

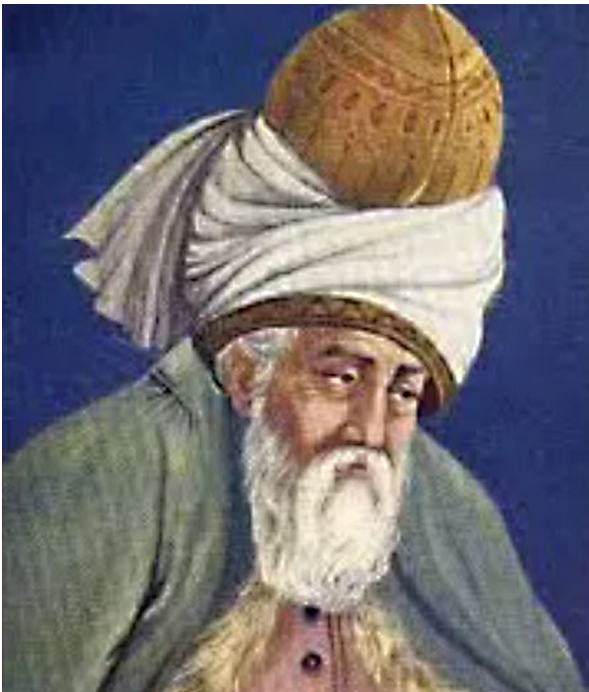
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NASCENT STATE

Journal of Intuition

Magazine

Intuitive Genius



Rumi



Blake



Goya

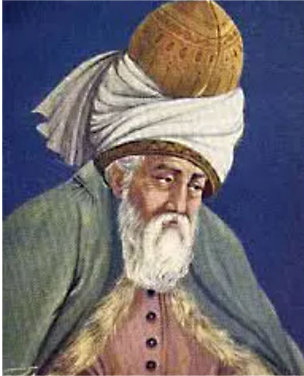


Paracelsus

Winter 2021

NASCENT STATE

Magazine



From the Editor

Intuitive Genius

We all possess an intuitive mind. An intuitive genius is someone who displays an intuitive ability to such a degree that it defines their very nature. This edition of Nascent State magazine is devoted to those who have displayed such an ability.

‘There comes a leap in consciousness, call it intuition or what you will, and the solution comes to you and you do not know how or why. All great discoveries are made in this way.’

Albert Einstein

In order to define intuitive genius, it is necessary to define both ‘intuition’ and ‘genius’. Intuition is the ability to see into the heart of the matter, as distinct from constructing clever arguments. If Baruch Spinoza is an example of a logical genius, then Jalal ad-Din Rumi is an example of an intuitive genius. We recognise a genius by the mark they leave on society, and often by the influence of their work beyond their death. In the examples provided, Jalal ad-Din Rumi, Francisco Goya, Paracelsus and William Blake, each of them displayed a high degree of insight, innovation, and originality in their work, and each was regarded as somewhat unconventional during their lifetime.

The purpose of this edition of Nascent State magazine is to allow such genius to speak for itself, as well as to provide the reader with an introduction to the life and work of each of these individuals.

Nascent State magazine is presented in a PDF, free-to-download format; download it and read it at your leisure.

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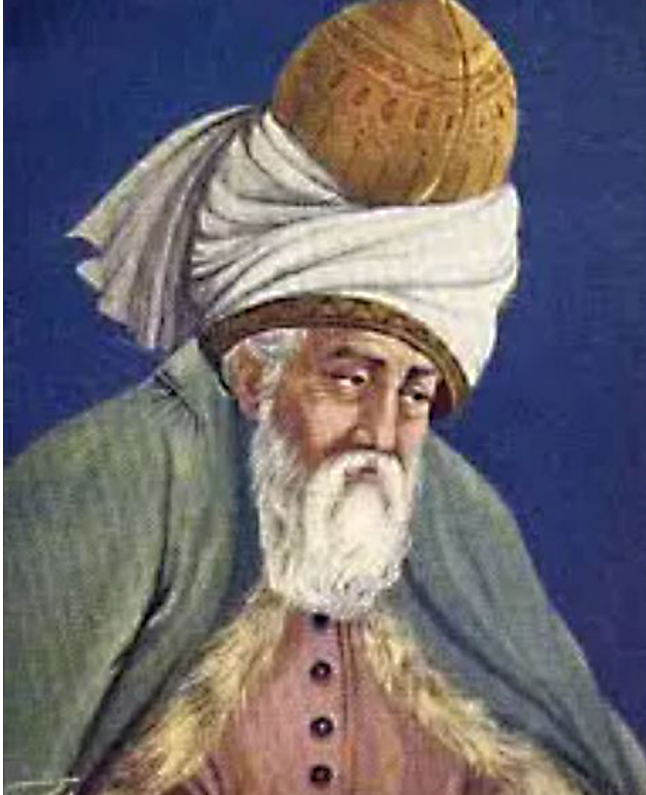
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Jalal ad-Din Rumi

poet like no other



Come, come, whoever you are.
Wanderer, worshiper, lover of leaving.
It doesn't matter.

Ours is not a caravan of despair.
Come, even if you have broken your vows a thousand
times.

Come, yet again, come, come.

Jalal ad-Din Rumi was a Persian poet and mystic who lived in the 13th Century. He was born in Balkh, Afghanistan, or in Wakhsh, Tajikistan - depending on report - and died in Konya, Turkey, aged 66. He is remembered for his poetry and for the Mevlevi Order of Whirling Dervishes, which was founded by his followers after his death.

His father, Baha ud-Din Walad (born c. 1227), was the head of a 'Madrasa', or religious school, and when Baha died, Rumi took over his position. After that, he became a jurist and taught in the mosques in Konya. In 1244, he travelled to Damascus and met a Persian mystic, Shams-i Tabrizi (1185 – 1248). Rumi studied under Shams for four years, until Shams died under mysterious circumstances. The impact of Shams on Rumi was such that he credited all his later works to his influence.

All of this can be read in any account of Rumi and his life. What it doesn't tell us is why he remains an important influence more than 700 years after his death. Rumi is regarded as one of the greatest poets of all time, both within and outside the Islamic world. In spite of the present friction between Islam and the West, he is the best-selling poet in America.

Western culture is governed by logic. Logic, by its very nature, is dry and illogical, and our high regard for its values is accompanied by the assumption that our emotions are merely a subjective response and can teach us nothing. Rumi's poetry defies logic, by speaking from the heart - and to the heart - and in a way which is both insightful and instructive.

Who makes these changes?

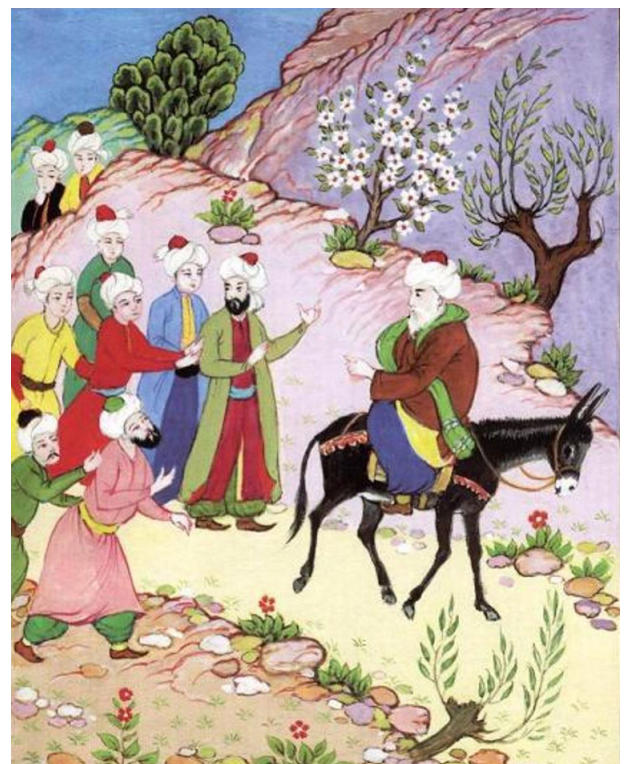
I shoot an arrow right,
It lands left.

I ride after a deer and find myself
chased by a hog.

I plot to get what I want
and end up in prison.

I dig pits to trap others
and fall in.

I should be suspicious
of what I want.



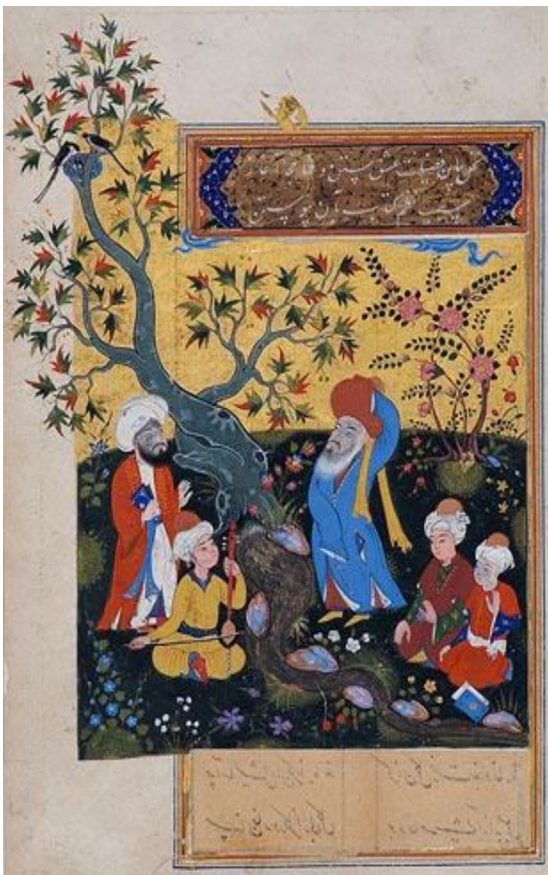
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What makes Rumi's poetry as relevant today as it was in the 13th Century, is that it is informed by wisdom. The term 'wisdom' is too vague for conventional logic, simply because logic operates under the assumption that we have adequate information to judge what is right and wrong. Wisdom is about seeing the bigger picture, about seeing beyond the obvious to what is presently excluded from our narrow-minded certainty.

Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing,
There is a field.
I'll meet you there.

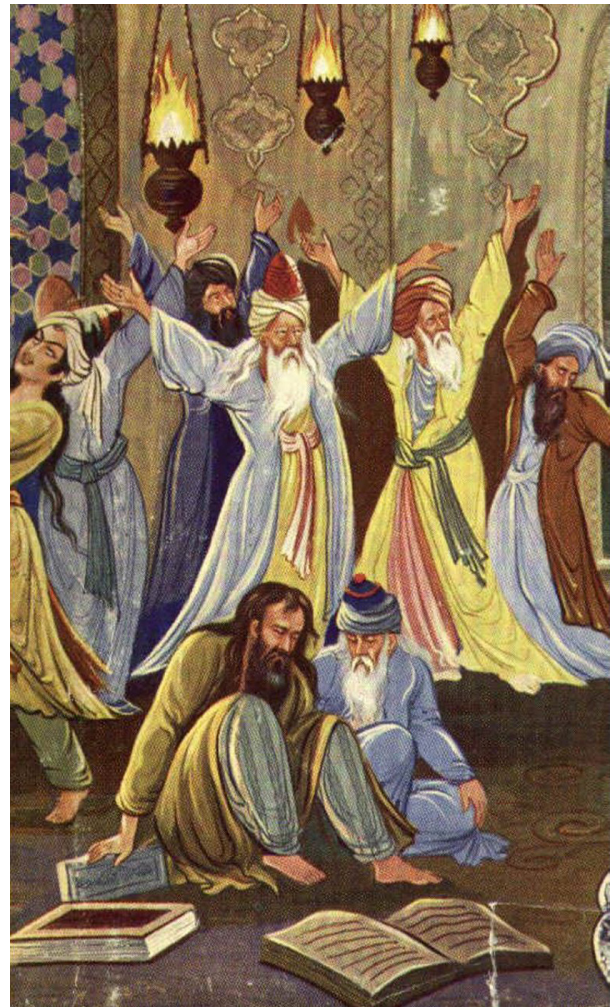
Because Rumi lived within an Islamic tradition, his poetry reflects that tradition and outlook, in the same way that Shakespeare's poetry reflected the Elizabethan period he operated in. But it would be wrong to say that Rumi's poetry was constrained by Islam, not least because if it was, non-Muslims wouldn't be able to relate to it. Nonetheless, when it does relate to Islam, it does so with the intention of throwing insight onto its principles.

If the wine drinker
Has a deep gentleness in him,
He will show that,
When drunk.
But if he has hidden anger and arrogance,
Those appear.
And since most people do,
Wine is forbidden to everyone.



In addition to his poetry, Rumi is remembered for inspiring the Order of the Mevlevi Dervishes. Early Western accounts of the Mevlevi Dervishes describe them as dancing in a 'frenzy of madness'. This view comes from a lack of understanding of the purpose of their particular form of dancing. The writer and thinker, P. D. Ouspensky (1878 - 1947), after travelling to Constantinople to witness the Dervishes himself, had the following to say about this 'madness':

'Involuntarily I began to think that this is what is described as a mad whirling which drives them into a frenzy! If there is anything in the world which is the complete opposite of frenzy, it is precisely this whirling. There was a system in it which I could not understand, but which made itself clearly felt, and, what was most important, there was some intellectual concentration and mental effort, as though they were not only turning, but at the same time solving difficult problems in their minds.'



This was in 1908, before Ouspensky came into contact with his own 'Shams', in the form of the mystic and teacher George Gurdjieff (c. 1866 - 1949). Gurdjieff's teaching drew much from

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Sufism, including its dance tradition. After being instructed in the methods employed by the Dervishes, Ouspensky returned to Constantinople, in 1920, after Russia had been torn by revolution, and Europe had been decimated by war. Constantinople too had changed.

'I could not be certain after twelve years, but it seemed to me that I recognised several faces. And now I knew more about them. I knew a part of their secret. I knew how they did it. I knew in what the mental work connected with the whirling consisted. Not the details of course, because only a man who takes part in the ceremonies or exercises can know the details. But I knew the principle. All this did not make the miracle less. It only came nearer and became more significant. And at the same time I understood why they do not reveal their secret. It is easy to tell what they do and how they do it. But in order to understand it fully one must first know why they do it.'



What cannot be conveyed in words is the inner state invoked by the dancing. This must be experienced. The ceremony of Dervish dancing

is called the 'Sama', which means 'listening'. The listening it refers to is listening to the hidden silence behind all things. In order to hear it, we must silence the chattering mind. Logic, rather than freeing us from the chattering mind, makes us slaves to it, and limits our experience of the world to what can be conveyed in words.

Why do you stay in prison
When the door is so wide open?
Move outside the tangle of fear-thinking.
Live in silence.

Perhaps that is why an academic approach to Rumi, based on formal reason and logic, misses the point of his work so much. Rumi speaks of the hidden silence, not as a mere theory, but directly, as though he was speaking out of it.

This is how it always is
when I finish a poem.
A great silence overcomes me,
and I wonder why I ever thought
to use language.

The division between logic and intuition, which is the hallmark of Western culture, has resulted in a disconnection between the emotions and the intellect. The emotions, as they are ordinarily expressed, often emerge in a violent and uncontrolled fashion, in an outburst of anger or a flood of tears or a gasp of fear; this is our common understanding of the emotions. The emotion which imbues Rumi's poetry is of an altogether different order. It is the emotion of ecstasy, and Rumi expresses it in both secular and religious language.

Last year, I admired wines.
This, I'm wandering inside the red world.
Last year, I gazed at the fire.
This year I'm a burnt kabob.

What distinguishes Rumi as an intuitive genius is the originality of his thought. Nothing of what Rumi expresses is second-hand. He does not rely on any authority for what he pronounces; he is that authority. The epithet given to him is 'Mevlana', which means 'Master'. Rumi's poetry is the very expression of 'heart-thinking', and of an intuitive mind of the highest order.

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Francisco Goya

sane man in a mad world



Francisco Goya was born in 1746, in the small town of Fuendetodos in Aragon, in northern Spain. He had clearly distinguished himself as an artist as a youth, and at 14 he was sent to study under the painter Jose Luzan (1710 – 1785). Luzan had both royal connections and church approval, and the association served Goya well. At 27 he married Josefa Bayeu, the sister of Francisco Bayeu, an artist who was employed making tapestries for King Charles III. Goya eventually became a court painter himself, and the position provided him with sufficient income to buy the degree of artistic freedom needed to create the works for which he is most remembered.

The context of the times in which he was born matters. Most of Goya's early paintings were religious, not for personal reasons, but because the Inquisition still exerted its authority over Spanish culture. The Inquisition had begun in France in the 13th century, and then spread to Spain, where it had attained a degree of ferocity. By the time of the 18th century, with the advent of the Enlightenment, the Church had lost some of its authority, and the more the secular values

of the Enlightenment began to inform Spanish culture, and so Goya was able to express his ideas without fear of being hauled up in front of the Inquisition.

The shift from a society governed by strict religious values to one governed by secular values is reflected in Goya's work, where religious themes give way to portraits, then social themes, and then finally to themes of war, brutality, and the human condition. Goya's career marked the transition from the formality of classical painting to the free expression of the modern era, to the point where he was described by his biographer, Robert Hughes (1938 – 2012), as 'the last Old Master and the first Modernist'.



Of what he thought, little is known from his writings beyond his personal letters, and they reveal little. And yet what he thought very clearly informed his paintings. Once he had earned the freedom to do so, he did not paint merely to please or to gain fortune, but as a means to inform and instruct.

The transition from the formality of his early works to the disturbing nature of his Black paintings (1819 - 1823) has led some to conclude that he became mad; indeed, Robert Hughes - while having much admiration for Goya - described him as 'crazy, like a genius'. And yet the portrayal of a strange and disturbing world

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does not imply Goya himself was mad, merely that he had a keen eye and an insightful mind. If the humanity that Goya painted was dark, it is because this element was visible to him, and he revealed it through his artwork.



While the transition from formal religious imagery to secular themes might imply that Goya was himself secular in his outlook, it would be wrong to assume he was at one with the rationalism of the period. If anything, Goya's later paintings portray the very elements of human nature which rationalism cannot address. Indeed, it is his expression of the unconscious and the irrational in human nature which marks him out as a truly modern painter. The more this darker element emerges, the more it invades everything he does.

Los Caprichos, or *The Caprices*, a set of prints published in 1799, cover a very dark subject matter, which include vanity, death, murder, war, and madness. What is more, by the end of the eighteenth century, Goya has clearly earned the freedom and respect to depict even the Inquisition in an unadorned manner. While many of *The Caprices* infer a meaning, the meaning is not always obvious or conventionally moral. Indeed there is, at times, something apocalyptic about them.



The Second of May Uprising in 1808, in which the citizens of Madrid revolted against the French forces in control of the city, occurred when Goya was 63. Goya depicted the scene in all its brutality, not for the purpose of shocking, but in all honesty. It was as though Goya was observing a mad world through the eyes of a dispassionate observer.

By the time Goya is in his seventies, the Black Paintings emerge. Now all convention is abandoned, and Goya has complete freedom to express himself. Even though the subject matter is far darker than even his *Caprices*, this is not the portrayal of darkness for the sake of shocking, but the portrayal of darkness for the sake of instruction.



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Which brings us to the question of his inclusion as an intuitive genius. Logic seeks to fix meaning through precise definitions, and any logician who could not say clearly what they meant would be a poor thinker. Intuition deals with the hidden, the unconscious and the unknown, which is why we use intuition to make decisions about the more important events in life. This also includes our understanding of the darker and hidden elements of human nature.



Rationalism cannot deal with the unconscious mind, simply because it is not subject to reason. This darker element of human nature has a hold over humanity by virtue of the fact that we do not see it directly. If reason cannot address this element of human nature, art can.

That is why Goya's non-commissioned works are more like parables than simple moral fables. They provoke a response, and continue to do so because their meaning cannot be resolved into a single definition. It is the nature of intuition to facilitate insight, and Goya's paintings do just that. While the rationalism of the Enlightenment gave us the Industrial Revolution, it also gave us the violent social revolutions which have been the source of so much destruction in the Modern Era. If we want to understand human nature, we must look beyond rationalism, and consider the

darker elements of human nature. And if we want to do that, Goya's paintings are a good place to start.



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- St. Francis and the dying man, 1788, Valencia Cathedral

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Paracelsus

doctor without equal



Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, better known as 'Paracelsus', was born in Hohenheim near Stuttgart, in Germany in 1493. It is uncertain whether the word 'bombastic' is derived from his name, but either way, his adopted name was chosen because it means 'greater than Celsus', the author of a 1st Century medical textbook, *De Medicina*, who at the time was regarded as the representative of the medical knowledge of the ancients.

Paracelsus' father was a physician with an extensive library. The library included the works of John Isaac of Holland (c. 14th century), a Flemish alchemist, who is said to have inspired Paracelsus' interest in alchemy and medicine. Paracelsus went on to study medicine at the University of Basel, after which he studied the alchemical and astrological writings of Johann Trithemius (1462 - 1516), although whether he studied directly under him is unknown. Upon completing his studies, he served as a surgeon in the army and travelled throughout Europe, before returning to Germany to practice

medicine, and then finally became a professor of medicine at the same university where he studied as a youth.

He spent much of his life challenging the orthodoxy of the day, in part owing to the originality of his thought and in part owing to his combative nature, and it made him many enemies. He was as forthright in his views as he was bold in his actions. As a student, he publicly burnt a volume of Avicenna's eleventh century *Canon of Medicine*, and then later in Salzburg (1525) he supported a rebellion of peasants, was arrested for it and only just escaped the death penalty.

An interesting account of his defiant nature can be found in *The Lives of the Alchemystical Philosophers* (1888) by Arthur Edward Waite. Waite records that at Basel University:

'With characteristic defiance he invited the faculty to a lecture, in which he promised to teach the greatest secret in medicine. He began by uncovering a dish which contained excrement. The doctors, indignant at the insult, departed precipitately, Paracelsus shouting after them 'If you will not hear the mysteries of putrefactive fermentation, you are unworthy of the name of physicians.'



Nuremberg in 1493

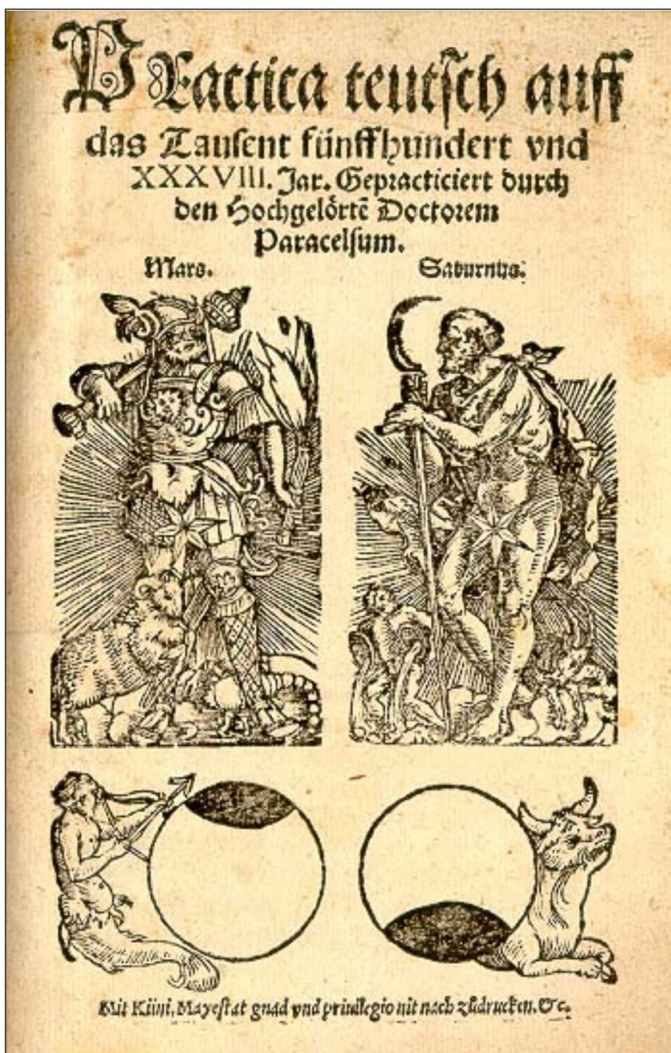
His whole approach was bold and uncompromising. He practiced medicine in the field, and often with little regard for his own safety. In the town of Sterzing in 1534 he treated the poor and dying, during an outbreak of plague. He pioneered clinical diagnosis, toxicology, and the use of antiseptics to keep wounds clean.

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Paracelsus' approach to medicine was broad-based and inclusive. His open-mindedness meant he drew on many sources for his knowledge, and would in no way allow himself to be limited by what was conventional or acceptable. The influence of alchemy on his thinking was such that he regarded all externals as the expression of a hidden and unseen cause.

'The peasant can see the externals, but the physician's task is to see the inner and secret matter. In order to make these things visible, Nature must be compelled to show itself... Take a piece of wood. It is a body. Now burn it. The flammable part is the Sulphur, the smoke is the Mercury, and the ash is the Salt.'

In addition to Alchemy, he incorporated the study of Astrology, dreams, divinations, magic and the Kabbalah in his writings. And yet he was not uncritical of these either. Of astrology, he wrote: 'The stars control nothing in us, suggest nothing, do not irritate us, incline to nothing, they are free from us and we are free from them.'



If it was not for the disdain with which his

unconventional views are held at the present time, Paracelsus would be widely regarded as one of the founding fathers of modern medicine. For all that, he is credited with founding the science of toxicology, and the adage 'the dose makes the poison' is derived from him.

His confrontational manner caused him to be bolder than most in attacking convention, and his unconventional character found expression even in his appearance, and it is recorded that, at times, he appeared like a wandering vagabond as he pursued his practice. He once said of his critics, 'Not one of you will remain in the hindmost corner upon whom the dogs will not crap!'



Even now, orthodox academia still finds him too unconventional to be given the approval and acknowledgement he deserves. John Maxson Stillman (1852 - 1923), who was the first head of the chemistry department at Stanford University, and wrote *The Story of Early Chemistry* (published

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1924), provides an example of how orthodox culture regards Paracelsus.

‘By nature, he was a keen and open-minded observer of whatever came under his observation, though probably also not a very critical analyst of the observed phenomena. He was evidently an unusually self-reliant and independent thinker, though the degree of originality in his thought may be a matter of legitimate differences of opinion.’

Those who are less constrained by orthodoxy see in Paracelsus a highly original thinker with a genuinely scientific mind. In his introduction to *Paracelsus' Essential Writings* (2008), Andrew Weeks, a professor of German literature at Illinois State University, tells us:

‘Science for Paracelsus is virtually the opposite of systematic observation. Immanent in nature, scientia reveals itself to inspired intuition.’

The problem was perhaps not that Paracelsus had an unconventional character, but that convention does not respect the inspired individual. Indeed, there is nothing more threatening to convention than a bold new idea. Once we challenge dogma, or the assertion of truth by a governing authority, then all thinking becomes reliant on observation and insight. This is the essence of intuitive thinking. We must weigh up each thought to see if it is valid - and we alone are responsible for making such a judgement. As Paracelsus put it:

‘They reproach me that my writings are not like theirs; that is the fault of their understanding, not my fault, for my writings are well-rooted in experiment and evidence.’

Paracelsus was more interested in the application of his ideas than in any discussion of his methodology. We might say that he was so naturally gifted with an intuitive mind that he was not aware it was peculiar to him. For that reason, Paracelsus fully deserves to be included as an example of an intuitive genius.

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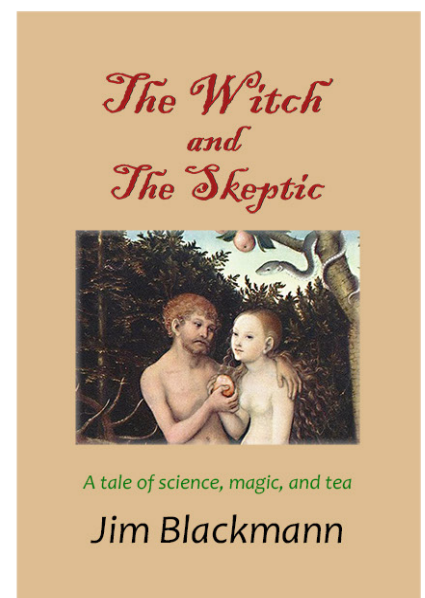
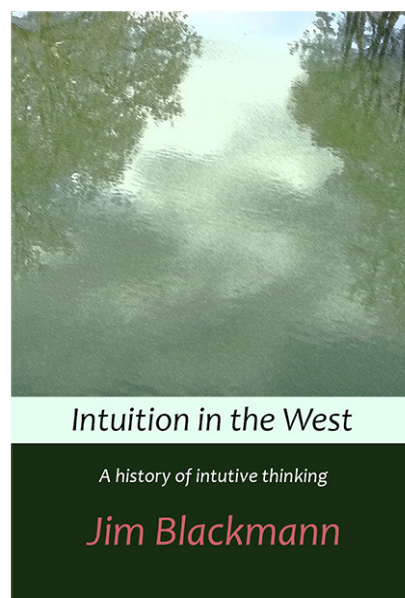
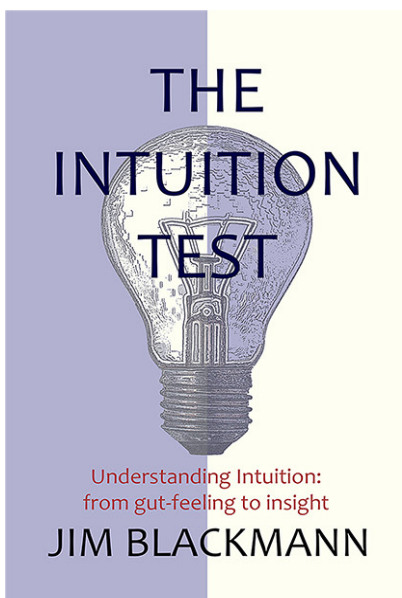
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Frontispiece illustrations from *The transformation of Paracelsianism 1500-1800: Alchemy, Chemistry and Medicine* Glasgow.

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William Blake

from the heart



William Blake was born in Soho, in London, in 1757. He was home schooled, clearly gifted as a child, and at the age of ten he was sent to study at a drawing school in the Strand. From there he became an apprentice to an established engraver, James Basire (1730 – 1802), where he studied for seven years before becoming a professional engraver in his own right at the age of twenty-one.

Everything about Blake's character suggests he was head-strong and governed wholly by the heart. The eighteenth century was eventful culturally and politically - providing the Enlightenment, the Encyclopédie, and the French and American revolutions - and Blake was neither ignorant nor unaffected by such events. It is recorded that, at the age of 23, on his way to Basire's studio, he was caught up in the Gordon Riots, and then, in the heat of the moment, found himself at the head of a mob marching to burn down Newgate Prison.

But it is for his art that Blake is most remembered. While the conditions of his life and times might explain his character to a degree,

it is his artwork which tells us most about Blake himself. What marks him out from the other artists and poets of the period is the visionary nature of his work. Blake was not interested in portraying the mundane or the conventional, but of expressing the content of his inner life through a combination of art and poetry - and his inner life was extraordinary.

He began to have vivid and striking visions - described as 'eidetic' because, for him, they were very real - from early childhood. They continued throughout his life, and many of his works of art, particularly where they are most personal, are an expression of this.



He was little recognised during his lifetime, and it was not until his first biographer, Alexander Gilchrist (1828 - 1861), published *The Life of William Blake*, that his life and work were reappraised. Gilchrist, an admirer, provides an interesting account of Blake's visionary nature in the chapter Mad or not Mad?

'To him all thought came with the clearness and veracity of vision. The conceptive faculty working

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with a perception of outward facts, singularly narrow and imperfect, projected every idea boldly into the sphere of the actual. What he thought, that he saw to all intents and purposes.'

Blake drew on mostly Christian imagery for his art and poetry, but he was by no means conventionally religious. His visions, central to his character and outlook, meant he identified with other visionaries - themselves unorthodox - such as Paracelsus (1493 - 1541) and Jacob Boehme (1575 - 1624).



The world of his imagination was, for him, as real as anything in the outer world. He took the view that this capacity for visionary seeing was not unique to him, but something possessed by everyone. Gilchrist tell us:

'He said the things imagination saw were as much realities as were gross and tangible facts. He would tell his artist-friends, 'You have the same faculty as I (the visionary), only you do not trust or cultivate it. You can see what I do, if you choose.'

He was highly informed of the movements and events of the period, and clearly knew about the Encyclopédistes and their inherent atheism. He called Voltaire and Rousseau 'Pharisees and Hypocrites' for their involvement with them. For Blake, simple mechanics could not explain the nature of the world, and in his *There is no Natural Religion* (1788) he wrote:

'Man's perceptions are not bounded by organs of

perception, he perceives more than sense (tho' ever so acute) can discover.'



Emotion imbued everything Blake did. He drew, wrote and painted with his heart. There is not a thought he expressed he did not wholly believe, and he expressed every thought without fear or favour. Initially at least, he identified with the theologian Emanuel Swedenborg (1688 - 1772), but he came to reject Swedenborg's dry doctrinal outlook and he expressed this dissatisfaction in his *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790):

'Now hear a plain fact: Swedenborg has not written one new truth. Now hear another: he has written all the old falsehoods.'

What marks out William Blake as an intuitive genius was the originality of his thought. Everything about his outlook is drawn from his personal experience, and little, if anything, is drawn from received wisdom. One of his earliest works, *All Religions are One* (1788), begins with the following statement:

'As the true method of Knowledge is Experiment, the true faculty of knowing must be the faculty which experiences.'

Blake's dream-like visions, his highly emotional nature and his original outlook all mark him out as a highly intuitive thinker. His expressive character meant he was accused of being mad,

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and yet attempts to explain his behaviour as a form of madness fail to acknowledge the extent of his creative output, much of which was the product of his visions. If he had a fault, it was that he would not bend to convention. Rather than being considered mad, William Blake is better understood as someone who, by their very nature, expressed more than the narrow-minded rationalism of the age would allow. His depiction of Isaac Newton (1795) – whom he regarded as its representative – had Newton staring down into the limited perspective of a compass, failing to see the greater world around him. Blake wrote: 'May God us keep, from Single vision and Newton's sleep.'

Blake was by no means the product of single vision; indeed, all that he produced was a combination of the inner life and the outer world. For him, both were real, and only the inclusion of both could represent the world as a whole. In his *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790 - 1793), he wrote:

'A fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees.'

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Alexander Gilchrist, *The Life of William Blake* (London: Bodley Head, 1907), p. 339.



But listen to me:
for one moment,
quit being sad. Hear blessings
dropping their blossoms
around you.

Rumi