

Image Creates Human Creates Image

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Advances in the study of esotericism continue to be reflected in this issue of *Correspondences*, despite varying degrees of transition around the world and the lack of vibrant (as well as some perhaps not-so-vibrant) in-person conferences that have historically helped define the field and reinforce social relationships among scholars and the public at large. In other words, much of the uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 does unfortunately remain true a year later.¹ At the same time, in my view scholars in the field have since rapidly adjusted to the format of “virtual” conferences either hosted by Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or other communication platforms, and such technology has continued to steadily allow for extended digital engagement in unforeseen ways. As with every advance in technology, however, there are also unexpected downsides to this digitalization of the study of esotericism; expanded participation in social media or blogs in past months can lead to positive or negative backlash or generate unintended public impressions of personal divisions that in earlier days might have been mitigated by “grabbing a drink together” or by means of a ritual of “breaking bread,” that is, by high-context collective rituals of conversation and affirmation that were once much more possible—and perhaps taken for granted—in the before-time prior to the pandemic’s onset.

1. For this journal’s earlier acknowledgment of the pandemic’s effects, see Manon Hedenborg White, “Transformations and Troubled Times,” *Correspondences: Journal for the Study of Esotericism* 8, no. 1 (2020): 1-3.

In this issue of *Correspondences* we are invited to consider a range of research articles and book reviews that coincide rather nicely with a complementary impulse to explore one's inner psyche in isolation that many undoubtedly will have felt as external social events have been canceled, scaled down, or rescheduled (often only to be further postponed). The main research articles accordingly arrive and depart from a unique nexus that links disparate yet interconnected ranges of extraordinary experience: dreams, palmistry, and visionary art. The first article, by Samuel Glauber-Zimra, explores the dreams and visions of the Jewish writer and religious thinker Hillel Zeitlin (1871-1942), who as Glauber-Zimra demonstrates was one of the first Jewish figures to provide an explanatory model for his dreams that were informed by modern esoteric and psychological frameworks. The second article, by Alexandra Nagel, quite literally examines the hands of genius in that it offers a fascinating and informative chiromantic history of the prototypical brainiac Albert Einstein. Last but certainly not least, the final article, by Amy Hale, provides a thorough ethnographic analysis of modern ceremonial magic and artistic aesthetics as intertwined in the creative vision of Barry Hale. All three articles point to the human brain's fascinating yet ever-elusive capacity—also possibly present to some limited extent in other complex animal organisms—to imagine and project impressions of reality onto various objects, including the self. Whether the fleeting substance of dreams or the lifelong lines on one's palms, the authors in this issue encourage us to consider the phenomenon of “Man creates art creates man,” as the title of one of my mother's coffee-table books so succinctly put it (the term “man” being used in its historical sense as denoting a non-gendered human being of the male or female sex).² The six review articles in this issue further relate to this impulse to imagine, whether it connects to the imagination induced by mind-altering drugs (Neşe Devenot), the imagination that informs the complicated social history of Theosophical Orientalism (Julie Chajes), the imagination of medieval religion

2. Duane Preble, *Man Creates Art Creates Man* (Berkeley, CA: McCutchan, 1973).

(Minji Lee), the imagination of spiritual qualities in one's breath (Magdalena Kraler and Kelly Mullan), the imagination that informed later impressions of ancient religion (Korshi Dosoo), and the imagination that informed esoteric subjectivity in Costa Rica (Mauricio Oviedo Salazar). Various cultures and ethnic groups certainly access and express this impulse to internalize in myriad ways, and both the research and review articles herein point to certain common threads of connectivity that inform these same impulses. The reader is therefore invited to contrast these examples or cases with diverse examples born of one's own individual experience and expertise.

On a more journal-specific level, with this issue we offer bittersweet news. First, we bid a sad but friendly farewell to Manon Hedenborg White, who has served as Editor for the past two years and will no doubt continue to accomplish amazing feats in the fields of esotericism and gender studies. Next, we are delighted to report, however, that Justine Bakker (our former Book Review Editor) will assume her position as Editor. Last but not least, we welcome the energy of two new accomplished scholars as Book Review Editors: Naamleela Free Jones of Rice University and Mriganka Mukhopadhyay of Universiteit van Amsterdam. Their experience and expertise will, beginning with the next issue, certainly assist with addressing the wide range of books that continue to be published on various topics of relevance to Esotericism, both Western and that which lies beyond the range of conventional directionality.

As always, we appreciate your readership, and I am confident that the *Correspondences* team will continue to offer engaging content that not only contributes to scholarly research in the field but also, insofar as is possible or prudent for an academic journal, stimulates the esoteric imagination, however this itself may also be imagined.