGINS OF HIS UNDERSTANDING OF PHENOMENOLOGY

"9. The phenomenological method is described by Van der Leeuw, Otto, Bleeker,

Kramer et alia. See article in Eliade, 1987: Phenomenology."



Chumbley gives us a clue through his labyrinth, and it leads us back through the history of religious studies

This article, mercifully available on the Internet Archive along with all the other volumes, posits multiple forms of phenomenology (transcendental, hermeneutic,

RESTRICTED

WHO ARE THESE PHENOMENOLOGISTS?

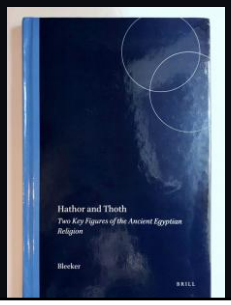
VAN DER LEEUW = GERARD VAN DER LEEUW. *RELIGION IN ESSENCE AND MANIFESTATION: A STUDY IN PHENOMENOLOGY.*

OTTO = RUDOLPH OTTO. *THE IDEA OF THE HOLY*. FAMOUS FOR THE DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIENCE OF THE HOLY AS *MYSTERIUM TREMENDUM ET FASCINANS*.

BLEEKER = **CLAAS JOUCO BLEEKER.** *HISTORIA RELIGIONUM.* RELIGIOUS HISTORIAN WITH A PHENOMENOLOGICAL BENT, EMPHASIS ON PHENOMENOLOGY OF EGYPTIAN RELIGION

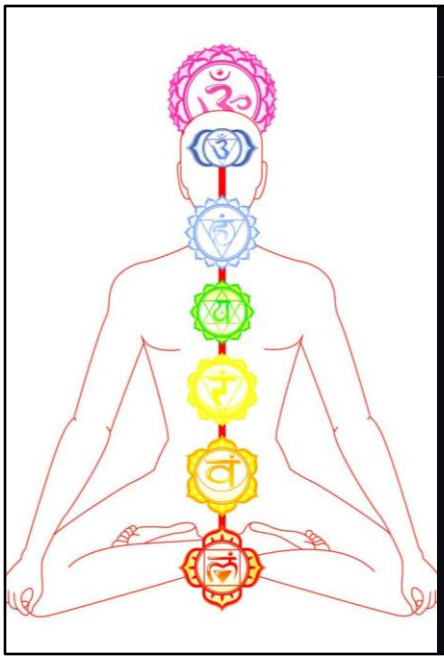






RESTRICTED

Rather than being hoary figures from the early days of modern religious studies, might we be able to leverage their approaches and methodologies in the context of contemporary occulture
Pronunciation (Van as in father, Lay-oo)



FOR CHUMBLEY, PHENOMENOLOGY ENABLES EMPATHY WITH & UNDERSTANDING OF DREAM GNOSIS

"It is as if the condition of photic being permits the individual to act as an agent of gnosis, moving hither and yon through the transliminality of the imaginal, becoming a teacher to all who seek the path." (47)

RESTRICTED

Which brings us to the next theme of this talk…

RESTRICTED

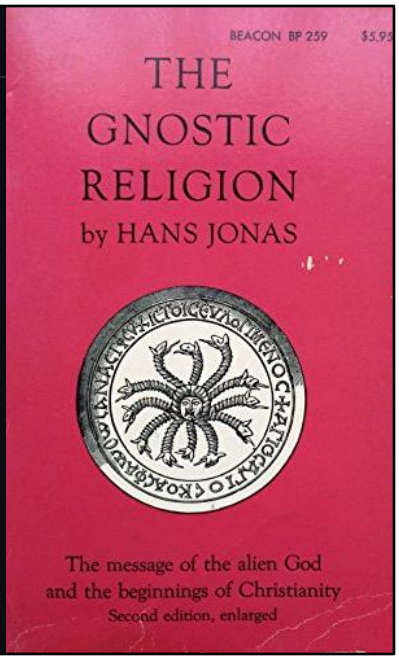
GNOSIS, UNDERSTOOD DIRECT EXPERIENCE, IS INTERTWINED WITH EARLY 20TH-C PHENOMENOLOGY

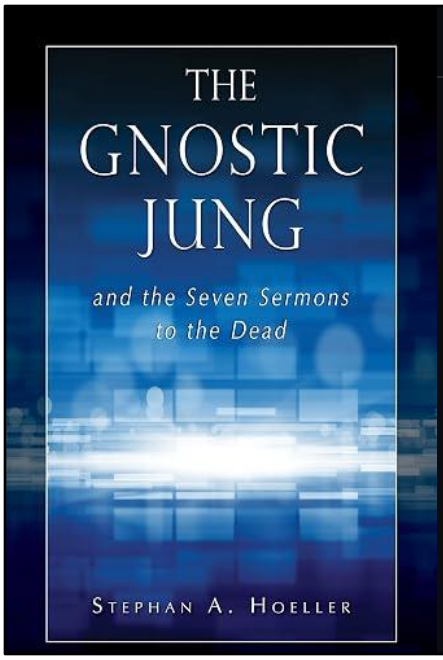
THIS IS GNOSIS MEDIATED THROUGH JUNG AND JONAS (WHO COMPARED GNOSTICISM TO EXISTENTIALISM)

JONAS' BOOK ON GNOSTICISM WAS BASED ON HIS PHD ON THE GNOSTICS (DIRECTED BY NONE OTHER THAN… MARTIN HEIDEGGER)

SOME HAVE CHALLENGED WHETHER THE CONCEPT OF EXPERIENCE WOULD HAVE BEEN AVAILABLE TO THE GNOSTICS (*THE OCCULT WORLD*)

RESTRICTED





RESTRICTED

JUNG ON GNOSIS

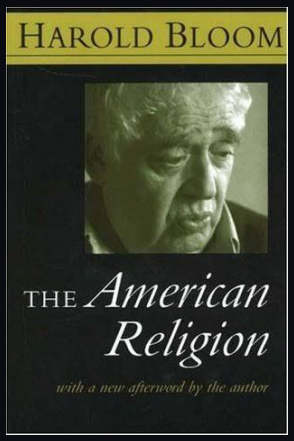
- AS **DIRECT EXPERIENCE** RATHER THAN BELIEF
- FAMOUSLY "I DO NOT NEED TO BELIEVE, I KNOW."
- ALSO BENTLEY LAYTON'S READING OF GNOSIS AS **ACQUAINTANCE** (I.E. DIRECT, INTUITIVE KNOWLEDGE) RATHER THAN PROPOSITIONAL KNOWLEDGE
- THE FRENCH DISTINCTION BETWEEN *SAVOIR* (TO KNOW LOGICAL FACTS) AND *CONNAITRE* (TO BE ACQUAINTED WITH, AS A FRIEND OR A LANGUAGE) IN FRENCH

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

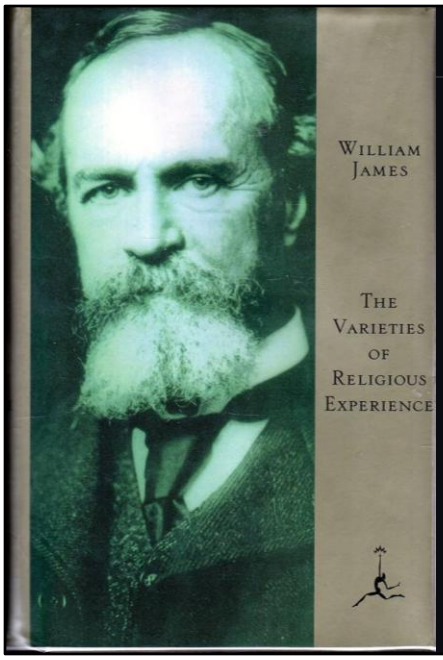
Harold Bloom on finding “the spiritual in religion”

- POSITS THAT “THE AMERICAN RELIGION” IS NOT CHRISTIANITY, BUT GNOSTICISM
- BECAUSE AMERICAN DENOMINATIONS (PENTECOSTALS, MORMONS, JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES, BAPTISTS) EMPHASISE DIRECT EXPERIENCE OF GOD, I.E. GNOSIS
- “ A KNOWING, BY AND OF AN UNCREATED SELF, OR SELF-WITHIN-THE-SELF”
- BLOOM OPERATES IN THE TRADITION OF HANS JONAS (AN UNDERSTANDING THAT WAS CHALLENGED BY MANY RELIGIOUS STUDIES SCHOLARS)
- SOUGHT “THE SPIRITUAL IN RELIGION” AS OPPOSED TO PSYCHOLOGISING OR SOCIOLOGICAL REDUCTIONS OF RELIGION
- FOR BLOOM, HUMAN EXPERIENCE IS COMMUNICATED AND CLARIFIED BY READING, WHOSE FUNDAMENTAL PURPOSE IS SELF KNOWLEDGE/GNOSIS



RESTRICTED

Bloom derives his definition of



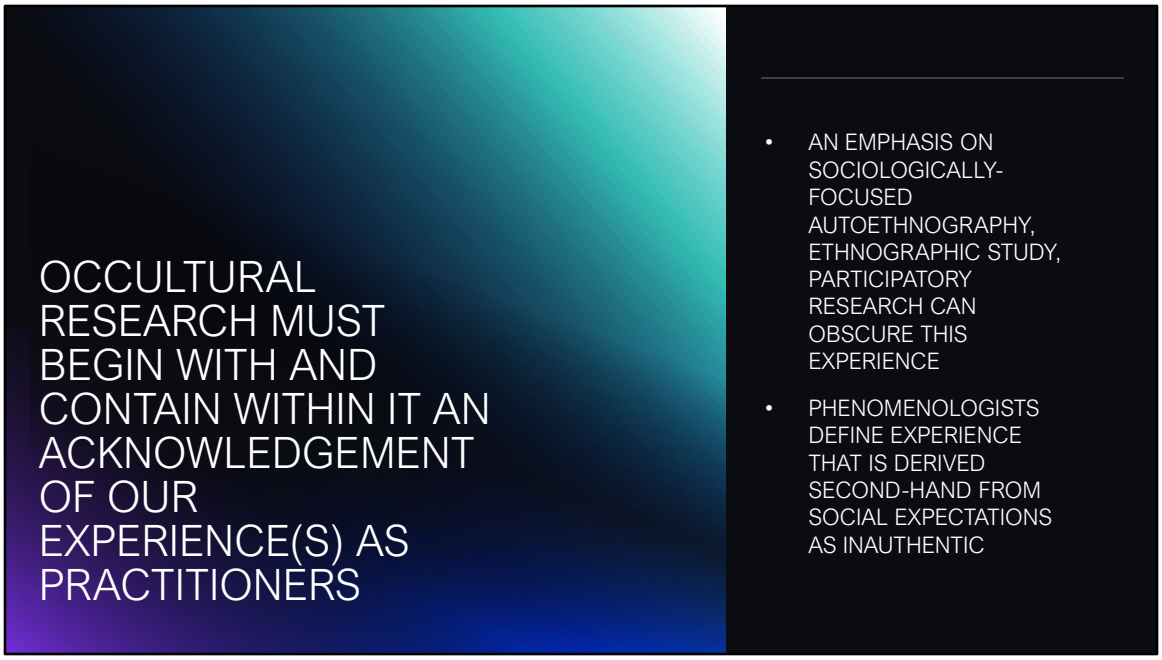
RESTRICTED

BLOOM BY WAY OF WILLIAM JAMES

"IF THE INQUIRY BE PSYCHOLOGICAL, NOT RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS, BUT RATHER RELIGIOUS FEELINGS AND RELIGIOUS IMPULSES MUST BE ITS SUBJECT, AND I MUST CONFINE MYSELF TO THOSE MORE DEVELOPED SUBJECTIVE PHENOMENA RECORDED IN LITERATURE PRODUCED BY ARTICULATE AND FULLY SELF-CONSCIOUS MEN, IN WORKS OF PIETY AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY."

BLOOM NOTES JAMES' EMPHASIS ON THE **EMOTIONS AND EXPERIENCES** OF A RELIGIOUS PERSON, RATHER THAN THEIR THOUGHTS OR MEMORIES

RESTRICTED



Because we, ultimately, only have direct access to our own experiences



RESTRICTED

PHENOMENOLOGY = THE SEARCH FOR AN **IRREDUCIBLE** EXPERIENCE OF SPIRIT, GOD, THE DIVINE

THERE IS AN IRREDUCIBLE DIMENSION TO OCCULT EXPERIENCE THAT BELONGS IN THE STUDY OF OCCULTURE;

THIS EXPERIENCE IS INDIVIDUAL;

IT HAS TO DO WITH THE SPIRIT BUT IS (SOMETIMES) REGISTERED IN THE BODY;

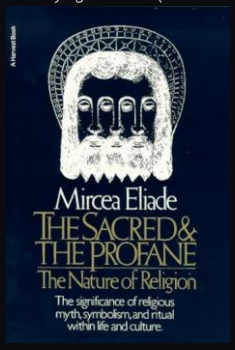
IT HAS TO DO WITH THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF OTHER WORLDS;

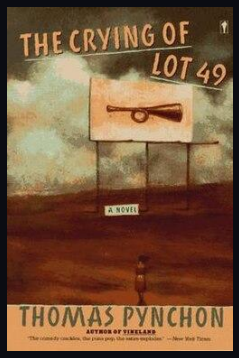
RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

MIRCEA ELIADE (EDITOR OF THE ARTICLE THAT GAVE CHUMBLEY HIS DEFINITION OF PHENOMENOLOGY AS METHOD) ON *THEOPHANY*

Theophany = the revelation of the divine, "one world's intrusion into another" *Sacred and the Profane*, memorably quoted in Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* (in the description of Oedipa Maas' own almost-theophany)





RESTRICTED

Eliade's take on phenomenology involves one world intruding into another, cosmic liminality, transcendence… and not just

PHENOMENOLOGY AS/VERSUS RESEARCH OUTPUT

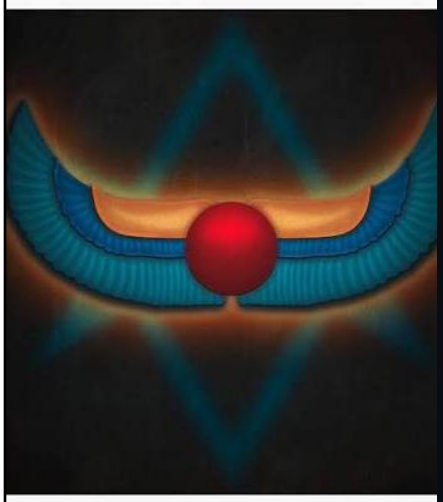
Some versions of occulture place primary emphasis on the production of art (i.e. the **output** of the experience **rather than the experience itself or the object that is experienced, i.e. the divine**);

But the notion of output is the result of **late capitalist pressures** and concepts of **productivity** on academia (i.e. research output);

But the **experience** of the sacred, the holy, and the *occult* need not have an output beyond itself;

Especially not a **public** or **performative** output;

RESTRICTED



PHENOMENOLOGY PRESUPPOSES A SELF THAT EXPERIENCES

- THE **TRANSCENDENTAL EGO**
- **PUNCTUM** OR POINT OF CONSCIOUSNESS
- GNOSTIC PNEUMA/**SPARK** (OR SCINTILLA IN LURIANIC KABBALAH)
- THE **QUTUB** (CHUMBLEY, BY WAY OF THE SUFIS AS CITED IN IDRIES SHAH)
- HADIT IN THELEMA

RESTRICTED

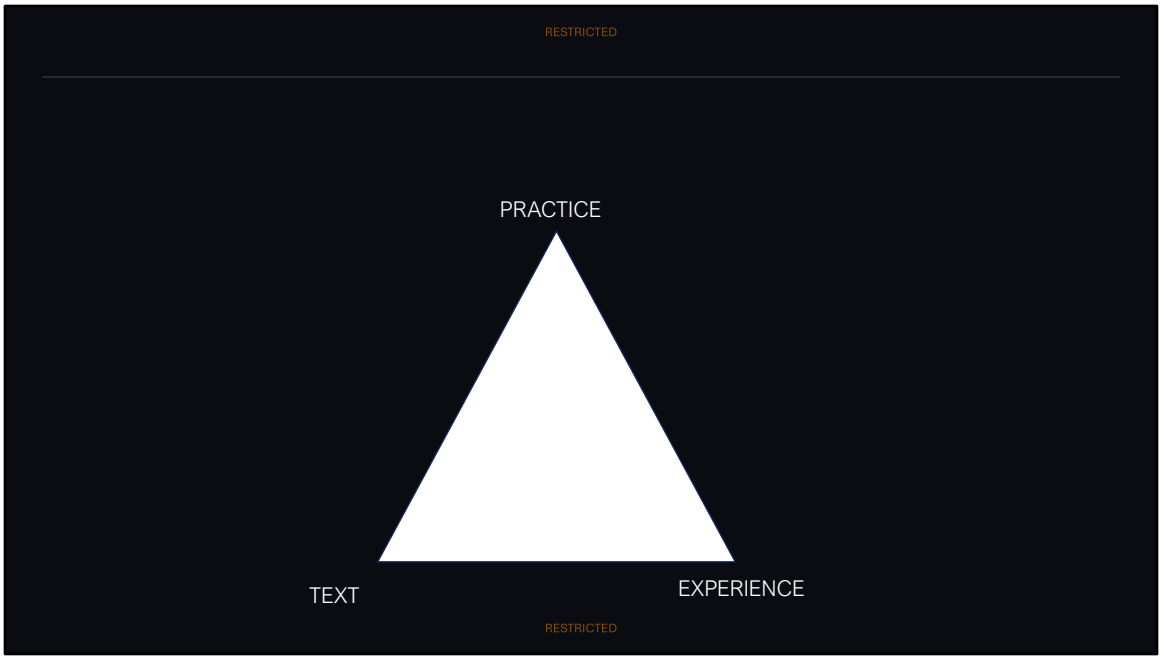
PHENOMENOLOGY AND MAGICAL SILENCE



ALLOWS US TO TALK ABOUT OUR EXPERIENCES OF MAGICAL PRACTICE ONE STEP REMOVED ("THE TRANSCENDENTAL RELATION" AS PER ENGELLAND)

WHICH IS GOOD, BECAUSE THESE EXPERIENCES ARE MAYBE FUNDAMENTALLY INCOMMUNICABLE IN LOGICAL OR RATIONAL TERMS

I'LL BE TALKING ABOUT MAGICAL SILENCE AT "CREATIVE PRACTICES: BRIDGING THE INVISIBLE" IN OCTOBER



A triangular method in which each point feeds back on the other
PRACTICE generates experiences (mystical, Gnostic)
THE EXPERIENCE OF PRACTICE
TEXT (the experience of practice allows for analysis of text, the generation of text facilitates reflection on practice)
This method thus sits between

RESTRICTED

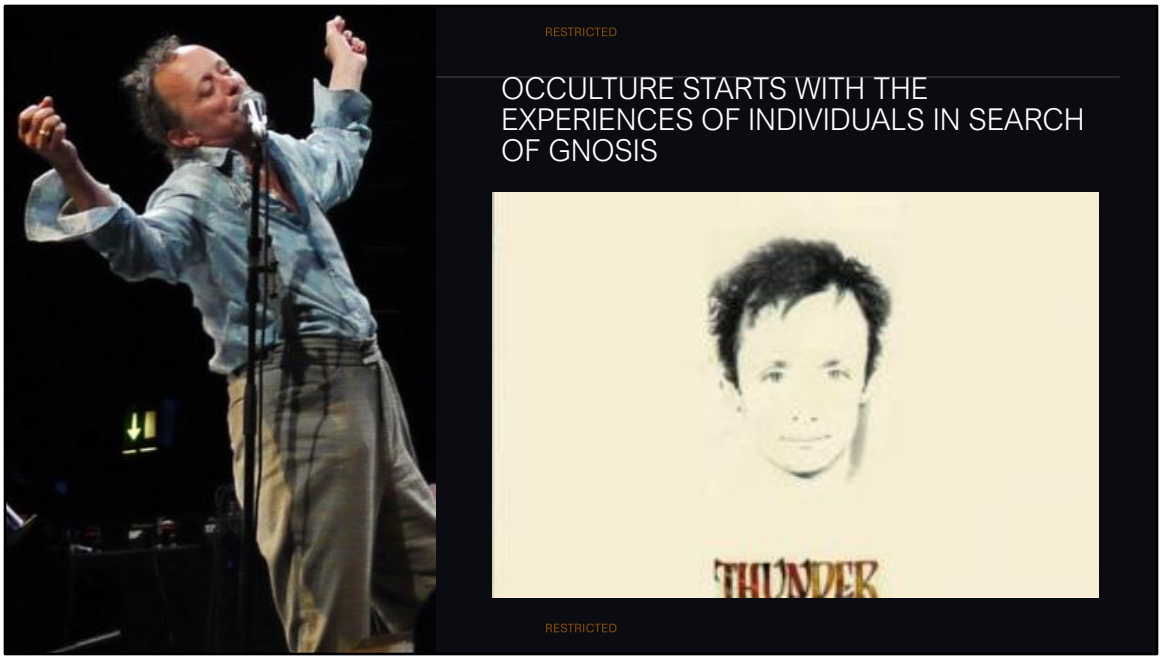
BETWEEN PARTRIDGE AND ASPREM'S DEFINITIONS OF OCCULTURE

IAN C EDWARDS = PHENOMENOLOGY OF OCCULTISM

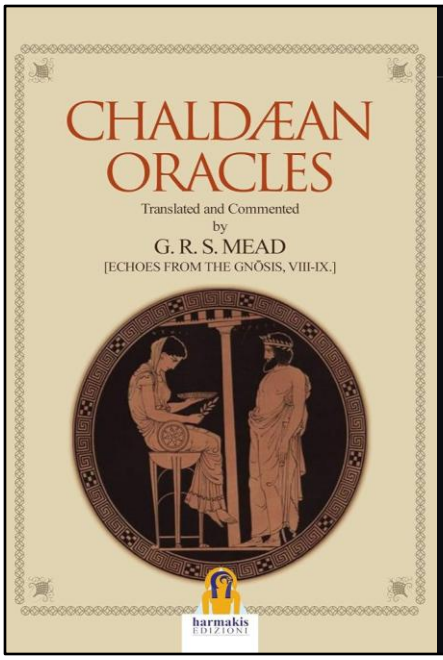
PARTRIDGE = OCCULTURE = THE OCCULT MANIFESTS IN POP CULTURE

ASPREM = OCCULTURE = THE CULTURE(S) SURROUNDING MAGICAL PRACTICE

RESTRICTED



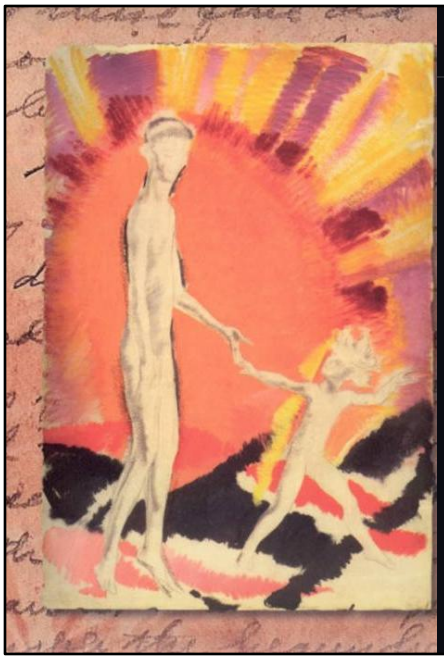
This is why David Tibet learned Coptic
Tibet's experience of ancient texts through the gnosis of his own practice



IT IS OUR EXPERIENCE AS PRACTITIONERS THAT ILLUMINATES ESOTERIC TEXTS AND ALLOWS US TO PRODUCE CULTURE FROM THOSE TEXTS.

- "Phenomenology brings insights back to life by reexperiencing the truth of their inception." Engelland
- As an example, take one of the more obscure Chaldean Oracles "Stoop not down to the darkly splendid world."
- This can be read as an admonition against the lure of matter and the chthonic
- There is a peculiar frisson, both foreboding and alluring, in that line, suggestive of the experience of working with chthonic daimons (as well as an implied celestial transcendence of them).

RESTRICTED



And all of those experiences are translated by David Tibet, and can be found, in his Current 93 song “The Darkly Splendid World” (which references that line)

There is a peculiar frisson, both foreboding and alluring, in that line, suggestive of the experience of working with chthonic daimons (as well as an implied celestial transcendence of them).

RESTRICTED

The shock of recognition in finding this line in a Current 93 song (shared by the Occulture Instagram) while reading the Chaldean Oracles was so intense that it followed me for months. It followed me because the song evokes the Gnostics (and their distrust of matter) as well as the experience of the lure and danger of matter in my own magical practice.

RESTRICTED

WE CAN CIRCLE BACK TO PHENOMENOLOGY AND GNOSIS FOR FRESH OCCULTURAL INSIGHTS

IN THE SAME WAY THAT PHENOMENOLOGISTS REVISIT REJECTED OR DISCARDED TEXTS TO FIND FRESH EXPERIENTIAL TRUTHS

"PHENOMENOLOGY BRINGS INSIGHTS BACK TO LIFE BY REEXPERIENCING THE TRUTH OF THEIR INCEPTION." ENGELLAND
IS UNVERIFIED PERSONAL GNOSIS, ULTIMATELY, THE PRIMARY AND MOST VITAL FORM OF GNOSIS?

RATHER THAN FEARING "UNVERIFIED PERSONAL GNOSIS," PERHAPS WE COULD TRUST OUR GNOSIS AS ITS OWN VERIFICATION?

EMERSON'S "TRUST THYSELF: EVERY HEART VIBRATES TO THAT IRON STRING" COULD BE A CALL UPON STUDENTS OF OCCULTURE TO TRUST THEIR OWN EXPERIENCES



RESTRICTED

Rather than

Works Cited

Bloom, Harold. *The American Religion*. 2013.

Chaldean Oracles. Trans. W. Wynn Westcott.

Chumbley, Andrew. *Mysticism, Dream, and Initiation*. Three Hands Press.

Edwards, Ian C. *Being and Non-Being in Occult Experience*.

Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and the Profane*.

Engelland, Chad. *Phenomenology*, MIT Press 2020.

Harding, Brian and Michael R. Kelly. *Early Phenomenology : Metaphysics, Ethics, and the Philosophy of Religion.* Bloomsbury 2016.

Hoeller, Stephen. *The Gnostic Jung*.

Iamblichus, Ed. Thomas Taylor. *On the Mysteries*.

James, William. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.

Pynchon, Thomas. *The Crying of Lot 49*.

Rivera, James. *Explaining Phenomenology*. 2022.

Schell, Jesse. *The Art of Game Design*. 3rd Edition. CRC Press 2015.



RESTRICTED

Questions

jeff.howard@falmouth.ac.uk

@gamemagicarcana on all social media

RESTRICTED