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**After the Philosopher's Stone: Aesthetic
Interrogations and Navigations**

An exegesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Fine Arts at Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand 2017

Abstract

“One becomes two, two becomes three, and out of the third comes the One as the fourth.”

Maria Prophetessaⁱ

The axiom of Maria is an alchemical percept illustrating a processual procedure across time that accords with the Jungian concept of individuation (from undifferentiated unconsciousness to unique individualised wholeness). The process concerns transformations of materialities and psychological state as movement in time. My research project is situated at a nexus between three simultaneous aims and procedures which relate to this precept;

One: Art as magick, (magickal operations, in this case sigil constructions, aimed at altering psychological and material conditions under intentional application of imagination and will);

Two: Art as spiritual practice and religious devotion, (a devotional orientation through art practiced on a relational line of enquiry and association via ‘theophanic’ and ‘active’ imagination’);

Three: Art as a psychotherapeutic vehicle (oblique means for mending disturbed subjective conditions, generating processes and affects of integration and connectivity across an experiential and theorised fragmented subject terrain).

The ‘fourth’ here is what is brought to the moment of reception and reading by a given audience.

All concern alchemical transmutation as matter-mind relations; from an immersive, undifferentiated ‘one’ in relative unconsciousness, to compounding relational reflexivities of correspondence, doubling of associations, ‘two’, through to a ‘third that becomes a One as the fourth’, a ‘transcendent function’, as a held space weaving all of the varying threads and development together into a new unified configuration, co-ordinated but remaining unfixed as end and determination.

Each point in this axiomatic evolution is polymorphous, yet relates to origins and concerns guiding it at the outset. Drawings, objects, materialities, substances, space, become the axes and *in potentia* through which this metamorphic generation takes place and manifests in form.