

Clovis Hestean de Nuysement

Sal Lumen and Spiritus Mundi Philosophici

*Treatises on the True Salt and the Universal Spirit of the
World
A new English translation from the complete French text of
1621
With French text annotations and study apparatus*

Diotimos Editions

2026

All three books with preliminary texts nine sonnets and original errata.

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Edition Statement

Diotimos Editions · 2026

A new English translation from the complete textual contents of the selected Paris printing of 1621, with a French reading text, annotations and study apparatus. All three books, nine sonnets, preliminary texts and original errata are included.

Clovis Hestean de Nuysement.

The familiar title *Sal Lumen and Spiritus Mundi Philosophici* identifies this edition with the work published in English in 1657. Its governing source is the fuller French *Traitez de l'harmonie et constitution generale du vray sel* of 1621. The separate eighty-page *Poeme philosophic* of 1620 is outside this edition.

The historical source words are in the public domain. The new English translation and editorial contributions were prepared with AI assistance for Diotimos Editions. The universal-spirit plate referred to in the preliminaries has not been located in the governing scan and is not reproduced.

Introduction

A Living World

Nuysement begins with a claim whose consequences occupy the whole book: the world is alive. Life extends through the heavens, the earth and the bodies generated within them. Plants grow, animals move, and minerals acquire their distinctive forms through a power distributed throughout nature. To understand any particular thing, the reader must therefore ask how it participates in that larger activity. The question leads from the visible body towards the spirit that moves and sustains it, and from a familiar substance towards the conditions under which substances become possible.¹

This account gives the philosophers' salt an unusually demanding role. Salt is to explain how an active, universal principle can acquire a body while retaining its power. It is also to make intelligible a practice: the separation, purification and concentration through which an operator seeks a medicine. Cosmology and the work of the vessel continually refer to one another. An explanation of the heavens can prepare a claim about matter under heat; an account of a prepared substance can return the reader to the order of creation.

The book's ambition is consequently larger than the identification of an ingredient. It asks what holds a world together, how life becomes particular, and how the powers dispersed through nature might be brought into a usable form. Its answers belong to an early seventeenth-century natural philosophy whose terms require patient attention. The present introduction follows the argument in those terms. Descriptions of efficacy are treated as the author's claims; the relations among his explanations, examples and images remain available for the reader to examine.

Nuysement and the Book of 1621

The governing witness is the Paris printing whose title page bears the date 1621 and names Jérémie Périer and Abdias Buisard. It describes the work as gathered by the sieur de Nuisement, receiver-general of the county of Ligny in Barrois. Modern institutional catalogues identify the author as Clovis Hesteau de Nuysement. The surname appears in several historical spellings, and older catalogues also supplied the name Jacques. Wellcome's description explicitly corrects that identification.

¹. Book I opens by arguing that the world is alive, then distinguishes spirit, soul and body. The account here is an editorial reading of that sequence, rather than an independent endorsement of its natural claims. Sources: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k656273>; <https://resources.warburg.sas.ac.uk/pdf/fgh5802b3217134.pdf>.

The printed title and the corrected catalogue evidence support a cautious attribution without requiring an embellished biography.²

The date needs comparable care. The privilege reproduced in the volume was granted in November 1620; the title page reads 1621. These statements record different events. Permission to print can precede the date announced by the finished book. A separate *Poème philosophic* concerning mineral physics was published in 1620 and is sometimes bound with the treatise. Its existence does not turn the title-page date of this witness into 1620, nor make that separately issued work an unannounced part of the present translation.³

The volume presents itself through several voices before its argument begins: the privilege, a reader's poem concerning the figure of the universal spirit, a chapter table, a dedication to the Duke of Lorraine and Bar, and a preface. These preliminaries establish the work's claims to protection, patronage and attention. The word 'gathered' on the title page also deserves to remain visible. It places the speaker among earlier authorities and materials; it gives no warrant for assigning every quotation or doctrine in the collection to a single inventor.

The Third Principle and the Cosmopolite

The French title places the treatise in relation to the third principle of the Cosmopolite. That designation supplies an intellectual lineage before it supplies a securely identified person. The title of Combach's Latin version makes the association more explicit, naming Michael Sendivogius with the qualification that this is the commonly received identification. The cautious wording matters. It records the way the work was presented within its own transmission; it cannot by itself settle every question about the authorship or composition of the writings circulating under the Cosmopolite's name.⁴

Within Nuysement's argument, the proposed continuation concerns salt. Mercury and sulphur provide a vocabulary for aspects of generation and change; salt is brought forward as a principle through which the relation between an active spirit and an enduring body can be

² The 1621 title page is PDF page 4 of the BnF reproduction available through Warburg. For the correction of Jacques to Clovis Hesteau de Nuysement, see Wellcome's note on its 1657 English copy. Sources: <https://resources.warburg.sas.ac.uk/pdf/fgh5802b3217134.pdf>; <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/nw727we8>.

³ The privilege is dated 6 November 1620. The separate *Poème philosophic* has its own 1620 imprint and an independent Wellcome record. Sources: <https://resources.warburg.sas.ac.uk/pdf/fgh5802b3217134.pdf>; <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/b25xtx6h>.

⁴ The French title names the third principle of the Cosmopolite. The actual 1651 Latin title page, Google image PP7, presents a supplement to that awaited principle and qualifies the association with Michael Sendivogius as commonly believed. This is evidence for the edition's framing, not proof of authorship or personal collaboration. Sources: <https://resources.warburg.sas.ac.uk/pdf/fgh5802b3217134.pdf>; <https://books.google.com/books?id=uCVnVywqslsC&pg=PP7>.

explored. The reader should attend to the explanatory work of these names. Their meanings emerge from the processes and qualities attributed to them. A modern chemical label, introduced too quickly, would decide questions that the historical account is still asking.

The promise of a third principle also shapes the book's rhetoric. Nuysement offers to complete or make accessible something insufficiently disclosed. Yet his exposition repeatedly requires discrimination between an ordinary material, a prepared subject and the universal power said to operate through both. The apparent openness of the promise coexists with the difficulty of recognising its referent. This tension helps explain the sustained argument: the author needs a reader capable of following relations among things, rather than merely collecting names that appear to reveal a secret.

The Shape of the Complete French Text

The actual arrangement of the French body is more informative than its chapter table. Book I contains nine chapters. Book II contains four, although the printed table lists only three. Its fourth chapter begins on printed page 203 with the ascent of the spirit into heaven and its descent into earth. Book III begins on printed page 305, after the preceding discourse has reached a formal conclusion. Following the body rather than repairing it to fit an incomplete table preserves the author's sequence.⁵

Book I establishes the living world, its spirit and its first matter, then considers the sun, moon, air and earth as participants in generation. Book II follows embodiment, the conversion of spirit into earth, separation, and the movement between higher and lower regions. These divisions give the reader a route from a general account of nature towards the conditions of an operation. They do not eliminate repetition: a subject returns because a later claim requires its earlier explanation to be reconsidered.

Book III adds a further approach. Its magnificent prince and sumptuous palace introduce an analogy of resources, hidden chambers and access. The prose continues the exposition, while verse changes the pace and manner of instruction. The complete French witness also preserves nine concluding sonnets, including a poetic treatment of Hermes' table and summaries of major arguments. Their headings belong to the reading sequence. Keeping them makes it possible to see how the work compresses, recasts and finally gathers its account, instead of allowing

⁵. Direct source inspection establishes II.4 at printed p. 203 (PDF page 223). The end of II and beginning of III share printed p. 305 (PDF page 305), owing to the original's irregular pagination. Sources: <https://resources.warburg.sas.ac.uk/pdf/fgh5802b3217134.pdf>.

the ending familiar from another language to determine the limits of the French book.⁶

Spirit, Salt and Embodiment

The universal spirit is difficult to describe because it must account for both continuity and difference. It gives life throughout the world, yet an animal, a plant and a mineral possess different forms and capacities. Nuysement therefore considers how a general power becomes specified within particular bodies. The question is more exacting than a declaration that everything is connected. He needs to explain how a common source of activity can produce and sustain things that remain distinct.⁷

Salt occupies the meeting point of activity and persistence. The exposition follows a spirit towards corporeal form and asks how its virtue can remain within the resulting earth. 'Earth' consequently requires attention to context: it can name a region of the world, an element or a condition reached during the work. 'Spirit' can indicate an active power and something described through the behaviour of a prepared material. The vocabulary moves between an account of the universe and an account of particular operations; recognising the movement is essential to following the argument.

The parental language applied to sun and moon places generation within the same scheme. The air bears or contains the spirit, and the earth nourishes it. These relations draw authority from the sayings attributed to Hermes. They also offer a pattern for the operator, who must receive, separate and conserve rather than simply exert force. The book gives particular importance to retaining a subtle virtue through changes of state. A body that appears purified must still be understood through what has entered it, what has departed, and what remains capable of acting.

Hermes' Table and the Work of Separation

The short text associated with Hermes Trismegistus and commonly called the Emerald Table provides an organising authority. Nuysement develops its relations of above and below, generation, separation, ascent and return through a much longer exposition. The table functions as an object of commentary: its compact propositions demand an explanation

⁶. Book III opens on printed p. 305; the text and concluding poetic material continue to printed p. 332, followed by errata. The precise sequence of headings, rather than an inferred modern outline, governs this edition. Sources: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k656273>; <https://resources.warburg.sas.ac.uk/pdf/fgh5802b3217134.pdf>.

⁷. See Book I, especially the chapters on the universal spirit, its first matter and its specification to bodies; Book II then treats embodiment and the persistence of virtue in earth. These paragraphs interpret the sequence without supplying modern substance-identifications. Sources: <https://resources.warburg.sas.ac.uk/pdf/fgh5802b3217134.pdf>.

of what can act, what can receive that action, and how a single course of transformation can unite apparently distant regions.⁸

Separation is especially revealing. It makes a usable distinction within a mixture and prepares the possibility of reunion in a more effective form. The author's concern with the subtle and the dense, with accidental impurities and a substance's proper power, repeatedly qualifies the action of fire. Heat must suit the subject and the intended stage. In this account the operator learns from nature's ordering activity, seeking to reproduce an intelligible sequence within a restricted material setting.⁹

The argument also uses fable, poetry and reported examples. Such passages call for local judgment. An analogy can explain a relation without identifying an ingredient; an authoritative quotation can support a claim without independently proving an operation. Reading each example according to its role preserves more of the work's reasoning than a single interpretative key would allow. Its difficulties are often productive: the reader must determine which feature of a story, natural process or inherited saying carries the comparison at that particular point.

Purification and the Christian Analogy

The ascent-and-descent chapter gives Christian language a sustained explanatory task. Corruption threatens a compound body and the spirit lodged within it; a remedy must reach the condition in which both are involved. The account turns to the incarnation, the union of divine and human natures, and the restoration of humanity through Christ. These subjects are developed through distinctions already important to the natural argument: mediation, participation, corruption and the relation between higher and lower things.¹⁰

The comparison requires care because its force depends on what is being compared. Nuysement's Christian purifier and natural purifier are related within his exposition, but every property is not thereby transferred indiscriminately from one to the other. The reader should follow the particular steps by which a remedy, a conjunction or a purification becomes explanatory. The text's religious claims deserve the same precision as its treatment of matter. Reducing them to a

⁸. Hermes' table is invoked throughout the prose and receives explicit poetic treatment among the concluding sonnets. "Emerald Table" is used here as the familiar English designation of that attributed text, without asserting its authorship by a historical Egyptian sage. Sources: <https://resources.warburg.sas.ac.uk/pdf/fgh5802b3217134.pdf>.

⁹. Book II's separation chapter and its ascent-and-descent chapter supply the principal sequence discussed here. Exact technical readings remain tied to their French passages. Sources: <https://resources.warburg.sas.ac.uk/pdf/fgh5802b3217134.pdf>.

¹⁰. Book II, chapter IV, begins on French printed p. 203 and develops the creator/corruption/remedy argument. Its heading and incipit correspond to the chapter beginning on p. 160 of Turner's English printing, consulted only as a transmission control. Sources: <https://resources.warburg.sas.ac.uk/pdf/fgh5802b3217134.pdf>; <https://www.e-rara.ch/cgj/content/structure/1507169>.

general language of personal improvement would obscure their stated theological content.¹¹

Ethical judgment accompanies this account of knowledge. False practitioners, credulous seekers and the desire for gain appear within the discussion of error. The book asks how an operator can distinguish a real principle from a misleading appearance, and how knowledge should be sought and used. Its religious and moral vocabulary gives those questions a larger setting. That setting helps explain why the work moves so readily among natural philosophy, medicine, scriptural interpretation and the conduct of its reader.

Latin, Printed English and Manuscript English

Ludwig Combach's *Latin Tractatus de vero sale* appeared at Kassel in 1651. Its third book begins on page 190 with the prince-and-palace analogy found in the French. The later pages preserve further prose, quoted French verse and Latin renderings, and an authorial concluding French sonnet followed by Combach's Latin imitation. This is positive evidence for a third-book transmission. It does not establish that the Latin reproduces every French poetic unit or every detail of the first two books.¹²

Robert Turner's *Sal, Lumen, & Spiritus Mundi Philosophici* appeared in London in 1657. Its title advertises the passage from French through Latin into English. The two-book body ends on page 220 with the retreat from the ocean of inquiry and the concluding wishes that correspond to the end of French Book II. Turner's dedication, reader's address and commendatory poems give the English printing its own setting. The difference in extent is clear; the surviving witnesses alone do not establish responsibility for every omission or change.¹³

A separate English manuscript gives another reason for caution. Penn Libraries' Ms. Codex 501 is catalogued as a translation from the first French edition and dated to the second half of the seventeenth century. It contains three books; its third begins with the same palace analogy. The manuscript provides a valuable control for difficult readings and

¹¹. The concluding sonnet on ascent and descent explicitly joins that movement with the conformity of the divine and natural purifiers. The comparison made here remains an interpretation of the work's own stated relations. Sources: <https://resources.warburg.sas.ac.uk/pdf/fgh5802b3217134.pdf>.

¹². 1651 Latin: Book III at p. 190; authorial concluding sonnet at pp. 209–210; Latin imitation at pp. 210–212; index on the following leaves. The ending was checked in original page images. Sources: <https://books.google.com/books?id=uCVnVywqslsC&pg=PA190>; <https://books.google.com/books?id=uCVnVywqslsC&pg=PA209>; <https://books.google.com/books?id=uCVnVywqslsC&pg=PT4>.

¹³. 1657 Harrison issue: e-rara facsimile and EEBO-TCP A52581. Wellcome describes the Ekins title-page issue as apparently a reissue. No line-by-line equivalence with the French is asserted here. Sources: <https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-5033>; <https://raw.githubusercontent.com/textcreationpartnership/A52581/master/A52581.xml>; <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/nw727we8>.

for the fuller work's English reception. Its date range does not establish priority over Turner, and its existence rules out any casual assertion that Book III has never previously been translated into English.¹⁴

Poetry, Evidence and the Present Reading

The French witness governs the present translation so that its full arrangement can be read in English without passing through the limits of a later printed version. Its prose and verse retain their different forms. The sonnets offer compression, recurrence and changes of emphasis: a relation developed across many pages can return within a short poetic argument. Their usefulness extends beyond summary. They show what the work chooses to make memorable, and how its philosophical claims are made to occupy more than one kind of discourse.¹⁵

The accompanying notes distinguish a source identification, an uncertain reading and an interpretation. They explain a technical or scriptural reference where evidence permits, while preserving a difficulty that remains unresolved. An elusive name is not silently exchanged for a modern formula, and an attractive parallel is not treated as proof of direct borrowing. The purpose is to make the reader's encounter with the French argument more exact. Its promises, qualifications, repetitions and unresolved questions deserve to remain visible together.

¹⁴ Penn's catalogue describes Books I–III at manuscript pp. 1–141; the third-book heading and palace opening are visible at p. 126. Sources:

<https://openn.library.upenn.edu/Data/0002/html/mscodex501.html>;

https://openn.library.upenn.edu/Data/0002/mscodex501/data/web/2506_0143_web.jpg.

¹⁵ The present edition's scope is the complete text of the selected 1621 French volume: its preliminaries, three books, concluding sonnets and printed errata sheets. The separately issued 1620 *Poeme philosophic* is distinct. Image completeness is a separate question, addressed in the note on the text. Sources: <https://resources.warburg.sas.ac.uk/pdf/fgh5802b3217134.pdf>; <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/b25tx6h>.

Note on the Text and Translation

The governing source is the Paris printing of 1621, *Traitez de l'harmonie et constitution generale du vray sel, secret des Philosophes, & de l'Esprit universelle du Monde*, issued by Jérémie Périér and Abdias Buisard. The BnF/Gallica reproduction identified by ark:/12148/bpt6k656273 supplies the principal reading witness. The date follows its title page; the privilege reproduced in the volume is dated 6 November 1620. A separate *Poème philosophic* issued in 1620 is outside the boundaries of this volume, even though an errata heading here refers to that publication.¹⁶

The translation includes the surviving preliminary texts, all three books, the concluding sonnets and the printed errata sheets of the selected witness. Book I has nine chapters; Book II has four in the body, although its original table omits the fourth. The third book begins on printed page 305. Original headings establish the divisions. The chapter table is translated as it stands, with its omission explained; it is not silently rewritten to conceal a difference between the table and the body.

The French is presented as a reading transcription. Historical vocabulary and spelling are retained, while typographic long s is represented as ordinary s, typographical u/v and i/j are normalised where required for legibility, and words divided solely by a line ending are joined. Catchwords, signatures and running titles are omitted from continuous prose. These conventions do not authorise grammatical rewriting. A clear compositor's error may be corrected with a recorded explanation; a doubtful letter, sign or damaged passage remains identified as uncertain until the image or another witness resolves it. Machine transcription serves only as a locating and drafting aid.

The English is newly translated from the governing French. It aims to retain the complete argument, qualifications, examples, repetitions, addresses and changes of form in readable present-day English, using British spelling. Long sentences may be divided where their logical relations remain clear. The 1651 Latin printing, Turner's 1657 English and Penn's seventeenth-century English manuscript are controls for comparison. A reading offered by one of them is assessed against the French passage and documented where consequential. Earlier English wording does not supply the translation by substitution.¹⁷

¹⁶ Governing title page and privilege: PDF pages 4–5 of the BnF reproduction supplied through the Warburg Institute. The title controls the imprint date. Sources: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k656273>; <https://resources.warburg.sas.ac.uk/pdf/fgh5802b3217134.pdf>.

¹⁷ The Latin title and Book III were checked in original images. Penn's description dates its manuscript broadly and does not name a translator. The comparison witnesses are not represented as interchangeable copies of the French. Sources:

Technical words are rendered in context. Spirit, soul, body, salt, sulphur, mercury, tincture, fixation and related terms retain a historical range where a modern identification would add an unproved conclusion. The same word may name a principle, a quality or a prepared material at different points. Notes explain such changes when the local evidence permits. No modern chemical formula, ingredient, temperature or quantity is supplied to complete a historical direction. The author's reported successes and therapeutic assertions remain attributable to the source.

Latin and Greek passages retain their identity and are accompanied by an English sense. Significant uncertainties in their printed form are recorded rather than silently repaired from a familiar quotation. Biblical and classical passages are translated from the wording transmitted in the French witness; references identify a likely source and explain a material discrepancy where necessary. A modern Bible translation or a different classical edition is not silently inserted in place of Nuysement's quotation. Marginal material is preserved and placed where its relation to the prose can be recognised.

Verse remains distinct from prose. The sonnets preserve the sequence of their arguments and, where the source permits, their line structure and stanza organisation. Sonnets retain fourteen substantive verse lines; printer's wraps within a line are joined. The translation gives priority to meaning, imagery and rhetorical movement over an imposed English rhyme scheme. Short quoted verses remain identifiable as quotations. New explanatory headings, outlines and notes belong to the editorial apparatus and are distinguished from translated source material. An interpretation in a note states its basis and does not become an unmarked addition to the author's voice.

Printed page numbers accompany the translated units, together with source-image locators where needed. The French witness contains irregular numbering and omitted numerical ranges; an apparent jump does not by itself establish missing text. Image position and printed page label are therefore recorded separately. The end of Book II and beginning of Book III occur on the same printed page 305. These locators allow a reading to be checked at the appropriate heading and paragraph, instead of relying on an unqualified page count.¹⁸

One visual element requires an explicit reservation. The preliminary reader's poem refers to a figure of the universal spirit, and the Wellcome catalogue describes an engraved plate. A separate matching

<https://books.google.com/books?id=uCVnVywqIsC&pg=PP7>;
<https://books.google.com/books?id=uCVnVywqIsC&pg=PA190>; <https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-5033>; <https://openn.library.upenn.edu/Data/0002/html/mscodex501.html>.

¹⁸. Wellcome notes pagination errors and omitted numerical ranges without loss of text. The source images, rather than a reconstructed consecutive count, determine the order. Sources: <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/hngymnr>;
<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/j7xjuhmu>.

plate has not been located in the BnF reproduction used for the text. The surviving poem is translated, and the gap in the image evidence is reported. No imagined reconstruction is presented as the missing original, and this edition makes no claim to supply a complete original plate suite. Source-scan reproduction is treated separately from transcription and translation; BnF images are not presented as commercially cleared.¹⁹

For continuous reading, the prose of Book III follows its printed page order. In the consulted scan, four unnumbered sonnets intervene between printed pages 326 and 327, even splitting the word *engloutisse*, and another four intervene between pages 330 and 331. Those eight poems and the final sonnet on printed page 332 are presented together after Book III, in their preserved sequence. Their original image locations remain attached to each poem. No prose or verse is omitted by this rearrangement.

Stable passage identifiers link the translation, notes and study apparatus. FR image identifiers refer to positions in the 342-page digital PDF, including its added wrappers; they are image locators rather than historical line numbers. French and English follow one another in aligned passages. The English-only EPUB retains all translated historical sections, including preliminaries and both errata lists, while omitting the French, new notes, outlines and study apparatus.

¹⁹. The physical French record describes an engraved plate; the selected scan has not established its survival there. BnF's stated commercial-reproduction policy requires separate attention. No clearance is inferred from public online access. Sources: <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/hngyrmnr>; <https://www.bnf.fr/fr/faire-une-utilisation-commerciale-dune-reproduction>.

Original Preliminary Texts

The Original Title Page

Traitez de l'harmonie et constitution generale du vray sel

Chapter outline

The title identifies true salt, the universal spirit, the Cosmopolite and chymical medicine.

Nuysement describes his role as compiler and names his office.

The Paris imprint is dated 1621.

SL_TITLES001 1621 Unnumbered title page · scans FR004

TRAITTEZ DE L'HARMONIE ET CONSTITUTION GENERALE DU VRAY SEL, secret des Philosophes, & de l'Esprit universelle du Monde, suivant le troisieme Principe du Cosmopolite.

OEUVRE NON MOINS CURIEUX que profitable, traittant de la cognoissance de la vraye medecine Chimique.

Recueilly par le sieur de NUISEMENT, Receveur general du Comté de Ligny en Barrois.

A PARIS. Chez IEREMIE PERIER ET ABDIAS BUISARD, tenans leur boutique à la Cour du Palais vers les Horlogers. M. DC. XXI. AVEC PRIVILEGE DU ROY.

TREATISES ON THE HARMONY AND GENERAL CONSTITUTION OF THE TRUE SALT, the secret of the philosophers, and of the universal spirit of the world, following the third principle of the Cosmopolite.

A WORK AS CURIOUS AS IT IS USEFUL, treating the knowledge of true chymical medicine.

Compiled by the Sieur de Nuysement, receiver general of the County of Ligny in Barrois.

PARIS. At the shop of Jérémie Périer and Abdias Buisard, in the Cour du Palais near the clockmakers. 1621. WITH THE KING'S PRIVILEGE.^{20,21}

²⁰ The name on the title is Nuisement. Institutional catalogues identify the compiler as Clovis Hestean de Nuysement, correcting an older attribution to Jacques de Nuisement. The English title *Sal, lumen, et spiritus mundi philosophici* belongs to Turner's 1657 printing; it is retained as the present edition's familiar identifying title. Source: <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/nw727we8>

²¹ The Roman numeral imprint is MDCXXI, 1621. The privilege dated 6 November 1620 on the following page is a different bibliographical event. 'Chymical' preserves the historical connection between alchemical philosophy, preparations and medicine without equating them with a modern chemical discipline.

Extract from the Royal Privilege

Extrait du Privilege du Roy

Chapter outline

Périer receives exclusive permission to print and sell the book for six years.

The privilege is dated 6 November 1620 and signed Bergeron.

SL_PRIVILEGES001 1621 Unnumbered preliminary page · scans FR005

Par grace & Privilege du Roy il est permis à Ieremie Perier marchand Libraire en l'Université de Paris, de faire imprimer, vendre & distribuer un livre intitulé Traitez de l'Harmonie & constitution generale du vray Sel, secret des Philosophes, & de l'esprit universel du monde, suivant le troisieme Principe du Cosmopolite: Composé par le sieur de Nuisement, Receveur general du Comté de Ligny en Barrois. Avec deffences à tous Libraires, Imprimeurs & Relieurs, d'imprimer ou faire imprimer, vendre & distribuer autres que ceux que ledit Perier aura fait imprimer jusques au temps & terme de six ans finis & accomplis, à peine de huit cens livres d'amende, moitié applicable au Roy, & l'autre moitié audit exposant: ainsi qu'il est plus amplement contenu és lettres de Privilege donnees à Paris le sixiesme jour de Novembre, mil six cens vingt: signees,

Par le Conseil,
BERGERON.

By the King's grace and privilege, Jérémie Périer, bookseller of the University of Paris, is permitted to have printed, sell and distribute a book entitled Treatises on the Harmony and General Constitution of the True Salt, the Secret of the Philosophers, and of the Universal Spirit of the World, Following the Third Principle of the Cosmopolite, composed by the Sieur de Nuyement, receiver general of the County of Ligny in Barrois. All booksellers, printers and binders are forbidden to print, have printed, sell or distribute any copies other than those which the said Périer shall have had printed, until the full term of six years has expired, under penalty of a fine of eight hundred livres, half payable to the King and the other half to the petitioner, as is more fully set out in the letters of privilege granted at Paris on the sixth day of November, sixteen hundred and twenty, signed:

By the Council,
BERGERON.²²

²² The privilege records a historical royal printing monopoly. Its six-year term and penalty belong to the 1620 grant and impose no present restriction on this new edition of the historical text. A livre here is a unit of account, not a weight.

To the Reader on the Figure of the Universal Spirit of the World

Au Lecteur sur la figure de l'Esprit general du monde

Chapter outline

A six-line riddle asks the reader to alter a six-letter anatomical name.

Its heading refers to a figure of the universal spirit.

SL_READERS001 1621 Unnumbered preliminary verse · scans FR006

Il est une partie en l'homme,
Dont le nom six lettres consomme:
Ausquelles un p adjoustant,
Puis s en m permutant:
Tu trouveras sans nuls ambages,
Le vray nom du subiect des sages.

There is a part within the human body
Whose name takes up six letters:
Add a p to those letters,
Then change s into m:
You will find, without ambiguity,
The true name of the subject of the sages.^{23,24}

²³. A solution is the Latin LUMBUS, 'loin'. Prefix P to obtain PLUMBUS and replace the final S with M to obtain PLUMBUM, 'lead'. This explains the letter operation; it does not by itself establish that every occurrence of philosophical matter in the treatise means ordinary lead. For the Latin meanings see Lewis and Short, entries lumbus and plumbum:

<https://logeion.uchicago.edu/lumbus> ;
https://atlas.perseus.tufts.edu/dictionaries/entry/urn%3Acite2%3Aascaife-viewer%3Adictionary-entries.atlas_v1%3Aatls.perseus-eng2-n36718/

²⁴. The heading refers to a figure. Wellcome catalogues an engraved plate in a copy of the 1621 edition, but the plate has not been located in the BnF scan used for this reading text. The verse is retained in full; no modern reconstruction is presented as the missing original. Source:

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/j7xjuhmu>

The Original Chapter Tables

Tables des chapitres

Chapter outline

The first treatise lists nine chapters.

The second table lists three chapters and the concluding third book.

The actual body also contains Book II Chapter Four.

SL_CONTENTSS001 1621 Unnumbered preliminary tables · scans FR007

TABLE DES CHAPITRES du premier Traicté de l'Esprit general du monde.

Que le monde est vif, & plein de vie, Chap. 1. fol. 1.

Que le monde puisqu'il vit, a Esprit, Ame & Corps, Chap. 2. fol. 17.

Que tout ce qui a essence & vie, est fait par l'Esprit du monde, & de la premiere matiere, Chap. 3. fol. 21.

Comme le Soleil est dit par Hermes pere de l'Esprit du monde, & de la matiere, Ch. 4. fol. 25.

Comment la Lune est mere de l'Esprit du monde, & de la matiere universelle, Ch. 5. fol. 37.

Que la racine de l'Esprit du monde est en l'Air, Chap. 6. fol. 43.

Comment la terre nourrit cet Esprit universel, Chap. 7. fol. 48.

Que cet Esprit du monde est cause de la perfection en tous, Chap. 8. fol. 51.

De la specification de l'Esprit universel aux Corps, Chap. 9. fol. 57.

TABLE OF CHAPTERS in the first treatise on the universal spirit of the world.

That the world is living and full of life. Chapter 1, page 1.

That the world, since it lives, has spirit, soul and body. Chapter 2, page 17.

That everything which has being and life is made by the spirit of the world and from first matter. Chapter 3, page 21.

How the sun is called by Hermes the father of the spirit of the world and of matter. Chapter 4, page 25.

How the moon is the mother of the spirit of the world and of universal matter. Chapter 5, page 37.

That the root of the spirit of the world is in the air. Chapter 6, page 43.

How the earth nourishes this universal spirit. Chapter 7, page 48.

That this spirit of the world is the cause of perfection in all things.

Chapter 8, page 51.

Of the specification of the universal spirit in bodies. Chapter 9, page 57.

SL_CONTENTSS002 1621 Unnumbered preliminary tables · scans FR008

TABLE DU SECOND Traicté.

Que l'Esprit du Monde prend corps, & comment il se corporifie, Chap. 1. fol. 63.

De la Conversion de cet Esprit en terre, & comment en cette terre sa vertu demeure entiere, Chap. 2. fol. 79.

De la separation du feu d'avec la terre, du subtil d'avec l'espais, & par quelle industrie elle se doit faire, Chap. 3. fol. 125.

Troisiesme livre ou traicté dernier pour conclusion de l'œuvre. fol. 305.

TABLE OF THE SECOND Treatise.

That the spirit of the world takes a body, and how it is embodied.

Chapter 1, page 63.

Of the conversion of this spirit into earth, and how its power remains entire in this earth. Chapter 2, page 79.

Of the separation of fire from earth, of the subtle from the thick, and by what skill it should be accomplished. Chapter 3, page 125.

Third book, or final treatise concluding the work. Page 305.²⁵

²⁵ The historical table omits Book II Chapter Four, which begins on printed page 203 and is included in full in the body of this edition. The page references here are those of the French source, even where the source misnumbers its pages. 'Fol.' is the printer's label; the numerals identify printed pages rather than modern leaves.

Dedication to the Duke of Lorraine and Bar

A Monseigneur le Duc de Lorraine et de Bar

Chapter outline

Nuysement praises François de Candale's exposition of the Pimander and recalls his own intellectual debt.

Legends of Hermes support an account of philosophy as recovered ancient wisdom.

The Emerald Table and the Pimander are presented as mutually illuminating accounts of creation and the universal spirit.

The compiler places his work under the Duke's patronage.

SL_DEDICATIONS001 1621 Unnumbered preliminary pages · scans FR009, FR010, FR011

A TRES-HAUT, TRES-PUISSANT, ET tres-vertueux Prince, MONSEIGNEUR LE DUC DE LORRAINE & de Bar, &c.

MONSEIGNEUR,

Encore que ce Phœnix des beaux esprits: (François Monseigneur, de la tres Illustre maison de Candale) se fust rendu autant admirable en la pratique des Arts mecaniques, où il excelloit les plus ingenieux & renommez de son siecle, qu'en la profonde Theorie des plus rares sciences, qui semblent n'avoir esté gardees de l'inondation universelle, sinon pour le combler de gloire: & bien qu'il peust de son invention propre fournir en l'une & l'autre perfection les aages suyvens d'exemplaires en les inimitables chef d'œuvres: si ne creut il toutefois sa peine plus utilement employee qu'à donner par ses excellents commentaires une nouvelle naissance au Pimandre de Hermes, qu'une si longue suite de siecles avoit tenu ensevely, comme trop laschement abandonné des uns à cause de son obscurité, & frivolement negligé des autres, qui le jugeant par son entree l'estimoient un songe fait à plaisir. Ceux là par impatience, & ceux cy par un mespris inconsideré, se priverent malheureusement de l'usufruit de ce tresor inestimable: & nous rendoyent participants de leur dommage sans ce nouvel Hercule, qui passant l'Acheron & le Cocithe alla malgré Cerbere le retirer du noir fleuve d'oubly, dans lequel l'ignorance & l'envie l'avoient precipité. Il nous le raporta donc tout moitte & degoutant de ce long naufrage, & luy redonna tel lustre par l'esclat des pierres precieuses dont il l'a enrichy; que parmy la creation du monde on y voit clairement estinceler tant de brillans rayons des secrettes merveilles de Dieu & de Nature, que cette premiere obscurité ignoramment aborree, & cet abhor legerement estimé fabuleux sont aujourd'huy admirez & chers de tous; voire advoüez des plus illuminez autant agreables & mysterieux que s'ils avoient esté produits par quelqu'un des Prophetes.

To the most high, most powerful and most virtuous Prince, my Lord the Duke of Lorraine and Bar, and so forth.

MY LORD,

That phoenix among fine minds, François, my lord, of the most illustrious house of Candale, had made himself as admirable in the practice of the mechanical arts, in which he surpassed the most ingenious and celebrated men of his age, as in the profound theory of the rarest sciences. Those sciences seem to have been preserved from

the universal flood only to crown him with glory. By his own invention he could have furnished later ages with models of both kinds of perfection in his inimitable masterpieces. Yet he thought his labour most usefully employed in giving a new birth, through his excellent commentaries, to the Pimander of Hermes. A long succession of centuries had kept it buried. Some had abandoned it too readily because of its obscurity; others had lightly neglected it, judging from its opening that it was a dream invented at will. The former through impatience, the latter through ill-considered contempt, unhappily deprived themselves of the enjoyment of this priceless treasure. They would have made us share their loss had not this new Hercules crossed Acheron and Cocytus and, despite Cerberus, retrieved it from the dark river of oblivion into which ignorance and envy had cast it. He brought it back to us still wet and dripping from that long shipwreck, and restored its lustre by the brilliance of the precious stones with which he enriched it. Amid its account of the creation of the world, so many radiant beams of the hidden wonders of God and Nature can now plainly be seen to sparkle that the obscurity formerly hated through ignorance, and the opening lightly judged fabulous, are today admired and cherished by everyone. Even the most enlightened acknowledge them to be as pleasing and mysterious as if they had been produced by one of the prophets.^{26,27}

SL_DEDICATIONS002 1621 Unnumbered preliminary pages · scans FR011, FR012, FR013

Donnant subject à beaucoup d'ajouter foy aux historiens qui tiennent que Hermes fut le beaupere de Moyse nommé Getro, & que divinement inspiré en toutes choses plus cachees, il luy apprit la caballe, & la Philosophie oculte à sa sœur Marie, dite la prophetisse, de laquelle il nous reste comme un tesmoing irreprochable certain fragment, que tous ceux qui ont escrit de la verité de cet Art, alleguent avec reverence. Il semble que la plus part nous vueillent encore asseurer que ce fut luy qui, apres le deluge, entrant en la vallee d'Ebron trouva les sept tables de marbre, esquelles avoient esté par les premiers sages insculpez les principes des sept arts liberaux, afin qu'ils ne perissent avec eux: & qu'en ayant seul une parfaite intelligence, il les enseigna au peuple, & leur donna cette clarté qui nous eclaire encore à present. Le songe de Scipion, celui de Poliphile, & le Lissias de Platon, nonobstant ce tiltre ont autant apporté de loüange à ces autheurs que tous leurs anciens escrits: & n'ont esté moins estimez de l'invention que de l'ouvrage. Considerant que pour dignement traiter de si hautes matieres il est bien necessaire que l'ame se desrobant de sa prison aille librement visiter les regions supremes, & conferer avec ses semblables: ce qu'elle ne pourroit faire ayant tousjours aux pieds l'importun contrepoids de cette masse terrestre, qu'elle secoue & quitte alors que le gracieux charme du sommeil aggravant le corps luy laisse les portes ouvertes.

²⁶. The source names François of the illustrious house of Candale. Pimandre refers to the Hermetic Pimander or Poimandres tradition and its account of creation. Nuysement praises Candale as an interpreter and later describes him as his own teacher; this is testimony within the dedication, not an independent biography.

²⁷. The comparison with Hercules makes recovery of a neglected book an underworld rescue. Acheron and Cocytus are rivers of the classical underworld; Cerberus guards its entrance. The imagery does not establish the alleged antiquity of the Hermetic writings.

This gives many people grounds for crediting the historians who hold that Hermes was Moses' father-in-law, named Jethro, and that, divinely inspired in all the most hidden things, he taught Moses the cabala and taught occult philosophy to his sister Mary, called the prophetess. A certain fragment of hers survives as an irreproachable witness, cited with reverence by everyone who has written of the truth of this art. Most of them seem also to wish to assure us that it was he who, after the flood, entered the valley of Hebron and found seven marble tablets on which the first sages had engraved the principles of the seven liberal arts so that these would not perish with them. He alone perfectly understood them, taught them to the people and gave them the clarity which still enlightens us today. The Dream of Scipio, that of Poliphilus, and Plato's Lissias, despite this title, have brought their authors as much praise as all their earlier writings, and have been valued no less for their conception than for their execution. To treat such lofty matters worthily, the soul must indeed steal away from its prison, freely visit the highest regions and converse with beings like itself. It could not do so while its feet were constantly weighed down by the troublesome counterweight of this earthly mass. It shakes off and leaves that mass when the gracious charm of sleep, weighing upon the body, leaves the doors open to it.^{28,29,30}

SL_DEDICATIONS003 1621 Unnumbered preliminary pages · scans FR013, FR014

Or ce fut ce puissant Athlete (Monseigneur) qui premier m'ouvrit la forte barriere qui deffend l'entree de cette ample lice Philosophique, où tant de vaillans champions ont couru & debattu le prix proposé par le trois fois grand Mercure. Et qui m'obligea de suivre ses pas (quoy que lentement & d'une distance infinie) par l'encouragement & les preceptes qu'en faveur du Prince à qui j'avois l'honneur d'estre, il daigna me donner dès ma jeunesse; apres m'avoir par son humanité, non commune à ceux de son rang, fait participant de ce qu'il tenoit le plus cher; me communiquant des œuvres sans parangon, & des desseins qui ne sentoient rien de l'humain. Si de fortune il se remarque donc en ce bouquet, duquel j'estreine vostre Altesse, quelques fleurs de son parterre, il me doit estre pardonné; puisque Platon mesme, à qui l'on donne le surnom de divin, n'a point fait conscience d'estaller comme siennes aux yeux de sa posterité les reliques sacrees qu'il avoit butinees dans le temple de Socrate.

It was this powerful athlete, my Lord, who first opened for me the strong barrier defending the entrance to that broad philosophical arena

²⁸. These identifications of Hermes with biblical figures belong to Nuysement's account of ancient wisdom. The text conflates traditions about Miriam, Moses' sister, and Mary the alchemical prophetess. They are retained as historical claims, not endorsed as established identities.

²⁹. The seven liberal arts are conventionally grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy. The tablets-and-flood account supplies a legendary explanation for the survival of their knowledge.

³⁰. The source prints Lissias; the intended Platonic work has not been established here. Scipio's dream is the concluding visionary episode of Cicero's Republic, later transmitted with Macrobius' commentary. Poliphilus is the dreamer of the *Hyperotomachia Poliphili*. The paragraph treats visionary writing as a vehicle for difficult philosophy rather than as grounds for dismissing it.

in which so many valiant champions have run and contested the prize proposed by thrice-great Mercury. He bound me to follow his steps, however slowly and at however infinite a distance, by the encouragement and precepts which he deigned to give me from my youth, out of regard for the Prince whom I had the honour to serve. With a kindness uncommon among men of his rank, he had already made me a participant in what he held dearest, sharing with me works without equal and designs which seemed to have nothing merely human about them. If, therefore, a few flowers from his garden happen to be recognised in this bouquet which I offer Your Highness as a gift, I should be forgiven. Plato himself, to whom the epithet divine is given, did not scruple to display before his posterity as his own the sacred relics which he had gathered in the temple of Socrates.^{31,32}

SL_DEDICATIONS004 1621 Unnumbered preliminary pages · scans FR014, FR015, FR016

Et puis on doit aussi recevoir pour une excuse legitime, que mon dessein est tellement concatené & dependant du sien, que si la mort eust eu des yeux & du jugement pour voir & considerer le tort qu'elle faisoit aux mortels de leur esteindre avant le temps une si belle & utile lumiere, ou que les vœuz & les clameurs des doctes curieux eussent peu flechir l'impieté de cette sourde insatiable, & luy obtenir encore quelque peu de respit; il est indubitable qu'il eust d'une mesme main enchassé dans le pur Or de sa miniere feconde, la riche table d'esmeraude en laquelle ce vieil Philosophe Égyptien, à l'imitation de ses sages devanciers, grava le double mistere, ou le mistere unique à double sens, que l'Hortulan & quelques autres ont entierement appliqué à l'effect de leurs transmutations metaliques: ainsi que je me suis esvertué de l'attacher d'un nœud indissoluble à son Pimandre; avec lequel il a tant de conformité & sympathie, qu'ils semblent avoir esté composez l'un pour l'autre. Car si le premier traicte de la Creation de l'univers, le second depeint naïvement l'Esprit universel qui donne vie & mouvement à tous les membres de ce grand corps. Esprit general auquel sont occultement encloses les vives semences des trois genres: duquel toutes les choses sont produites au monde: par lequel elles croissent, persistent, & se multiplient: & en qui elles se doivent toutes reduire quand elles auront atteint la borne que Nature leur a plantee.

A further legitimate excuse should also be accepted. My undertaking is so closely linked with and dependent upon his that, had death possessed eyes and judgement to see and consider the wrong it did mortals by extinguishing so beautiful and useful a light before its time, or had the prayers and cries of learned seekers been able to soften the impiety of that deaf and insatiable creature and gain him a little further respite, he would undoubtedly have used the same hand to set in the pure gold of his fertile mine the precious Emerald Table. In it that ancient Egyptian philosopher, following his wise predecessors, engraved the double mystery, or the single mystery with a double meaning, which Hortulanus and some others have applied wholly to

³¹. The athlete remains Candale, introduced at the opening. The first-person account explains the compiler's declared debt. 'Thrice-great Mercury' is Hermes Trismegistus, not an unqualified reference to the metallic substance mercury.

³². The bouquet and borrowed flowers are metaphors for compilation and intellectual inheritance. The 'temple of Socrates' is likewise figurative; this sentence is not evidence of a particular material temple or manuscript collection.

the effecting of their metallic transmutations. I have endeavoured to bind it by an indissoluble knot to his Pimander, with which it has so much agreement and sympathy that the two seem to have been composed for one another. For if the former treats the creation of the universe, the latter plainly depicts the universal spirit which gives life and movement to every member of this great body. Within that universal spirit the living seeds of the three kinds are secretly enclosed. From it all things are brought forth in the world; by it they grow, endure and multiply; and into it they must all return when they have reached the limit which Nature has set for them.^{33,34,35}

SL_DEDICATIONS005 1621 Unnumbered preliminary pages · scans FR016, FR017

Tout ce que je doy plus justement apprehender, Monseigneur, c'est le reproche que vostre Altesse me peut faire d'employer si temerairement sa grandeur & son nom à la protection de mes labeurs, indignes de tant illustre Mœcene. Et que je devois au moins me contenter de les avoir audacieusement prophanez une fois en les placeant au front des vers que je vous presentay il y a quelque temps; sans abuser encore un coup de vostre auguste patience. Mais je suis resolu de dire à quiconque m'en vueille blâmer, & fust-ce vostre Altesse mesme, que j'ayme trop mieux estre estimé insolent au desir que j'ay de m'acquitter aucunement de ce que je doy à vostre genereuse largesse, que me priver de la continuation de vos bienfaits par un lasche & honteux acte d'ingratitude. Outre que c'est mon destin qui me porte naturellement: car le Ciel ne m'a fait naistre que pour mourir,

MONSEIGNEUR,

Vostre tres-humble, tres-obeissant, & tres-obligé serviteur,
DE NUISEMENT.

What I have better reason to fear, my Lord, is the reproach Your Highness may make against me for so rashly employing your greatness and your name to protect my labours, which are unworthy of so illustrious a Maecenas. At least I ought to have been content with having boldly profaned them once already by placing them at the head of the verses I presented to you some time ago, without once more abusing your august patience. Yet I am resolved to tell anyone who wishes to blame me for it, even Your Highness yourself, that I would much rather be thought insolent in my desire to discharge some part of what I owe your generous bounty than deprive myself of the continuance of your favours through a cowardly and shameful act of

³³. Hortulanus is the traditional name attached to a commentary on the Emerald Table. Nuysement contrasts an exclusively metallic application with his own attempt to read the Table together with Hermetic creation teaching. His report does not settle the historical authorship or date of the Table or commentary.

³⁴. The antecedents of 'former' and 'latter' are awkward after the preceding movement between the Pimander and the Table. The substantive contrast is explicit: an account of creation is paired with an account of the spirit animating the world. The translation preserves that argument without silently rewriting the order of the pronouns.

³⁵. The three kinds are the principal natural genera discussed in the treatise, commonly mineral, vegetable and animal. The seeds are formative principles in Nuysement's natural philosophy; the language does not imply modern genetic theory.

ingratitude. Besides, my destiny naturally carries me this way, for
Heaven caused me to be born only to die,

MY LORD,

Your most humble, most obedient and most indebted servant,
DE NUYSEMENT.^{36,37}

³⁶. Maecenas, the Roman patron of poets, is used as a conventional name for a literary patron. The last sentence deliberately carries the formula 'to die' into the signature: to die as the Duke's devoted servant.

³⁷. The earlier verses mentioned here are a separate presentation to the patron. They are not silently identified with the nine sonnets preserved later in this volume, nor is the separately published *Poeme philosophic* of 1620 appended to this edition as if it were present in the governing scan.

The Original Preface

Preface

Chapter outline

The author anticipates rejection by readers governed by ignorance or gain.

He promises an account of Nature's principles rather than fabulous riches.

Experience in the chymical art is presented as a means of understanding universal matter.

Judgement is entrusted to readers who know true philosophy.

SL_PREFACES001 1621 Unnumbered preliminary pages · scans FR018

Je ne doute point que ce livre arrivant en public ne soit rejeté de plusieurs, & receu de peu: car les esprits humains estans communément offusquez du brouillas d'ignorance, & la multitude des aveugles surmontant beaucoup le nombre des clairvoyans, les plus rares sciences ont de tout temps esté les moins connues & les plus mesprisees; soit par la negligence, ou par l'avidité du gain, preferant l'utile à l'honneste. De sorte que telles gens croyans estre nez pour avoir, non pour sçavoir, s'adonnent entierement à la suite du lucre; & different fort peu des animaux qui n'ont soin que de la pasture. Mais s'ils rentroient quelquefois en eux mesme, illuminez de ce rayon divin de cognoissance, ils trouveroient que l'aliment leur est donné pour soutien de la vie; & la vie pour s'employer à l'inquisition de verité: pour le respect de laquelle ils sont douez de la ratiocination.

I do not doubt that, when this book appears in public, many will reject it and few will receive it. Human minds are commonly darkened by the fog of ignorance, and the multitude of the blind greatly exceeds the number of those who see clearly. The rarest sciences have therefore always been the least known and most despised, either through neglect or through greed for profit, which prefers advantage to what is honourable. Such people believe they were born to possess rather than to know, give themselves wholly to the pursuit of gain and differ very little from animals concerned only with feeding. Yet if they sometimes returned within themselves, illumined by that divine ray of knowledge, they would find that food is given them to sustain life, and life to be employed in the search for truth. It is for the sake of truth that they are endowed with the power of reasoning.

SL_PREFACES002 1621 Unnumbered preliminary pages · scans FR018, FR019

Prevoyant donc que la mesme cause qui les abastardit, & fait degenerer du glorieux destin de leur naissance, pourroit produire un mespris de ce mien labeur, pour y voir estinceler quelque rayon de l'Art Chimique, (encor que ce ne soit mon but) mais parce que j'ose entreprendre de deschiffrer ce que le trois fois grand Hermes a si souverainement enseigné dans sa table, que plusieurs excellens esprits s'y sont trouvez confus, j'ay bien voulu par ceste Preface admonester les curieux qu'ils ne cherchent icy la toison d'Or, ou les pommes des Hesperides: Mais seulement une naïve description des premiers principes de Nature, dans le riche sein de laquelle reposent tous les tresors du monde. Tresors vraiment inestimables, & devancent d'une distance extremesme tout ce que le vulgaire admire & idolatre le plus.

I foresee, then, that the same cause which debases them and makes them fall away from the glorious destiny of their birth might produce contempt for this labour of mine, because some ray of the chymical art is seen to sparkle in it, although that is not my aim. Rather, because I dare undertake to decipher what thrice-great Hermes taught so excellently in his Table, in which many outstanding minds have found themselves perplexed, I have wished in this preface to warn inquiring readers not to seek here the Golden Fleece or the apples of the Hesperides. They should seek only a plain description of the first principles of Nature, in whose rich bosom all the treasures of the world repose. These are truly priceless treasures, surpassing by an immense distance everything which ordinary people most admire and idolise.³⁸

SL_PREFACES003 1621 Unnumbered preliminary pages - scans FR019, FR020

Que s'il avient qu'aucuns quittent ce livre & s'en desgoustent, pour abhorrer les choses Chimiques; Ny luy ny moy n'en pourrons meriter le blasme, puis que les apetits sont differents; Et que leurs palais empastez de la lie d'une erreur populaire les empesche de savourer ces viandes exquises: Lesquelles au contraire sont les delices plus cheres des beaux entendemens; qui confesseront volontiers que l'homme ne merite absolument le tiltre de Sçavant, s'il n'est Chimiste: parce que les principes naturels, ny la vraye matiere universelle ne seront jamais aperceuz que par l'experience de l'Art Chimique: ainsi que ce pere des Philosophes l'a clairement déclaré, lors qu'ayant montré par qui, comment, & dequoy est fait le premier subject des choses, (c'est à dire, cet Esprit general du Monde,) par quels moyens il se corporifie & specifie en diverses formes & genres: & comment de luy tout ce qui est bas & haut, se produit, parfait, maintient, & augmente; il ouvre encore le chemin aux sages d'entrer par une profonde consideration des effects secrets de nature à la recherche & invention des moyens par lesquels, à l'ayde du feu, ils puissent parvenir à la parfaite modification de cet esprit infus en tous les corps; pour en tirer une essence tres-pure, capable de produire des effects incroyables; & autant infinis en merveilles qu'en nombre. Ce que je ne dy point icy pour tascher d'esmouvoir les hommes à cherir mon opinion, bien qu'ils ne la doivent temerairement rejeter, sans voir si je parle avec raisons probables, appuyees d'autoritez antiques. C'est donc à ceux qui separez du vulgaire ont quelque sentiment de la vraye Philosophie, que je remets le jugement de ce labeur, & à qui j'envoie ce fruit, s'ils y en peuvent recueillir.

If some people put this book aside and lose their taste for it because they abhor chymical things, neither it nor I can deserve blame. Appetites differ, and their palates, clogged with the dregs of popular error, prevent them from savouring these exquisite dishes. To fine minds, by contrast, these are the most cherished delights. Such readers will willingly confess that a person does not fully deserve the title of learned unless he is a chymist, because neither natural principles nor true universal matter will ever be perceived except through experience of the chymical art. That father of the philosophers clearly declared as much. Having shown by whom, how and from what the first subject of

³⁸ The Golden Fleece and the apples of the Hesperides are classical images of arduously sought treasures, here used to restrain expectations of fabulous material rewards. The author distinguishes his exposition of Nature's principles from a promise of immediate wealth.

things is made, that is, this universal spirit of the world, by what means it takes body and is specified in diverse forms and kinds, and how everything below and above is produced, perfected, maintained and increased from it, he also opens a path for the sages. Through profound consideration of Nature's hidden effects, they may search for and discover the means by which, with the aid of fire, they can arrive at the perfect modification of this spirit infused into all bodies, drawing from it a most pure essence capable of producing incredible effects, as infinite in their wonders as in their number. I do not say this here in an attempt to move people to cherish my opinion, although they ought not rashly to reject it without seeing whether I speak with plausible reasons supported by ancient authorities. I therefore entrust judgement of this labour to those who, standing apart from the multitude, have some understanding of true philosophy. To them I send whatever fruit they may be able to gather from it.³⁹

³⁹. 'Experience' includes engagement with materials and operations in the chymical art. The passage states Nuysement's programme and claimed results. 'Essence', 'spirit' and 'matter' remain historical explanatory terms rather than names assigned here to modern chemical compounds.

Book One

TRAICTEZ DU VRAY SEL SECRET DES PHILOSOPHES, ET DE L'ESPRIT
UNIVERSEL DU MONDE. LIVRE PREMIER.

TREATISES ON THE TRUE SALT, THE SECRET OF THE
PHILOSOPHERS, AND ON THE UNIVERSAL SPIRIT OF THE
WORLD. FIRST BOOK.

1 That the world is alive and full of life

Que le Monde est vif, & plein de vie.

Chapter outline

The continual natural transformations of the world imply an animating soul.

Demogorgon, Iliaste and Archee describe the distribution of matter and vital heat from the earth's centre.

Animals, plants and minerals receive different degrees of life according to the condition of their matter.

Celestial movement, hidden seeds and generation manifest the world's universal life.

Bodies change into other bodies rather than perish utterly.

SL_I_01S001 1621 pp 1–3 · scans FR021, FR022, FR023

Puis que j'ay entrepris de traicter de l'Esprit du Monde, il est necessaire que je face reconnoistre comment le Monde est plein d'ame & de vie: car outre que la Nature ne spiritualize rien que elle ne le vivifie: & que le monde consiste en continuelles & indeficientes alterations des formes, qui ne se peuvent faire sans vital mouvement; si est ce que nous voyons encore cette mesme Nature, ainsi que Mere tresfeconde & soigneuse, embrasser & nourrir ce monde; departant à chacun de ses membres suffisante portion de vie. De sorte qu'il n'y a rien en tout l'Univers qu'elle ne tasche de rendre animant; pource qu'elle ne peut estre oisive, ains demeure tousjours tenduë & ententive à son action, qui est de vivifier. Or ce grand corps est agité & pourveu d'un mouvement sans repos: & ce mouvement ne se peut faire sans esprit vital: car ce qui est sans vie est necessairement immobile; non pas de lieu en autre, par mouvement violent & forcé: mais de privation à la forme; ou pour dire plus clairement, d'imperfection à perfection. La vegetation aux plantes, & la concretion aux pierres, s'avancent avec mouvement; qui se fait par l'infusion de cette ame agitant cette grande masse, par le moyen de certain Esprit radical & nourrissant: la source & Miniere duquel est assise au centre de la terre, grande ayeulle de toutes choses; afin que de là proviennent & s'estendent par tout le corps (comme du cœur) toutes les fonctions vitales.

Since I have undertaken to treat of the spirit of the world, I must make it understood how the world is full of soul and life. For besides the fact that Nature spiritualises nothing without giving it life, and that the world consists in continual, unfailing alterations of forms which cannot take place without vital movement, we also see this same Nature, like a most fruitful and attentive mother, embracing and nourishing the world, allotting a sufficient portion of life to each of its members. Thus there is nothing throughout the universe that she does not endeavour to animate. She cannot be idle, but remains continually intent upon her work, which is to give life. Now this great body is stirred and endowed with ceaseless movement, and such movement cannot take place without a vital spirit. For what has no life is necessarily incapable of movement: I do not mean movement from one place to another through violence and force, but movement from privation to form, or, to speak more clearly, from imperfection to perfection. The growth of plants and

the concretion of stones advance through movement, brought about by the infusion of the soul that stirs this great mass, through a certain nourishing spirit at its root. The source and mine of this spirit lies at the centre of the earth, the great grandmother of all things, so that from there, as from a heart, all the vital functions may arise and spread throughout the body.^{40,41}

SL_I_01S002 1621 pp 3–5 · scans FR023, FR024, FR025

Or cette racine & miniere est enclose dans l'antique sein du vieil Demogorgon; progeniteur universel, que les anciens Poëtes, tresdiligents inquisiteurs des secrets naturels, ont ingenieusement peint revestu d'une chappe verde; enveloppee d'une rouille ferrugineuse, couverte d'obscures tenebres, & nourrissant toutes sortes d'animaux: dans le ventre, duquel les vertus des globes celestes incessamment decoulent, penetrant les flancs de la terre, qu'elles engrossissent de toutes sortes d'especes omniformes. Là où pareillement les qualitez, & forces elementaires viennent servir ce vieil Pere, comme producteur & Specifieur de toutes choses perpetuellement embesogné à la dispensation des formes specifiques par le moyen de son Iliaste, & à l'excitation de la chaleur vitale, par son Archee. Lesquels Iliaste & Archee sont comme les deux outils de la formation, conservation, & augmentation des choses.

[Iliaste est le pourvoieur qui fournit les matieres pour les generations. Archee est le feu ou chaleur naturelle qui digere, & agit sur lesdites matieres.]

Ce Demogorgon est celuy avec lequel la meditation & pensee de Dieu a produit tout ce qui est créé dans les cieux & dessous les cieux: de sorte que par admirable adaptation inconnue au vulgaire des Philosophes, & referee par eux aux causes occultes, contenant en soy son Iliaste, & son Archee, il forme & engendre tout; puis nourrit & conserve ce qu'il engendre: faisant par tout l'office d'oeconome & dispensateur; etablissant le magazin de ses munitions au milieu des entrailles de la terre, d'où il tire & depart vie & vigueur à tout ce qu'il produit, du centre en la circonference.

Now this root and mine is enclosed in the ancient bosom of old Demogorgon, the universal progenitor, whom the ancient poets, most diligent investigators of natural secrets, ingeniously depicted wearing a green cloak, wrapped in an iron-coloured rust, covered in obscure darkness, and nourishing every kind of animal. Into his belly the powers of the celestial globes continually flow, penetrating the earth's flanks and making them pregnant with species of every possible form. There too the elemental qualities and forces come to serve this ancient father, the producer of all things who gives each its specific character. He is perpetually occupied in distributing specific forms through his Iliaste, and in rousing vital heat through his Archee. These Iliaste and Archee are like the two instruments by which things are formed, preserved and increased.

[Marginal definitions: Iliaste is the purveyor who supplies the materials for generation. Archee is the fire or natural heat that digests and acts

⁴⁰. "Animate" and the later description of the world as an "animal" refer to a living, ensouled whole. They do not restrict life to animals in the modern sense.

⁴¹. The author explicitly distinguishes natural movement towards form and perfection from mere displacement in space. The argument includes growth and mineral formation among such movements.

upon those materials.]

This Demogorgon is he through whom God's meditation and thought produced everything created in the heavens and beneath the heavens. Thus, by an admirable adaptation unknown to the common run of philosophers, who attribute it to hidden causes, he contains within himself his Iliaste and his Archee, forms and generates everything, then nourishes and preserves what he generates. Everywhere he performs the office of steward and distributor, establishing the storehouse of his provisions in the midst of the earth's entrails, from which he draws and distributes life and vigour to everything he produces, from the centre to the circumference.^{42,43}

SL_I_01S003 1621 pp 5-7 · scans FR025, FR026, FR027

La terre donc, comme receptacle des influences & vertus superieures, a dedans soy la fontaine de cette ame vitale, du surgeon de laquelle decoule aux animaux, Mineraux & vegetaux le benefice de la vie, qui leur depart sentiment, essence, & vegetation, selon qu'elle trouve la matiere obeyssante, & disposee à mouvement. De là vient que les animaux composez d'une masse plus ductible & facile à mouvoir, sentent, & vegetent; & pour cette cause engendrent aysément leurs semblables, comme pourvez de vie sensitive & vegetative. Mais les plantes, & toutes choses germinantes, de qui l'Esprit n'est point arresté par l'assemblément d'une matiere du tout crasse & dure, croissent & s'augmentent, pourvez de la seule vie vegetative: & vont engendrant leurs semblables par semence ou traduction: Mais non en la façon des animaux. Les Mineraux n'ont point la faculté sensitive ny vegetative, & vivent seulement d'une vie essentielle; d'autant que leur composition est plus dure que celle des animaux, & vegetaux; & leur matiere plus crasse & grossiere, qui gesne & reserre par trop cet esprit qui les vivifie, & par ce moyen sont empeschez de pouvoir produire leur semblable, si premierement repurgez de leur grossiere impurité, ils ne sont resoluts en la subtilité de leur premiere matiere. Voyons ce qu'en dit Augurel, excellent Philosophe & Poëte Latin,

The earth, then, as the receptacle of higher influences and powers, contains within itself the fountain of this vital soul. From its spring the benefit of life flows to animals, minerals and plants, bestowing sensation, essential being and growth according as it finds matter responsive and disposed to movement. Hence animals, composed of a more pliable mass that is more easily moved, possess sensation and growth; and for this reason they readily generate their like, being endowed with sensitive and vegetative life. But plants and all sprouting things, whose spirit is not checked by the gathering together of wholly thick and hard matter, grow and increase, endowed with vegetative life alone. They continue to generate their like by seed or propagation, though not in the manner of animals. Minerals possess neither the sensitive nor the vegetative faculty, and live only an essential life,

⁴². The two definitions in brackets reproduce substantive marginal notes on printed page 4. They are the author's own explanations of Iliaste and Archee, and must remain distinct from editorial annotations.

⁴³. Demogorgon functions here as a poetic figure for the universal progenitor operating within created nature. The account retains a distinction between God's creative thought and the instruments of natural generation.

because their composition is harder than that of animals and plants, and their matter thicker and coarser. This excessively constrains and confines the spirit that gives them life, and so prevents them from producing their like unless they are first purged of their gross impurity and resolved into the subtlety of their first matter. Let us see what Augurel, an excellent philosopher and Latin poet, says of this:^{44,45}

SL_I_01S004 1621 pp 7 · scans FR027

Mais un chacun croira finablement
Que les Metaux vivent secrettement,
Et que de vie ils ont la force & lieu
Divinement, comme d'un don de Dieu.
Et ce qui fait que ces Metaux valables
Ne semblent pas engendrer leurs semblables
Encore moins estre si vertueux
De convertir autres choses en eux:
C'est que l'Esprit qui donne vie entiere
Est empesché de trop lourde matiere:
Et n'a pouvoir de monstrier la vertu
Dont richement Nature l'a vestu,
Si l'industrie humaine & vertu vive
Ne luy fait place, à celle fin qu'il vive:
Et si l'ouvrier à l'extraire ne tasche
De la matiere espaisse qui le cache.

But everyone will come at last to believe
That metals live in secret,
And possess the power and place of life
Divinely, as a gift from God.
And what makes these worthy metals
Appear not to generate their like,
Still less to have such power
As to turn other things into themselves,
Is that the spirit which gives full life
Is hindered by matter too heavy,
And cannot show the power
With which Nature has richly clothed it,
Unless human industry and active power
Make room for it, so that it may live,
And unless the worker strives to extract it
From the thick matter that conceals it.⁴⁶

SL_I_01S005 1621 pp 7-9 · scans FR027, FR028, FR029

Alors donc n'estans plus minéraux impurs & grossiers, ils engendreront, par la forme specifique en eux introduite, non pas leurs semblables, mais en leurs

⁴⁴. The passage distinguishes sensitive life, vegetative life and essential life. "Essential" does not mean especially important: it names the mode of life ascribed here to minerals.

⁴⁵. "Traduction", paired with seed, means propagation from an existing plant; it is not used in its ordinary modern sense of linguistic translation.

⁴⁶. The French quotation is printed as sixteen verse lines. The English preserves that line count and the qualification that the metals only appear unable to generate or transform.

semblables une alteration & perfection telle qu'on l'attribuë à ce tant cherché Elixir: que les sages admirent pour ses divines vertus, & que les fols mesprisent, pour ne pouvoir de leurs yeux fascinez penetrer au centre de ses merveilles. Si donc les animaux, Minéraux; & vegetaux, qui tiennent la pluspart de ce monde visible, sont remplis de vie, quelle apparence y auroit il de croire que le tout feust plus pauvre que les parties? Ce que l'on connoistra encore plus veritable aux choses du monde surlunaire; car les globes celestes influant la vie aux corps inferieurs, il est bien necessaire qu'ils l'ayent premierement receuë de cette ame universelle, puis qu'on ne peut donner ce qu'on n'a point. Entendez Augurel.

Voire l'on dit que l'air & terre & cieux
Et de la mer le grand tour spacieux
Sont excitez interieurement
D'une ame vive, & generalement
Que par cette ame a vie toute chose
Que nous voyons dessous le ciel enclose,
Et qui plus est, que par une ame telle
Le monde vit, & sa vigueur tient d'elle.

Then, no longer being impure and coarse minerals, through the specific form introduced into them they will generate, not their like, but in their like an alteration and perfection of the kind attributed to that much-sought elixir. The wise admire it for its divine powers, while fools despise it because their bewitched eyes cannot penetrate to the centre of its wonders. If, then, animals, minerals and plants, which occupy the greater part of this visible world, are filled with life, what grounds could there be for believing the whole poorer than its parts? This will be recognised still more truly in the things of the world above the moon. For since the celestial globes pour life into lower bodies, they must necessarily have first received it from this universal soul, since no one can give what they do not possess. Listen to Augurel:

Indeed, it is said that air and earth and heavens,
And the great spacious circuit of the sea,
Are inwardly stirred
By a living soul; and, generally,
That through this soul everything has life
Which we see enclosed beneath the heavens;
And, further, that through such a soul
The world lives, and draws its vigour from it.

SL_I_01S006 1621 pp 9-11 · scans FR029, FR030, FR031

Or le mouvement (j'entens naturel) est tousjours accompagné de vie: comment donc produira en autrui & vie & mouvement, celui qui n'a ny mouvement ny vie en soy? Le mouvement n'abandonne jamais ce que la vie n'a point encore abandonné: & ce qui est tousjours agité & mouvant ne peut estre estimé sans vie. L'ame de l'univers se mouvant de soy mesme, est source & origine de tout corporel mouvement, estant ordinaire compagne du corps; qui fait que la tresubtile partie de cette ame du monde cherchant le haut, & habitant en haut, d'un rouër continuel tourne avec les globes celestes, qu'elle conduit d'un mouvement propre & sans fin orbiculairement: & pour cette cause toutes choses superieures sont plus vitales, parfaites, & participantes de l'immortalité, que les autres inferieures: parce que ce qui est pourveu d'une vie non defaillante, doit necessairement estre agité d'un

mouvement retournant à soy mesme. Et par ainsi, que ce qui est meu sans fin est consequemment doué de vie perpetuelle & indeterminable. Il paroist donc par ces raisons que le monde universel est universellement remply de vie. Tellement que la vie de chacune espece individue n'est sinon une vie participee de cette generale vie du monde; qui seul peut veritablement estre dit animal. Aux elemens corporels duquel sont encloses les occultes semences de toutes les choses visibles & corporelles. Car nous voyons naistre plusieurs corps sans expresses semences precedentes; comme les plantes, & sans conjunction de masle & de femelle: Comme certains animaux engendrez de corruption.

Now movement—I mean natural movement—is always accompanied by life. How, then, can something produce both life and movement in another when it possesses neither movement nor life in itself? Movement never abandons what life has not yet abandoned, and what is continually stirred and moving cannot be considered lifeless. The soul of the universe moves of itself and is the source and origin of all bodily movement, being the body's constant companion. Hence the most subtle part of this world soul, seeking the heights and dwelling on high, revolves continually with the celestial globes, which it guides in an endless circular movement of its own. For this reason all higher things are more living, perfect and participant in immortality than lower ones: whatever is endowed with unfailing life must necessarily be stirred by a movement that returns upon itself. Thus what moves without end is consequently endowed with perpetual, unbounded life. These reasons therefore show that the universal world is universally filled with life. The life of each individual species is nothing but a life shared in this general life of the world; the world alone can truly be called an animal. Enclosed in its bodily elements are the hidden seeds of all visible, bodily things. For we see many bodies arise without distinct seeds preceding them, as plants do, and without the union of male and female, as do certain animals generated from corruption.

SL_I_01S007 1621 pp 11–13 · scans FR031, FR032, FR033

Les semences des plantes sont visibles jusques au grain: & celles des animaux jusques à la geniture. Les Metaux ont pareillement leur semence; mais elle ne peut estre veüe sinon des vrais Philosophes qui la sçavent extraire de son lieu propre avec grand Art: & la peut on beaucoup plustost conjecturer par raison, qu'apercevoir des yeux corporels. Que si dans les elemens n'estoit occultement contenue certaine vertu secrette produisante, en laquelle gist en puissance une faculté d'engendrer; plusieurs herbes ne sortiroient pas de terre, ny mesme des murailles plus eslevees, que jamais n'y ont esté semees ou plantees, & dont auparavant on n'avoit cognoissance. Et tant d'animaux divers ne seroient engendrez en la terre, & en l'eau, sans precedente copulation des sexes, qui toutefois croissent; & puis par commixtion de masle & de femelle produisent leurs semblables à la perpetuité de leurs especes; encor qu'ils ne soient engendrez par semblable assemblément de parens. Cela s'espreuve assez par la generation des anguilles, produittes du limon: & des mouches, ou bestions qu'on voit naistre des excremens des autres animaux.

De quelle vie dira l'on que vivent les huistres, les esponges, & plusieurs choses aquatiques, lesquelles meritent mieux le nom de plantanimaux, que celuy de poissons?

Or tous ces corps ne vivent point tant de vie qui leur soit proprement particuliere, que de celle de l'univers, qui est generale & commune: Laquelle aparoist beaucoup plus vigoureuse sur la terre aux corps plus subtils, comme estans plus prochains de l'ame universelle du monde; qu'en ceux qui sont plus grossiers, ou plus esloignez d'elle.

The seeds of plants can be seen in the grain, and those of animals in the generative fluid. Metals likewise have their seed, but it can be seen only by true philosophers who know how to extract it from its proper place with great art; and it can much more readily be inferred by reason than perceived with bodily eyes. If the elements did not secretly contain a certain hidden productive power, in which a faculty of generation lies potentially, many herbs would not spring from the ground, or even from the highest walls, where they had never been sown or planted, and where they were previously unknown. Nor would so many different animals be generated in earth and water without any preceding coupling of the sexes. Yet they grow and then, through the mingling of male and female, produce their like for the perpetuation of their species, although they themselves were not generated by a similar union of parents. This is sufficiently demonstrated by the generation of eels produced from mud, and of flies or little creatures seen arising from the excrement of other animals.

By what life shall we say oysters, sponges and many aquatic things live, when they better deserve the name of plant-animals than that of fish? All these bodies live less by a life peculiar to themselves than by the general and common life of the universe. On earth this appears much more vigorous in subtler bodies, as being nearer to the universal soul of the world, than in those which are coarser or more distant from it.⁴⁷

SL_I_01S008 1621 pp 13–15 · scans FR033, FR034, FR035

Le Monde donc ayant esté créé bon par celui qui est la bonté mesme, est non seulement corporel, mais encore participant d'intelligence; (car il est plein d'idees omniformes) & comme j'ay desja dit, il n'a membre ny partie qui ne soit vitale. Pour cette cause les sages l'ont dit estre animal; par tout masle & femelle; & se conjoindre par mutuelle amour & conjonction à ses membres; tant il est convoiteux & avide du mariage & liayson de ses parties. De là, par une translation, vient la diversité des sexes aux plantes, & aux animaux, qui s'acouplant ensemble, à l'exemple du monde, engendrent leurs semblables; non autrement que le monde mesme qui de soy produit une infinité d'autres petits mondes. Car autant qu'au monde il s'engendre de corps, autant sont ce de microcosmes: veu qu'il n'y a corps, ou les parties, vertus, & qualitez de petits mondes ne soient distinctement remarquées. De sorte qu'un semblable produit volontiers son semblable, par adaptation d'action & de passion: ce qui ne se sçauroit veritablement faire sans estre plein de vie. Car quelle generation pourroit proceder d'un subject que l'on tiendroit pour mort? n'estant probable ny possible que ce qui n'a point de vie la puisse donner à quelqu'autre. Nous voyons bien aucunes fois que sans acouplement de masle & de femelle, voire

⁴⁷ The original errata correct "& source" on page 9 to "est source", and direct masculine "seul" and "animal" on page 10. These are incorporated: the world, rather than merely an individual creature's life, is the complete living animal. The examples of eels and insects form part of the author's argument for generation without parents. Their asserted origin from mud or excrement is his historical explanation, not an editorial account of their reproduction.

sans l'un ny l'autre, plusieurs choses sont engendrees, ausquelles par naturelle fomentation est inspiree la vie, de la vie de l'univers: comme quelques uns artificiellement font esclorre des poulets, sans que la poulle en ait couvé les œufs.

The world, then, having been created good by him who is goodness itself, is not only bodily but also shares in intelligence, for it is full of ideas of every form. And, as I have already said, it has no member or part that is not alive. For this reason the wise have called it an animal, male and female throughout, joining itself to its members through mutual love and union, so greatly does it desire and thirst for the marriage and binding together of its parts. From this, by a transference, comes the difference of the sexes in plants and animals. Coupling together after the world's example, they generate their like, just as the world itself produces from itself an infinity of other little worlds. For there are as many microcosms as there are bodies generated in the world, since there is no body in which the parts, powers and qualities of little worlds cannot be distinctly observed. Thus like readily produces like through an adaptation of action and receptivity; and this cannot truly take place without fullness of life. For what generation could proceed from a subject considered dead, since it is neither probable nor possible that what has no life could give it to another? We do indeed sometimes see many things generated without the coupling of male and female, or even without either, into which life is breathed from the life of the universe through natural warming. Thus some people artificially hatch chickens without the hen having brooded the eggs.⁴⁸

SL_I_01S009 1621 pp 15–16 · scans FR035, FR036

Et d'autres preparent certaines matieres, & les font putrifier, desquelles s'engendrent des animaux estranges, comme le Basilic d'un œuf de Coc, ou des menstrues d'une femme rousse: le Scorpion, de l'herbe ditte Basilic: des entrailles d'un bœuf la mouche à miel: des branches ou feuilles de certain arbre tombant en la mer, une espece d'oiseaux semblables à des canes: & tant d'autres choses à nous & à nostre monde incongneuës, plus dignes de admiration que de creance, pour estre hors du train commun de la nature, attirant la vie de cette vie universelle à certaines matieres, en certain temps & certain lieu: tant le monde est plein de vivacité preignante, & tousjours en action vitale. De sorte que rien ne meurt en luy, mais plustost que de demeurer sans agir, & par consequent sans vie, il refait incessamment d'une chose l'autre: & n'y a corps qui s'aneantisse ou perisse totalement. Car s'il estoit ainsi, toutes les parties du monde l'une apres l'autre, & peu à peu, s'esvanouyroient de nos yeux, voire mesme depuis tant de siecles, & tant de mutations, je ne sçay s'il y en auroit aujourd'huy quelque reste. A ce propos certain Poëte, non ignorant en cette secrette philosophie, parlant aux yeux de sa maistresse, leur dit,

Vostre aspect inégal qui ma fortune change,
Est comme le Soleil, contraire en ses effects,
Qui amollit la cire, & endurecit la fange,
Et fait des corps nouveaux de ceux qu'il a defaits.

⁴⁸. "Action and passion" are the complementary relations of acting and being acted upon. "Receptivity" renders the latter here; it does not mean an emotion.

Others prepare certain materials and make them putrefy, and strange animals are generated from them: the basilisk from a cock's egg or the menstrual blood of a red-haired woman; the scorpion from the herb called basil; the honeybee from an ox's entrails; and a kind of bird resembling ducks from the branches or leaves of a certain tree falling into the sea. There are so many other things unknown to us and to our world, more worthy of wonder than of belief because they lie outside nature's usual course, drawing life from this universal life into certain materials at a certain time and place. So full is the world of pregnant vitality, and so continually engaged in vital action, that nothing dies within it. Rather than remain inactive, and consequently without life, it continually remakes one thing from another; and no body is annihilated or perishes utterly. For if that were so, all the world's parts would gradually vanish from our eyes, one after another. Indeed, after so many centuries and so many changes, I do not know whether any remnant would be left today. On this subject a certain poet, not ignorant of this secret philosophy, addresses his mistress's eyes, saying:

Your changing glance, which changes my fortune,
 Is like the sun, contrary in its effects,
 Which softens wax and hardens clay,
 And makes new bodies from those it has undone.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ The author qualifies these extraordinary generation stories as "more worthy of wonder than of belief". The translation retains that reservation instead of silently accepting or correcting the examples.

2 That the world, since it lives, has spirit, soul and body

Que le Monde puis qu'il vit, a Esprit, Ame, & Corps.

Chapter outline

The soul requires a mediator sharing the nature of both soul and body.

The analogy with Christ's mediation illustrates the relation between the two extremes.

The world spirit joins the soul to the body and bears the activity of divine intelligence.

Verses attributed to Virgil and Augurel express this threefold constitution.

SL_I_02S001 1621 pp 17–19 · scans FR037, FR038, FR039

Le corps du monde est familierement connu par les sens, mais en luy gist un esprit caché, & en cet esprit une ame; qui ne peut estre accouplee au corps que par le moyen d'iceluy, car le corps est grossier, & l'ame tres-subtile; esloignee des qualitez corporelles, d'une longue distance. Il est donc besoin à cet accouplement, d'un tiers qui soit participant de la Nature des deux, & qui soit esprit corps, parce que les extremités ne peuvent estre assemblees que par la liaison de quelque mediateur ayant telle affinité à l'une & à l'autre, que chacune y puisse rencontrer sa propre nature. Le Ciel est haut, la Terre est basse: l'un est pur, l'autre est corrompu. Comment donc pourroit on eslever & joindre cette lourde corruption à cette agile pureté, sans un moyen participant des deux? Dieu est infiniment pur & net: les hommes sont extremement impurs & souillez de pechez: La reconciliation & rapprochement desquels avec Dieu ne pouvoit jamais arriver sans l'entremise de Jesus-Christ, qui vraiment Dieu & homme en a esté le vray aymant. De mesme, en la machine de l'univers cet esprit corps, ou corps spirituel, est comme agent commun, ou ciment de la conjonction de l'ame avec le corps. Laquelle ame est en l'esprit & corps du monde un apast & allechement de l'intelligence divine: car cette intelligence y est assez clairement apperceuë par eslevations effectives, renovations, mutations, variations, & multiplications de formes, qui ne peuvent proceder que de l'intelligence divine, & non de la matiere, qui de soy est brute, & ne peut causer aucune nature intelligente, pour former & specifier les choses. Le monde est donc nourry par cet esprit, & agité par l'ame infuse en luy au moyen de cet esprit mesme. Ce que Virgile, suivant la doctrine de Platon, a naïvement depeint en ces vers.

The body of the world is familiarly known through the senses, but within it lies a hidden spirit, and within that spirit a soul, which can be joined to the body only through the spirit's mediation. For the body is coarse and the soul most subtle, far removed from bodily qualities. Their union therefore needs a third thing sharing the nature of both, something that is spirit-body, because extremes can be brought together only through the bond of a mediator having such affinity with each that each can encounter its own nature in it. Heaven is high, earth low; one is pure, the other corrupt. How, then, could this heavy corruption be raised and joined to that agile purity without a medium sharing in both? God is infinitely pure and clean; human beings are exceedingly impure and stained with sins. Their reconciliation and renewed approach to God could never have taken place without the mediation of Jesus Christ, who, being truly God and man, was their true magnet. Likewise, within the structure of the universe this spirit-body, or spiritual body, is like a common agent or cement joining soul to body. In the world's spirit and body, this soul is a bait and attraction for divine intelligence. For that intelligence is clearly enough perceived there through actual elevations, renewals, mutations, variations and multiplications of forms. These can proceed only from divine intelligence and not from matter, which is in itself brute and cannot bring forth any intelligent nature to form things and give them their specific character. The world is therefore nourished by this spirit and stirred by the soul infused into it through this same spirit. Virgil, following Plato's doctrine, has vividly depicted this in these verses:^{50,51,52}

SL_I_02S002 1621 pp 19–20 · scans FR039, FR040

Le ciel semé de feus, la terre, & mer flotante,
 Les Astres rutilans, & la Lune luisante,
 Par un interne esprit sont tous alimentez,
 Et la vivacité d'une ame en tous costez
 Par les membres infuse esmeut toute la masse,
 Et se mesle au grand corps qui tous les deux embrasse.
 Augurel à son imitation.
 Puisque c'est donc chose bien assuree
 Qu'au corps du monde est l'ame incorporee,
 Croire il convient qu'au milieu de ces deux
 Gist un esprit puissant & vigoureux,
 Qui ne se doit ny corps ny ame dire;
 Mais qui des deux participe, & reduire
 Seul peut en un ces deux extremittez
 Par ses effects en tout bien limitez.

⁵⁰. "Spirit-body" preserves the deliberately joined expression "esprit corps". The following phrase, "spiritual body", explains its function as a medium sharing in both extremes.

⁵¹. The French "aymant" means magnet. The attraction implied by that word links Christ's mediation to the chapter's physical language of joining and affinity.

⁵². "Elevations" translates the source's plural without specifying a particular laboratory process; the list embraces the operations through which the author recognises intelligent form.

The heaven sown with fires, the earth and flowing sea,
 The gleaming stars and shining moon,
 Are all nourished by an inward spirit,
 And the vitality of a soul infused on every side
 Through all the members moves the entire mass,
 And mingles with the great body that embraces both.
 Augurel, in imitation of him:
 Since it is therefore a well-established thing
 That soul is embodied in the world's body,
 We must believe that between these two
 Lies a powerful and vigorous spirit,
 Which should be called neither body nor soul,
 But which shares in both, and alone
 Can bring these two extremes together as one
 Through its effects, well bounded in every respect.⁵³

⁵³ The first quotation has six substantive verse lines, several wrapped by the printer; the second has eight. The English preserves both counts. The source presents Augurel's verses as an imitation of the preceding Virgilian account.

3 That everything which has being and life is made through the spirit of the world; and concerning first matter

Que tout ce qui a essence & vie, est fait par l'Esprit du monde: Et de la premiere matiere.

Chapter outline

Things are nourished by the same spirit from which they are made.

The separable subtle essence is called fifth in relation to the four elements.

Solar heat vivifies seeds, with different effects according to their material disposition.

Gold illustrates the gradual perfection of purified mercury and sulphur under continuous heat.

SL_I_03S001 1621 pp 21–22 · scans FR041, FR042

Les choses sont nourries de ce dont elles sont faites. Il se voit que tout respire, vit, croist, & se nourrit par cet esprit infus au monde: & se dissout & meurt iceluy defaillant. Il s'ensuit donc que tout est fait de luy, qui n'est autre chose qu'une simple essence subtile, que les philosophes nomment quinte, parce qu'elle peut estre separee des corps comme d'une matiere crasse & grossiere, & de la superfluité des quatre elemens: & lors elle a des operations merueilleuses. Or elle est infuse par toutes les parties du monde, & par elle la vertu de l'ame se dilate & devient vigoureuse: Laquelle vertu est principalement versee & donnee aux corps qui ont plus attiré & participé de cet Esprit, estant envoyee & decoulee d'enhaut, c'est à sçavoir du Soleil, qui veritablement produit la qualité de la matiere en essence: Tellement que cet esprit eschauffé par l'action du Soleil, acquiert grande abondance de vie, multipliant & vivifiant les semences de toutes choses, qui croissent & augmentent jusques à la magnitude determinee, selon l'espece & forme de la chose. Pour cette cause Virgile a veritablement dit
Qu'une vigueur ignee & celeste origine
Est en chaque semence, & en elle domine.

Things are nourished by that of which they are made. We see that everything breathes, lives, grows and is nourished through this spirit infused into the world, and dissolves and dies when it fails. It follows, then, that everything is made of it. It is nothing other than a simple, subtle essence, which philosophers call the fifth because it can be separated from bodies as from thick, coarse matter and from the superfluity of the four elements; and then it performs marvellous operations. It is infused throughout every part of the world, and through it the power of the soul spreads and becomes vigorous. This power, sent and flowing down from above—that is, from the sun—is chiefly poured into and bestowed upon those bodies which have drawn in and shared more of this spirit. The sun truly brings the quality of matter into being. Thus this spirit, heated by the sun's action, acquires a great abundance of life, multiplying and vivifying the seeds of all things, which grow and increase to their determined size according to the species and form of the thing. For this reason Virgil truly said:

A fiery vigour and a heavenly origin
Are in each seed, and hold dominion within it.^{54,55}

SL_I_03S002 1621 pp 22–23 · scans FR042, FR043

Cet esprit donc (par les philosophes appellé Mercure) à cause qu'il est multiforme, voire omniforme, faisant la production de tous les corps, eslargit une vie aux uns plus nette & incorruptible, & aux autres plus embrouillée, & subjecte à corruption & defaillance: selon la predisposition de la matiere. Par ainsi cette vigueur de feu qui provient des rayons solaires n'est pas toute une en tout & par tout, mais est diversifiée selon le plus ou le moins qui est aux semences des choses. Toutes matieres donc de plus nette & pure predisposition ont l'esprit & la vie plus durable & incorruptible: car toute chose se delectant volontiers en son semblable, il est bien seant que cette chaleur celeste qui est tres-pure, entre & penetre dans les corps autant & plus profondement qu'ils sont plus purs, & les rende plus durables, vitaux, & incorruptibles.

This spirit, then, is called Mercury by the philosophers because it takes many forms, indeed every form, bringing forth all bodies. It bestows on some a cleaner and more incorruptible life, and on others a more troubled life, subject to corruption and failure, according to the predisposition of the matter. Thus this fiery vigour proceeding from the solar rays is not wholly the same in everything and everywhere, but is varied according to the greater or lesser degree present in the seeds of things. All materials of cleaner and purer predisposition therefore have a more lasting and incorruptible spirit and life. For since everything readily delights in its like, it is fitting that this celestial heat, which is most pure, should enter and penetrate bodies more deeply the purer they are, and render them more lasting, living and incorruptible.⁵⁶

SL_I_03S003 1621 pp 23–25 · scans FR043, FR044, FR045

La preuve de cela se monstre en l'or, qui estant le plus net & depuré de tous les corps terrestres, participe le plus de cette chaleur & feu celestiel, qui perçant la terre trouve aux minieres les matieres de l'or predisposees; à sçavoir son Mercure, & son soufre, (qu'Esdras appelle poudre) preparees selon le pouvoir de l'action & diligence de nature, par depuration & separation de toutes ordures & feculences terrestres pleines d'adustion. Lesquelles matieres sont au commencement un sperme ou une eau meslee avec cette poudre ou soufre tres-pur, qui peu à peu aydez d'une propre vertu coagulante s'espoissit & endurecit par la longue action d'une chaleur continue. Tant qu'elle est à la fin conduite à sa perfection, qui est simple en nature, & teinte d'une couleur ignee: car veritablement la chaleur est mere des teintures.

S'il est donc tenu pour certain que cette chaleur vient du Soleil, qui sera celui tant ennemy de verité & de raison qui veuille debatre que le Soleil ne soit autheur & pere

⁵⁴. "Fifth" renders "quinte", the name assigned to the subtle essence in relation to the four elements. The chapter explains it through separability and operation rather than identifying it with one ordinary material.

⁵⁵. "Essence" shifts between being and the subtle essence under discussion. The opening "has being" keeps this distinction intelligible without replacing the technical expression "first matter" in the heading.

⁵⁶. The original errata correct the opening of the Virgilian couplet to "Qu'une" and delete "est" from the parenthesis naming Mercury; these corrections are incorporated. The name "Mercury" is expressly given here to the multiform productive spirit. The passage does not confine it to tangible quicksilver.

de perfection? eslevons nous donc un peu plus haut, & recherchons exactement comment cela se peut faire.

The proof of this is shown in gold, which, being the cleanest and most purified of all terrestrial bodies, shares most in this celestial heat and fire. Piercing the earth, the fire finds in the mines the predisposed materials of gold, namely its mercury and sulphur—which Esdras calls powder—prepared, as far as Nature’s action and diligence can achieve, by purification and the separation of all earthly filth and dregs full of scorched impurity. At the beginning these materials are a seed-fluid, or a water mixed with this most pure powder or sulphur. Little by little, aided by an inherent coagulating power, it thickens and hardens under the prolonged action of continuous heat, until at last it is brought to its perfection, simple in nature and tinged with a fiery colour; for heat is truly the mother of tinctures.

If, then, it is held certain that this heat comes from the sun, who will be so hostile to truth and reason as to dispute that the sun is the author and father of perfection? Let us therefore rise a little higher and investigate precisely how this can take place.^{57,58}

⁵⁷. “Adustion” describes a burnt or scorched condition associated here with earthly impurity. The translation preserves that quality rather than treating the dregs as an unspecified waste.

⁵⁸. The materials begin as a seed-fluid or water and become solid through their coagulating power and continuous heat. “Its mercury” and “its sulphur” retain the possessive relation to gold; they are not silently replaced with modern chemical ingredients.

4 How Hermes calls the sun the father of the spirit of the world and of matter

Comme le Soleil est dit par Hermes pere de l'Esprit du monde, & de la Matiere.

Chapter outline

The celestial sun arises from primordial matter, then nourishes and vivifies it.

The earth receives solar influences as the common womb of generation.

The particular chymical stone is distinguished from the universal spirit on which its action depends.

Hermetic sayings are read at both the universal and the particular levels.

The general mercury requires solar animation to realise its threefold generative power.

SL_I_04S001 1621 pp 25–26 · scans FR045, FR046

Mais (me dira quelqu'un) puisque toutes choses procedent d'une mesme matiere, comment se peut il faire que le Soleil soit pere de la matiere, veu que d'icelle il a esté creé luy mesme? Pour respondre à cette question il faut entendre que si on regarde cette primeraïne & prejacente matiere de toutes choses on la trouvera invisible, & qui ne peut estre comprise que par profonde & vive imagination: du Soleil & vital feu de laquelle, en elle naturellement inné, le Soleil celeste sortit & s'esleva plein de lumiere & de pareille vigueur ignee, qui desployant par apres cette chaleur interne & essentielle, accompagnée de cette chaleur naturelle, espart les rayons de son feu par toute la rondeur du monde; illuminant en haut les astres, & vivifiant toutes choses en bas.

Or pource que la terre est comme la matrice commune de toutes choses, le Soleil agit principalement en elle comme au receptacle de toutes influences: au sein de laquelle sont cachees les semences de toutes choses, qui agitees & menees par la chaleur des rayons solaires sortent en lumiere.

But someone will say to me: since all things proceed from one and the same matter, how can the sun be the father of matter, seeing that it was itself created from it? To answer this question, we must understand that if we consider this primordial matter, which precedes all things, we shall find it invisible and comprehensible only through deep and vivid imagination. From its sun and vital fire, naturally innate within it, the celestial sun came forth and rose up full of light and like fiery vigour. Afterwards, unfolding this inward and essential heat, accompanied by this natural heat, it scatters the rays of its fire throughout the whole sphere of the world, illuminating the stars above and vivifying all things below.

Now because the earth is like the common womb of all things, the sun acts chiefly upon it as the receptacle of all influences. Hidden in its

bosom are the seeds of all things, which, stirred and impelled by the heat of the solar rays, come forth into the light.^{59,60}

SL_I_04S002 1621 pp 26–28 · scans FR046, FR047, FR048

C'est pourquoy nous voyons en Hiver. Lors que le Soleil s'est esloigné de nous, que la terre morfondue par la privation des rayons perpendiculaires d'iceluy, & par ce moyen depourveuë de chaleur suffisante, demeure sterile; mais quand au renouveau le Soleil remonte sur nous par sa voye ordinaire, alors elle reprend vie & vigueur comme ressuscitée. De ce changement est seule cause cet esprit de l'univers, tres plein d'ame & de vie, habitant principalement en la terre. Lequel avant que pouvoir engendrer doit necessairement habiter & demeurer en quelque corps, assavoir en la terre, qui est comme le corps de tous les corps. Et parce que toutes choses sont alimentees & nourries de ce dont elles sont faites, cet esprit est tres-aymé du Soleil, & pour cette cause les sages anciens n'ont pas dit sans raison que le Soleil vient au Printemps réchauffer & ranimer son pere aggravé de vieillesse, & languissant demy mort, par les froidures de l'Hiver.

Puis donc qu'il est renforcé & revivifié par le Soleil, ce n'est pas sans subject que nous disons avec Hermes que le Soleil est son pere: sans lequel autrement il seroit ingenerable, & ne pourroit croistre ny multiplier, & ce d'autant plus que la chaleur influante des astres provient du Soleil & empreinte la terre, qui ayant conceu, engendre, esleve, & multiplie cette matiere spiritueuse; l'amenant d'incorporeité à corporeité.

This is why we see in winter, when the sun has withdrawn from us, that the earth, chilled through being deprived of its perpendicular rays and thus lacking sufficient heat, remains barren. But when, at the renewal of the year, the sun rises over us again along its accustomed path, the earth recovers life and vigour as though resurrected. The sole cause of this change is the spirit of the universe, most full of soul and life, dwelling chiefly in the earth. Before it can generate, it must necessarily inhabit and remain within some body, namely the earth, which is like the body of all bodies. And because all things are fed and nourished by that of which they are made, this spirit is greatly loved by the sun. For this reason the ancient sages did not say without cause that in spring the sun comes to warm and revive its father, weighed down with age and languishing half dead from winter's cold.

Since, then, it is strengthened and revived by the sun, we do not say without grounds, with Hermes, that the sun is its father. Without it, it would otherwise be incapable of generation and could neither grow nor multiply. This is all the more so because the heat flowing from the stars proceeds from the sun and impregnates the earth, which, having conceived, generates, raises and multiplies this spirituous matter, bringing it from incorporeality into corporeality.⁶¹

⁵⁹. The objection distinguishes origin from subsequent nourishment. Matter precedes the celestial sun, yet the sun is its "father" through the continuing action that brings its powers into effect.

⁶⁰. The source speaks of a sun and vital fire innate in primordial matter before describing the emergence of the celestial sun. Both stages are retained rather than collapsed into a single physical sun.

⁶¹. The sun both revives its "father" and is called the spirit's "father". These reciprocal parental expressions belong to the argument: the generative source is itself nourished by what has

SL_I_04S003 1621 pp 28–30 · scans FR048, FR049, FR050

L'Hortulan qui a commenté la table d'Hermes delaisant les radicaux principes de la nature, & descendant aux particuliers principes de l'Alchimie, entend par le Soleil, l'or philosophal, lequel il dit estre pere de la pierre: ce qui est vray. Car les illuminez en cet art, sçavent par experience, & l'ont appris de tous les bons auteurs (desquels le nombre est infiny) qu'en la vraye matiere & subject de la pierre sont en puissance or & argent, & vif argent en nature. Lesquels or & argent sont meilleurs que ceux que l'on voit & touche vulgairement, pource qu'ils sont vifs, & peuvent vegeter & croistre, & les vulgaires sont morts. Et s'il n'estoit ainsi, la matiere ne parviendroit jamais à la perfection extreme que l'art luy donne. Laquelle perfection est si grande qu'elle parfaict les imparfaits metaux quasi miraculeusement, comme dit Hermes. Et toutesfois cet or & cet argent invisibles qui, par le magistere sont exaltez en si haut degré, ne sçauroient communiquer cette perfection aux imparfaits, sans le ministere de l'or & de l'argent vulgaires. C'est pourquoy les Maistres les y joignent à la fermentation: par ainsi l'or est tousjours pere de l'Elixir.

Hortulan, who commented upon the table of Hermes, leaves aside Nature's root principles and descends to the particular principles of alchemy. By the sun he understands philosophical gold, which he calls the father of the stone; and this is true. For those enlightened in this art know by experience, and have learnt from all the good authors, whose number is infinite, that within the true matter and subject of the stone there are gold and silver potentially, and quicksilver in nature. This gold and silver are better than those ordinarily seen and touched, because they are alive and can grow and increase, whereas the ordinary ones are dead. Were this not so, the matter would never reach the extreme perfection which art gives it. This perfection is so great that it perfects imperfect metals almost miraculously, as Hermes says. Yet this invisible gold and silver, raised through the magistry to so high a degree, could not communicate this perfection to imperfect metals without the agency of ordinary gold and silver. For this reason the masters add the latter during fermentation. Thus gold is always the father of the elixir.⁶²

SL_I_04S004 1621 pp 30–31 · scans FR050, FR051

Mais il faut que ceux qui auront desir de se confirmer en cette verité s'employent à lire les bons livres: car ce n'est pas mon dessein d'en parler icy davantage: parce que je pretens faire cognoistre seulement que le divin Hermes a d'un mesme doigt voulu toucher l'une & l'autre corde; ainsi qu'il le declare assez quand il dit qu'il est appelé Mercure trois fois grand, comme ayant les trois parts de la sapience de tout le monde: voulant dire qu'ayant anatomisé cet esprit general, qui est auteur materiel & principe des trois genres, qui font le tout de ce grand monde, il avoit la sapience & science universelle, par laquelle rien ne luy estoit plus incogneu. Apres avoir aussi dit dés le commencement; & comme toutes choses procederent d'un par la meditation d'un, ainsi toutes choses sont nees de cette chose unique par adaptation. Or cet un dont procederent toutes les choses, est l'Esprit general duquel je veux traicter: Et cette chose unique de laquelle il dit que seront perpetrez les miracles, est

issued from it.

⁶² The author explicitly accepts a particular alchemical interpretation of the sun as philosophical gold, while distinguishing it from the universal explanation he is pursuing. He also distinguishes invisible living gold and silver from ordinary metals used in fermentation.

la vraye matiere minerale de la pierre, de laquelle j'ay parlé cy dessus: qui est procréée par Nature dans la terre de cette premiere matiere generale: ou esprit universel: lequel esprit contenant en soy toutes les vertus celestes en puissance, en a communiqué à cette matiere minerale autant qu'il estoit necessaire pour luy donner l'estre parfait auquel elle estoit destinee.

Those who desire confirmation of this truth must apply themselves to reading good books, for I do not intend to speak further of it here. My purpose is only to make it understood that divine Hermes intended to touch both strings with the same finger. He makes this sufficiently clear when he says he is called Mercury thrice great because he possesses the three parts of the wisdom of the whole world. He means that, having anatomised this general spirit, the material author and principle of the three kinds which make up the entirety of this great world, he possessed universal wisdom and knowledge, through which nothing remained unknown to him. At the beginning he had also said: "And as all things proceeded from one through the meditation of one, so all things were born from this single thing by adaptation." Now this one, from which all things proceeded, is the general spirit of which I wish to treat. And this single thing, through which he says wonders will be performed, is the true mineral matter of the stone, of which I spoke above. Nature produces it within the earth from this general first matter, or universal spirit. Containing all celestial powers potentially within itself, this spirit has communicated to that mineral matter as much as was necessary to give it the perfect being for which it was destined.⁶³

SL_I_04S005 1621 pp 31–33 · scans FR051, FR052, FR053

Reprenant donc mes premieres erres, & m'esloignant des sentiers Chimiques autant que le subject me le voudra permettre, je diray que cet esprit general est la pierre, & l'Elixir, que la nature a composé, & dont elle perpetre tous ses miracles, beaucoup plus dignes d'admiration que ceux de la pierre Chimique; à laquelle il est seulement eslargy par cet esprit mesme, d'agir en son semblable; pour y introduire ce qui luy defailloit: Car estant vrayement metallique purifiée & accomplie par art, elle purifie & accomplit les metaux impurs qui sont demeurez imparfaits, par faute de digestion. Mais cette pierre phisque reproduit perennellement les choses qui d'elles ont defia eu commencement, & à chacun moment en cree de nouvelles, tant au genre animal, qu'au vegetal, & mineral. Ce qu'elle ne pourroit faire sans l'ayde & faveur des corps celestes, & specialement du Soleil source & principe de toutes vertus & generations. Elle a donc le Soleil pour pere, & contient or & argent spirituels, puis qu'elle est premiere matiere de la premiere matiere de l'or & de l'argent corporels, & parce que l'air est le moyen par lequel elle reçoit les vertus superieures, Hermes dit que le vent l'a portee en son ventre: à raison dequoy Raymond Lulle l'appelle Mercure Aérien. La terre premiere parente le nourrit en son sein fecond: ce qui est prouvé par la production de tout ce qui sort de la terre: car si cet esprit n'y estoit enclos elle n'auroit force ny pouvoir d'engendrer & produire, n'estant proprement que le vaisseau ou matrice de tant de generations, & productions diverses. Cette matiere generale, à qui est donné le nom de Mercure;

⁶³ The quoted French reads "meditation". That wording is retained in English. The author then distinguishes the universal "one" from the particular mineral "single thing", allowing the same Hermetic saying to address two levels of operation.

estant par le dire des sages invisible & presque incorporelle, ne peut estre corporisee ny mise en veuë sinon par subtil artifice:

Returning, then, to my first course, and withdrawing from chymical paths as far as the subject will allow, I shall say that this general spirit is the stone and elixir which Nature has composed, and through which she performs all her wonders, far more worthy of admiration than those of the chymical stone. To that stone this same spirit grants only the ability to act upon its like, introducing into it what it lacked. For, being truly metallic, purified and perfected by art, it purifies and perfects impure metals which have remained imperfect through lack of digestion. But this natural stone perpetually reproduces things which have already had their beginning from it, and at every moment creates new ones in the animal, vegetable and mineral kinds alike. It could not do this without the aid and favour of the celestial bodies, especially the sun, source and principle of all powers and generations. It therefore has the sun as its father and contains spiritual gold and silver, since it is the first matter of the first matter of bodily gold and silver. And because air is the medium through which it receives the higher powers, Hermes says that the wind carried it in its belly; for this reason Raymond Lulle calls it aerial Mercury. The earth, its first parent, nourishes it in her fruitful bosom. This is proved by the production of everything that issues from the earth; for if this spirit were not enclosed within her, she would have neither strength nor power to generate and produce, being properly only the vessel or womb of so many different generations and productions. This general matter, to which the name Mercury is given, is, according to the sages, invisible and almost incorporeal, and can be embodied and brought into view only through subtle artifice.^{64,65}

SL_I_04S006 1621 pp 33–35 · scans FR053, FR054, FR055

Que si elle est extraite du sein de sa mere nourrisse, puis repurgee de toutes superfluitez accidentelles, & preparee selon l'art: Qui l'empeschera de separer des corps, auxquels elle sera administree, les choses corrompantes qui luy sont dissemblables; & de conserver & multiplier ce qui luy est conforme? veu que toutes les forces celestes & vertus mondaines y concurrent ensemble.

Il est certain que les auteurs mal interpretez semblent tous commander ou conseiller que l'on use des metaux seuls pour faire les metaux: disant qu'en l'or seul sont les semences de l'or. Sentence, voire Arrest sans appel. Mais outre ce que j'ay desia dit n'aguere de la difference des metaux vulgaires, & de ceux qu'ils entendent que l'on prenne pour leur magistere; encore prendrai-je l'audace d'affirmer que sans cet Esprit general qui est la seule cause de vegetation en toutes choses, cette faculté d'aurifier ou d'argentifier qui est en ces corps metalliques tant vulgaires que secrets & occultes, ne pourroit vegeter ny venir de puissance en effect; d'autant que la nature ne se produit point soy mesme; & qu'en toute operation il faut un agent & une matiere capable de son action; & c'est ce feu dont parle Pontanus, que les sages

⁶⁴. "Natural stone" renders "pierre phisque" in its stated contrast with the particular "chymical stone". The former continually generates across all three kinds, while the latter perfects metals of its own kind.

⁶⁵. The repeated phrase "first matter of the first matter" is substantive. It places the universal spirit before the particular matter of bodily gold and silver, and is not an accidental repetition.

ont tous caché comme la seule clef de leurs secrets, sans lequel il a failly deux cent foyes (dit il) en l'operation sur la vraye matiere.

If it is extracted from the bosom of its nursing mother, then purged of all accidental superfluities and prepared according to art, what will prevent it from separating from the bodies to which it is administered the corrupting things unlike itself, and from preserving and multiplying what conforms to it? For all celestial forces and worldly powers concur together within it.

It is certain that, when poorly interpreted, the authors all seem to command or advise the use of metals alone to make metals, saying that the seeds of gold are in gold alone: a judgement, indeed a verdict without appeal. But besides what I have just said about the difference between ordinary metals and those they intend to be taken for their magistry, I shall venture to affirm that without this general spirit, the sole cause of growth in all things, the faculty of making gold or silver which exists in these metallic bodies, ordinary as well as secret and hidden, could neither grow nor pass from potentiality into effect. For nature does not produce itself, and every operation requires an agent and matter capable of receiving its action. This is the fire of which Pontanus speaks, which all the sages have concealed as the sole key to their secrets, and without which he failed two hundred times, he says, in operating upon the true matter.⁶⁶

SL_I_04S007 1621 pp 35–36 · scans FR055, FR056

Ce Mercure triple ou supreme universel, est donc la premiere semence de tous les metaux, ainsi que des deux autres genres: laquelle se coagule & endurecit peu à peu par l'action de la chaleur continue qui est dedans les mines, & reçoit la teinture estant parfaitement purifiée. Mais il se specifie en divers genres; & prend diverses formes & couleurs, selon le lieu & la matiere adiacente: faisant metaux, mineraux, & pierres au dedans de la terre; & toutes sortes d'arbres & de plantes en la superficie; selon qu'il est animé par les rayons du Soleil; sans lesquels il resteroit ingenerable: car des le commencement Nature a estably cette Loy que le Soleil eschauffast & nourrist perpetuellement la matiere; afin que sa vertu triplement animale, vegetale, & minerale, feust incessamment tournee & portee à l'effect: & c'est pourquoy Hermes escrit que le Soleil est son pere.

⁶⁶. The figure of two hundred failures is retained as the report attributed to Pontanus. The author invokes it to emphasise the indispensable agent, not to supply a further recipe.

This triple or supreme universal Mercury is therefore the first seed of all metals, as of the other two kinds. It coagulates and hardens little by little through the action of the continuous heat within the mines, and receives the tincture when perfectly purified. But it takes on specific character in different kinds, and assumes different forms and colours according to the place and adjacent matter, making metals, minerals and stones within the earth, and every sort of tree and plant upon its surface, according as it is animated by the sun's rays. Without them it would remain incapable of generation. For from the beginning Nature established this law: that the sun should perpetually heat and nourish matter, so that its threefold power, animal, vegetable and mineral, should continually be turned and brought into effect. And that is why Hermes writes that the sun is its father.

5 How the moon is the mother of the spirit of the world and of universal matter

Comment la Lune est mere de l'Esprit du monde & de la matiere universelle.

Chapter outline

Body, spirit and soul remain associated even when separation seems to have occurred.

Heat and moisture act as male and female principles in generation.

Corruption names the passage between forms through putrefaction.

The moon nourishes radical moisture, complementing solar heat.

The particular philosophical moon joins and retains body and seed in the stone.

SL_I_05S001 1621 pp 37–38 · scans FR057, FR058

Pour empescher que l'on ne se deçoyve icy, il fault considerer que comme nous avons corps, esprit, & ame; aussi a ce grand univers. Desquelles trois parties ne se trouvant aucune chose qui en soit despourveuë, c'est une consequence necessaire qu'elles sont tousjours associees ensemble; de sorte que l'une n'est jamais sans l'autre, que si quelquefois il semble que les deux en soient separees, elles sont toutes-fois cachees en la tierce qui reste; comme le subtil & profond artiste sçaura bien cognoistre, & voir en chacun corps par l'examen du feu. Ce qui donc est matiere est aussi esprit: & ce qui est esprit peut sans impertinence estre appellé corps, eu esgard à ce qu'ils sont indivisibles & engendrez par la loy de Nature pour n'estre qu'une seule & mesme chose; parquoy la matiere n'est point seulement corps, ame ou esprit, mais elle est tous les trois ensemble, l'un avec l'autre engendrez & nourris, tellement qu'à la propagation & action de l'un, les deux autres se trouvent.

To prevent error here, we must consider that just as we have body, spirit and soul, so does this great universe. Since nothing is found without these three parts, it follows necessarily that they are always associated together, so that one is never without another. If it sometimes seems that two have been separated from it, they are nevertheless hidden in the third which remains, as the subtle and profound practitioner will readily recognise and see in every body through examination by fire. What is matter is therefore also spirit, and what is spirit may without impropriety be called body, considering that they are indivisible and generated by Nature's law to be one and the same thing. Matter is consequently not merely body, soul or spirit, but all three together, generated and nourished with one another, so that in the propagation and action of one the other two are present.⁶⁷

SL_I_05S002 1621 pp 38–39 · scans FR058, FR059

Quand donc nous disons que la Lune est mere de l'esprit & matiere universelle, nous ne parlons pas sans raison apparente; & n'y a rien d'absurde: Mais il nous fault faire voir d'où vient cette maternité. Chaleur & humeur sont les deux clefs de toute

⁶⁷ The opening guards against taking separation as the absolute removal of two principles. The author says that they remain hidden in the third, a qualification which governs the later language of extraction and purification.

generation: la chaleur faisant l'office de masle, & l'humeur celuy de femelle. Par l'action du chaud sur l'humide se fait premierement la corruption; qui est suivie par la generation. Cecy apparoist au petit vaisseau d'un œuf; dedans lequel le sperme se putrifie par la chaleur de fomentation; puis apres le poulet se coagule & forme, le mesme arrive en la generation de l'homme, qui est amené à un corps accomply de toutes ses parties, par l'assemblément de deux spermes, l'un masculin & l'autre feminin, dedans la matrice, à l'aide de la chaleur naturelle de la femme. J'appelle icy corruption le changement & passage de forme en forme, qui ne peult arriver sans le moyen de putrefaction, qui est le vray chemin de generation; laquelle est procuree & avancee par certain Mercure ou argent vif, comme porteur & conducteur special de la vertu vegetative.

When, therefore, we say that the moon is the mother of universal spirit and matter, we do not speak without evident reason, and there is nothing absurd in it; but we must show the source of this motherhood. Heat and moisture are the two keys to all generation: heat performs the office of the male, and moisture that of the female. Through the action of the hot upon the moist, corruption first takes place, followed by generation. This appears in the little vessel of an egg, within which the seed-fluid putrefies through the heat of warming; afterwards the chick coagulates and takes form. The same happens in human generation: a body complete in all its parts is brought about through the gathering together of two seed-fluids, one male and the other female, within the womb, aided by the woman's natural heat. Here I call corruption the change and passage from one form to another, which cannot occur without putrefaction, the true path of generation. Generation is procured and advanced by a certain Mercury or living silver, as the special bearer and conductor of the vegetative power.^{68,69}

SL_I_05S003 1621 pp 40–41 · scans FR060, FR061

Les semences de tous les corps sont aquees, comme pleines de l'humeur de leur Mercure. Que si leur chaleur innee est tiree de puissance en acte par la chaleur externe du Soleil, alors par decoction se fait la generation. Ce qui a fait dire aux philosophes anciens que le Soleil & l'homme engendrent, assavoir le Soleil, le Soleil terrestre, qui est l'or: & l'homme, l'homme, c'est une chose manifeste que le feu elementaire est comme mort & ingenerable sans le feu solaire: qui fait que le Soleil est coustumierement appellé seigneur de vie & generation. La chaleur donc en toute generation des choses vient du Soleil; mais l'humidité que l'on appelle radicale est fomentee par l'influence Lunaire, que toutes choses recoivent & sentent, estant alterees & changees par les mouvemens de cet astre, en son croissant ou decours. Voyla pourquoy Hermes a dit que la Lune est mere de la matiere universelle, & le Soleil son pere: car la chaleur du Soleil & l'humidité de la Lune engendrent toutes choses, parce que la chaleur & l'humeur ayant pris temperie conçoivent, & de cette conception tout naist & reçoit vie. Et combien que le feu & l'eau soient contraires, toutes-fois l'un ne pourroit profiter sans l'autre, mais par leur diverse action tout est conceu & conçoit.

⁶⁸. The author defines "corruption" explicitly as a passage between forms. The passage gives putrefaction a generative function rather than using corruption merely as a moral or destructive term.

⁶⁹. The two seed-fluids are explicitly male and female in the source. The translation retains that historical account rather than substituting a modern explanation of conception.

Ainsi dans l'univers discordante concorde
Aux generations devient apte & s'accorde.

The seeds of all bodies are watery, being full of the moisture of their Mercury. If their innate heat is brought from potentiality into actuality by the sun's external heat, generation then takes place through decoction. This led the ancient philosophers to say that the sun and man generate: the sun, that is, the terrestrial sun which is gold; and man, man. It is manifest that elemental fire is as though dead and incapable of generation without solar fire; hence the sun is customarily called the lord of life and generation. Heat in every generation of things therefore comes from the sun, but the moisture called radical is fostered by lunar influence. All things receive and feel this influence, being altered and changed by the movements of this heavenly body in its waxing or waning. That is why Hermes said that the moon is the mother of universal matter and the sun its father. For the sun's heat and the moon's moisture generate all things: heat and moisture, having reached a temperate balance, conceive, and from this conception everything is born and receives life. Although fire and water are contrary, neither could accomplish anything without the other; through their different actions everything is conceived and itself conceives.

Thus in the universe discordant concord
Becomes fit for generation and agrees.^{70,71}

SL_I_05S004 1621 pp 41–43 · scans FR061, FR062, FR063

Je ne veux toutesfois donner cet avantage à ceux qui lisant ce chapitre pourroient faire par precipitation un mauvais jugement de moy, sur ce que je destraque l'intention principale de Hermes du grand chemin Phisque pour la jeter au sentier que je tiens: sçachant bien que selon son precepte tous les bons Philosophes veulent que leur Soleil soit conjoint à leur Lune, pour faire par leur conjunction la generation necessaire. Car comme dit Arnauld de Villeneuve en sa fleur des fleurs, leur sperme ne se joint point à leur corps, sinon par le moyen de leur Lune, & cette Lune n'est point l'argent vulgaire, ains la vraye matiere de la pierre, qui assemble en son ventre, & retient inseparablement le corps, qui est le Soleil, & le sperme, qui est le Mercure. Et c'est de cette Lune qu'il parle en sa nouvelle lumiere, disant que horsmis le maistre qui luy enseigne l'œuvre, il n'avoit jamais veu personne travaillant sur la vraye matiere: mais que tous s'esgaroient & extravaguoient au choix des choses, comme si d'un chien ils vouloient engendrer un homme.

Nevertheless, I do not wish to give an advantage to those who, reading this chapter, might hastily judge me ill because I divert Hermes' principal intention from the broad natural road into the path I am following. I know well that, according to his precept, all good philosophers require their sun to be joined to their moon so that their conjunction may accomplish the necessary generation. For, as Arnauld de Villeneuve says in his Flower of Flowers, their seed does not join

⁷⁰. "Radical" moisture means moisture at the root of life. Here it belongs to the lunar contribution, while solar heat brings innate heat into actuality.

⁷¹. The compressed explanation "the sun ... gold; and man, man" is retained without adding a missing object or an unprinted alchemical equation.

their body except through their moon. This moon is not ordinary silver, but the true matter of the stone, which gathers within its belly and retains inseparably the body, which is the sun, and the seed, which is Mercury. It is of this moon that he speaks in his *New Light*, saying that, apart from the master who taught him the work, he had never seen anyone working upon the true matter, but that all went astray and wandered in their choice of things, as though they wished to generate a man from a dog.⁷²

⁷² The passage names *Flower of Flowers* and *New Light* as works associated with Arnould de Villeneuve. That attribution is the witness's own; the translation does not independently authenticate the works or their authorship.

6 That the root of the spirit of the world is in the air

Que la racine de l'Esprit du monde est en l'air.

Chapter outline

Wind is moving air, and breathing demonstrates air's vital necessity.

Air impregnates the general spirit and strengthens its generative power.

The saying that roots are in air also admits a particular reading through volatile and fixed parts.

Distillation and return of water to earth explain the imagery of mountains and roots.

Air carries celestial influences and the forms of natural things.

SL_I_06S001 1621 pp 43–44 · scans FR063, FR064

Le vent n'est autre chose qu'un air esmeu & agité: comme il se recognoist par la respiration des animaux, puisque respirant par le benefice de l'air, ils jettent du vent. Le vent donc est air & l'air est par tout vital & spiracle de vie, veu que sans air aucune chose ne peut vivre: car ce qui en est privé ou suffoqué meurt incontinent, & les plantes mesme qui n'ont l'air ouvert & libre deviennent debiles & languissantes au respect des autres.

Nous ne disons donc pas en vain que l'air est esprit vital, traversant & penetrant tout, donnant vie & consistance à tout, liant, mouvant, & remplissant toutes choses. Par lequel air s'engendre & rend manifeste cet esprit general enclos & caché en toutes choses: estant empraint & engrossé par l'air qui le rend plus puissant à engendrer. Tellement que Calid Philosophe Juif a eu juste subject de dire que les minieres des choses ont leurs racines en l'air & leurs testes ou sommitez en terre. Comme s'il disoit que l'air est cause que cet Esprit vegete, s'augmente, & multiplie sa miniere en la terre.

Wind is nothing other than air moved and stirred, as can be recognised from the breathing of animals: breathing through the benefit of air, they send out wind. Wind, then, is air, and air everywhere is vital and the breath of life, since nothing can live without it. Whatever is deprived of it or suffocated dies immediately, and even plants without open and free air become weak and languishing compared with others.

We do not therefore say in vain that air is a vital spirit, passing through and penetrating everything, giving life and consistency to everything, binding, moving and filling all things. Through this air the general spirit enclosed and hidden in all things is generated and made manifest, being impregnated and made fruitful by air, which renders it more powerful in generation. Thus Calid, the Jewish philosopher, had good grounds for saying that the mines of things have their roots in the air and their heads or summits in the earth. It is as though he said that air causes this spirit to grow and increase, and to multiply its mine within the earth.^{73,74}

⁷³. "Spiracle de vie" is rendered "breath of life", preserving its relation to breathing in the opening example.

⁷⁴. The description of Calid as a Jewish philosopher is the source's own designation. "Mine" here names the generative source or repository whose root the chapter is locating.

Encore que les experts en la preparation de la pierre des sages puissent dire que Calid entend autrement ce passage: car selon la doctrine de tous, il y a deux parties en l'œuvre, l'une volatile qui s'esleve en forme de vapeur, laquelle se resoult & condense en eau, qu'ils nomment esprit, & l'autre plus fixe, qui demeure au fonds du vaisseau, qu'ils appellent corps: prenant cette partie volatile pour l'air, comme elle est à la verité, & la fixe pour la terre. Rozinus a voulu expliquer ce passage par un autre du mesme auteur où il dit: Pren les choses de leurs ames, & les exalte és hauts lieux: Moissonne les aux sommets de leurs montagnes, & les remets sur leurs racines. La glose dit que ces paroles sont claires, vrayes, sans aucune envie ny ambiguïté: & toutesfois qu'il n'a point nommé les choses dont il entendoit parler. Or par les montagnes (dit il) le sage a voulu signifier les pots ou cucurbites, & par les sommets d'icelles les chapes ou alembics: Moissonner, selon la similitude, est faire eslever l'eau des choses susdites dans le vaisseau: remettre sur les racines, est permettre que ladite eau retombe sur la terre d'où elle est partie. Ce qui est confirmé par Morien, quand il dit que toute l'operation des sages n'est autre chose sinon l'extraction de l'eau d'avec la terre, & la remise de l'eau sur la terre, jusques à tant que la terre pourrisse: car cette terre se pourrit avec cette eau, & se mondifie, laquelle estant mondifiée moyennant l'aide de Dieu dirigera & parfera tout le magistere.

Yet experts in preparing the stone of the sages may say that Calid intends a different meaning in this passage. For according to the teaching of them all, there are two parts in the work: one volatile, which rises in the form of vapour, resolves and condenses into water, and which they call spirit; the other more fixed, which remains at the bottom of the vessel, and which they call body. They take this volatile part for air, as indeed it is, and the fixed part for earth. Rozinus sought to explain this passage by another from the same author, where he says: "Take the things from their souls, and exalt them into high places. Harvest them at the summits of their mountains, and put them back upon their roots." The gloss says these words are clear and true, without any jealous withholding or ambiguity, yet that he has not named the things of which he intended to speak. By the mountains, it says, the sage meant pots or cucurbits, and by their summits the heads or alembics. To harvest, according to the comparison, is to cause the water of the aforesaid things to rise within the vessel; to return it to the roots is to allow that water to fall again upon the earth from which it came. This is confirmed by Morien when he says that the entire operation of the sages is nothing other than the extraction of water from earth and the return of water upon earth until the earth putrefies. For this earth putrefies and is cleansed with this water; and when cleansed, with God's help it will guide and perfect the entire magistry.^{75,76}

⁷⁵. The two parts are distinguished operationally: the volatile rises as vapour and condenses, while the fixed remains below. The ensuing explanation expressly decodes mountains, summits, harvest and roots as vessel and distillation imagery.

⁷⁶. "Envy" in the gloss concerns withholding knowledge. "Jealous withholding" preserves that sense without implying that the author has supplied the unnamed materials.

SL_I_06S003 1621 pp 46–48 · scans FR066, FR067, FR068

Quelques uns parlant de l'air ne l'ont point mis au rang des autres Elemens, mais l'ont estimé comme quelque glus ou ciment conjoignant leurs diverses natures, voire l'ont tenu pour l'esprit & l'instrument du monde, parce qu'il est origine, & porteur de nostre Esprit universel. Car il conçoit prochainement les influences de tous les corps celestes, & les communiquant aux autres Elemens & aux corps mixtes, il reçoit & retient encore neantmoins, comme un divin miroir, les especes & formes de toutes choses naturelles: lesquelles portant avec luy, & s'errant par les pores des animaux, il les imprime en eux, soit qu'ils veillent ou dorment. Nous apprenons des animaux & vegetaux que tout esprit qui est proprement attaché à la terre, prend sa force & vertu de l'air, car nous les voyons croistre & s'eslever en haut, tant cet esprit qui leur donne la vie est convoiteux de l'air, comme du lieu de sa propre origine. Aussi a dit Hermes que le vent, c'est à dire l'air, l'a porté en son ventre. A quoy s'accorde Aristote, disant que les choses humides se font de l'air, & les terrestres des humides: car l'air estant tres proche du corps de la terre, elle est humectee de tous costez, & cette humeur espaisie par la chaleur native, se tourne en certaine nature de terre, qui contient en soy Mercure & Soufre, deuëment proportionnez.

Some who speak of air have not placed it in the rank of the other elements, but have regarded it as a kind of glue or cement joining their different natures. Indeed, they have held it to be the spirit and instrument of the world because it is the origin and bearer of our universal spirit. For it directly conceives the influences of all the celestial bodies; and while communicating them to the other elements and to mixed bodies, it nevertheless also receives and retains, like a divine mirror, the species and forms of all natural things. Carrying these with it and wandering through the pores of animals, it imprints them within them, whether they wake or sleep. We learn from animals and plants that every spirit properly attached to the earth takes its strength and power from air, for we see them grow and rise upwards, so greatly does the spirit which gives them life desire air as the place of its own origin. Hermes likewise said that the wind—that is, air—carried it in its belly. Aristotle agrees, saying that moist things arise from air, and earthly things from moist ones. For since air is very close to the body of the earth, she is moistened on every side, and this moisture, thickened by native heat, turns into a certain kind of earth containing mercury and sulphur in due proportions.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ The chapter gives air both a mediating role between elements and a receptive role as a mirror carrying forms. These are related functions in the author's account, not an identification with a modern gas.

7 How the earth nourishes this universal spirit

Comment la Terre nourrit cet Esprit universel.

Chapter outline

The earth makes the spirit more readily evident because it receives celestial powers.

Exposure to air replenishes the generative spirit even after extraction.

Outward and inward exhalations produce different things according to moisture or dryness.

The earth nourishes plants through the same spirit.

SL_I_07S001 1621 pp 48–50 · scans FR068, FR069, FR070

Bien que cet Esprit soit infus & resident tant és choses inferieures que superieures, toutesfois on le peult plus evidemment & facilement voir & connoistre au corps plus proche. Or le plus proche & vegeteux de tous les corps c'est celuy de la terre. En elle donc il s'engendre & manifeste davantage, non sans grande raison: car la terre est comme le blanc & la butte de toutes les celestes influstions & vertus superieures, en laquelle tous les astres descochent & lancent leurs rayons. Elle est aussi le fondement & baze de tous les elements, contenant en soy les semences & vertus seminales de toutes choses, qui est cause qu'on la nomme Mere commune des animaux, vegetaux, & mineraux. Estant donc engrossie par les cieux & les autres Elements, elle produit de son sein toutes choses.

Or que d'icelle on arrache cet Esprit; qu'on le lave; qu'on le separe tant que l'on voudra; si on laisse cette terre ainsi despouillee quelque temps à l'air, elle sera r'engrossie & impregnee comme devant par les vertus & forces du ciel, produisant derechef certaines pierrettes cristallines, & reluysantes estincelles: & cet Esprit que l'on pensera en estre du tout separé, regermera tousjours. Parquoy l'impregnation faite par l'action des cieux & des qualitez premieres la rend continuellement generante, car d'elle provient tout ce qui est dessous le cercle de la Lune.

Although this spirit is infused and resident in lower things as well as higher, it can be seen and known more clearly and easily in the nearer body. Now the nearest and most productive of all bodies is that of the earth. In her it is therefore generated and made manifest more abundantly, and with good reason: for the earth is like the mark and target of all celestial influxes and higher powers, into which all the stars discharge and cast their rays. She is also the foundation and base of all the elements, containing within herself the seeds and seminal powers of all things; hence she is called the common mother of animals, plants and minerals. Made pregnant by the heavens and the other elements, she produces all things from her bosom.

Now let this spirit be drawn out of her, washed and separated as much as one wishes: if this earth, thus stripped, is left in the air for some time, she will again be made pregnant and impregnated as before by the powers and forces of heaven, once more producing certain little crystalline stones and shining sparks. This spirit, which one will suppose to have been entirely separated from her, will always sprout again. Thus impregnation through the action of the heavens and the

primary qualities makes her continually generative, for from her proceeds everything below the circle of the moon.^{78,79}

SL_I_07S002 1621 pp 50–51 · scans FR070, FR071

Elle produit toutes choses qui ont vie, les conserve, les nourrit, puis finalement les resoult & transmue en elle mesme. Or estant agitee par les actions susdites, elle jette double expiration tant dehors que dedans elle: lesquelles expirations sortent de cet Esprit terrien, empreint & eschauffé par la chaleur celeste. De l'expiration qui s'esleve dehors d'icelle terre, advenant qu'elle soit humide, seront engendrees les bruïnes ou rosées: & si elle est seiche, elle produira les vents, foudres, & autres telles impressions seiches de l'air. Mais de celle qui demeure enclose & resserree en elle, advenant qu'elle soit humide, seront faites toutes choses liquefiables, comme metaux & mineraux. Et si au contraire elle est seiche & aride, elle en produira choses non fusibles, comme pierres & autres matieres semblables. Outre cela, toutes choses vegetables en proviennent, & reçoivent aliment de cet Esprit que la terre nourrit. C'est pourquoy les poëtes antiques nommoient cette terre grande ayeulle & nourrice de toutes choses.

She produces all things that have life, preserves and nourishes them, then finally dissolves and transmutes them into herself. Stirred by the aforesaid actions, she gives forth a double exhalation, both outside and within herself. These exhalations issue from this earthly spirit, impregnated and heated by celestial heat. From the exhalation that rises outside the earth, if it is moist, mists or dews will be generated; if dry, it will produce winds, thunderbolts and other such dry phenomena of the air. But from the exhalation remaining enclosed and confined within her, if moist, all things capable of liquefaction will be made, such as metals and minerals. If, on the contrary, it is dry and arid, it will produce things that cannot be melted, such as stones and other similar materials. Besides this, all vegetable things proceed from it and receive nourishment from this spirit which the earth nourishes. That is why the ancient poets called the earth the great grandmother and nurse of all things.⁸⁰

⁷⁸. The opening locates the most accessible manifestation of the spirit, not its exclusive residence. The author expressly says it inhabits both higher and lower things.

⁷⁹. The little crystals and shining sparks remain the witness's descriptions. Their appearance alone does not establish a single modern chemical identity.

⁸⁰. The original errata replace the misprint "royées" on printed page 50 with "rosées", "dews". The corrected reading is incorporated. The following fourfold distinction depends on outward or inward exhalation being moist or dry.

8 That this spirit of the world is the cause of perfection in everything

Que cet Esprit du monde est cause de perfection en tout.

Chapter outline

The same universal spirit operates differently in animal, vegetable, mineral and celestial things.

Its balanced constitution makes it the beginning and end of natural perfection.

Three operations correspond to vivification, coagulation and gathering together.

Glass, salt and mercury are argued to form a triad through examples of hardness and cohesion.

The author answers the objection that salt alone could account for hard shells and bones.

SL_I_08S001 1621 pp 51–53 · scans FR071, FR072, FR073

L'Esprit de l'univers est le genre general & commun de tous les genres: car si nous regardons le monde inferieur ou elementaire, nous le trouverons divisé en trois subalternes, assavoir le vegetal, l'animal, & le mineral: toutesfois il est tousjours un en chacune chose, mais il opere diversement selon la diversité des especes. De là vient cette infinie variété de creatures: Autrement il faudroit par necessité qu'il n'y eust qu'une espece de choses en tout l'univers. Mais si nous regardons le monde superieur & celeste, nous trouverons aussi que cet Esprit y est un & pareil en tout: ne differant que de la seule purification & subtilité. Car de la pure substance ignee ont esté faits ces Esprits celestes & tres-esloignez de l'inferieure espaisseur corporelle. Et de la substance moyenne aëreuse, ont esté composez les globes celestes, & leurs luminaires.

Or il a donc fait toutes choses, parce qu'il a les vertus des choses superieures & inferieures, à cause de son exquise temperature, car ce seul corps, entre tous, est commencement & fin de perfection: & si les vertus luy manquoient, il ne parferoit aucune chose. Nous appellons toutesfois icy la perfection simple & naturelle. Parquoy estant seulement parfait selon l'intention de nature, contenant en soy la regle, ligne, action, & puissance de perfection, il acquiert neantmoins si grande force sur les choses naturelles, qu'il attire tout de la puissance à l'action, il altere tout, & penetre tout, quelque espois qu'il soit: mollifie les choses dures, endurecit les molles: & finalement augmente, nourrit, & conserve tout.

The spirit of the universe is the general and common genus of all genera. For if we consider the lower or elemental world, we shall find it divided into three subordinate kinds, namely the vegetable, animal and mineral. Yet the spirit is always one in each thing, though it operates differently according to the diversity of species. From this comes the infinite variety of creatures; otherwise there would necessarily be only one species of things throughout the universe. But if we consider the higher and celestial world, we shall likewise find that this spirit is one and the same in everything there, differing only in purification and subtlety. For from pure fiery substance were made those celestial spirits so far removed from the coarse bodily thickness below; and from the intermediate airy substance were composed the celestial globes and

their lights.

It has therefore made all things because, through its exquisite balance of qualities, it possesses the powers of higher and lower things. This body alone, among them all, is the beginning and end of perfection; and if it lacked those powers, it would perfect nothing. Here, however, we mean simple and natural perfection. Thus, although perfect only according to Nature's intention, and containing within itself the rule, measure, action and power of perfection, it nevertheless acquires so great a force over natural things that it draws everything from potentiality into action. It alters everything and penetrates everything, however thick; softens hard things and hardens soft ones; and finally increases, nourishes and preserves everything.^{81,82}

SL_I_08S002 1621 pp 53–55 · scans FR073, FR074, FR075

Cet Esprit estant donc en tout corps, auteur de generation & corruption, est necessairement de triple operation; car par sa siccité il vivifie, par sa froidure il congele; & par son humeur il amasse & assemble. Pour cette cause on luy a donné le nom de terre triple, ou trine, assavoir vitrifiante, salsugineuse, & mercurieuse: car tout ce qui est fait au monde est fait de Sel, Verre, & Mercure: bien que les principes de Paracelse soient le Sel, le Soulfre, & le Mercure: & que le verre soit mis pour le quatriesme, comme s'il vouloit dire que toutes les choses composees de ces trois premiers, se reduisent au quart pour leur dernière fin: d'autant que du verre ne se peut plus faire production quelconque, par l'industrie de la Nature; ny de l'Art. Mais je veux prouver mon opinion par l'exemple & la raison suivante: disant qu'es animaux les os sont consolidez & endurcis par vitrification: la chair & les nerfs sont concreez par le Sel; & amassez ensemble par l'humeur Mercurieuse. Aux vegetables; les coquilles des amandes, pignons, noix, noisettes; & toutes sortes de noyaux, peuvent semblablement estre dites vitrifiees: aussi bien que les coquilles des tortues, limassons, huistres, & semblables animaux que la terre & la mer produisent.

Since this spirit is present in every body as the author of generation and corruption, it necessarily has a threefold operation: through its dryness it vivifies, through its coldness it coagulates, and through its moisture it gathers and joins together. For this reason it has been given the name of triple or threefold earth, namely vitrifying, saline and mercurial; for everything made in the world is made of salt, glass and mercury. Yet Paracelsus' principles are salt, sulphur and mercury, with glass placed fourth, as though he meant that all things composed of the first three are reduced to the fourth as their ultimate end, since nothing further can be produced from glass by the industry either of Nature or of art. But I wish to prove my opinion by the following example and reasoning: in animals, bones are consolidated and hardened through vitrification, while flesh and nerves are formed together through salt and gathered together through mercurial moisture. In plants, the shells of almonds, pine nuts, walnuts and hazelnuts, and every kind of fruit

⁸¹. "Temperature" here describes the balancing or tempering of qualities, not a numerical temperature. No modern measure of heat is supplied.

⁸². The distinction between potentiality and action concerns the realisation of powers already present. The author expressly limits the perfection in this passage to simple, natural perfection.

stone, may likewise be called vitrified, as may the shells of tortoises, snails, oysters and similar animals produced by land and sea.⁸³

SL_I_08S003 1621 pp 55–56 · scans FR075, FR076

Le goust seul donne suffisante preuve qu'elles sont salees à la verité, car rien n'est sans sel que ce qui est sans goust. Et mesme on en tire du sel duquel se fait le verre, comme de la fougere, du salicot ou souldre, & de force autres choses. Quelqu'un pourroit donc objecter que ce seroit le Sel & non le verre qui seroit cause de la dureté des os, coques, & coquilles des animaux & vegetaux que je viens d'alleguer. A quoy je respondray que l'experience y repugne, & la raison aussi: en ce que tout sel se fond & dissout par la moindre humidité de l'air ou de l'eau qu'ils reçoivent; & toutes les choses susdites y resistent; selon le plus ou le moins qu'elles ont esté endurcies par cette vertu vitrifiante, pour derniere preuve de quoy je représenteray icy les diamants, les pierres precieuses, & les cristaux, qui ne sont rien plus que verres elaborez à telle perfection dans la fournaise de l'ingenieuse Nature. Et que toutes ces choses soient condensees par l'humeur du Mercure, cela est si manifeste qu'il n'est besoin en donner autre tesmoignage que l'experience commune.

Taste alone gives sufficient proof that they are indeed salted, for nothing is without salt except what is without taste. Salt is even extracted from them to make glass, as from fern, glasswort or soda, and many other things. Someone might therefore object that salt, rather than glass, causes the hardness of the bones, husks and shells of the animals and plants I have just cited. I shall answer that experience contradicts this, as does reason: every salt melts and dissolves through the slightest moisture it receives from air or water, whereas all the things mentioned resist it according to the degree to which they have been hardened by this vitrifying power. As final proof, I shall present diamonds, precious stones and crystals, which are nothing more than glasses worked to such perfection in ingenious Nature's furnace. That all these things are condensed by the moisture of Mercury is so manifest that no testimony beyond common experience is needed.⁸⁴

SL_I_08S004 1621 pp 56–57 · scans FR076, FR077

Les mineraux sont suffisamment pourveuz de Sel, Soulfre, & Mercure. Les pierres, & tout ce qui se tire de la terre, à qui manque la fusion & l'extention sous le marteau, ont bien quelque sel en elles, mais il est surmonté par l'adustion du soulfre corrompant qui intervient en la vitrification & endurcissement d'icelles. Les metaux, & toutes choses fondantes & ductiles, sont créées & condensees par le Sel & le Mercure, non sans vitrification, qui les endurecit & rend indociles au marteau: selon toutesfois le plus ou le moins d'impurité & terrestreité adustible qui s'est rencontrée à l'epaississement & coagulation de leur Mercure. Par ainsi nous pourrions veritablement dire que toutes choses sont faites, comme d'une triade, de Verre, de Sel, & de Mercure ou d'eau: le verre causant la dureté, le sel donnant la matiere, & l'eau faisant l'assemblage & condensation.

⁸³. The author argues for a triad of salt, glass and mercury while explicitly distinguishing the triad he attributes to Paracelsus. "Vitrification" is part of this historical explanation of hardness; the English does not turn the examples into modern claims that bone and shell are ordinary glass.

⁸⁴. The objection and reply depend upon the author's asserted contrast between dissolving salts and bodies resistant to moisture. Both the general claim and his examples are retained as the argument he makes; "salt" is not standardised to sodium chloride.

Minerals are sufficiently furnished with salt, sulphur and mercury. Stones and everything drawn from the earth which lack fusibility and the capacity to spread under the hammer do contain some salt, but it is overcome by the scorching action of corrupting sulphur which intervenes in their vitrification and hardening. Metals, and all things fusible and ductile, are created and condensed through salt and mercury, though not without vitrification, which hardens them and makes them unyielding to the hammer, according to the greater or lesser amount of impurity and combustible earthiness present when their mercury thickened and coagulated. Thus we may truly say that all things are made, as from a triad, of glass, salt and mercury or water: glass causes hardness, salt provides matter, and water effects the joining and condensation.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ The original errata correct "Mercuce" on printed page 56 to "Mercure"; the corrected form is incorporated. The closing sentence identifies mercury with water for the function of joining and condensation in this particular triad.

9 Of the specification of the spirit of the universe in bodies

De la specification de l'Esprit de l'univers aux corps.

Chapter outline

The world soul communicates seminal causes through the spirit, taking form according to material affinities.

Each species draws from common nourishment what accords with its own nature.

Soul, spirit and body remain united as forms are embodied in the elements.

Extraction frees the mineral spirit to operate in its own kind.

Nature originates the species which art subsequently perfects and multiplies.

SL_I_09S001 1621 pp 57–59 · scans FR077, FR078, FR079

L'Ame du monde, & son action & vertu, est representee en toutes choses, dedans lesquelles elle est toute conforme. Elle lie, & conjoint ensemble les choses superieures & les inferieures. Car autant qu'il y a d'idees aux cieus, autant a elle de causes & raisons seminales, dont par le moyen de cet esprit, elle forge autant d'especes en la matiere. Partant, s'il advient quelquefois que chacune des especes degenerate, l'ame qui est dedans pourra estre reformee & reduite en son premier estat par le moyen de cet esprit du monde qui luy est tresprochain, obeissant à toute maniere de mouvement. Ne pensons toutesfois que cet intellect ideal soit attiré, mais bien l'ame douee des vertus d'iceluy, & allechee par les formes materielles. Ce qui ne doit sembler estrange, car elle mesme se fait la viande & l'apast, comme transmutable en toutes les choses par qui elle est attiree, & sollicitee; demeurant & residant tousjours volontairement en icelles. Zoroastre nomme ces congruitez & decences des formes avec les raisons de l'ame du monde, allechemens.

The soul of the world, with its action and power, is represented in all things, within which it is wholly conformable. It binds and joins higher and lower things together. For as many ideas as there are in the heavens, so many seminal causes and reasons it possesses; and through this spirit it fashions as many species in matter. Therefore, if any species sometimes degenerates, the soul within it may be reformed and restored to its first state through this spirit of the world, which is very close to it and obedient to every kind of movement. Yet we should not think that the ideal intellect itself is drawn down, but rather the soul endowed with its powers and attracted by material forms. This should not seem strange, for the soul itself becomes food and bait, being capable of transmutation into all the things by which it is drawn and solicited, and always willingly dwelling and remaining within them. Zoroaster calls these congruities and fitnesses of forms with the reasons of the world soul attractions.^{86,87}

⁸⁶. "Specification" means the acquisition or communication of a particular species and form. It does not mean a list of technical requirements.

⁸⁷. The passage distinguishes the ideal intellect from the soul bearing its powers: it is the latter which is attracted by material forms. "Seminal reasons" preserves the causal and formative sense of the source's "raisons".

SL_I_09S002 1621 pp 59–60 · scans FR079, FR080

Par cela il apparoist que chacune chose & espece puise de l'ame du monde ses dons & vertus; non pas toutes entierement, mais bien celles de la semence, & autres conformes, par lesquelles elle germe & pullule. L'exemple s'en void & remarque en l'homme, qui se nourrissant seulement d'aliments humains, ne s'acquiert pas la nature des oyseaux ou poissons qu'il a mangez, mais bien l'humaine & convenable à son espece. Il advient aussi que quelquefois plusieurs autres animaux vivent des mesmes aliments & viandes, desquelles neantmoins chacun attire ce qui est propre à son espece. De sorte que c'est chose veritablement admirable, que d'une mesme viande l'homme tire ce qui est propre à l'homme; & l'oyseau & l'animal ce qui convient aux oyseaux & aux animaux. Or cela se fait, non pource que en une seule & mesme viande il y ait divers & variables aliments: mais à raison de l'espece qui est nourrie, laquelle attire & transforme en soy sa nourriture conforme, par le moyen dequoy elle engendre son semblable, à cause de la vertu de cette ame & raison seminale qu'elle a en soy, selon sa qualité.

From this it appears that each thing and species draws its gifts and powers from the world soul: not all of them entirely, but those belonging to its seed and others that accord with it, through which it sprouts and multiplies. An example can be seen and observed in human beings, who, nourishing themselves only with food suited to humans, do not acquire the nature of the birds or fish they have eaten, but the human nature appropriate to their species. It also happens that several other animals live upon the same foods and nourishment, from which each nevertheless draws what is proper to its species. Thus it is truly admirable that from the same food a human draws what is proper to a human, and a bird or animal what suits birds or animals. This takes place, not because a single food contains diverse and varying nourishments, but because of the species being nourished, which draws in and transforms into itself the nourishment that accords with it. Through this it generates its like, by the power of the soul and seminal reason within it, according to its quality.⁸⁸

SL_I_09S003 1621 pp 60–62 · scans FR080, FR081, FR082

Davantage, il ne faut estimer qu'en la machine du monde, l'esprit, l'ame, & le corps, soient quelques choses separees, car ces trois s'unissent & lient tousjours ensemble, ainsi qu'on void en l'homme, & rendent par cette union l'esprit vital entier, & la substance corporelle. L'ame de l'univers se feinct donc & imagine diverses formes d'especes, que l'esprit recevant dans les entrailles des Elements corporifie, & produit en lumiere. C'est pourquoy les animaux engendrent seulement des animaux; les plantes des plantes & les mineraux des mineraux. Non pas toutesfois en tout par semblable maniere, Car les mineraux comme j'ay dit cy devant, n'engendrent pas leur semblable en la mesme façon que les plantes; parce que l'esprit qu'ils possèdent est arresté & opprimé de trop grossiere & lourde matiere; Lequel esprit, advenant qu'il en soit une fois tiré & adjousté à la matiere minerale, pourra engendrer son semblable: d'autant qu'ayant acquis ingression & entree dans les corps imparfaits, par la grande subtiliation de l'Art, & graduation du feu, il a puisé de l'ame universelle ses propres semences minerales tant seulement; non pas celles des animaux, ny des plantes: d'autant que cela repugneroit à la Nature. Non que je

⁸⁸ The food example places the difference in the recipient's species, rather than in separate ready-made animal natures contained in the food. The repeated examples are part of the argument and are retained.

vueille dire qu'il n'ait en luy l'action des autres vertus; Mais il ne les demonstre que selon les especes où il est accommodé.

Furthermore, we must not suppose that within the structure of the world spirit, soul and body are separate things. These three always unite and bind together, as we see in human beings, and through this union make the vital spirit complete and constitute bodily substance. The soul of the universe therefore fashions and imagines various specific forms, which the spirit receives within the entrails of the elements, embodies and brings into the light. That is why animals generate only animals, plants plants, and minerals minerals. Yet they do not do so in every respect in the same manner. For minerals, as I said above, do not generate their like as plants do, because the spirit they possess is checked and oppressed by matter too coarse and heavy. Once this spirit is drawn out and added to mineral matter, it will be able to generate its like. For, having acquired ingress and entry into imperfect bodies through art's great subtilisation and the graduated application of fire, it has drawn from the universal soul only its own mineral seeds, not those of animals or plants, since that would oppose Nature. I do not mean that it lacks the action of the other powers within itself, but that it manifests them only according to the species to which it is adapted.^{89,90}

SL_I_09S004 1621 pp 62–63 · scans FR082, FR083

Autrement il faudroit que chacune chose en produisist une dissemblable; Assavoir, que l'homme engendrast un arbre: la plante feist un bœuf, & le metal une herbe. Ce que je dy seulement à l'esgard de la specification des choses: Car si nous considerons ce genre generalissime, (comme l'appelle Raymond Lulle) à quelque chose qu'on le baille il fera son semblable, pource qu'il est Mercure, & s'attribue la nature de tout ce à quoy il est meslé. Mais l'art humain ne peut faire ce qui est concedé à la seule Nature: laquelle engendre & procréé l'espece, que l'Art par apres dilate & multiplie; si le commencement de l'operation est pris de la racine de l'espece: comme sçavent bien faire tous prudents Phisiciens, qui tirant des minieres cet Esprit ja commencé à specifier, apres l'avoir deuëment purifié & conduit à perfection, le rendent capable de parfaire les imparfaits. Ces choses exactement examinees, l'artiste expert & advisé en tirera des adaptations admirables.

⁸⁹. The text retains the other powers within the spirit while limiting their manifestation according to the species receiving it. This qualification prevents the mineral operation from being read as the arbitrary production of a different kind.

⁹⁰. "Graduation of fire" indicates a graded application of heat; the witness provides no numerical temperature here.

Otherwise each thing would have to produce something unlike itself: a human would generate a tree, a plant make an ox, and a metal an herb. I say this only with regard to the specification of things. For if we consider this most general genus, as Raymond Lulle calls it, whatever it is given to, it will make its like, because it is Mercury and assumes the nature of everything with which it is mixed. But human art cannot do what is granted to Nature alone. Nature generates and brings forth the species, which art afterwards extends and multiplies, provided the operation begins from the root of the species. All prudent natural philosophers know well how to do this: drawing from the mines this spirit which has already begun to take on a specific character, then duly purifying it and bringing it to perfection, they render it capable of perfecting imperfect things. When these matters have been examined precisely, the experienced and discerning practitioner will draw admirable adaptations from them.

Book Two

DEUXIESME LIVRE

1 That the spirit of the world takes body, and how it is embodied

Que l'Esprit du monde prend corps, & comment il se corporifie.

Chapter outline

The spirit that embodies other things must itself be capable of embodiment.

Central fire and coessential moisture are the first parents of embodiment.

Generation, maturation and dissolution are successive operations of fire.

Ash and salt reveal the hidden fire that survives burning.

Vapour condenses into mercurial water and mucilage, then solidifies; the acorn supplies a concluding example.

SL_II_01S001 1621 pp 63–65 · scans FR083, FR084, FR085

J'Estime avoir suffisamment fait cognoistre au livre precedent, que par l'Esprit general toutes choses sont, non seulement produites; ains corporifiees en l'univers: mais il reste à declarer quel corps prend cet esprit, & de quelle façon il se corporifie en corporifiant toutes les autres choses. Car il est necessaire que prenant de luy seul tous leurs corps, il soit luy mesme corporel, n'estant raisonnable de croire qu'il peust donner ce qu'il n'auroit jamais eu. Voyons donc de quel corps il se revest; & en quelle maniere il en est revestu: Non que ce soit toutesfois mon dessein de disputer icy de la corporification des choses celestes & surnaturelles, ains seulement d'attacher mon discours aux generations physiques, soubslunaires, & au corps de la terre qui est le vaisseau & propre matrice où ce premier & general corporifieur des choses, luy mesme se corporifie. Je dy donc qu'aucune corporification ne se peut faire sans moteur precedent, qui tire la puissance en action, afin que ce qui semble n'estre point, sorte en lumiere & parvienne au terme & accomplissement de l'intention de Nature; qui est tousjours de corporifier ce qu'elle veut produire.

I believe I have sufficiently shown in the preceding book that through the general spirit all things in the universe are not only produced but embodied. It remains, however, to explain what body this spirit takes, and how it is itself embodied while embodying all other things. For since they take all their bodies from it alone, it must necessarily be bodily itself: it is unreasonable to believe that it could give what it had never possessed. Let us therefore see what body it clothes itself in, and in what manner it is clothed. Yet I do not intend to dispute here about the embodiment of celestial and supernatural things, but only to confine my discourse to natural, sublunary generations, and to the body of the earth, which is the vessel and proper womb in which this first and general giver of body to things is itself embodied. I say, then, that no embodiment can take place without a preceding mover which draws potentiality into action, so that what seems not to exist may come into

the light and reach the end and accomplishment of Nature's intention, which is always to embody what she wishes to produce.⁹¹

SL_II_01S002 1621 pp 65–66 · scans FR085, FR086

Or ce moteur n'est autre chose que le feu, ou la chaleur qui se meut premier dedans l'air: Car toutes generations se commencent par là; d'autant que le feu est le plus actif de tous les Elements, & par consequent comme plus subtil & leger, plus prompt à motion. Ce feu donc, duquel le propre est de voller en haut à cause de sa vive legereté, & de rendre visibles les choses incognues, prend necessairement la source de son mouvement & action d'embas, c'est à dire du centre du monde, où nous avons cy devant logé le vieil Demogorgon progeniteur de toutes choses; estant leans assis comme en son trosne au beau milieu de son Empire: afin que de là il gouverne, commande, entretienne, & departe de tous costez l'essence de la vie à tout ce grand corps spherique, rondement estendu autour de luy, afin qu'un chacun reçoive en chaque membre ce qu'il luy en faut, plus facilement & par distance egalle. Dedans le sein fecond de cet antique pere est implantee la racine de ce feu; qui de là fait une vaporante halaine, que Hermes en son Pimandre appelle Nature humide. Car vapeur est la premiere & prochaine action du feu; avec leuel elle est tellement conjointe qu'on ne le sçauroit seulement imaginer sans elle.

Now this mover is nothing other than fire, or the heat which first moves within air. All generations begin there, because fire is the most active of all the elements and consequently, being subtler and lighter, the readiest to move. This fire, whose property is to fly upwards because of its lively lightness, and to make unknown things visible, necessarily takes the source of its movement and action from below: that is, from the centre of the world, where we earlier lodged old Demogorgon, the progenitor of all things. He sits there as upon his throne in the very midst of his empire, so that from there he may govern, command, sustain and distribute on every side the essence of life to this entire great spherical body, spread round about him, and each may receive in every member what it needs more easily and at an equal distance. Within the fruitful bosom of this ancient father is implanted the root of this fire, which sends forth from there a vaporous breath, called moist Nature by Hermes in his Pimandre. For vapour is the first and immediate action of fire, so closely joined to it that fire cannot even be imagined without it.^{92,93}

SL_II_01S003 1621 pp 66–68 · scans FR086, FR087, FR088

Mais (dira quelqu'un) puisque cette vapeur provient du feu comment est elle humide, veu que le feu est chaud & sec; & d'où luy peut donc arriver cette contraire qualité? Il n'y a rien icy d'estrange, si nous voulons considerer qu'il est impossible que le feu vive ny puisse estre sans humeur, qui est son aliment, entretien, & sujet; sans leuel le feu mesme ne sçauroit estre imaginé. Car puisque son naturel est

⁹¹. The chapter deliberately confines its immediate account to sublunary generation. Its claim that the spirit is bodily follows from its role in giving bodies to other things; it is not presented as a discussion of supernatural embodiment.

⁹². The central location explains the image of equal distribution to the spherical whole. Demogorgon is again employed as the figure governing the natural life described earlier.

⁹³. "Pimandre" is the title as named by the witness. The phrase "moist Nature" is given as its terminology; no claim of a verbatim quotation from a separate Greek or Latin text is added.

d'agir, & que son action est indeficiente; il faut de necessité qu'il agite sur quelque chose: & que mesme cette chose ne luy manque jamais. Ainsi donc le feu & l'humidité coessentielle sont comme le masle & la femelle de toute generation; & les premiers parents de la corporification de cet Esprit du monde: comme il se verra cy apres. Mais le feu est comme le premier operant; d'autant que l'action precede tousjours la passion. Combien que ce qui patit inseparablement coexiste avec ce qui agit: Ainsi que le stoïque Zenon disoit jadis, estimant que la substance du feu, par l'air convertie en eau, & conservee en icelle, comme un sperme general, d'où puis apres toutes choses sont engendrees, estoit la premiere matiere de l'univers. Thales Millesien, que les Grecs honorent du nom de sage, s'arrestant à la matiere patiente, estimoit que c'estoit l'eau: qu'Heraclite aussi nommoit Mer: Et Moyse plus illuminé que ces deux, dit que l'Esprit de Dieu estoit porté sur les eaux avant la creation du ciel & de la terre: Nommant le feu à cause de sa noble, pure, & digne essence, l'Esprit de Dieu.

But someone will say: since this vapour comes from fire, how is it moist, seeing that fire is hot and dry? From where can this contrary quality come to it? There is nothing strange here if we consider that fire cannot live or exist without moisture, which is its nourishment, sustenance and subject, without which fire itself could not be imagined. Since its nature is to act, and its action never fails, it must necessarily act upon something, and that thing must never be lacking to it. Thus fire and coessential moisture are like the male and female of every generation, and the first parents of the embodiment of this spirit of the world, as will be seen below. Fire, however, is like the first worker, because action always precedes being acted upon, although what is acted upon inseparably coexists with what acts. So the Stoic Zeno once said, holding that the substance of fire, converted through air into water and preserved within it as a general seed from which all things are subsequently generated, was the first matter of the universe. Thales of Miletus, whom the Greeks honour with the name of sage, fixed upon the receptive matter and held it to be water, which Heraclitus also called sea. And Moses, more enlightened than these two, says that the spirit of God was borne upon the waters before the creation of heaven and earth, calling fire the spirit of God because of its noble, pure and worthy essence.^{94,95}

SL_II_015004 1621 pp 68–70 · scans FR088, FR089, FR090

Quand je diray donc le feu estre le principe des choses, je ne m'esloigneray de la raison ny de la verité: Car sans doute il en est le premier ouvrier: & le dernier destructeur & mueur des formes qu'il avoit causees: jusques à tant qu'il ait reduit les choses à leur periode & matiere: outre laquelle il n'y a plus de progression, mais bien transformation: ainsi que je l'esclairiray tantost par la comparaison des choses visibles & familiares. La premiere puissance active qui opere en la production de l'homme est l'agitation ou motion de la chaleur: Laquelle en imitant l'action du feu, de qui le naturel est principalement de separer, tire de tout le corps ce que l'on

⁹⁴. "Coessential" makes moisture inseparable from the fire acting upon it. The priority of action is therefore qualified by the coexistence of agent and recipient.

⁹⁵. The identification of fire with the spirit of God is the author's interpretation of the Mosaic account. It is retained as his reading rather than silently incorporated into the wording of a modern Bible.

nomme sperme, (auquel est contenue la semence humaine en puissance) qu'elle cuit & digere pour estre fait apte à l'expulsion, puis à la generation ou augmentation parfaite de l'homme entier. Laquelle generation & augmentation est tousjours aydee & conduite du feu, qui est le seul operateur: jusques à ce qu'arrivant au but de son exaltation, & trop enflamé par le soulfre des excrements procedans de l'impureté des aliments, il desseiche l'humide radical, qui est le siege & conservateur de la vie. Cela fait, ce feu mesme ne cesse point son action qu'il n'ait converty les corps en cendre par resolution & corruption, qui ne se peuvent faire que par luy seul.

When I say, therefore, that fire is the principle of things, I shall depart from neither reason nor truth. For it is undoubtedly their first craftsman and the final destroyer and changer of the forms it has caused, until it has reduced things to their appointed term and matter, beyond which there is no further progression, but transformation. I shall shortly make this clear by comparison with visible and familiar things. The first active power operating in the production of a human being is the stirring or movement of heat. Imitating the action of fire, whose nature is chiefly to separate, heat draws from the whole body what is called seed-fluid, in which the human seed is contained potentially, and cooks and digests it to make it fit for expulsion, then for the generation or complete growth of the whole human being. This generation and growth are always aided and guided by fire, the sole operator, until, reaching the limit of its exaltation and overinflamed by the sulphur of the excrements proceeding from impure foods, it dries up the radical moisture which is the seat and preserver of life. Once this is done, the same fire does not cease its action until it has turned bodies into ash through dissolution and corruption, which it alone can accomplish.⁹⁶

SL_II_01S005 1621 pp 70–71 · scans FR090, FR091

Mais pour faire entendre cecy plus facilement, & le toucher au doigt, afin que par la connoissance de la derniere matiere de ce corps on en connoisse la premiere: Mettons le dans le feu vulgaire, nous verrons aussi tost qu'il a je ne sçay quoy d'inflammable qui le consomme presque tout, & le reduit en un peu de cendre; laquelle nous voyons de nature ignee, & nourrir en son dernier subject & matiere un pur sel, dont le feu seul est l'unique pere & multiplicateur. Et quelque bruslement que l'on en puisse faire, n'en reussit rien que du sel, qui dedans son interieur a son feu caché, lequel se resjouit avec son semblable. C'est pourquoy les Spagiriques ont experimenté que dans le sel il y a une incombustibilité ou secret element de feu qui a les mesmes actions de ce feu primitif, estant pour cette cause appellé baulme des corps: d'autant qu'il a dans luy ce qui donne, augmente, & conserve la vie: qui n'est sinon une vapeur humide, accompagnée de chaleur temperee. Jean de la Fontaine en son Romant Philosophique tesmoingne qu'il n'ignoroit point ce mystere, quand il fait dire à Nature:

Aucuns disent que feu n'engendre
De son naturel fors que cendre:
Mais leur reverence sauvee
Nature est dans le feu antee:

⁹⁶. The same fire is made responsible for formation, growth and final dissolution. "Radical moisture" again means the sustaining moisture at the root of life, whose exhaustion marks the transition in the author's account.

Et si prouver je le vouloye
Le Sel à tesmoing je prendroye.

But to make this more easily understood and practically evident, so that knowledge of this body's final matter may disclose its first matter, let us put it in ordinary fire. We shall immediately see that it contains something inflammable which consumes almost all of it and reduces it to a little ash. We see this ash to be fiery in nature, nourishing within its ultimate subject and matter a pure salt, of which fire alone is the sole father and multiplier. However much it may be burnt, nothing results from it but salt, which has its fire hidden inwardly and rejoices in its like. For this reason the spagyrist has found by experience that salt contains an incombustibility or secret element of fire which has the same actions as that primitive fire. It is therefore called the balm of bodies, because it contains what gives, increases and preserves life: nothing other than a moist vapour accompanied by temperate heat. Jean de la Fontaine, in his *Philosophical Romance*, testifies that he was not ignorant of this mystery when he makes Nature say:

Some say that fire by its nature
Engenders nothing except ash;
But, with all due respect to them,
Nature is grafted within fire;
And if I wished to prove it,
I would call salt as my witness.^{97,98}

SL_II_01S006 1621 pp 71–73 · scans FR091, FR092, FR093

Or pour juger qu'il est muni d'humeur, il ne faut que considerer sa resolution facile: & pour prouver qu'il est plein de chaleur, il ne faut sinon observer sa prompte congelation, en laquelle il est aysé à remarquer que le feu agit & s'unit au feu, comme en la liquefaction l'air s'estoit joint à l'air. Car en quelle façon pourroit le Sec boire l'humide en un sujet, si la chaleur n'y estoit innee, puisque naturellement l'humeur est beuë par la seicheresse procedente de chaleur? Par cela peut on aysément comprendre que Demogorgon, qui est le feu Central, n'est point destitué d'humidité, sur laquelle agissant en son sein propre, il esleve une vapeur meslee des deux qualitez, que je nomme l'Esprit du monde: & que plusieurs appellent Mercure des Mercures, parce que tous les autres procedent universellement de luy. Cette vapeur s'eslevant n'est donc pas encore corps, mais bien une chose moyenne entre corps & esprit, comme participant de l'une & de l'autre substance, laquelle demeurant ainsi, ne pourroit engendrer aucune chose. Il faut donc qu'elle prenne quelque corps, ou forme de corps: Ce qui se fait en cette maniere.

To judge that it is furnished with moisture, we need only consider how readily it dissolves; and to prove that it is full of heat, we need only observe its prompt coagulation, in which it is easy to see fire acting and uniting with fire, just as in liquefaction air had joined with air. For how could the dry drink the moist within a subject if heat were not innate

⁹⁷. The six quoted lines make salt the witness to Nature's presence in fire. Their speaker is Nature within the work ascribed here to Jean de la Fontaine; the English preserves the dramatic framing and six-line form.

⁹⁸. "Spagyrist" names the practitioners whose experience is invoked. Their reported inference from burning and residue is the historical claim under discussion.

there, since moisture is naturally drunk up by the dryness proceeding from heat? From this we can readily understand that Demogorgon, who is the central fire, is not without moisture. Acting upon it within his own bosom, he raises a vapour mingled with both qualities, which I call the spirit of the world, and which many call the Mercury of Mercuries, because all the others proceed universally from it. This rising vapour is therefore not yet body, but something intermediate between body and spirit, sharing in both substances. Remaining thus, it could generate nothing. It must therefore take some body, or bodily form, which happens in this manner.

SL_II_015007 1621 pp 73–75 · scans FR093, FR094, FR095

La vapeur tressubtile procedant du sec & de l'humide, venant à s'eslever penetre les spongiositez de la terre, dans laquelle peu à peu elle se convertit en eau mercurielle par la rencontre qu'elle fait de l'air infus, & de la terre mesme, dont la superficie est grandement esloignee du centre, auquel est le foyer d'où part cette chaleur: tout ainsi qu'en la chappe d'un alembic où l'esprit & vapeur distillable se liquefie. Or parce que cette vapeur & son eau participent des deux principes, assavoir chaleur & humidité, elle s'engrossit & espoissit peu à peu par decoction moderee & continuelle, dont le principal instrument & moyen est ce feu inné que contient cette vapeur mesme: induisant, voire forçant par son action assidue, le sec de boire son humide, & faire congeler cette eau, non avec une solidité ou dureté en tout & par tout semblable, mais premierement mussilagineuse & differente. Ce que Nature pretend faire par l'information des Idees au mussilage, est le commencement d'induration & solidité: Laquelle doit de necessité tenir la voye de Nature, qui est de passer de l'un à l'autre extremité par la moyenne disposition. La Nature continuant donc sa digestion, ce mussilage s'afermit; Et de la plus grosse matiere ou partie s'engendrent les corps metalliques dans les veines de la terre & concavitez des rochers. Lesquels corps engendrez de mesme semence ne different nullement de substance, ains seulement des accidens qui leur arrivent selon la disposition des lieux ou matrices esquelles ils sont engendrez.

The most subtle vapour proceeding from the dry and the moist, as it rises, penetrates the earth's porous spaces. Within the earth it gradually turns into mercurial water through encountering the air infused there and the earth itself, whose surface is far removed from the centre where the hearth from which this heat issues is situated. This is just as in the head of an alembic, where spirit and distillable vapour liquefy. Now because this vapour and its water share in the two principles, heat and moisture, it becomes denser and thicker little by little through moderate and continuous decoction. The chief instrument and means of this is the innate fire contained in the vapour itself, which by its constant action induces, indeed forces, the dry to drink its moisture and coagulate this water: not into a solidity or hardness everywhere alike, but first into a mucilaginous and varied state. What Nature intends through the imparting of the ideas to the mucilage is the beginning of hardening and solidity. This must necessarily follow Nature's path, passing from one extreme to the other through the intermediate disposition. As Nature continues her digestion, this mucilage becomes firm, and from the coarser matter or part metallic bodies are generated in the earth's

veins and the hollows of rocks. Generated from the same seed, these bodies do not differ at all in substance, but only in the accidents which befall them according to the disposition of the places or wombs in which they are generated.^{99,100}

SL_II_01S008 1621 pp 75–77 · scans FR095, FR096, FR097

Ce qui est donc de plus subtil en cette vapeur montant volontiers, parvient en fin jusques à la superficie de la terre, où elle est contraincte de s'arrester. Et d'autant qu'elle ne peut demeurer ocieuse, & ne peut toutesfois devaller, ny monter plus haut, parce qu'estant esprit, c'est son propre de s'eslever; & que ne trouvant rien de solide qui la puisse porter; il est force qu'elle continue l'intention de Nature, & s'employe à la generation & corporification des individus. Mais afin que plus clairement on puisse entendre tout ce que j'ay desia dit; prenons quelqu'un de ces individus, & pour donner une absolue conclusion à ce chapitre, voyons comment il est procréé: Car cela nous rendra certains que cet Esprit du monde prend corps, & nous decouvriera comment il se corporifie. Le gland semé dedans la terre y demeureroit à jamais inutile, ou se consommeroit sans germer, s'il n'y avoit quelque agent qui portast en acte la puissance occulte que Nature y a logee. D'où pourroit on imaginer cette action sinon du feu central sortant du cœur de ce Demogorgon, lequel feu attiré & fomenté par les rayons du Soleil celeste, redouble sa force & vigueur? Cette germination n'a elle donc pas son commencement par ce feu de Nature qui eslevant & multipliant sa vapeur resveille & excite le feu inné dedans le gland, qui de sa part aussi se vaporise par le moyen de son air propre, puis estant commencé à vaporiser, se nourrit & augmente de cette vapeur premiere, qui jamais ne defaut ny cesse d'agir sur la matiere du gland, jusques à ce qu'il soit au periode de la perfection où l'intention de Nature l'a destiné, qui est d'estre fait chesne:

What is subtler in this vapour therefore readily rises and finally reaches the earth's surface, where it is compelled to stop. Since it cannot remain idle, yet can neither descend nor rise higher—being spirit, its property is to rise, but it finds nothing solid to bear it—it must continue Nature's intention and apply itself to the generation and embodiment of individual things. To make everything I have already said more clearly understood, let us take one of these individuals and, to bring this chapter to a full conclusion, see how it is produced. For this will assure us that the spirit of the world takes body and show how it is embodied. An acorn sown in the earth would remain there for ever useless, or be consumed without germinating, if there were no agent to bring into actuality the hidden power Nature has lodged within it. From where could we imagine this action to come except the central fire issuing from the heart of Demogorgon, a fire which, drawn and fostered by the celestial sun's rays, redoubles its strength and vigour? Does not this germination therefore begin through the fire of Nature, which, raising and multiplying its vapour, awakens and rouses the innate fire within the acorn? The acorn in turn gives off vapour through its own air; and

⁹⁹. The comparison with an alembic explains condensation by distance from the source of heat. The subsequent mucilage is an intermediate disposition, through which the passage says Nature must proceed before solidity.

¹⁰⁰. "Information" here is the imparting of form through the ideas, rather than the communication of data. "Accidents" are the differing conditions supervening on the substance shared by the metals.

having begun to do so, it is nourished and increased by that first vapour, which never fails or ceases to act upon its matter until it reaches the term of perfection to which Nature's intention has destined it: to become an oak.¹⁰¹

SL_II_01S009 1621 pp 77–79 · scans FR097, FR098, FR099

Lequel en son temps parvenu à la grandeur naturelle, commence (non pas proprement à mourir) mais bien à s'acheminer au declin pour retourner en sa première forme; & se convertir en celle de la terre, où cette vapeur ne manque point & n'est jamais oysive: Car elle engendre en la pourriture de l'arbre certains Polipodes, avec une infinité de bestions & vermines: ou bien ayant réduit le chesne en terre, elle y recommence quelqu'autre végétation. De penser dire que la masse du gland s'augmente & multiplie, il y auroit de l'erreur: Car en la germination il se void qu'il demeure tout entier, & se separe de son germe sans diminution ny amoindrissement quelconque; & neantmoins l'arbre en est sorty. Ce n'est donc point par la multiplication & augmentation du gland que le chesne s'engendre: C'est aussi peu par addition, & distraction de la terre adjacente, car il s'espuiseroit autant de terre que l'arbre pourroit estre grand, ce qui ne se fait point. Il est donc necessaire que ce soit par quelqu'autre voye & matiere, puis que ce n'est ny par l'une ny par l'autre de celles là. Or cet esprit ou vapeur seule y estant employée, c'est cela seulement qui se corporifie & fait individu, & de là que provient la creation, augmentation, & conservation de toutes choses, non point des masses terrestres qui ne sont que les excremens de la matiere spirituelle & primeraïne. Comme il se void en la digestion de l'estomac, laquelle rejette les excrements au mesme poids & quantité de viandes qu'il a prises: ayant neantmoins tiré son propre & particulier aliment, qui n'estoit autre chose que cet esprit enclos dans la masse d'icelles: lequel seul par sa siccité se corporifie, & par son humidité se dilate & augmente, poussé & conduit par sa propre chaleur.

In time, having reached its natural size, the oak begins—not properly to die—but to move towards decline, returning to its first form and changing into that of earth, where this vapour is never lacking and never idle. For in the tree's rotting substance it generates certain polypodies, with an infinity of little creatures and vermin; or, having reduced the oak to earth, it begins some other growth there. It would be an error to suppose that the mass of the acorn increases and multiplies. For in germination we see it remain whole and separate from its shoot without any diminution or lessening, yet the tree has issued from it. The oak is therefore not generated through the multiplication and increase of the acorn. Nor is it through the addition and withdrawal of adjacent earth, for as much earth would be exhausted as the tree could grow large, which does not happen. It must therefore be through some other path and matter, since it is through neither of those. Now only this spirit or vapour is employed in it; this alone is embodied and becomes an individual, and from it proceeds the creation, increase and preservation of all things, not from earthly masses, which are only the excrements of spiritual and primordial matter. This can be seen in the stomach's digestion, which rejects excrements of the same weight and

¹⁰¹. The acorn is offered as a visible example of the general theory, not as a separate operation. Its innate power is distinguished from the external agency said to awaken it.

quantity as the food it has taken, yet has drawn its own particular nourishment from it. That nourishment was nothing other than this spirit enclosed within the food's mass, which alone is embodied through its dryness, expands and increases through its moisture, and is impelled and guided by its own heat.^{102,103}

¹⁰². The acorn's alleged lack of diminution and the comparison of food and excrement by weight are premises in the author's argument that growth embodies spirit. They are translated in full as his claims, rather than corrected or supplied as modern measurements.

¹⁰³. "Polipodes" is retained as polypodies, with the separate following "little creatures and vermin". The text presents them among the products of the rotting tree; it does not explicitly identify a particular modern species.

2 The Conversion of This Spirit into Earth and How Its Power Remains Entire in That Earth

De la conversion de cet Esprit en terre: & comment en cette terre sa vertu demeure entiere.

Chapter outline

Embodiment begins with an earthly coagulation rather than the extraction of every volatile substance.

Salt serves as the first tangible body of the world spirit and as a model for the separation of primordial waters.

The author distinguishes vital central heat from ordinary destructive fire and the external heat of the sun.

Celestial powers converge in the earth and remain active within its generative matter.

The purified matter unites heavenly and earthly powers without losing the virtues that caused its embodiment.

SL_II_02S001 1621 pp 79–81 · scans FR099, FR100, FR101

Par les raisons ja deduites estant à mon advis suffisamment prouvé que l'Esprit du monde prend corps, il faut icy declarer comment il se corporifie. Et bien que plusieurs ayent beaucoup travaillé & fort peu avancé en cette recherche, j'essayeray à le rendre palpable & visible à ceux principalement qui favorisez d'une heureuse naissance, admirateurs des rares effects de Nature taschent d'entrer au cabinet de ses secrets. Car ce qui a deceu tant d'esprits curieux en la perquisition & decouverte de ce corps, a esté que les uns ont estimé cette cognoissance du tout hors de la faculté du sens commun de l'homme, & reservé seulement aux Anges ou demons. Les autres que le nommant l'Esprit du monde on ne luy devoit imaginer autre corps que celuy de l'univers; veu qu'à un esprit general il faut un corps universel. Les autres, qu'on ne le pouvoit autrement appercevoir que par la conversion des corps plus parfaits en leur premier esprit & sperme, par une exacte & laborieuse subtiliation, ne s'advisant pas qu'il n'y a point de retrogression en Nature: & que plus les corps sont parfaits, plus ils sont esloignez de leurs commencemens & corporeité premiere. Les autres encore ont pensé qu'il falloit extraire des corps ce qu'ils nomment quinte essence, croyant que ce qui estoit plus subtil & volatil feust l'esprit qu'ils cherchoient: & s'esloignant ainsi du but où ils visioient le plus, vouloient trouver l'Orient au couchant: Car ils spiritualisoient les corps au lieu de corporifier les esprits. Mais puisque cet esprit se void manifestement tourné en corps de terre; & que sans contradiction ny doute aucun tous corps sont engendrez de luy; On le doit donc tirer d'eux mesme: d'autant que ce seroit infiniment se destourner du droict chemin de la Nature, qu'au lieu de faire un corps terrestre on en feist un de feu, que les quintessenciaux appellent leur Ciel. Or le commencement de corporification en toutes choses se fait par la terre; Car c'est la premiere ou plus prochaine operation du Mercure que se terrifier. Pourquoi veulent ils donc commencer par ignification? c'est tout ainsi que de commencer un bastiment par la toiture & non par les fondemens.

Since the reasons already set out have, in my judgement, sufficiently proved that the spirit of the world takes on a body, we must now explain how it becomes embodied. Although many have laboured greatly and advanced very little in this inquiry, I shall try to make it

palpable and visible, chiefly to those who, favoured with a happy birth and admiring Nature's rare effects, endeavour to enter the cabinet of her secrets. What has deceived so many inquisitive minds in searching for and discovering this body is that some have considered this knowledge altogether beyond the capacity of the human common sense, and reserved to angels or demons alone. Others have thought that, since it is called the spirit of the world, no body should be imagined for it other than that of the universe, because a general spirit requires a universal body. Others have thought that it could be perceived only by converting the more perfect bodies into their first spirit and seed through an exact and laborious subtilisation. They fail to consider that there is no going backwards in Nature, and that the more perfect bodies are, the further they stand from their beginnings and their first corporeality. Still others have thought it necessary to extract from bodies what they call quintessence, believing that whatever was more subtle and volatile must be the spirit they sought. Thus, in moving furthest from the mark they aimed at, they wished to find the east in the west: they spiritualised bodies instead of embodying spirits. Yet since this spirit is visibly turned into a body of earth, and all bodies are indisputably and undoubtedly generated from it, it must therefore be drawn from those bodies themselves. It would be an infinite departure from Nature's straight path to make, in place of an earthly body, a body of fire, which the quintessence makers call their heaven. The beginning of embodiment in all things takes place through earth, for mercury's first or most immediate operation is to become earth. Why, then, do they wish to begin by making it fire? That is just like beginning a building with its roof rather than its foundations.^{104,105,106}

SL_II_02S002 1621 pp 81–83 · scans FR101, FR102, FR103

Ceux qui tendent à la reduction des corps en leur premier germe auroient bien une raison plus apparente en leur dessein que les derniers qui les veulent quintessencier, s'ils ne prenoient en ce progrez un chemin tortueux qui les conduit à l'opposite du lieu où ils aspirent. Car outre ce que Nature ne retrograde jamais, ils ne s'avisent pas qu'ils suivent le trac de l'accomplissement, & non de la reversion destructive; ou pour dire plus clairement, qui reconduit à la naissance. Mais outre, que ces labeurs sont du tout impossibles; ou à tout le moins si difficiles & longs que la vie ordinaire de l'homme n'y seroit suffisante; ils ne sçauroient par cette voye arriver à la vraye & naturelle reduction, ains feroient seulement un corps fantasque, grandement esloigné de celuy avec lequel Nature commence toutes ses operations productives, qui est le seul & legitime sperme de tous corps. Si nous considerons

¹⁰⁴. The contrast between spiritualising bodies and embodying spirits governs the chapter's argument. Its preferred operation moves from an invisible or volatile principle towards a tangible earthly body; the passage rejects treating every volatile extract as the sought universal spirit.

¹⁰⁵. The common sense is the faculty that gathers and coordinates sensory perceptions, rather than merely practical good judgement. The author contests the claim that knowledge of the world spirit necessarily lies beyond human perception.

¹⁰⁶. *Se terrifier* here means to become earth or acquire an earthly body. Its opposition to *ignification*, becoming fire, makes the technical sense clear; it does not mean to become frightened.

que tout se corporifie par terrification, nous advouerons necessairement qu'il y a quelque subject preajcent, & prochainement apte à se terrifier: Or j'ay dit dès le commencement que le feu est le premier operateur du monde, qui jette une vapeur spiritueuse, laquelle il cuit & desseiche pour la corporifier; car la corporification ne se peut faire sans coagulation; necessairement procuree par la siccité du feu. Mais en quel lieu se fait cette cuisson, desseichement ou coagulation, sinon dans le corps de la terre, d'où proviennent tous autres corps? Il faut donc que la preajcente matiere d'iceux y soit cachee: car si elle n'y estoit, il s'ensuivroit qu'ils seroient faicts de rien; ce qui contredit à l'ordonnance de Nature, qui veut que toute chose ait son principe, & que de rien rien ne procede.

Those who aim to reduce bodies to their first germ would have a more plausible reason for their undertaking than the last group, who wish to turn them into quintessence, if in pursuing it they did not take a winding path that leads them to the opposite of their intended destination. Besides the fact that Nature never goes backwards, they fail to see that they follow the course of completion, rather than of destructive reversion—or, to speak more clearly, the course that leads back to birth. Moreover, these labours are altogether impossible, or at least so difficult and lengthy that an ordinary human lifetime would not suffice for them. By this path they could not reach true and natural reduction, but would make only an imaginary body, far removed from that with which Nature begins all her productive operations, the sole legitimate seed of every body. If we consider that everything becomes embodied by becoming earth, we must necessarily acknowledge some underlying subject immediately capable of doing so. I said at the beginning that fire is the world's first operator: it sends forth a spirituous vapour, which it cooks and dries in order to embody it, for embodiment cannot take place without coagulation, necessarily brought about by the dryness of fire. But where does this cooking, drying or coagulation occur, except within the body of the earth, from which all other bodies proceed? Their underlying matter must therefore be hidden there. If it were not, it would follow that they were made from nothing, contradicting Nature's ordinance, which requires everything to have its principle and nothing to proceed from nothing.¹⁰⁷

SL_II_02S003 1621 pp 83–86 · scans FR103, FR104, FR105, FR106

Cette matiere ou principe est donc attachee au corps de la terre, où elle se nourrit, epaissit, & incorpore. Pour cette cause, ceux qui ont voulu la tirer des corps metalliques parfaits, ou des imparfaits & simples, par extraction de quintessence auroient bien mieux fait (puis qu'ils cherchoient le premier sperme) d'ouvrir la matrice de la mere, que de tuer & destruire les enfans desja parvenus à la perfection de leur aage, pour les cuider remettre en l'estat qu'ils estoient à leur conception: Mais quand ils ouvriroient cette matrice, qu'y trouveroient ils? car rien ne se presente delà à la veue; & plusieurs advoüant bien que cette voye estoit la plus favorable, ont encore esté deceuz, esperant trouver dans le ventre des minieres

¹⁰⁷. Reduction means a return towards a body's beginning or seed, not a reduction in quantity. The author distinguishes Nature's productive progression from an attempted undoing of an already perfected body; the subsequent argument seeks the generative subject in the earth instead.

quelque apparence de commencement d'aurification: ce qu'ils n'ont faict toutesfois, & ont desespéré de leur dessein, d'autant qu'ils ne voyoient aucune moyenne disposition entre la mollesse & la dureté du metal. Puis donc que l'œil n'y void aucune chose, comment est-il possible d'y rien trouver & prendre? Cela est l'œuvre, mais cecy est le labeur. Certainement tels investigateurs ne jugeoient pas que la matiere premiere n'est autre chose qu'esprit & vapeur si subtile & delice que le seul regard de l'intellect la peut voir ou imaginer. Toutefois d'autant qu'elle est attachee au corps de cette mere, & habite en icelle, il faut par vive raison qu'elle ait quelque nature quasi corporelle, & apte à se corporifier. Or jaçoit que j'aye cy devant assez ouvertement déclaré à ceux qui sont douez de subtil jugement quelle est cette Nature, si adjousteray-je icy que la spongiosité de la terre est pleine de cette vapeur spiritueuse, qui par la vertu de la chaleur innee, acquiert une qualité seiche, accompagnée d'une humeur secrete, par laquelle elle se condense & coagule en corps spécifique.

This matter or principle is therefore attached to the body of the earth, where it is nourished, thickens and becomes incorporated. For this reason, those who have wished to draw it from perfect metallic bodies, or from imperfect and simple ones, by extracting quintessence would have done far better, since they sought the first seed, to open the mother's womb than to kill and destroy children already arrived at the perfection of their age, intending to restore them to the state they occupied at conception. Yet if they opened this womb, what would they find there? Nothing there presents itself to sight. Many, although acknowledging that this was the most promising path, have still been deceived, expecting to find within the womb of the mines some visible beginning of gold formation. They have nevertheless failed to do so, and have despaired of their undertaking because they saw no intermediate condition between the softness and the hardness of metal. Since the eye sees nothing there, how is anything to be found and taken from it? That is the work, but here is the labour. Certainly such investigators did not judge that first matter is nothing other than spirit and vapour, so subtle and delicate that only the intellect's gaze can see or imagine it. Nevertheless, because it is attached to the body of this mother and dwells within her, sound reason requires it to have some almost corporeal nature capable of becoming embodied. Although I have already declared fairly openly to those endowed with subtle judgement what this nature is, I shall add here that the earth's spongy fabric is full of this spirituous vapour. Through the power of innate heat it acquires a dry quality, accompanied by a secret moisture, through which it condenses and coagulates into a specific body.^{108,109}

¹⁰⁸. The mother and her womb are the earth and its mineral-bearing interior. Aurification means the formation of gold; the argument distinguishes an imperceptible generative beginning from visible, mature metallic bodies.

¹⁰⁹. The work and labour phrasing recalls Virgil, Aeneid 6.129, hoc opus, hic labor est. Here it marks the difficulty of finding and grasping what the eye cannot yet perceive. Latin text: <https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0055%3Abook%3D6>.

Et comme cette nature humide desseichee a esté premierement eau, il faut aussi la reduire en eau par l'eau, qui est le seul moyen pour aquefier les choses seiches, comme le feu pour desseicher les humides: Chose que Nature observe tres-exactement en la generation des metaux. Car l'eau fluant par les pores terrestres, trouve une substance dissoluble, avec laquelle elle s'unit par leurs plus simples parties, & à cette union conviennent les elemens deuëment proportionnez. La substance adonc ainsi conjointe par la dissolution, se congele & coagule d'elle mesme par endurcissement qu'elle a naturellement en elle, à cause de sa siccité innee: puis par successive & longue decoction elle acquiert la dureté metallique. Mais puis que cette substance est dissoluble, de quelle autre nature peut elle estre que de sel? car rien ne se dissout que les sels; desquels la multitude & varieté est grande, puis qu'il y en a autant que de choses au monde? Tellement que tant plus il est brulé, & plus acquiert il de facilité à se dissouldre, pourveu qu'il ne soit arrivé jusques à la vitrification. Cette premiere matiere est donc un sel: C'est à dire que le sel est le premier corps, par lequel elle se rend palpable & visible, duquel sel Raymond Lulle entend parler dans son testament, quand il dit: Nous avons cy dessus declaré qu'au centre de la terre est une terre Vierge, & un vray element: & que c'est l'œuvre de Nature. Partant Nature est logee au centre de chacune chose. Ainsi le sel est cette terre Vierge qui encore n'a rien produit; en laquelle l'esprit du monde se convertit premierement, par vitrification; c'est à dire par extenuation d'humeur. C'est luy qui donne forme à toutes choses, & rien ne peut tomber au sens de la veue ny de l'attouchement que par le sel: Rien ne se coagule que le sel: Rien que le sel ne se congele: C'est luy qui donne la dureté à l'or, & à tous les metaux: au diamant, & à toutes les pierres tant precieuses qu'autres, par une puissante mais tres-secrete vertu vitrifiante.

Since this dried moist nature was originally water, it must also be reduced to water by water, which is the sole means of making dry things watery, just as fire dries moist things. Nature observes this most exactly in the generation of metals. Water flowing through the earth's pores finds a dissoluble substance with which it unites through their simplest parts; the duly proportioned elements concur in this union. The substance thus joined through dissolution then congeals and coagulates of itself through a hardening naturally present within it because of its innate dryness. Afterwards, by successive and lengthy decoction, it acquires metallic hardness. Yet since this substance is dissoluble, of what other nature can it be than salt? For nothing dissolves except salts, whose multitude and variety are great, since there are as many as there are things in the world. Thus, the more it is burnt, the more readily it dissolves, provided it has not reached vitrification. This first matter is therefore a salt: that is, salt is the first body through which it becomes palpable and visible. This is the salt of which Raymond Lull means to speak in his Testament when he says: We have declared above that at the centre of the earth there is a virgin earth and a true element, and that it is Nature's work. Therefore Nature is lodged at the centre of each thing. Salt, then, is this virgin earth which has not yet produced anything, into which the spirit of the world is first converted through vitrification, that is, through the attenuation of moisture. It gives form to everything, and nothing can become an object of sight or touch except through salt. Nothing coagulates but salt;

nothing but salt congeals. It gives hardness to gold and all metals, to diamond and all stones, precious or otherwise, through a powerful but most secret vitrifying power.^{110,111}

SL_II_02S005 1621 pp 88–89 · scans FR108, FR109

Qui plus est, il se void que toutes les choses composees des quatre elemens retournent en sel. Car s'il advient qu'un corps se pourrisse, qu'en restera il sinon une poudre cendreuse qui recelle un sel precieux? & si ce corps est destruit par bruslement, calcination, ou incineration, qu'en tirerons nous en dernier ressort sinon du sel? Les verriers nous serviront à cette preuve. C'est pourquoy Arnauld de Villeneuve grand Medecin & Philosophe, en sa nouvelle lumiere chimique parlant de l'eau permanente des sages, qui est une eau seiche, laquelle ne mouille point les mains non plus que l'argent vif vulgaire; dict: Qui sera-ce donc qui pourra faire cette eau? certes je dis que ce sera celuy qui sait faire le verre: Le mesme Autheur parlant de l'excellence de cette eau seiche, l'a donné assez à cognoistre quand il dit en un traicté chimique auquel il baille le nom de Breviaire philosophique: L'opérateur ne fera non plus sans sel, qu'un archer tirera sans corde. Et la fontaine des amoureux dit aussi,

Furthermore, we see that everything composed of the four elements returns to salt. If a body putrefies, what will remain of it but an ashen powder concealing a precious salt? And if the body is destroyed by burning, calcination or incineration, what shall we ultimately draw from it but salt? The glassmakers will serve as evidence of this. Thus Arnauld of Villeneuve, the great physician and philosopher, speaking in his *New Chymical Light of the sages' permanent water*—a dry water which no more wets the hands than ordinary quicksilver—says: Who, then, will be able to make this water? Certainly, I say that it will be someone who knows how to make glass. The same author sufficiently disclosed the excellence of this dry water when he said in a chymical treatise to which he gives the name *Philosophical Breviary*: The operator will accomplish no more without salt than an archer will shoot without a string. And the *Fountain of Lovers* also says:¹¹²

SL_II_02S006 1621 pp 89 · scans FR109

Sans sel ne peux mettre en effect,
Utile chose pour ton fait.

Without salt you cannot bring about
Anything useful to your work.

¹¹⁰. The witness uses vitrification both for a limit beyond which a burnt substance ceases to dissolve and for the first embodiment of the world spirit, expressly explained as the attenuation of moisture. The translation retains this wording rather than replacing the latter occurrence with a different technical operation.

¹¹¹. The Testament is cited under Raymond Lull's name. Its virgin earth denotes a generative subject that has not yet produced a particular body; the argument makes salt its first tangible manifestation, without identifying that salt as one modern chemical compound.

¹¹². Permanent water and dry water designate the sages' material in the cited argument, whose comparison is with quicksilver's failure to wet the hands. The text does not describe ordinary liquid water or identify a modern chemical substance. The names and attributions of the cited treatises are retained as this witness gives them.

SL_II_02S007 1621 pp 89–91 · scans FR109, FR110, FR111

C'est donc de sel que tous les corps ont esté premier composez, car ainsi que j'ay dit au precedent chapitre, les principes de composition & de resolution sont semblables. Et comme veulent & tiennent tous les philosophes pour maxime infaillible, la premiere matiere des choses n'est point autre que leur dernière, c'est à dire celle en quoy ils se resolvent en leur fin, donnant pour exemple la glace & la neige qui par chaleur se reduisent en eau; de laquelle par congelation elles estoient faictes. Et si je voulois icy raporter tous les tesmoignages des bons Autheurs il en naistroit un juste volume. Or pour monstrier que ce sel est la pure & vraye terre, non pas celle sur laquelle nous marchons; que je veux prouver n'estre que l'excrement & lie de l'autre; j'auray recours à la premiere creation des choses, laquelle je figureray par l'exemple d'une operation familiere qui se fait à l'imitation de Nature, & par le moyen & mesme reigle que ce grand univers a esté fait. J'ay cy devant dit que le principe des choses estoit l'eau, ou bien une Nature humide ainsi que dit Hermes, sur laquelle, suyvnt le texte de Moyse, l'esprit de Dieu estoit porté.

All bodies were therefore first composed of salt, for, as I said in the preceding chapter, the principles of composition and resolution are alike. As all philosophers maintain as an infallible maxim, the first matter of things is none other than their last: that into which they are resolved at their end. Their example is ice and snow, which heat reduces to water, from which they were made by congealing. If I wished to recount all the testimony of good authors here, it would grow into a whole volume. To show that this salt is pure and true earth, rather than the earth on which we walk—which I intend to prove is merely the excrement and dregs of the other—I shall return to the first creation of things. I shall represent it through the example of a familiar operation performed in imitation of Nature, by the means and the very rule through which this great universe was made. I said above that the principle of things was water, or a moist nature, as Hermes says, over which, according to the text of Moses, the spirit of God was borne.

SL_II_02S008 1621 pp 91–93 · scans FR111, FR112, FR113

Mais on me pourra demander comment ce grand amas & confusion d'eaux a esté divisé, en sorte que cette ample & lourde masse terrestre en soit sortie? & par quel moyen tant de choses diverses sont produictes de cette terre. Je respondray à telles questions ce que la seule experience m'en a fait voir, disant qu'il est naturellement probable qu'il se feist lors premierement quelque assiette au milieu de ces eaux par le moyen de separation, suivant le propre texte de Moyse, qui dit que Dieu separa les eaux des eaux, car il en est de deux sortes, assavoir l'eau elevative & l'eau congelative. La premiere s'eslevant par evaporation laissa donc la seconde fixe en bas: ainsi que le voyent journellement ceux qui font le Sel tant marin que fontainier. Vray est que l'un se fait par la force attractive des rayons du Soleil: & l'autre par la violence expulsive du feu. Or le feu seul, ou la seule chaleur entre toutes les choses du monde possede cette vertu separative, par l'une ou l'autre de ces deux voyes, ou naturelle, ou violente. C'est donc par l'un ou l'autre que cette separation a esté procuree. Mais à qui eust sceu Moyse comparer ce feu sinon à l'esprit divin, qui ne se peut autrement definir, que la source universelle de lumiere, de chaleur animante & de vital mouvement; par lequel toutes choses sont, & persistent en leur estre? Considerons le sel de Nature estant encore en son lymbe ou cahos; C'est à dire diffus, dissout, ou noyé dans son eau, en quelle forme apparostro-il à nostre veue, & quelle qualité luy attribuera nostre goust & attouchement sinon d'eau amere?

Lesquelles forme & qualité, il conserveroit eternellement si le separateur n'intervenoit. Mais aussi tost que cette eau eslevative sent l'action du feu qui luy est ennemy; la separation commence à se faire par evaporation, & peu à peu se diminuant faict apparroistre au centre de son globe une petite assiette de sel qui s'assemble tout ainsi que fist le corps de la Terre dans le premier limbe des eaux universelles. Voilà donc la premiere operation que fist le feu, assavoir de faire apparroistre l'aride, c'est à dire, la terre.

Yet I may be asked how this great mass and confusion of waters was divided so that this vast and heavy earthly mass emerged from it, and by what means so many different things are produced from this earth. To such questions I shall answer what experience alone has shown me, saying that it is naturally probable that some settled foundation was first formed amid these waters through separation, according to Moses' own text, which says that God separated the waters from the waters. There are two kinds: the water that rises and the water that congeals. The first, rising through evaporation, therefore left the second fixed below, as those who make both sea salt and spring salt see daily. It is true that the former is made by the attractive force of the sun's rays, and the latter by the expulsive violence of fire. Of everything in the world, fire alone, or heat alone, possesses this separating power, through either of these two paths, natural or violent. The separation was therefore brought about through one or the other. But with what could Moses have compared this fire except the divine spirit, which can be defined only as the universal source of light, animating heat and vital movement, through which all things exist and persist in their being? Let us consider Nature's salt while it is still in its limbus or chaos: that is, dispersed, dissolved or submerged in its water. In what form will it appear to our sight, and what quality will our taste and touch attribute to it, except that of bitter water? It would preserve that form and quality eternally if the separator did not intervene. But as soon as this rising water feels the action of fire, which is its enemy, separation begins through evaporation. Gradually diminishing, it reveals at the centre of its globe a small deposit of salt, which gathers just as the body of the earth did in the first limbus of the universal waters. This, then, was the first operation performed by fire: to make the dry land, that is, the earth, appear.^{113,114}

SL_II_02S009 1621 pp 93–97 · scans FR113, FR114, FR115, FR116, FR117

Mais tout ainsi que cette terre premiere demeura coagulee par le feu avec ses excremens & feces; ce sel qui est vraiment terre retient aussi les feces, encore qu'il semble pur & net, plein de blancheur & lucidité: Car rien ne se peut engendrer, alimenter, & croistre, sans engendrer aussi des excremens, de la formation &

¹¹³. The argument transfers the account of the separation of waters and the appearance of dry land to a familiar salt-making operation. The distinction between the sun's attractive action and fire's expulsive action is the author's explanation of two ways in which heat separates moisture.

¹¹⁴. Lymbe or limbus here denotes the undifferentiated condition in which a material remains latent within its surrounding waters. The source itself pairs the term with chaos; it is not using it for a place assigned to departed souls.

separation desquels je reserve à parler en leur lieu. Or ce sel ou cette terre aride qui se coagule & assiet dedans l'eau, reboit tout son humide, & le desseiche par la continuation du feu: gardant neantmoins en elle une humeur interne qui ne l'abandonne point; & de laquelle luy provient cette vertu dissolutive: puis arrivant temperature, entre le sec & l'humide, elle demeure apte aux productions des choses, tiree de puissance à effect par l'action de la chaleur. Et de vray tout ainsi que le corps de la grand terre a cette vertu productive & specifique des individus; aussi l'a celle cy que nous appellons sel: Non pas qu'elle produise herbes, metaux, ny animaux, comme fait l'autre, mais elle a dans son sein la semence originelle de toutes choses: de sorte que l'experience nous y fait voir par les operations du feu, les couleurs, saveurs, accroissemens, vegetations, & endurcissemens, que l'on voit en chacun de ces trois genres. Et non seulement cela, mais encore le propre feu que le Soleil y a mis; par lequel il vivifie & nourrit toutes choses. Ainsi qu'il m'est apparu au progrez de certaine œuvre philosophique: Ayant veu en cette matiere seule, distinctement & l'une apres l'autre: selon l'ordre & les intervalles determinez par les maistres, toutes les couleurs & les apparences qu'ils disent devoir arriver en leur matiere à la confection de leur pierre: avec cette fusion soudaine apres estre parvenu à la haute rougeur du pavot champestre: Et toutesfois sans avoir produit le miracle tant désiré & attendu, quant à la Methamorphose des metaux: mais ayant fait sur les corps humains par sueurs universelles & naturelles, des effects si miraculeux que je ne l'oserois publier sans craindre le tiltre de charlatan: toutesfois, Monseigneur, vostre Altesse me peut garentir de cette injure, comme tesmoing irreprochable; puisque le bruit de ces merveilles estant parvenu jusqu'à elle vous daignastes bien ainsi que Jupiter visiter la demeure de vostre pauvre Philemon; portee du genereux dessein d'en estre asseuree par la bouche d'un homme de bien, qui cruellement affligé de diverses douleurs, & trop extenué de la languissante longueur de ses maux, n'avoit plus recours qu'à la bonté celeste, ny espoir qu'en la mort, à chacun moment reclamee. Le dire veritable duquel obligea encore vostre altesse, de faire ouyr par information solennelle une multitude d'autres que j'avois soulagez par ce mesme remede. Et si l'avidité ou l'envie de celuy auquel estoit commis & confié le soin de la santé de feu (de tres-illustre & glorieuse memoire) Monseigneur le Reverendissime Cardinal vostre trescher frere, ne l'eust empesché d'en prendre, j'estime que Dieu n'eust desnié à son Excellence la mesme grace & benediction qu'il avoit eslargie à tant de pauvres gens.

But just as this first earth remained coagulated by fire together with its excrements and dregs, this salt, which is truly earth, likewise retains its dregs, although it seems pure and clean, full of whiteness and brightness. Nothing can be generated, nourished or grow without also generating excrements; I reserve discussion of their formation and separation for their proper place. This salt, or this dry earth, which coagulates and settles in the water, drinks back all its moisture and dries it through the continuing action of fire. Nevertheless, it retains within itself an internal moisture which never abandons it and from which its power of dissolution proceeds. Then, attaining a temper between dry and moist, it remains capable of producing things, being drawn from potentiality into effect by the action of heat. Indeed, just as the body of the great earth possesses this power to produce individuals and give them their specific forms, so does this earth which we call salt. It does not produce herbs, metals or animals as the other does, but holds within its bosom the original seed of all things. Thus, through the operations of fire, experience shows us within it the colours, tastes,

increases, vegetations and hardenings seen in each of these three kinds. Not only that: it also contains the very fire which the sun has placed in it, through which it gives life and nourishment to everything. This appeared to me in the course of a certain philosophical work. In this matter alone I saw, distinctly and one after another, according to the order and intervals determined by the masters, all the colours and appearances which they say must arise in their matter when making their stone, together with that sudden fusion after it had reached the intense redness of the field poppy. Yet it did not produce the miracle so greatly desired and awaited in the metamorphosis of metals. In human bodies, however, it produced, through general and natural sweats, effects so miraculous that I would not dare publish them for fear of being called a charlatan. Nevertheless, my lord, Your Highness can protect me from that insult as an unimpeachable witness. When news of these marvels reached you, you deigned, like Jupiter, to visit the dwelling of your poor Philemon, moved by the generous intention of confirming them from the mouth of an honest man. Cruelly afflicted with various pains and greatly worn down by the lingering length of his sufferings, he had no recourse left but heavenly goodness, and no hope but death, which he called for at every moment. His truthful testimony further moved Your Highness to have a multitude of others whom I had relieved with the same remedy heard in a solemn inquiry. Had the greed or envy of the man entrusted with the care of the late Most Reverend Cardinal, your dearly beloved brother of most illustrious and glorious memory, not prevented him from taking it, I believe that God would not have denied His Eminence the same grace and blessing which he had bestowed upon so many poor people.^{115,116,117}

SL_II_02S010 1621 pp 97–100 · scans FR117, FR118, FR119, FR120

Si donc ce Sel a toutes les qualitez de la terre, qui voudra soustenir que luy mesme ne soit terre: & par consequent qu'il ne doive estre appellé Esprit universel terrifié, ainsi que Hermes l'a despeint? Mais je diray que cette conversion ne se peut faire sinon par un artifice de tres-facile pratique, & de tresmal aisee perquisition. Car sans mentir c'est un acte qui passe l'humain de faire voir à l'œil & toucher au doigt cette premiere matiere qu'un monde d'hommes admirez pour leur grande doctrine en tous les siecles, ont estimé voire affirmé estre invisible, & incomprehensible. S'amusant seulement par une profonde theorie à discourir de l'excellence de la chose; & non pas à la rechercher & cognoistre par ses effects. De sorte qu'entre tous les curieux que j'ay pratiquez depuis quarante ans que j'en ay senty la premiere

¹¹⁵. Temperature here means a temper or balanced constitution between dry and moist, not a numerical measure of heat. The retained internal moisture explains why the dry, coagulated salt can subsequently dissolve.

¹¹⁶. The author explicitly distinguishes an unsuccessful claim to metallic transmutation from what he presents as successful medical effects. The coloured stages, poppy-red condition and fusion are observations claimed for his work; they are not presented here as proof that he made transmuting gold.

¹¹⁷. The address returns to the princely dedicatee as a witness to the author's medical claims. The author casts himself as poor Philemon and the visiting patron as Jupiter; the subsequent charge against the cardinal's physician is the author's allegation, not an independently established finding.

odeur, je n'en ay point trouvé six qui le cogneussent. Or ayant suffisamment esclaircy comment ce sel est converty en terre; & gagné ce point aussi, qui est la vraie operation des operations: il reste maintenant à monstrier comme apres cette conversion sa vertu luy demeure entiere. Toutefois avant que passer outre il est bien raisonnable de dire de quelle vertu & force estoit doué cet Esprit ou Sel, afin de le sçavoir rechercher & retrouver en luy quand il sera terrifié. Je diray donc à cet effect que c'est une chose indubitable & qui n'a besoin de preuve, que les Cieux sont en continuel mouvement qui tend necessairement à quelque fin. Car, combien que naturellement on puisse dire la fin de ce qui se meut estre d'aller d'un lieu en un autre, si est-ce que le mouvement se fait pour quelqu'autre cause & l'intention de la motion n'est pas seulement de remuer de place en place: mais bien de faire ce mouvement pour parvenir à l'effect de quelqu'autre fin. Car il y a deux fins; L'une que les Philosophes appellent fin pour laquelle la chose se fait: comme la fin de la generation de Plato, c'est l'ame de Platon. Et la fin pour laquelle Platon a appris les vertus; c'est beatitude. L'autre fin est ce à quoy les choses vont à cause de la precedente; comme la fin de l'assemblément du masle & de la femelle, c'est la generation, mais la fin pour laquelle se fait la generation, c'est l'homme, ou l'animal. Aussi la fin pour laquelle Plato alla de Grece en Egypte, c'estoit pour apprendre sapience. Mais la fin de son cheminer, c'estoit l'Egypte où il pretendoit d'aller. La fin donc du mouvement des Cieux n'est point seulement de se remuer de lieu en lieu: Mais afin d'influer leurs vertus sur les corps inferieurs. Car d'imaginer que l'influence se face & espande inutilement és lieux où il n'y a rien pour la recevoir, c'est une erreur trop grossiere. Or cette influence de vertus est indeficience & continuelle à cause que le mouvement par lequel elle se faict est orbiculaire, toujours recommençant & retournant à soy mesme.

If, then, this salt has all the qualities of earth, who will maintain that it is not itself earth, and consequently that it should not be called the universal spirit made earth, as Hermes has portrayed it? But I shall say that this conversion can be achieved only through an artifice very easy to practise and very difficult to discover. Without lying, it is an act surpassing human capacity to make visible to the eye and tangible to the finger this first matter which a world of men, admired in every age for their great learning, have considered, and indeed affirmed, to be invisible and incomprehensible. They occupy themselves only in discoursing through profound theory on the excellence of the thing, rather than seeking it and knowing it through its effects. Among all the inquisitive men with whom I have associated during the forty years since I first caught its scent, I have not found six who knew it. Having sufficiently explained how this salt is converted into earth, and having also won this point, which is truly the operation of operations, it now remains to show how its power remains entire after this conversion. Before proceeding, however, it is reasonable to say with what power and force this spirit or salt was endowed, so that we may know how to seek and rediscover it within the salt once it has been made earth. To this end I say that it is an undoubted thing, requiring no proof, that the heavens are in continual motion which necessarily tends towards some end. Although in natural terms the end of something moving may be said to be its passage from one place to another, the movement nevertheless occurs for some further cause. The intention of motion is not merely to shift from place to place, but to make this movement in

order to accomplish some further end. There are two ends. One is what philosophers call the end for which a thing is done: thus the end of Plato's generation is Plato's soul, and the end for which Plato learned the virtues is blessedness. The other end is that towards which things go on account of the former. Thus the end of the union of male and female is generation, but the end for which generation takes place is the human being or the animal. Likewise, the end for which Plato went from Greece to Egypt was to learn wisdom; but the end of his travelling was Egypt, where he intended to go. The end of the heavens' movement is therefore not merely to move from place to place, but to infuse their powers into lower bodies. To imagine that this influence takes place and spreads uselessly in places where there is nothing to receive it is too gross an error. This influence of powers is unfailing and continual because the movement through which it occurs is circular, always beginning again and returning to itself.¹¹⁸

SL_II_02S011 1621 pp 101–102 · scans FR121, FR122

Qui est la raison pourquoy les choses sur lesquelles elle se faict, & ce qui en procede est de pareille nature & qualité; recevant sans cesse une force & multiplication de ces vertus qui ne manque jamais: & puisque cette influence ne s'estend point dessus les Cieux, où comme j'ay dit, il n'y a rien; il s'ensuit de nécessité qu'elle se doit faire sur quelque chose inferieure & corporelle, sur quoy elle puisse agir, Car rien ne patist que ce qui a corps: Mais quel corps naturel y a il au monde que celuy de la terre? n'est-ce pas le corps des corps: Et celuy seul qui de luy mesme peut subsister, ayant toutes les qualitez requises aux corps, assavoir longueur, largeur, profondeur, & superficie? n'est-ce pas le subject ou but prefix de la Nature, à quoy sans cesse elle s'exerce de corporifier & animer? Où pourroit elle donc accomplir ces ouvrages sinon dans le corps de la terre? ainsi la terre est le seul corps inferieur qui reçoit les influences celestes, les vertus & puissances desquelles sont de penetrer, eschauffer, purger, separer, vivifier, augmenter, conserver, & restaurer. Il n'est besoin de disputer icy maintenant si les Astres & les Cieux influent leurs corps sur le corps de la terre, car l'experience nous en releve par le tesmoignage des sens. Parquoy, laissant cela pour cognu, je m'efforceray seulement à desduire comment ils font leurs vertueuses influctions. J'ay n'aguere dit qu'elles tendent en bas directement & non en haut. Et d'autant que le bas d'un corps spherique est son centre, c'est donc necessairement sur la terre qu'elles decoulent, & en elle seule qu'elles finissent & fichent leurs pointes.

This is why the things upon which it acts, and what proceeds from them, are of a like nature and quality: they continually receive a force and multiplication of these powers which never fails. Since this influence does not extend above the heavens, where, as I have said, there is nothing, it necessarily follows that it must act upon something lower and corporeal upon which it can operate, for nothing undergoes action except what has a body. But what natural body is there in the world other than that of the earth? Is it not the body of bodies, and the

¹¹⁸. The distinction is between a purpose for which an action is undertaken and the immediate endpoint of that action. The journey to Egypt illustrates the difference between gaining wisdom and simply reaching a place; the author uses it to argue that heavenly motion must accomplish something beyond changing position.

only one that can subsist of itself, possessing all the qualities required of bodies—length, breadth, depth and surface? Is it not Nature's appointed subject or goal, which she continually strives to embody and animate? Where, then, could she accomplish these works except within the body of the earth? The earth is thus the sole lower body receiving the celestial influences, whose powers and capacities are to penetrate, heat, purge, separate, give life, increase, preserve and restore. There is no need now to dispute whether the stars and heavens infuse their bodies into the body of the earth, for experience relieves us of that question through the testimony of the senses. Leaving that as known, I shall therefore endeavour only to explain how they perform their efficacious influences. I said recently that they tend directly downwards, not upwards. Since the lower part of a spherical body is its centre, they necessarily flow down upon the earth, and in it alone do they terminate and fix their points.

SL_II_025012 1621 pp 102–105 · scans FR122, FR123, FR124, FR125

Car la terre est le vray centre de l'univers, & le point de ce grand cercle où toutes les lignes de ces influctions aboutissent. Et parce que cette terre est un corps solide, & que la solidité de tous autres corps provient d'elle, il faut une vertu tres-subtile pour la penetrer par ses moindres parties. Les Cieux donc qui sont de tres-subtile matiere produisent des vertus pareilles, car les operations suivent ordinairement les qualitez du corps qui les produict. Or cette penetration ne serviroit de rien, & seroit comme une eau courante sur un champ duquel elle n'arrose que la superficie à cause de la vistesse de son cours, si elle n'y faisoit quelque pose. Mais puis qu'infailliblement elle tombe jusques au centre, & qu'elle ne peut passer outre, ne trouvant rien de plus bas pour y descendre; elle est contrainte de s'y arrester & amasser. C'est pourquoy quelques uns ont dit que le fonds de la terre est tres-precieux, à cause que toutes les vertus celestes s'y assemblent & unissent. Lesquelles ainsi unies & assemblees ont une puissance infinie, tant parce qu'elles y affluent continuellement, que parce qu'elles procedent des corps infinis en vertus, immortels, incorruptibles, & indeficients. Les anciens Poëtes qui fabuleusement nous ont laissé ce qu'ils avoient imaginé de ces choses occultes, partageant le monde en trois, assignerent à Jupiter comme premier fils de Saturne, le Ciel: encores qu'aucuns ayent voulu attribuer le droict d'aisnesse à Neptune, & l'election de ce regne superieur à Jupiter, pour certaines raisons sophistiques nullement necessaires à mon propos: auquel Neptune fut baillé la Mer pour son lot. Pluton fut apanagé de la Terre comme cadet. Et toutesfois il est estimé le plus riche des trois freres; à cause que dans son heritage naissent & renaissent continuellement tous les tresors du monde: & semble qu'il ayt rendu ses deux freres tributaires vers luy de ce qu'ils ont de plus exquis. Ils le disent Roy des enfers; & pour son lieu de plaisance luy donnent les champs Elisies, où les esleuz & bien-heureux luy vont faire la court.

The earth is the true centre of the universe, the point of this great circle at which all the lines of these influences meet. Since the earth is a solid body, and the solidity of every other body proceeds from it, an extremely subtle power is needed to penetrate its smallest parts. The heavens, being made of extremely subtle matter, therefore produce powers of the same kind, for operations ordinarily follow the qualities of the body producing them. This penetration would serve no purpose, and would resemble water running over a field, wetting only its surface

because of the speed of its flow, if it did not pause there. Yet since it unfailingly falls as far as the centre and cannot go further, finding nothing lower into which to descend, it is compelled to stop and gather there. This is why some have said that the earth's depths are exceedingly precious: all the celestial powers assemble and unite there. Thus united and assembled, they possess an infinite power, both because they flow there continually and because they proceed from bodies infinite in their powers, immortal, incorruptible and unfailing. The ancient poets, who left us in fables what they had imagined concerning these hidden things, divided the world into three and assigned heaven to Jupiter as Saturn's first son. Some, indeed, wished to give the right of primogeniture to Neptune and the choice of this upper kingdom to Jupiter, for certain sophistical reasons wholly unnecessary to my purpose. Neptune received the sea as his portion. Pluto was allotted the earth as the youngest. Nevertheless, he is considered the richest of the three brothers, because all the world's treasures are continually born and reborn within his inheritance. It seems that he has made his two brothers pay him tribute from what is most exquisite in their possessions. They call him king of the underworld, and give him the Elysian fields as his place of delight, where the elect and blessed go to pay him court.¹¹⁹

SL_II_02S013 1621 pp 105–107 · scans FR125, FR126, FR127

Nos Theologiens veulent aussi qu'en ce mesme lieu soient les enfers, & les tourmens des ames: se persuadant qu'estant bien veritable que les influences de tous les astres qui sont de nature ignee y tombent, il y doive avoir une ardeur incroyable. L'on peut sans doute appeller ce lieu infernal, puis qu'il n'y a rien de plus bas: Mais que les ames y soient tourmentees par ce feu, & que l'ardeur d'iceluy soit ou puisse estre telle qu'ils disent, cela semble esloigné de la raison, & des vrayes axiomes de Philosophie. Car, outre que les ames n'occupent aucun lieu, par leur confession mesme, & que leur naturel apres qu'elles ont quitté le fardeau de leurs corps est de tendre & se porter en haut, à cause de leur legereté spirituelle, qui tient plus de la qualité ignee que de toute autre; elles ne peuvent qu'avec violence, ny comme legeres estre demergees en ce lieu sousterrain, ny comme simples patir l'action du feu qui n'a point d'empire sur son semblable. Pourquoy veulent-ils donc qu'elles descendent en ce lieu pour y estre tourmentees? si ce n'est que le pesant fardeau du peché dont elles sont enveloppees, deprimant leur naturel les porte en bas & face descendre au centre de la terre: & que le mesme peché encore s'estant emparé & comme incorporé avec elles il se face je ne sçay quelle composition qui les rende passibles & subjectes, non à l'action simple & naturelle de ce feu, mais peut estre à la violence d'un autre feu créé de Dieu à cet effect: & peut estre de ce feu mesme dont nous parlons, son action luy estant redoublée par une secrette & vertu divine: ce qui est fort probable, & semble estre autorisé de l'écriture sainte: Toutefois je ne veux temerairement faire opinion à part; non plus que m'escarter de la foy orthodoxe; au soustien de laquelle j'ay de long temps voué ma vie, & le peu d'industrie que je tiens du Ciel.

¹¹⁹. The distribution of the world among Jupiter, Neptune and Pluto becomes a physical allegory of celestial influence, water and the earth's concentrated riches. The author retains the poets' underworld and Elysian fields while preparing to distinguish their imagery from a literal account of the punishment of souls.

Our theologians also maintain that hell and the torments of souls are in this same place. They persuade themselves that, since the influences of all the stars, which are fiery in nature, certainly fall there, an incredible heat must exist there. One may undoubtedly call this place infernal, since nothing lies lower. But that souls should be tormented there by this fire, and that its heat should or could be such as they say, seems remote from reason and the true axioms of philosophy. By their own admission souls occupy no place; and after leaving the burden of their bodies, their nature is to tend and rise upwards because of their spiritual lightness, which partakes more of the fiery quality than of any other. As light things they cannot be submerged in this underground place except by force; nor, as simple things, can they undergo the action of fire, which has no dominion over its like. Why, then, do they maintain that souls descend there to be tormented? Unless the heavy burden of sin in which they are enveloped oppresses their nature, bears them down and makes them descend to the centre of the earth; and unless that same sin, having taken possession of them and become, as it were, incorporated with them, produces some composition—I know not what—which makes them capable of suffering and subject, not to the simple and natural action of this fire, but perhaps to the violence of another fire created by God for this purpose. Or perhaps it is this very fire of which we speak, its action being redoubled by a secret and divine power. This is highly probable and seems to be authorised by Holy Scripture. Nevertheless, I do not wish rashly to set up a separate opinion, any more than to depart from the orthodox faith, to whose defence I have long dedicated my life and the little skill I have received from Heaven.¹²⁰

SL_II_02S014 1621 pp 107–110 · scans FR127, FR128, FR129, FR130

Je diray neantmoins en passant (pour ne m'esloigner de mon premier discours) que c'est mal conclu de dire, que puisqu'en ce lieu s'assemblent toutes les influences des Astres, il s'ensuit qu'il y doit avoir une ardeur extreme, ce qu'à la verité je confesserai si le feu des Astres estoit ainsi que le vulgaire, destruisant & consommant, non pas vivifiant, conservant, & nourrissant: car s'il estoit tel qu'on le croit, il y a long temps que non seulement la terre, mais l'univers fust consummé. Ces influences veritablement s'eschauffent dans le sein du vieil Demogorgon; Mais c'est d'une ardeur vitale, & non mortelle, ou destruisante: Laquelle y plante une vertu omniforme, qui par cet eschauffement se dilatte par tout le corps terrestre, estant la premiere cause motrice des generations. Et ne faut penser que la chaleur externe qui provient du Soleil eschauffe seule la terre, & la face engendrer: car nous voyons qu'en hyver, alors que le Soleil est le plus esloigné de nous, le dedans d'icelle est plus chaud qu'au plus ardent de l'esté, comme il s'experimente és puits, fontaines, & caves profondes: De sorte que pendant les plus fortes gelees de l'hyver, les metaux ne laissent à se cuire & endurcir; Et peut on asseurer que c'est lors que se fait leur plus grande cuisson, à cause que la chaleur centralle est reprimée &

¹²⁰. The author distinguishes the natural central fire from the supernatural punishment of souls. His physical objection depends on souls being simple, light and akin to fire; he then allows a divinely imposed or intensified fire and expressly submits the discussion to his orthodox faith.

retenue dans la terre par la froideur de l'air & de l'eau qui l'environnent. Le Soleil remontant au printemps, & s'approchant de son perpendicule sur nous, n'est pas la principale cause de la vegetation des choses: Car si elle dependoit de luy seul, aucun ne doutera que plus il seroit haut & exalté, les vegetations s'iroient augmentant à proportion de la chaleur croissante: ce qui se void tout au contraire. Mais pource qu'un semblable attire volontiers l'autre, & que l'un s'esloignant l'autre se recule & depart aussi, le Soleil par la force aymentine de ses rayons attire & rappelle la chaleur du Soleil centrique, retiree & comprimée en l'interieur de la terre par l'aspre rigueur du froid, laquelle remontant à la superficie redonne la vertu vegetative à toutes choses. Ce n'est donc pas l'externe chaleur du Soleil celeste qui eschauffe le profond de la terre, mais bien celle du Soleil terrestre innée en elle: car il y a deux sortes de chaleur: l'une de reverberation, qui est l'externe; l'autre d'influence & penetration, qui est l'interne, dont j'entens parler: Le naturel de laquelle est de vivifier, augmenter, & conserver, par l'entretien de l'humeur radicale contenue en ce feu duquel j'ay fait mention au precedent chapitre.

Nevertheless, in passing, and so as not to stray from my original discourse, I shall say that it is a faulty conclusion to suppose that, because all the stars' influences assemble in this place, an extreme heat must follow. I would indeed admit this if the stars' fire were like ordinary fire, destroying and consuming rather than giving life, preserving and nourishing. If it were as people believe, not only the earth but the universe would have been consumed long ago. These influences truly grow warm within old Demogorgon's bosom, but with a vital heat, not a deadly or destructive one. This plants within it a power capable of all forms, which spreads through the whole earthly body by this warming, as the first moving cause of generations. We must not suppose that the external heat proceeding from the sun alone warms the earth and makes it generate. In winter, when the sun is furthest from us, we see that the earth's interior is warmer than in the fiercest summer, as is experienced in wells, springs and deep cellars. Thus, during the strongest winter frosts, metals do not cease to cook and harden. Indeed, one may affirm that their greatest cooking occurs then, because the central heat is pressed back and retained within the earth by the coldness of the surrounding air and water. As the sun rises again in spring and approaches a perpendicular position above us, it is not the principal cause of things' growth. If growth depended on it alone, no one would doubt that the higher and more elevated it stood, the more growth would increase in proportion to the increasing heat; yet the very contrary is seen. But because like readily attracts like, and as one draws away the other also retreats and departs, the sun, through the magnetic force of its rays, attracts and recalls the heat of the central sun, withdrawn and compressed within the earth by the harsh severity of cold. Rising again to the surface, this heat restores the vegetative power to everything. It is therefore not the external heat of the celestial sun that warms the earth's depths, but that of the earthly sun innate within it. There are two kinds of heat: the external heat of reverberation, and the internal heat of influence and penetration, of which I mean to speak. Its nature is to give life, increase and preserve by sustaining the

radical moisture contained within this fire, which I mentioned in the preceding chapter.¹²¹

SL_II_02S015 1621 pp 110–112 · scans FR130, FR131, FR132

Qui plus est, pour verifïer que ce feu central n'est point extreme, ny propre à tourmenter & brusler; nous voyons que tous les astres par leurs influctions ne tendent pas à chaleur, & que ce n'est pas leur seul naturel d'eschauffer, car Saturne est froid & sec: Jupiter chaud & humide: Mars, chaud & sec: le Soleil chaud & sec: Venus froid & humide; la Lune humide & froide: & Mercure tenant du naturel de tous, s'accommode variablement à tous. C'est donc chose facile à juger que toutes ces influences engendrent une chaleur temperee des quatre qualitez, qui sont chaud, sec, froid, & humide. Lesquelles convenant ensemble, il est necessaire que le lieu où elles conviennent les ayt en luy avec cette temperature. C'est pourquoy cette vapeur ou esprit qui provient de ce centre participe de ces quatre. D'où prennent leur origine toutes les qualitez des simples; dont les uns eschauffent parce que la chaleur y domine: les autres desseichent à raison de la siccité qui maistrise; les autres humectent & refroidissent selon le plus ou le moins de froideur & humidité qui abonde en eux. D'autre part, les Astres versent dans le centre plusieurs autres natures ou qualitez que celles-là, car ils y sement les germes des saveurs, couleurs, & odeurs que l'on goust, void, & sent en toutes choses. Je dy donc que les Astres eschauffent la terre en son centre; & par consequent cet Esprit originel qui y habite participe à cet eschauffement. Et parce que la vertu naturelle de la chaleur est de separer; par mesme influxion descend aussi cette vertu separative, qui divise le pur de l'impur, le subtil du grossier, le leger du pesant, & le doux de l'amer. Laquelle separation, qu'on peut nommer purgative, est cause que naturellement toute chose rejette d'elle mesme les excrements qui ne sont de sa substance specifique: ce qui à la verité est tres-necessaire: car il n'y a rien au monde en qui les excrements n'excedent la substance naturelle. Et tout ce que nous voyons & touchons n'est autre chose que l'excrement qui enveloppe cette substance cachee.

Furthermore, to confirm that this central fire is not extreme or suited to tormenting and burning, we see that not all the stars tend towards heat through their influences, and that heating is not their sole nature. Saturn is cold and dry; Jupiter hot and moist; Mars hot and dry; the sun hot and dry; Venus cold and moist; the moon moist and cold; and mercury, partaking of the nature of all, adapts itself variously to all. It is therefore easy to judge that all these influences engender a heat tempered from the four qualities, which are hot, dry, cold and moist. Since these come together, the place where they meet must possess them within itself in this tempering. Hence the vapour or spirit proceeding from this centre partakes of all four. From this arise all the qualities of simples: some warm because heat dominates in them, others dry because dryness rules, and others moisten and cool according to the greater or lesser abundance of cold and moisture within them. Furthermore, the stars pour into the centre many other natures or qualities besides these, for they sow there the germs of flavours, colours and odours that are tasted, seen and smelt in all things. I say, then, that the stars heat earth at its centre, and consequently that original Spirit dwelling there shares

¹²¹. The original errata for p.108 prescribe ne laissent à se cuire. Here the expression means that the metals do not cease to cook and harden during winter; the corrected sense supports the argument for an internal heat retained by external cold.

in this heating. Since heat's natural power is to separate, the same influx also brings down this separating power, which divides the pure from the impure, the subtle from the coarse, the light from the heavy and the sweet from the bitter. This separation, which may be called purgative, causes everything naturally to reject from itself the excrements that do not belong to its specific substance. This is indeed most necessary, for there is nothing in the world in which excrements do not exceed the natural substance. Everything we see and touch is simply the excrement enveloping this hidden substance.¹²²

SL_II_02S016 1621 pp 112–114 · scans FR132, FR133, FR134

Nous l'apercevons clairement aux viandes que nous mangeons; la masse desquelles ne se convertit ou trans-substancie pas en nostre chair, mais s'évacue par les lieux à ce destinez; Nature attirant seulement d'icelles le suc invisible & spirituel, apte à se carnifier & substancier en nous. De mesme pouvons nous dire que cette masse terrestre que nous foulons des pieds n'est qu'un excrement de la premiere substance, qui s'amassa dans le limbe du cahos; s'affaissant & enfonçant à l'entour du centre par egale proportion: qui a causé cette rondeur spherique, avec la substance equilibre, qui fait qu'elle ne peut remuer ny tomber, car estant ja devalée au plus bas lieu, elle ne sçauroit passer outre qu'en remontant, de quelque costé que ce soit: & cela repugneroit totalement à son naturel. Nous voyons que les lignes qui de chacune partie de la superficie d'un cercle tombent à son centre qui est leur point, n'en peuvent estre tirees sans remonter d'où elles sont parties. Je ne dy pas qu'au corps de la terre il n'y ait rien qu'excrement: car jaçoit qu'il apparaisse tout excrementel, si est-ce qu'en ses excremens est enveloppée une substance pure; qui toute spirituelle ne peut substanter sans l'administration d'un corps: ainsi que nous voyons en toutes les choses qui en proviennent, dont la semence & premiere matiere est invisible; mais est portée & conduite par la masse corporelle qui s'engendre mesme avec elle, parce que rien ne se corporifie sans l'excrement.

We perceive this clearly in the foods we eat: their mass is not converted or transubstantiated into our flesh, but is evacuated through the places appointed for that purpose; Nature draws from them only the invisible and spiritual juice fitted to become flesh and substance within us. Likewise we may say that the earthly mass we tread underfoot is merely an excrement of the first substance, which gathered in the limbus of chaos, sinking and settling around the centre in equal proportion. This caused its spherical roundness, and its equally balanced substance, which prevents it moving or falling; for, having already descended to the lowest place, it could go further only by rising again, in whatever direction, and that would be wholly contrary to its nature. We see that lines drawn from each part of a circle's circumference down to its centre, which is their point, cannot be drawn out again without rising to where they began. I do not say that earth's body contains nothing but excrement; for although it appears wholly excrementitious, its excrements nevertheless envelop a pure substance which, being entirely spiritual, cannot subsist without the provision of a body. We see this in all things proceeding from it: their seed and first

¹²². "Temperature" here means the tempering or balanced mixture of qualities, rather than a measured degree of heat. The four qualities are the historical hot/cold and dry/moist pairs.

matter are invisible, but are carried and conveyed by the bodily mass generated together with them, because nothing takes bodily form without excrement.¹²³

SL_II_02S017 1621 pp 114–116 · scans FR134, FR135, FR136

Parquoy aux generations des choses cette substance est separee du corps de la terre par l'operation de la chaleur influee: ne prenant ny retenant rien d'icelle terre: mais s'en aydant seulement à son soustien. Laquelle n'a servy dès le commencement sinon d'un receptacle & magasin des influences celestes: ou pour mieux dire qu'un vaisseau où cette matiere spirituelle fait ses operations: comme il sera plus clairement traicté avec demonstration evidente au chapitre suyvant, où je parleray des separations. Or seroit-ce peu fait de separer les choses, si apres la separation elles demeuroient inutiles & sans action. Le but auquel tend Nature est de vivifier en separant, afin d'éviter la mort qui ne vient d'ailleurs que de l'abondance des excremens qui suffoquent la pure & naturelle substance: j'entens la mort naturelle, & non la violante & forcee. Que si les semences des choses demeuroient tousjours ensevelies en cette terre excrementeuse, rien ne sortiroit en lumiere, & ne recevrait le benefice de la vie. Mais la vertu du Ciel par son influence vitale les tire dehors en l'esprit primitif, qui remply d'icelle la depart & dilate en toutes especes & chacune d'icelles, selon que leur nature & composition le requiert. La vivification provient donc de la purification que font les Astres en influant: avec laquelle decoule aussi une vertu d'augmentation & restauration. Car estant en continuel mouvement ils sont aussi en continuelle action d'influer; & par consequent en perpetuelle vivification: incessamment adjoignant vie à vie.

Thus in the generation of things this substance is separated from earth's body by the operation of the heat flowing into it, taking or retaining nothing of that earth, but using it merely for its support. From the beginning earth has served only as a receptacle and storehouse for celestial influences, or rather as a vessel in which this spiritual matter performs its operations. This will be treated more clearly, with evident demonstration, in the next chapter, where I shall discuss separations. It would be a small achievement to separate things if after separation they remained useless and inactive. Nature's aim is to give life through separating, to avert death, which arises only from the abundance of excrements suffocating the pure and natural substance. I mean natural death, not violent and enforced death. If the seeds of things remained for ever buried in this excrementitious earth, nothing would come into the light and receive the benefit of life. But Heaven's power through its vital influence draws them out in the primitive spirit, which, filled with that influence, distributes and extends it into every species and each one of them, according as their nature and composition require. Vivification therefore proceeds from the purification the stars perform in pouring down their influence; with this also flows a power of increase and restoration. For, being in continual movement, they are also continually

¹²³. "Limb(e)" denotes the encompassing or primordial region of chaos. The argument for earth's stability depends on the cosmology of a lowest central place, from which any further motion would be upward.

active in pouring down influence, and consequently in perpetual vivification, ceaselessly adding life to life.^{124,125}

SL_II_02S018 1621 pp 116–118 · scans FR136, FR137, FR138

Ce qui ne se peut faire que l'augmentation ne s'en ensuive, avec la conservation & restauration: L'une par l'indéficient entretien de la vie; l'autre par le refournissement infiny de ce qui s'employe & depart aux generations des especes: comme il se void appertement en cette premiere matiere corporifiee: laquelle engrossie par l'impregnation celeste se nourrit, multiplie & accroist de soy mesme, par une vive source d'aliment & accroissance qui flue inepuisable. Qui est la cause qu'elle est nommee dragon ou serpent luxuriant en soy mesme: Tousjours renaissant & germinant comme les vegetables, en quelque lieu qu'il soit. De sorte que tout endroict & place qui en aura esté une fois peuplee, n'en sera jamais despourveue, quelque lavement ou bruslement que l'on en puisse faire. Et voyla certainement une des marques plus insignes avec laquelle on puisse discerner cette matiere premiere. Ce sont donc icy les principales vertus que cet esprit universel receut des influences celestes dès le commencement du monde, & recevra jusqu'à la fin: produisant tousjours des effects merueilleux en tous les membres de ce grand corps universel. Mais on me pourroit demander pourquoy cette premiere matiere que j'ay dit avoir receu du Ciel tant de pures & vertueuses influences, est ordinairement trouvee farcie de tant de vicieuses qualitez? & comment les retient elle apres les avoir receuës, veu qu'elle est sans cesse en besongne aux actions de separation, vivification, augmentation, conservation, & restauration: car si elle ne separe, il est necessaire qu'elle mortifie. Et si elle n'augmente, conserve & restaure, il faut bien qu'elle diminue, destruisse, & affoiblisse: ce qu'à vray dire elle ne fait jamais. Je respondray que les Astres ont double influence; L'une naturelle, L'autre accidentelle.

This cannot occur without increase following, together with preservation and restoration: the one through unfailing maintenance of life, the other through infinite replenishment of what is employed and distributed in generating the species. This is plainly seen in this embodied first matter, which, made pregnant by celestial impregnation, nourishes, multiplies and increases itself through a living source of nourishment and increase that flows inexhaustibly. This is why it is called a dragon or serpent luxuriating within itself, continually reborn and germinating like plants, wherever it may be. Thus any spot or place once populated by it will never be deprived of it, whatever washing or burning may be done there. This is certainly one of the most notable signs by which this first matter may be discerned. These, then, are the principal powers which this universal spirit received from celestial influences at the world's beginning, and will receive until its end, continually producing marvellous effects in all members of this great universal body. But I might be asked why this first matter, which I have said receives so many pure and efficacious influences from Heaven, is

¹²⁴. Earth is distinguished from the active hidden substance: it supplies a supporting vessel, receptacle and storehouse. The next chapter develops the practical and philosophical meaning of separation.

¹²⁵. "Refournissement" is replenishment: what is expended in particular generations is continually supplied again. The starry influence thus accounts for both continuity and increase.

usually found stuffed with so many vicious qualities; and how it retains them after receiving them, seeing that it is ceaselessly engaged in acts of separation, vivification, increase, preservation and restoration. For if it does not separate, it must mortify; and if it does not increase, preserve and restore, it must diminish, destroy and weaken, which in truth it never does. I reply that the stars have a double influence, one natural and the other accidental.^{126,127}

SL_II_025019 1621 pp 118–120 · scans FR138, FR139, FR140

La naturelle est celle qui est innée en eux, & leur fut donnée dès la création, qui est ce gouvernement de l'univers dont parle Hermes au Pimandre, par lequel ils l'entretennent en son être, le gardant & conservant par leurs vertus de destruction, décadence, & anéantissement des vertus de cette influence, dont l'Esprit de l'univers est incessamment fourny & doté, comme nous voyons: lequel les applique & fait voir en toutes choses auxquelles il donne accroissement & subsistance. Mais l'accidentelle est celle qui leur survient outre leur nature par les occurrences de leurs situations & regards: Et celle cy change à toute heure, de sorte qu'elle n'est jamais semblable: & n'a puissance que sur les effets de la matière, & non sur la matière même. Car quelque maligne influence qui arrive, nous voyons que la terre en son centre ne laisse pas à deux fois faire ses opérations, & sans cesse produire animaux, végétaux, & minéraux. Que s'il arrive quelquefois des mortifications, cela procède seulement de la malice de l'aspect qui ne touche que la superficie des corps, c'est à dire la masse excrémenteuse, & non pas la substance intérieure, qui est la chose même. Et de vray cet accident se change: tellement que cette influxion opère tantost une chose, & tantost une autre toute contraire: Ce que ne fait jamais la naturelle & principale, qui demeure fixe & permanente en son point. De là se doit tirer une conclusion que la matière première comme simple de soy ne reçoit sinon les vertus célestes, qu'elle reçoit & garde encore en sa terrification.

The natural is that innate in them and given to them at creation: the government of the universe of which Hermes speaks in the Pimander, whereby they maintain its being, guarding and preserving it, through their powers, from destruction, decay and annihilation—powers of this influence, with which the Spirit of the universe is ceaselessly supplied and endowed, as we see; it applies them and displays them in all things to which it gives growth and subsistence. But the accidental influence is what comes upon them beyond their nature through the contingencies of their positions and aspects. This changes at every hour, so that it is never the same, and has power only over matter's effects, not over matter itself. For whatever malignant influence occurs, we see that earth at its centre does not cease duly to perform its operations and continually produce animals, plants and minerals. If deaths sometimes occur, this proceeds only from the malignity of the aspect, which touches merely the surface of bodies, that is, the excrementitious mass, and not their inward substance, which is the thing itself. Indeed this

¹²⁶. The self-renewing dragon or serpent figures the first matter's claimed capacity to multiply and persist; the text itself offers this persistence as a sign by which to recognise it.

¹²⁷. "Pimandre" names the Hermetic Pimandres/Pimander tradition. The author invokes it for celestial government while distinguishing the stars' innate influence from an accidental influence explained below.

accident changes, so that this influx produces now one thing and now another wholly contrary; the natural and principal influence never does this, remaining fixed and constant at its point. Hence we must conclude that first matter, being simple in itself, receives only celestial powers, which it receives and retains even in its earthing.¹²⁸

SL_II_025020 1621 pp 120–121 · scans FR140, FR141

Or il faut declarer comme elle les retient; afin de prouver ce que dit Hermes, que sa force demeure entiere estant convertie ou muee en terre; d'autant que toutes les vertus celestes descendent & conviennent au centre de la terre: & que leurs cours ne tendent sinon à l'information de la matiere qui est comme un receptacle des Idees supresmes. Cette matiere mesme estant pleine de formes, non actuellement, mais par possibilité, se diversifie par innumerables specifications. Ainsi n'est elle pas proprement corps, mais quasi corps: & continuelle compagne des corps, que tousjours elle appetite par un desir d'information vers laquelle sans repos elle se meut & achemine. Laquelle motion & acheminement luy arrive par l'action du feu celeste que j'ay cydevant dit estre le premier moteur dans le Cahos. Ce que les anciens poëtes comme Orphée, & Hesiodé ont descrit sous le nom d'amour, & que l'Homere & Pindare François, Ronsard, a divinement chanté en cette inimitable stance.

We must now explain how it retains them, to prove Hermes's saying that its force remains entire when converted or changed into earth, since all celestial powers descend and meet at earth's centre, and their courses tend solely to the informing of matter, which is as it were a receptacle of the supreme Ideas. This matter itself, being full of forms, not actually but potentially, is diversified through innumerable specifications. Thus it is not properly body, but as it were body, and the constant companion of bodies, which it always desires through a longing to be informed, towards which it moves and advances without rest. This movement and advance comes to it through the action of celestial fire, which I said above was the first mover in Chaos. Ancient poets such as Orpheus and Hesiod described this under the name of love; and Ronsard, the French Homer and Pindar, divinely sang it in this inimitable stanza:

SL_II_025021 1621 pp 121–122 · scans FR141, FR142

Je suis Amour le grand maistre des Dieux,
Je suis celui qui fait mouvoir les Cieux,
Je suis celui qui gouverne le monde:
Qui le premier hors de la masse éclos,
Donnay lumiere, & fendy le cahos,
Dont fut basty cette machine ronde.

¹²⁸ The French sentence resumes des vertus de cette influence after its list of destruction, decline and annihilation. The translation treats this as a resumption of the preserving powers rather than as a new destructive action; the construction in the witness is loose.

I am Love, the great master of the Gods,
 I am he who makes the Heavens move,
 I am he who governs the world:
 Who, first hatched out of the mass,
 Gave light and split apart chaos,
 From which this round machine was built.

SL_II_025022 1621 pp 122–123 · scans FR142, FR143

Puis donc que cette matiere de son propre naturel & desir tend à se corporifier, qui pourra dire avec raison vallable qu'en se corporifiant nature la despoüille & prive des vertus mesmes qui causent sa corporification? Et puisque venant à prendre corps elle se convertit premierement & prochainement en terre; Qui voudra nier que cette terre ne soit doüee de ses mesmes vertus? Car jaçoit qu'à cause de la commixtion & concurrence des elements elle ayt quelques impuritez, si est-ce qu'en son profond elle est tousjours tres-pure: de sorte qu'apres sa purification le plus puissant & actif de tous les elements, qui est le feu, n'y a plus de puissance destructive, car elle le surpasse en perfection & subtilité. C'est pourquoy elle penetre si promptement tous corps: les vivifiant & augmentant en force: restaurant & conservant en eux ce qu'elle y trouve estre de sa nature, assavoir l'humide radical: que par sa subtilité ignee elle purge & separe des excremens qui l'enveloppent & taschent à le suffoquer. C'est en un mot cette excellente medecine que Salomon dit estre tiree de la terre, & que l'homme prudent ne desdaignera point. C'est encore le sel precieux auquel ce grand Docteur des Docteurs compara ses Apostres, comme au tresor plus exquis que les Cieux ayent produit. Car il eust aussi tost dit vous estes les diamans, les rubis, les perles, l'or ou l'argent de la terre, s'il n'eust bien sceu que toutes ces choses, quoy qu'admirables, n'ont rien en elles de comparable à ce sel general: auquel seul elles doivent l'hommage de leur glorieuse perfection.

Since, then, this matter by its own nature and desire tends to embody itself, who can say with valid reason that in its embodiment nature strips and deprives it of the very powers that cause it to take bodily form? And since, on coming to take body, it is first and immediately converted into earth, who would deny that this earth is endowed with those same powers? Although the mixture and concurrence of the elements give it certain impurities, in its depths it is nevertheless always most pure. Thus after its purification the most powerful and active of all elements, fire, no longer has any destructive power over it, for it surpasses fire in perfection and subtlety. Hence it so readily penetrates all bodies, giving them life and increasing their strength, restoring and preserving in them what it finds of its own nature, namely radical moisture. Through its fiery subtlety it purges and separates this moisture from the excrements that envelop it and try to suffocate it. In a word, it is that excellent medicine which Solomon says is drawn from earth, and which the prudent man will not disdain. It is also the precious salt to which that great Teacher of Teachers compared his Apostles, as to the choicest treasure the Heavens have produced. For he might just as readily have said, "You are the diamonds, rubies, pearls, gold or silver of the earth", had he not well known that all these things,

however admirable, contain nothing comparable to this general salt, to which alone they owe homage for their glorious perfection.¹²⁹

SL_II_025023 1621 pp 123–125 · scans FR143, FR144, FR145

Cette medecine opere comme le feu en consummant l'impur qu'elle separe du pur, par un banissement perpetuel des parties Etherogenes: & une adoption des Homogenes. Le Ciel ayant donc engendré cette vierge dans la matrice de la terre, elle a justement retenu les vertus de ses parents. Et comme l'enfant qui est naturellement participant des humeurs de ses pere & mere, par la commixtion de leurs semences, ayt esté des sages anciens appellé d'un nom proprement composé des noms de ses deux geniteurs, assavoir Androgine; que les poëtes ont dit Hermaphrodite: parce qu'il ne pouvoit encore estre appellé homme ny femme, estant incapable de produire les effects de l'un ny de l'autre: aussi est il convenable d'attribuer à cette vierge le nom d'Uranogee, ou Ciel terrifié, puis qu'estant terre elle a neantmoins en soy, par leurs vertus, tous les Cieux enclos & joints d'un lien indissoluble: desquels elle fait voir les operations admirables. Dont toutesfois j'ay desja fait icy une suffisante ouverture à ceux qui par la lumiere de leur noble intellect pourront traverser la sombre epaisseur de la forest noire: & comme dit Virgile, ausquels sera donné d'enhaut d'entrer dans les obscurs cachots de la terre.

This medicine acts like fire in consuming the impure that it separates from the pure, through a perpetual banishment of heterogeneous parts and an adoption of homogeneous ones. Since Heaven has therefore engendered this virgin in earth's womb, she has rightly retained her parents' powers. Just as the child, naturally sharing the humours of father and mother through the mixture of their seeds, was called by the ancient sages a name properly compounded from those of its two begetters, namely Androgyne, which the poets called Hermaphrodite, because it could not yet be called man or woman, being incapable of producing the effects of either, so it is fitting to give this virgin the name Uranogee, or Heaven made earthly; for, although earth, she nevertheless possesses within herself, through their powers, all the Heavens enclosed and joined by an indissoluble bond, whose admirable operations she displays. Of these I have already given sufficient disclosure here to those who, by the light of their noble intellect, can pass through the shadowy thickness of the black forest; and, as Virgil says, to whom it will be granted from above to enter earth's dark dungeons.¹³⁰

¹²⁹. The medicine drawn from earth recalls Sirach/Ecclesiasticus 38:4, although the witness attributes it to Solomon. The Apostles as salt recalls Matthew 5:13. "Radical moisture" is the innate life-sustaining moisture of period physiology.

¹³⁰. "Uranogee" joins heaven and earth (Greek ouranos and gē); "Ciel terrifié" means heaven made earthy. The analogy with Androgyne and Hermaphrodite expresses combined origins and powers.

3 On separating fire from earth and the subtle from the thick, and the skill by which this must be done

De la separation du feu d'avec la terre; du subtil d'avec l'espais, & par quelle industrie elle se doit faire.

Chapter outline

Nature separates the pure from the impure, rather than merely dividing connected parts of an individual body.

The distinction between substance and accompanying dregs governs the author's account of nourishment, medicines and corruption.

Mortification and renewal are compared with Christian regeneration while retaining the difference between the heavenly and earthly human being.

The first matter carries impurities from its beginning and requires successive purification and fixation.

Fire and water perform different kinds of separation, which the author relates to Hermes and the poets' figures.

SL_II_03S001 1621 pp 125–127 · scans FR145, FR146, FR147

La nature tres-sage ouvriere nous enseigne par ses operations propres que nous devons en toutes choses considerer la fin où nous desirons parvenir; & par où nous devons commencer nos ouvrages. Pour cette cause le prudent inquisiteur des secrets naturels doit avoir vraye cognoissance des principes, progresz, & qualitez, tant internes qu'externes de la matiere; afin que pretendan accomplir quelque excellent œuvre il ne confonde la fin avec le commencement, & par regimes fantastiques & sentiers inconnus il ne s'esgare & s'esloigne du grand, plain, & droit chemin que Nature à tracé dès le premier project & fondement du monde. Le divin Hermes à bien sceu tenir cette voye par la cognoissance parfaite qu'il avoit de la constitution de l'univers: & voulant par Art ensuivre les vestiges & traces naturelles s'imagina tres-prudemment que la terre est le principe de toutes choses: & la premiere qui fut créée par separation dedans le ventre du cahos. C'est pourquoy il entra ainsi discretement au sacraire des arcanes naturels par la terrification de cette matiere premiere, que j'ay dit cydevant estre nourrie dans la matrice de la terre. Mais comme ce n'est pas assez à un Architecte d'avoir les materiaux d'un edifice, s'il n'a la science de bastir & les mettre en œuvre: Hermes ne se contenta pas aussi d'estre pourveu de la matiere convenable, mais il rechercha & apprit soigneusement les moyens de la mettre en œuvre, à l'imitation du grand Phisicien en la confection du monde: creant d'icelle un petit monde auquel il sceut enclore toutes les vertus du grand, duquel, & sur le patron duquel il l'auroit pris & façonné.

Nature, that most wise craftswoman, teaches us through her own operations that in everything we must consider the end we wish to reach, and where we must begin our works. For this reason the prudent investigator of nature's secrets must truly know the principles, progress and qualities of the matter, both inward and outward, so that, in seeking to accomplish some excellent work, he does not confuse the end with the beginning, or stray through fanciful regimens and unknown paths from the great, level and straight road which Nature laid out at the world's first design and foundation. The divine Hermes knew well how to keep to this road through his perfect knowledge of the

constitution of the universe; and, wishing through Art to follow nature's footsteps and traces, he most prudently conceived that earth is the principle of all things, and the first thing created by separation within the womb of chaos. This is why he thus entered discreetly into the sanctuary of nature's mysteries through the earthing of this first matter, which I said above is nourished in the womb of the earth. But just as it is not enough for an architect to possess the materials for a building if he lacks the knowledge to build and employ them, so Hermes was not content merely to be supplied with suitable matter: he carefully sought and learned the means of working it, in imitation of the great Physician in the making of the world. From it he created a little world in which he knew how to enclose all the powers of the great world, from which and after whose pattern he had taken and fashioned it.^{131,132}

SL_II_03S002 1621 pp 127–129 · scans FR147, FR148, FR149

Considerant donc que ce qu'il vouloit faire estoit une chose tres-parfaite, & que pour parvenir à telle perfection il falloit commencer par les choses basses & encore grossieres, c'est à dire par la separation de ce qui estoit superflu & nuisible à son œuvre: il voulut premierement diviser les Natures contraires, pour eviter la ruine d'icelle. En quoy veritablement on peut dire qu'il prit l'oyseau par le pied, suivant l'adage: & fait son entree par la vraye porte &allee qui conduit droitement au cabinet des secrets de Nature. Car separation est le commencement de toutes choses, & la premiere operation qui distingua les membres confus du corps universel. Par la division des difformes amas du cahos commença premierement à s'esclaircir & arranger l'ordre & forme des elements: car sans cette separation le jour & la nuit, le Soleil & la Lune, l'Hiver & l'Esté, seroient encore une mesme chose à present: Les Metaux, & mineraux tant diversifiez, n'auroient qu'un mesme corps: Et tous les vegetaux une mesme semence. Il fut donc necessaire que Nature commençast ce bel ordre & distinction que nous voyons embellir l'univers par l'œuvre de la separation. Mais descendant aux choses particulieres, considerons que cette sçavante ouvriere commence par là tous ses labeurs. Les generations ne se commencent ny achevent que par separation: & par separation les aliments augmentent & maintiennent tous corps. Que si je voulois m'estendre en la preuve de cette verité par chacune des especes, je m'envelopperois en la confusion du mesme Cahos d'où je ne sortirois jamais pour l'infinité des exemples qui s'offriroient à moy. Je poseray donc ce premier fondement, que nature commence toutes ses besongnes par la separation.

Considering, then, that what he wished to make was something most perfect, and that to attain such perfection he must begin with things lowly and still coarse, that is, by separating what was superfluous and harmful to his work, he wished first to divide the contrary Natures to prevent its ruin. In this he may truly be said, according to the proverb, to have caught the bird by the foot, and to have entered through the true door and passage leading straight to the cabinet of Nature's secrets.

¹³¹. The opening invokes nature as an artisan whose procedure the chymical operator should follow; the chapter's separation is therefore both cosmological and practical.

¹³². "Terrification" means making earthy or giving an earthy body, rather than causing fear. "The great Physician" is the divine maker; the operator's little world reproduces the universe's powers.

For separation is the beginning of all things, and the first operation that distinguished the confused members of the universal body. Through the division of the shapeless masses of chaos, the order and form of the elements first began to become clear and arranged; for without this separation day and night, the Sun and Moon, winter and summer would even now still be one and the same thing; the metals and minerals, so diverse, would have but one body; and all plants would have the same seed. Nature therefore had to begin that beautiful order and distinction which we see adorning the universe through the work of separation. But, coming down to particular things, let us consider that this learned craftswoman begins all her labours with it. Generations neither begin nor end except through separation; and through separation nourishment increases and sustains all bodies. Were I to enlarge upon the proof of this truth in each species, I would entangle myself in the confusion of that same Chaos and never emerge, because of the infinite examples that would present themselves. I shall therefore lay down this first foundation: nature begins all her tasks with separation.

SL_II_03S003 1621 pp 129–131 · scans FR149, FR150, FR151

Mais comme ce n'est pas assez de sçavoir cela si nous ne sçavons aussi qu'elles choses elle separe, & d'où vient cette vertu separative: il faut examiner cette matiere afin que mon discours marche reglement & par ordre. Toutesfois avant qu'entrer en cette lice il me semble à propos de diffinir cette separation, & declarer combien il y en a de sortes. Or separation en general n'est autre chose que division & distinction des choses dissemblables; comme du ciel d'avec la terre; du Soleil d'avec la Lune; & autres choses que j'ay desja dictes. Comme aussi du pur d'avec l'impur, du chault d'avec le froid, du sec d'avec l'humide. Et de cette diffinition je tireray deux sortes ou especes de separations. La premiere sera des choses simplement differentes & non contraires, comme des parties du monde qui furent separees du premier cahos. Ou bien pour descendre aux particularitez, comme du bois d'avec l'escorce, des feuilles d'avec le fruit, de la racine d'avec les branches: Et cette espece sera simplement appelee distinction, parce qu'à la verité ces parties ne sont pas divisees ny retranchees l'une de l'autre: soit que nous considerions les principaux membres du monde, ou bien les particularitez, car, encore que la terre & les Cieux semblent separez à cause de leur situation, assavoir du haut & du bas, si est-ce pourtant qu'ils ne sont retranchez l'un de l'autre, y ayant une perpetuelle connection & alliance entr'eux. Ainsi que l'on peut recueillir de plusieurs endroits de ce livre. C'est pourquoy Homere non moins admirable en Philosophie qu'en poésie à dit que la terre estoit attachee au Ciel avec une chaisne d'or.

But since knowing this is not enough unless we also know what things she separates, and whence this separating power comes, we must examine the matter so that my discourse proceeds in a regular and orderly way. Yet before entering this arena I think it appropriate to define separation and declare how many kinds there are. Separation in general is simply the division and distinction of dissimilar things: heaven from earth, the Sun from the Moon, and the other things I have already mentioned; likewise the pure from the impure, the hot from the cold, and the dry from the moist. From this definition I shall derive two

kinds or species of separation. The first concerns things that are simply different and not contrary, as with the parts of the world separated from the first chaos; or, to come down to particulars, wood from bark, leaves from fruit, and root from branches. This kind will simply be called distinction, because in truth these parts are neither divided nor cut off from one another, whether we consider the principal members of the world or particular things. For although earth and the heavens seem separated by their situation, namely above and below, they are nevertheless not cut off from each other, since there is an everlasting connection and alliance between them, as may be gathered from several places in this book. Hence Homer, no less admirable in philosophy than in poetry, said that earth was fastened to Heaven with a golden chain.^{133,134}

SL_IL_03S004 1621 pp 131–134 · scans FR151, FR152, FR153, FR154

D'ailleurs, suivant l'exemple que j'ay naguères baillé, les feuilles & le fruit, le bois & l'escorce, les branches & la racine, ne sont pas separees & divisees comme contraires, mais bien sont distinguees chacune en son ornement & endroit: ayant neantmoins certaine parentelle & liaison, sans que l'un occupe l'autre, mais s'accordent, s'aydent, & supportent l'un l'autre. La seconde espece de separation est le desassemblément ou desliement des choses totalement estrangeres, contraires & superflues: qui n'ont aucune connexion de nature avec la substance des choses: comme l'impur d'avec le pur, le froid d'avec le chaud, le grossier d'avec le subtil, & choses semblables. Non pas que je veuille dire ces choses ne pouvoir estre ensemble, mais que leur assemblément & meslange cause par leur diversité la destruction, ou du moins empesche l'action des vertus naturelles innees en la pure substance. Et cette maniere de separation doit proprement estre dicte division ou retranchement, lequel Nature pratique en toutes ses productions, afin de rendre libres ses propres actions & vertus en chacune chose. La premiere est donc seulement comme une distinction des parties vrayement dissemblables en situation & figure, mais toutesfois homogenes en substance & vertu. Car c'est une chose certaine que le bois, l'escorce & tout ce qui est de l'arbre, participe à cette vertu innee qui luy est proprement particuliere, mais generale à toutes ses parties. Quant est des autres subalternes, il y en peut avoir de dissemblables, c'est à dire, qui reçoivent plus ou moins de substance, mais non pas de contraires: car un mesme effect ne produit point choses diametrales en une seule matiere: comme d'une plante salubre ne peut sortir une vertu veneneuse, encore qu'elle soit salubre à un corps & mortelle à un autre; ainsi que le veratre qui nourrit & engraisse les cailles, & tue l'homme: ne pouvant pourtant exercer ces contraires vertus en un mesme subject. C'est à dire que le veratre ne peut nourrir & tuer la caille, ny empoisonner & nourrir l'homme tout ensemble. La vertu propre à la plante est donc en toute la plante: & chacune des parties de la plante est veritablement dissemblable en situation & figure, mais non pas contraire en vertu ny substance; car la feuille & le fruit sont de la substance de la plante, & ont plus ou moins les vertus d'icelle. On me voudra peut estre objecter que les choux produisent deux effects divers, selon l'opinion vulgaire, qui estime que leur jus lasche le ventre; & leur marc le reserre.

¹³³. The first kind of separation distinguishes parts that remain naturally connected. The second, developed below, removes alien or contrary matter that obstructs a substance's power.

¹³⁴. The golden chain recalls the chain of Zeus in Homer's *Iliad* VIII, subsequently read as an image of the linked cosmos. The philosophical interpretation here is the author's.

Moreover, following the example I gave just now, leaves and fruit, wood and bark, branches and root are not separated and divided as contraries, but distinguished, each in its own adornment and place. They nevertheless possess a certain kinship and bond, so that one does not occupy another's place; instead they agree, assist and support one another. The second kind of separation is the disassembly or unbinding of things wholly alien, contrary and superfluous, which have no natural connection with the substance of things: the impure from the pure, the cold from the hot, the coarse from the subtle, and similar things. I do not mean that these things cannot be together, but that, through their diversity, their conjunction and mixture causes destruction, or at least prevents the action of the natural powers innate in the pure substance. And this manner of separation should properly be called division or removal, which Nature practises in all her productions to give free scope to her own actions and powers in each thing. The first is therefore merely a distinction between parts truly dissimilar in situation and shape, yet homogeneous in substance and power. For it is certain that wood, bark and everything belonging to a tree shares in the innate power that is peculiar to it, yet common to all its parts. As for the other subordinate powers, they may be dissimilar, that is, receive more or less substance, but cannot be contrary: for one and the same effect does not produce diametrically opposed things in a single matter, just as a wholesome plant cannot yield a poisonous power, although it may be wholesome for one body and deadly to another, as hellebore nourishes and fattens quails but kills man, yet cannot exercise these contrary powers upon the same subject. That is, hellebore cannot nourish and kill a quail, or poison and nourish a man, at the same time. The power peculiar to the plant therefore exists throughout the plant; and each of its parts is indeed dissimilar in situation and shape, but not contrary in power or substance, for the leaf and fruit belong to the plant's substance and possess its powers in greater or lesser measure. It may perhaps be objected that cabbages produce two different effects, according to the common opinion that their juice loosens the bowels and their residue binds them.^{135,136}

SL_II_03S005 1621 pp 134–136 · scans FR154, FR155, FR156

A quoy je respondray que si c'est le propre de la substance de cette plante de lascher il est impossible que restriction en provienne: car à dire verité le marc n'est pas de la substance comme il s'esprouve assez en la digestion de l'estomach qui prend bien la substance du chou par aliment; mais il rejette la masse comme excrementeuse, & qui n'a aucune vertu nutritive, laquelle vertu est toute en la substance & en chacune partie d'icelle. Car la substance à cette propriété qu'elle ne reçoit en elle aucune contrariété, mais seulement le plus ou le moins: Ce que

¹³⁵. The printed text reads "un mesme effect"; although "cause" might appear more expected, the reading is retained. "Subalternes" denotes subordinate powers under the plant's common innate power.

¹³⁶. "Veratre" is hellebore in the historical botanical vocabulary. The contrast illustrates effects depending on the receiving body rather than opposite powers inherent in one substance.

j'entends des actions & vertus d'icelle, non pas de l'essence. Pour exemple dequoy on peut dire qu'un homme en chacune partie de l'homme n'est point plus ou moins homme qu'un autre; mais bien voyons nous que les vertus & actions d'homme sont plus excellentes & puissantes en l'un qu'en l'autre; & en ce membre icy qu'en cetuy là. Le semblable est aux simples dont nous voyons les parties plus ou moins chaudes ou froides, seiches ou humides l'une que l'autre: ce que leurs couleurs & saveurs denotent, toutesfois il n'y a aucune contrariété en ces choses; car nous ne trouvons point qu'une partie d'une plante tue ny empoisonne par trop de froideur, & que l'autre guarisse par trop de chaleur: mais bien trouvons nous par experience que les fleurs & cimes des branches sont plus subtiles en action & vertu que le tronc ou les parties plus basses: d'autant que le propre du plus pur de la substance est de s'eslever au plus haut: & le moins pur de demeurer plus pres des excrements aux parties inferieures.

To this I shall reply that if it is the property of this plant's substance to loosen, binding cannot possibly arise from it. For in truth the residue does not belong to the substance, as digestion in the stomach sufficiently proves: it takes the cabbage's substance as food, but rejects the mass as excrementitious and possessing no nutritive power; that power lies wholly in the substance and in every part of it. For substance has this property, that it admits no contrariety within itself, but only more or less. By this I mean its actions and powers, not its essence. As an example, one may say that a man, in every part of man, is neither more nor less man than another; but we do see that human powers and actions are more excellent and powerful in one person than another, and in this member than in that. The same holds for simples, whose parts we see to be hotter or colder, drier or moister than one another, as their colours and flavours indicate. Yet there is no contrariety in these things: we do not find one part of a plant killing or poisoning through excessive cold while another heals through excessive heat. Experience does show, however, that flowers and the tips of branches are subtler in action and power than the trunk or lower parts, because the purest portion of the substance naturally rises highest, while the less pure remains closer to the excrements in the lower parts.¹³⁷

SL_II_035006 1621 pp 136–138 · scans FR156, FR157, FR158

Ce que Nature a voulu practiquer pour deux raisons, l'une pour orner & embellir la plante par la varieté de ses digestions: l'autre pour donner aux humains, voire à tous animaux, ce qui plus ou moins leur faisoit besoin pour la conservation de leur estre: se montrant en cela tres-soigneuse mere, qui prepare toutes choses necessaires & propres, chacune selon son degré, autant que son industrie & puissance le luy permet, car elle ne passe jamais outre une simple perfection: comme aux herbes les fleurs & les semences sont les plus parfaites parties qu'elle ait sceu elaborer. Lesquelles par apres l'art commençant où la Nature a finy sont par luy conduittes à plus haut degré de perfection, par le mesme chemin que tient Nature; sçavoir est par la separation: comme il sera dit cy apres. Nature donc par cette premiere sorte de separation ne fait que distinguer les choses pour ornement du subject, & utilité des animaux ou autres parties du monde, entre lesquelles elle a semé & planté une alliance & parentelle reciproque, de sorte que toutes s'entreservent & secourent

¹³⁷. "Simples" are individual medicinal substances, especially plants, considered before compounding. The ascent of purer substance is part of the author's natural philosophy.

selon leur naturel & sympathie. Mais la seconde maniere de separation est differente, car par icelle Nature, ou l'art à son imitation, divise ou retranche les choses contraires; c'est à dire qu'elle distrait de la substance tout ce qui n'est point de son essence, ains plustost luy est ennemy, estant toutesfois avec elle, encore qu'il ne soit point d'elle: comme le pur d'avec l'impur, le subtil d'avec le grossier, la substance d'avec l'excrement. Cette seconde sorte de separation se fait aussi pour deux causes, ainsi que la precedente. L'une pour preserver la pure substance de corruption & de mort: l'autre pour rendre ses vertus & actions plus libres en la despouillant de toute feculance grossiere.

Nature chose to do this for two reasons: first, to adorn and beautify the plant through the variety of her digestions; secondly, to give humans, indeed all animals, what they require in greater or lesser measure to preserve their being. In this she shows herself a most careful mother, preparing all necessary and suitable things, each according to its degree, as far as her skill and power permit, for she never goes beyond a simple perfection. Thus in herbs the flowers and seeds are the most perfect parts she has been able to elaborate. Afterwards Art, beginning where Nature has finished, brings these to a higher degree of perfection by the very road Nature follows, namely separation, as will be said below. By this first kind of separation, then, Nature merely distinguishes things for the adornment of the subject and the benefit of animals or other parts of the world, among which she has sown and planted a reciprocal alliance and kinship, so that all serve and assist one another according to their nature and sympathy. But the second manner of separation is different, for by it Nature, or Art in imitation of her, divides or removes contrary things. That is, she draws away from the substance everything that does not belong to its essence but is rather its enemy, although it is with it without being of it: the pure from the impure, the subtle from the coarse, the substance from the excrement. Like the previous kind, this second separation is performed for two reasons: one, to preserve the pure substance from corruption and death; the other, to free its powers and actions by stripping it of every coarse dreg.¹³⁸

SL_II_03S007 1621 pp 138–140 · scans FR158, FR159, FR160

Car la chose impure qui enveloppe le pur de la substance & se mesle parmy, ne cesse de la quereller & combattre jusqu'à ce qu'elle l'aye surmontee & suffoquee, donnant entree & accès à la corruption mortelle qui ne s'attache jamais aux choses simples & pures, ains seulement aux ordes & composees. Toute substance donc est simple & pure de soy mesme, & par consequent non subjecte à corruption ny à mort: comme nous le voyons aux choses superieures esloignees de tous excrements. Mais les inferieures ne sont pas ainsi, car elles habitent au milieu des lies impures du monde desquelles le naturel est de destruire & mortifier: comme celui de la pureté est de vivifier & conserver. Les corruptions & mortifications viennent és hommes par les lies du monde, dans lesquelles ils vivent une courte & penible vie plaine d'ennuis & de languissantes maladies, ne plus ne moins qu'un criminel enclos dedans une orde & obscure chartre, où il transist entre la mort & l'esperance, parmy l'infection & la vermine, repeu du rebut des viandes gastees & mal nettes.

¹³⁸. Here "digestions" includes natural maturation and elaboration, not only digestion in the stomach. Art is presented as carrying nature's work to a further degree of perfection.

Car tous aliments sont impurs, & portent avec eux les bourreaux de la vie, assavoir les venins cachez desquels en fin la mort nous assassine en trahison par nos propres mains, & de nostre consentement; n'ayant en eux qu'une si petite quantité de substance vivifiante & nourrissante, & encore si fort embarrassee & infectee des excrements, que la digestion de l'estomach la peut malaisément attirer seule.

For the impure thing that envelops the purity of the substance and mingles with it never ceases quarrelling and fighting with it until it has overcome and suffocated it, admitting the deadly corruption that never attaches to simple and pure things, but only to filthy and compounded ones. Every substance is therefore simple and pure in itself, and consequently subject neither to corruption nor to death, as we see in higher things remote from all excrements. Lower things are otherwise, since they dwell amid the world's impure lees, whose nature is to destroy and kill, just as purity's nature is to give life and preserve. Corruption and death come to human beings through the world's lees, among which they live a short and painful life full of troubles and wasting diseases, just like a criminal shut in a filthy, dark prison, where he shivers between death and hope, amid infection and vermin, fed on the refuse of spoiled and unclean food. For all nourishment is impure and carries life's executioners with it, namely hidden poisons by which death finally treacherously murders us through our own hands and with our consent. Food contains so little life-giving and nourishing substance, and even that is so encumbered and infected with excrements, that the stomach's digestion can scarcely draw it out alone.¹³⁹

SL_II_035008 1621 pp 140–142 · scans FR160, FR161, FR162

Ces venins entrant & penetrant donc dans les corps avec la substance, ils ne cessent de s'y accroistre & amonceler, jusques à tant qu'ils ayent offusqué, voire esteint la lumiere de la vie, & maistrisé l'action legitime de Nature, qui est la vivification, si par la medecine & separation ils n'estoient empeschez & retrenchez. Ce sont donc les excrements qui causent la corruption, laquelle nous vient de deux sortes. La premiere, de la semence des parents, qui mal sains & corrompus produisent une semence impure & corrompue, qui s'empire de race en race. Et qui toutefois est subjecte à la correction des medicaments, qui arrestent le cours de cette corruption active tendante à mortification. C'est proprement ce maudit Satan qui circuit le monde, cherchant incessamment à devorer les pauvres mondains: Et pour cette cause il rode autour du globe terrestre, c'est à dire, autour des excremens du monde qui ont leur principal siege en la terre: laquelle mesme vomit sa corruption sur les autres elemens. Ainsi les hommes vivans d'iceux & en iceux, sont corrompus en eux & par eux, & partant ne peuvent avoir qu'une semence corrompue, qui tousjours avec le temps se corrompt de plus en plus. Car nostre aage plus vicieux & desbordé que celuy de nos ayeuls, a fait de nous pire portee que celle de nos peres; comme il en sortira de nous une plus depravee; qui en fera quelqu'autre capable de la surpasser encore en ses debordements. L'autre source de corruption prent sa naissance des aliments abondamment excrementeux, par lesquels les corps sont infectez; de sorte que cette infection glisse de pere en fils, comme nous voyons en la

¹³⁹. "Excrement", "lees" and "dregs" denote matter cast off or held to obstruct the pure substance, with a wider scope than bodily waste. The claim that pure substance escapes corruption belongs to this philosophical argument.

lepre, & autres maladies hereditaires. Or ces aliments acquerent cette corruption du lieu de leur generation.

These poisons, entering and penetrating bodies along with the substance, therefore never cease increasing and accumulating there until they have darkened, indeed extinguished, the light of life and mastered the action proper to Nature, which is to give life, unless medicine and separation hindered and removed them. It is therefore the excrements that cause corruption, which comes to us in two ways. The first is from the seed of parents who, being unhealthy and corrupted, produce impure and corrupted seed that grows worse from generation to generation. Yet it is subject to correction by medicines that arrest the course of this active corruption tending towards death. This is properly that accursed Satan who goes round the world, ceaselessly seeking to devour poor mortals. For this reason he prowls around the earthly globe, that is, around the world's excrements, whose chief seat is in the earth, which itself vomits its corruption upon the other elements. Thus human beings, living on them and in them, are corrupted within them and by them, and hence can have only corrupted seed, which with time continually grows more corrupt. For our age, more vicious and dissolute than that of our forebears, has made us a worse offspring than our fathers' generation; and from us will come one more depraved, which will produce another capable of surpassing it in excess. The other source of corruption springs from foods abounding in excrementitious matter, by which bodies are infected, so that this infection slips from father to son, as we see in leprosy and other hereditary diseases. These foods acquire their corruption from the place where they are generated.^{140,141}

SL_II_03S009 1621 pp 142–144 · scans FR162, FR163, FR164

Car apres que le souverain auteur de toutes choses eut disposé la confusion qui estoit dedans le cahos, il fait que les choses superieures demeurent pures & subtiles, & les inferieures ordes & grossieres: d'autant que le naturel des substances est de s'eslever vers le lieu de leur origine: & celui des excrements de s'affaïsser & rabattre vers le centre. De là vient que le pur qui est dans les animaux & vegetaux esleve & recherche le haut, les faisant eslever & croistre jusques à ce qu'il soit delivré des masses excrementieuses qui l'engluent & attachent à la corruption mortelle, & qu'il puisse atteindre le lieu où il en soit plus esloigné, afin d'y vivre sans alteration ny defaillance. De là vient que les creatures plus spirituelles & subtiles habitent les lieux hautains comme plus espurez, & vivent d'aliments convenables & pareils à leur naturelle substance. Mais celles qui sont plus corporelles habitent les bas lieux, & demeurent parmy les feces & immondices qui ont leur siege és lieux inferieurs: c'est pourquoy elles sont infectees & gastees, vivant de ce qui est embrouillé & meslé parmy les lies du monde. Car tout ce que la terre & les autres elements (qui sont les receptacles de ces impuritez) peuvent

¹⁴⁰. The prowling adversary seeking whom to devour recalls 1 Peter 5:8. The author applies that religious image to his account of corrupting matter; the French quotation is translated as printed.

¹⁴¹. The sequence of progressively worse generations recalls Horace, Odes III.6, at its close. The passage links that moral commonplace with the author's account of inherited corruption.

produire, est corrompu & souillé, engendrant par consequent corruption & souillure en tout ce qui en est alimenté: au moyen dequoy le sang acquiert une mauvaise disposition, qui cause la malignité des humeurs, aux uns plus, aux autres moins, selon la portee de l'inquinement des parents, & la quantité abusive de l'usage des choses corruptibles desquelles procede la cause de la destruction & mortalité. Car si la terre & ce qu'elle engendre estoient aussi remplis de pureté que le Ciel, tous les animaux vivroient de la mesme vie que vivent les hostes celestes.

For after the sovereign author of all things had ordered the confusion within chaos, he ordained that higher things remained pure and subtle, and lower things filthy and coarse: for substances naturally rise towards their place of origin, while excrements sink and fall towards the centre. Hence the pure part in animals and plants rises and seeks the heights, making them rise and grow until it is released from the excrementitious masses that clog it and bind it to deadly corruption, and can reach a place farther from them, there to live without alteration or failure. Hence the more spiritual and subtle creatures inhabit lofty places as being more purified, and live on food appropriate and similar to their natural substance. But those that are more corporeal inhabit low places and dwell amid the dregs and filth that have their seat in the lower regions. That is why they are infected and spoiled, living on what is tangled and mixed among the world's lees. For everything that earth and the other elements, which are the receptacles of these impurities, can produce is corrupted and defiled, and consequently engenders corruption and defilement in everything nourished by it. Through this the blood acquires a bad disposition that causes malignity of the humours, more in some and less in others, according to the extent of the parents' contamination and the excessive quantity of corruptible things consumed, from which the cause of destruction and mortality proceeds. For if earth and what it engenders were as full of purity as Heaven, all animals would live the same life as the heavenly inhabitants.¹⁴²

SL_II_03S010 1621 pp 144–146 · scans FR164, FR165, FR166

Mais Nature a establi cette loy necessaire que ce qui tient plus du corps habite autour de ce qui est plus corporel: & ce qui est plus corruptible & souillé, autour de ce qui luy ressemble. Or la terre est le plus bas de tous les corps, & partant la plus grossiere & corruptible. Rien ne peut donc sortir d'elle qui ne luy soit semblable, si l'art de la separation intervenant n'oste cette corruption & impurité, tirant ce qu'il y a de pure substance dans les corps: ce que le vray Philosophe peut faire avec industrie. Je n'ay & n'auray jamais aucun dessein d'offenser les Medecins; qu'au contraire j'honore ainsi qu'il est ordonné; Mais je m'estonne, avec beaucoup de gens doctes, du peu de soins qu'ils ont de porter les Apoticairees à une plus utile curiosité en la preparation de leurs medicaments; puis qu'ils se trouvent si souvent frustrez du succès esperé de leur vulgaire procedure: car ils veulent guarir & restaurer les corps malades & debilitéz, leur brassant quantité de breuvages esquels il y a tant de feces impures & grossieres, que le peu de substance en qui gist la vertu aydante, est submergé dans le venin, & n'a pouvoir d'agir contre le mal; ny la Nature de luy

¹⁴². "Inquinament" means contamination or defilement. The humours belong to the period's physiological vocabulary; the passage's account of hereditary and alimentary causes is the author's.

ayder à cette action; parce qu'elle mesme est travaillee en ce conflict, autant ou plus par l'impureté du remede que par la maladie. C'est donc vouloir combattre la corruption avec des armes corrompuës & corrompantes: ce que j'estime estre impossible. Car, ainsi qu'à dit le Petrarque jamais les fleuves ne se sont taris par les pluyes, ny le feu esteint par les flames. Le corruptible adjoint au corruptible augmente la corruption.

But Nature has established this necessary law: that what partakes more of body should dwell around what is more corporeal, and what is more corruptible and defiled around what resembles it. Earth is the lowest of all bodies, and therefore the coarsest and most corruptible. Nothing can issue from it that does not resemble it, unless the art of separation intervenes to remove this corruption and impurity, drawing out the pure substance present in bodies, which the true Philosopher can do with skill. I have no intention, and never shall have, of offending physicians; on the contrary, I honour them as is commanded. But, with many learned people, I marvel how little care they take to lead apothecaries towards more useful diligence in preparing their medicines, since they are so often disappointed in the hoped-for success of their ordinary procedure. For they seek to heal and restore sick and weakened bodies by brewing quantities of drinks containing so many impure and coarse dregs that the little substance in which the helping power resides is submerged in poison and has no power to act against the disease; nor can Nature assist it in this action, because in this conflict she herself is afflicted as much or more by the remedy's impurity than by the disease. This is therefore an attempt to fight corruption with corrupted and corrupting weapons, which I consider impossible. For, as Petrarch said, rivers have never been dried up by rain, nor fire extinguished by flames. The corruptible added to the corruptible increases corruption.^{143,144}

SL_II_03S011 1621 pp 146–148 · scans FR166, FR167, FR168

Ils taschent aussi de restaurer le malade debilité en le nourrissant d'aliments qu'ils tiennent de plus facile digestion & moins impurs ou subjects à corruption: mais ils ne considerent pas qu'ils avancent fort peu; & que les aliments quelque election qu'ils en facent ne peuvent profiter; davantage n'ayant aucune action ny force destructive capable d'exterminer ou amoindrir la cause du mal, ils servent seulement d'un debile soustien à la miserable vie trebuschante de foiblesse, qui pour cela ne laisse pas à expirer; si Nature ne fait d'elle mesme quelque effort, & se revolte contre ses ennemis pour la contregarder de leurs mortelles atteintes: ou bien qu'elle en soit garantie par medicaments exquis, elabourez par industrieux artifice à pureté & perfection surnaturelle: l'incorruption & vertu desquels restablisce sa pristine vigueur, & par mesme moyen desracine l'origine de la maladie. Car tout vray medicament doit faire ces deux operations de purger & restaurer tout ensemble. En quoy gist tout l'art de la medecine: bien qu'aujourd'huy la moindre de ces deux parties soit en usage, assavoir la purgation: & que la plus excellente, qui est

¹⁴³. The command to honour physicians recalls Ecclesiasticus/Sirach 38:1. The criticism that follows concerns preparation and purification of remedies.

¹⁴⁴. The river/rain and fire/flame comparison is attributed in the witness to Petrarch. Its precise literary location has not been established here; the attribution is retained without supplying an invented reference.

la restauration, soit abolie, ou negligee par paresse ou avidité. Qu'ainsi ne soit void on quelques unes de leurs potions entrant au corps de l'homme faire autre effect que de lascher le ventre, & purger bien souvent, non pas ce qui cause la maladie, mais seulement quelques matieres excrementeuses qui ne touchent en rien le mal: & quelques fois par simples mal preparez, ou dispensez, & improprement adaptez, causer des evacuations superflues qui offensent avec peril la Nature ja offensee.

They also attempt to restore the weakened patient by feeding him foods they consider easier to digest and less impure or liable to corruption. But they do not consider that they make very little progress, and that food, however carefully chosen, cannot avail; moreover, since it has no destructive action or force capable of eliminating or lessening the disease's cause, it serves merely as feeble support for a miserable life staggering with weakness, which nevertheless expires unless Nature makes some effort of her own and rises against her enemies to protect it from their deadly attacks; or unless it is protected by exquisite medicines elaborated through skilful artifice to a purity and perfection beyond nature, whose incorruptibility and power restore its original vigour and at the same time uproot the source of the disease. For every true medicine must perform these two operations, purging and restoring together. In this lies the whole art of medicine, although today the lesser of these two parts is practised, namely purgation, while the more excellent, restoration, is abolished or neglected through laziness or greed. In proof of this, are any of their potions seen, on entering the human body, to produce any effect beyond loosening the bowels and frequently purging, not what causes the disease, but merely certain excrementitious materials that have no bearing on it? And sometimes, through simples badly prepared or dispensed and inappropriately applied, they cause superfluous evacuations that dangerously injure Nature when she is already injured.¹⁴⁵

SL_II_03S012 1621 pp 148–151 · scans FR168, FR169, FR170, FR171

Laquelle est enervée, tant par le vuide qu'elle abhorre sur tout; que par le violent mouvement qui se fait en telles purgations, tendant plustost à tuer qu'à guarir. Laquelle violence de mouvement elle ne deteste moins que le vuide; car elle est impatiente aux assauts de ces deux ennemis jurez à sa destruction. Parquoy, la medecine vulgaire ne guarist guere les maladies obstinees avec ses drogues communes preparees à l'ordinaire. Que si quelqu'un entre plusieurs est guaruy, cela n'advient par les pilules, bolus, ou breuvages; Mais par la vertu de Nature qui est encore suffisante pour vaincre l'impure quantité meslee en tels remedes, & faire son profit de leur peu de substance. Ou bien que la force venefique de ces choses excrementeuses & corrompantes, poussee & rejectee par la Nature vigoureuse, attire & entraine avec soy quelque portion de l'humeur peccante qui luy ressemble, & ce par attraction & simpatie. Ainsi tel medicament estrange travaillant le corps esmeut la Nature, qui pareillement troublee, & voulant resister à cet ennemy, rejecte & combat violemment ce qui luy est nuisible & dommageable. S'il faut que tout medicament soit convenable & non contraire à la Nature, il faut necessairement

¹⁴⁵. "Surnaturelle" here characterises the degree of purity reached by art beyond nature's unaided work; "pristine" means original or former. The two required operations are evacuation and restoration.

qu'il soit repurgé de tous ces venins, qu'il n'a reçu que de la masse excrémenteuse & corruptible. C'est pourquoy le vray medecin doit premierement choisir les choses qui plus conviennent & sympathisent au corps humain; & les purger de leurs impuritez: ou bien qui ayent naturellement en elles une generale vertu & purification innee & cachee en leur interieur. Laquelle purification ne se peut autrement faire que par la destruction & separation de l'impur nuisible; & la restauration du pur qui estoit suffoqué par les immondices. Mais parce que ce n'est point ma profession d'exercer la medecine, ny mon dessein d'en traicter icy davantage; n'en ayant dit ce peu que pour me desgager du destroit où le vent de l'occasion m'avoit lancé; je reprendray ma routte: & diray que puisqu'il n'y a rien aux choses basses qui ne soit infecté, enveloppé, & comme ensevely dans la corruption des excrements & feces qui engendrent mortification, & empeschent la liberté de la legitime substance, & de ses actions; il a fallu que par necessité Nature ait pratiqué le remede des separations, qui se font par division & retranchement du pur d'avec l'impur, du subtil d'avec le grossier, & du salutaire d'avec le destruisant.

She is weakened both by the void, which she abhors above all, and by the violent movement produced in such purgations, tending rather to kill than to cure. She detests this violence of movement no less than the void, for she cannot endure the assaults of these two enemies sworn to her destruction. Ordinary medicine therefore seldom cures stubborn diseases with its common drugs prepared in the usual way. If one among many is cured, this does not happen through pills, boluses or drinks, but through Nature's power, which is still sufficient to overcome the impure quantity mixed into such remedies and benefit from their little substance. Or else the poisonous force of these excrementitious and corrupting things, driven out and rejected by vigorous Nature, attracts and carries with it some portion of the offending humour that resembles it, through attraction and sympathy. Thus such a foreign medicine, afflicting the body, stirs Nature, who, likewise disturbed and wishing to resist this enemy, rejects and violently fights what is harmful and damaging to her. If every medicine must be suitable and not contrary to Nature, it must necessarily be cleansed of all these poisons, which it has received only from the excrementitious and corruptible mass. The true physician must therefore first choose things that best suit and sympathise with the human body, and purge them of their impurities; or things naturally possessing a general power and purification innate and hidden within them. This purification can be achieved only through the destruction and separation of the harmful impure matter, and the restoration of the pure matter that was suffocated by filth. But because practising medicine is not my profession, nor is it my intention to discuss it further here, having said this little only to extricate myself from the strait into which the wind of occasion had driven me, I shall resume my course. Since there is nothing among lower things that is not infected, enveloped and, as it were, buried in the corruption of excrements and dregs that engender death and hinder the freedom of the true substance and its actions, Nature necessarily had to practise the remedy of separations. These take

place through division and removal of the pure from the impure, the subtle from the coarse, and the wholesome from the destructive.¹⁴⁶

SL_II_03S013 1621 pp 151–153 · scans FR171, FR172, FR173

Mais d'autant que cette admirable ouvriere fait telles operations en cachette; n'y travaillant qu'au dedans des corps par secrette digestion; & sans jamais outrepasser cette perfection simple, jusques à laquelle est estendu son pouvoir: qui fait que les Elements corporels ne peuvent conduire les corps où ils sont enclos au supreme degré de leur propriété: les Philosophes se sont prudemment avisez de separer du tout cette substance d'avec la masse corrompante: & apres cette separation la mener par les sentiers de la Nature, qui sont les digestions & sublimations, au plus haut degré de pureté. Leur acquerant une nouvelle forme par un second engendrement, de maniere qu'ils ont osté aux choses toute leur premiere Nature, qualité & propriété: Ayant pour mieux dire changé ce qui estoit corps impur en esprit plein de pureté: ce qui estoit humide & froid, en chaleur & seicheresse. Pratiquant cela non seulement aux especes & simples; Mais aussi au grand compost du monde; qui est nostre esprit universel. Car si l'universelle Nature des choses n'est renouvellee, il est impossible qu'elle parvienne à l'estat d'incorruption & renovation. Regeneration est donc le premiere fruit que produit separation. Mais comme le grain ne peut rien engendrer de luy mesme s'il ne meurt & se pourrit dans la terre; aussi n'est il possible que rien se renouvelle & regenere que par mortification precedente. La mortification est donc le premier eschelon pour monter à la separation, & l'unique sentier pour y parvenir. Parce que tandis que les corps demeurent en leur vieille corruption & naissance, jamais la separation ne s'y peut entremettre, sinon que la mortification, c'est à dire, la putrefaction & dissolution, y ait passé.

But since this admirable craftswoman performs such operations in secret, working only within bodies through hidden digestion, and never going beyond that simple perfection to which her power extends, so that the corporeal Elements cannot lead the bodies enclosing them to the highest degree of their property, the Philosophers prudently devised a way to separate this substance wholly from the corrupting mass, and after that separation lead it along Nature's paths, namely digestions and sublimations, to the highest degree of purity. They acquire for things a new form through a second generation, so that they have removed their entire first Nature, quality and property; or rather, have changed what was impure body into a spirit full of purity, and what was moist and cold into heat and dryness. They practise this not only upon species and simples, but also upon the great compound of the world, which is our universal spirit. For unless the universal Nature of things is renewed, it cannot possibly attain the state of incorruptibility and renovation. Regeneration is therefore the first fruit produced by separation. But just as a grain can engender nothing of itself unless it dies and rots in the earth, so nothing can be renewed and regenerated except through a preceding mortification. Mortification is therefore the first rung by which to climb to separation, and the only path to reach it. For while bodies remain in their old corruption and

¹⁴⁶. A "bolus" is a soft medicinal mass taken as a dose. "Humeur peccante" is an offending or morbid humour; "sympathy" expresses the claimed affinity by which like matter attracts like.

birth, separation can never intervene in them unless mortification, that is, putrefaction and dissolution, has first passed through them.^{147,148}

SL_II_03S014 1621 pp 153–155 · scans FR173, FR174, FR175

Ce que Jesus-Christ mesme a divinement congnu & fait cognoistre, disant que si à l'imitation du grain de froment l'homme ne meurt, il ne peut acquerir la vie incorruptible. Non pas qu'il vueille dire que cette vie se doit acquerir par la mort corporelle, car s'il estoit ainsi le meschant, scelerat, mourant auroit le mesme avantage du juste vertueux: Mais il entend qu'il faut que le vieil homme meure, c'est à dire, que l'homme mortifie & separe de luy la vieille corruption qu'il avoit attiree de la semence de nostre premier pere. Or cette corruption est proprement l'intemperance & excès advenu par le mors de la pomme, depuis lequell l'homme n'a cessé de mourir, parce que deslors la terre & tout ce qu'elle produit d'animaux commencerent à estre infectez du venin de ce trompeur serpent caché parmy les fruicts, c'est à dire les aliments, par la friandise desquels il alache les pauvres humains à s'en souler, & avaler le morceau deffendu auquel leur mort estoit cachee. Et le serpent est le corrupteur que je nomme Satan, parce qu'il rampe sur la terre, & la circuit incessamment, se meslant & glissant en elle, & ce qu'elle produit d'animaux, vegetaux, & mineraux, afin d'empoisonner le monde, & introduire en l'homme la tyrannie de la mort. De cette intemperance & excès de vivre est sortie la privation de vertu, le vice n'estant proprement qu'un banissement de justice, & justice rien plus qu'un temperé desir & continuel progrès au bien. Il faut donc que cette intemperance & excès meurent en nous, d'autant qu'ils engendrent en l'homme toutes sortes de pechez, & l'esguillonent à malice & meschanceté.

Jesus Christ himself divinely knew and made this known, saying that unless man dies, in imitation of the grain of wheat, he cannot acquire incorruptible life. He does not mean that this life must be acquired through bodily death, for if that were so, the wicked criminal in dying would have the same advantage as the just and virtuous. Rather, he means that the old man must die; that is, a man must mortify and separate from himself the old corruption he drew from the seed of our first father. This corruption is properly the intemperance and excess occasioned by the bite of the apple, since which man has never ceased to die, because from that moment earth and all the animals it produces began to be infected with the poison of that deceitful serpent hidden among the fruits, that is, foods, whose daintiness he uses to entice poor humans to gorge themselves and swallow the forbidden morsel in which their death lay hidden. The serpent is the corrupter whom I call Satan, because he crawls upon earth and goes around it ceaselessly, mingling and slipping into it and into the animals, plants and minerals it produces, to poison the world and introduce the tyranny of death into man. From this intemperance and excess in living has arisen the loss of virtue, vice being properly nothing but the banishment of justice, and justice nothing more than temperate desire and continual progress

¹⁴⁷. "Sublimations" denotes elevations and refinements in the chymical work; the argument joins these to repeated digestions. The "grand compost" is the great compound, not agricultural compost in the modern sense.

¹⁴⁸. The grain that must die evokes John 12:24. "Mortification" is expressly glossed here as putrefaction and dissolution, linking the chymical process with the following Christian reading.

towards good. This intemperance and excess must therefore die in us, since they engender every kind of sin in man and spur him towards malice and wickedness.^{149,150}

SL_II_03S015 1621 pp 155–157 · scans FR175, FR176, FR177

C'est pourquoy il nous est commandé d'estre sobres; evitant gourmandise & yvrongnerie, geniteurs principaux des desirs charnels: Et que nous jeusnions afin d'alentir la pernicieuse vigueur des flammes intestines qui meuvent nos sens, & allument nostre sang aux corruptions. Or est il bien reconu par ceux qui ont anathomisé l'homme, qu'il y a deux hommes en luy; l'un celeste & immortel, l'autre terrestre & corruptible: l'un qui est le captif, & l'autre la prison. Mais c'est une grande question de sçavoir comment il se peut faire que le celeste ensevely dans ce gouffre infect & gasté y puisse conserver sa pureté essentielle? Car on tient tres certain que la liqueur pour excellente qu'elle soit, perd ce qu'elle a de precieux au goust, ou à l'odeur, si elle est longtemps enclose en un vaisseau punais. Et que le plus sain homme du monde courra fortune d'estre infecté s'il habite dans une maison pestiferee. L'homme celeste est bon & sincere de soy; Mais joint au terrestre, à qui l'impureté & les vices sont naturels, il est bien malaysé qu'il n'en soit entaché. La depravation de cette pureté essentielle provient sans doute du mors de cette pomme, qui est, à parler naïvement, l'intemperance des aliments confits en pernicieuse & contagieuse corruption. A cette cause il est donc besoin de mortifier cette intemperance & corruption, pour rembarre ce vieil destructeur de l'un & de l'autre homme: & de regenerer par une nouvelle vie ce qui approche de l'incorruption du pere celeste de l'homme. Or nostre restaurateur Jesus-Christ, nous a seulement enseigné deux moyens de regeneration, l'un par l'eau du baptesme, l'autre par le feu du saint Esprit.

Hence we are commanded to be sober, avoiding gluttony and drunkenness, the chief begetters of carnal desires, and to fast in order to slacken the pernicious vigour of the inward flames that move our senses and kindle our blood towards corruptions. Those who have anatomised man well recognise that there are two men within him, one heavenly and immortal, the other earthly and corruptible: one the captive, the other the prison. But it is a great question how the heavenly man, buried in this infected and spoiled abyss, can preserve his essential purity there. For it is held quite certain that a liquid, however excellent, loses its precious taste or fragrance if long enclosed in a foul-smelling vessel; and that the healthiest man in the world risks infection if he inhabits a plague-stricken house. The heavenly man is good and pure in himself; but joined to the earthly man, to whom impurity and vices are natural, he can scarcely avoid being stained by them. The depravity of this essential purity undoubtedly arises from the bite of that apple, which, to speak plainly, is intemperance in foods steeped in pernicious and contagious corruption. Hence this intemperance and corruption must be mortified to repel that old destroyer of both men, and to regenerate through a new life what approaches the incorruptibility of

¹⁴⁹. The "old man" combines the grain's death with the Pauline figure of the old self to be put off (compare Ephesians 4:22). The apple and alimentary reading of the Fall are the author's interpretation.

¹⁵⁰. The text deliberately shifts between physical "vertu" as efficacy and moral virtue. In the account of justice and vice here the ethical sense governs.

man's heavenly father. Our restorer Jesus Christ has taught us only two means of regeneration, one through the water of baptism, the other through the fire of the Holy Spirit.^{151,152}

SL_II_03S016 1621 pp 157–159 · scans FR177, FR178, FR179

L'eau est celle qui lave les taches, le feu est celui qui consomme & separe toutes impuritez d'avec la pure essence. Et tout ainsi que son precieux sang (qui est la vraye eau) purge les vices & lave l'homme de la mort que la corruption mortelle du pere terrestre luy a procuree, L'eau dissout & purge aussi les lies & ordures excrementeuses qui engendrent corruption en toutes les substances. Le feu du saint Esprit consomme & separe l'impurité excrementeuse des pechez: le feu semblablement divise celle de la substance des choses, laquelle à cette occasion doit estre mortifiée afin de se regenerer. Et cette mortification est la putrefaction & digestion qui la rendent plus apte à recevoir le benefice de separation. Cette mortification se fait en nous alors que le Soleil du saint Esprit dardant ses divins rayons autour du globe interieur de l'homme, qui est le cœur, ils l'eschauffent jusqu'au centre, & y consomment peu à peu les corrompantes affections du vieil Adam. Le feu chimique en la mesme sorte reverberant les pointes de ses flammes autour du corps qu'il veut purger, a cette vertu de brusler & aneantir ce qui y est d'impur & d'étrange nature, selon le plus ou le moins que cette impurité est rebelle & inobediente à dissolution & separation, qui puis apres s'accomplit par distillation. C'est donc le droict chemin que la nature tient aux regenerations de toutes choses, lesquelles n'auroient aucun effect louable en la medecine si elles ne renaissent par le moyen du feu & de l'eau.

Water washes away stains; fire consumes and separates all impurities from the pure essence. And just as his precious blood, which is the true water, purges vices and washes man from the death brought upon him by the deadly corruption of his earthly father, so water also dissolves and purges the lees and excrementitious filth that engender corruption in all substances. The fire of the Holy Spirit consumes and separates the excrementitious impurity of sins; likewise fire divides impurity from the substance of things, which must therefore be mortified in order to regenerate itself. This mortification is the putrefaction and digestion that make it better fitted to receive the benefit of separation. Such mortification takes place in us when the Sun of the Holy Spirit darts his divine rays around man's inward globe, which is the heart; they heat it to the centre and consume there little by little the corrupting affections of the old Adam. In the same way, chymical fire, reverberating the tips of its flames around the body it seeks to purge, has the power to burn and annihilate whatever within it is impure and of alien nature, to a greater or lesser extent according to that impurity's resistance and disobedience to dissolution and separation, which is afterwards accomplished by distillation. This, then, is the straight road Nature follows in the regeneration of all things, which would have no

¹⁵¹. The two men, captive and prison, express a spiritual anthropology rather than two anatomical individuals. "Intestines" means inward or internal in "flames intestines".

¹⁵². The water/fire pairing recalls baptism with water and with the Holy Spirit and fire (compare Matthew 3:11), here used as an explicit analogy for washing and chymical purification.

praiseworthy effect in medicine unless they were reborn through fire and water.¹⁵³

SL_II_03S017 1621 pp 159–161 · scans FR179, FR180, FR181

C'est pourquoy apres leur seconde nativité elles demeurent libres en leurs forces & actions, qui paravant estoient enfouyes dans la masse excrementeuse, & ne pouvoient exercer les fonctions vitales dont le Ciel par sa benigne influence les avoit enrichis, ne plus ne moins que l'homme estant encore emprisonné dans la chartre du vieil Adam ne peut produire aucun acte louable & vertueux. Mais avant que m'embarquer davantage à desduire la pratique de ces choses, je reprendray l'ordre encommencé: assavoir qu'ayant diffiny la separation & combien il en est d'especes, je declareray maintenant qu'elles sont, & d'où procedent les choses qui doivent estre separees: & de qui vient la vertu separative. J'ay suffisamment adverti les curieux qu'en tout corps il y a deux parties, l'une est l'excrement, & l'autre est la substance. L'une qui est essentielle, l'autre qui est accidentelle. Or la substance simplement consideree comme j'ay dit, est toute pure & sans corruption aucune: l'excrement au contraire totalement impur se meslant avec la substance est ce qui la gaste & pervertit sa pureté. La generation & formation de la substance a esté suffisamment esclaircie aux deux premiers chapitres de ce deuxiesme livre. Il reste maintenant à deschiffrer l'estre & les qualitez des excrements. Surquoy j'infere de ce qui a ja esté dit, que rien ne se doit separer sinon les excrements, posant ce fondement qu'il n'est rien au monde soubz-lunaire entre les choses passibles, qui soit vuide d'excremens. Car lors que Dieu separa les parties du monde, il se fait un ravalement & affaissement de ce qui estoit plus grossier en la matiere premiere, comme plus pesant & moins subtil.

Thus after their second birth their forces and actions remain free, whereas previously these were buried in the excrementitious mass and could not exercise the vital functions with which Heaven through its benign influence had enriched them, just as man, while still imprisoned in the prison of the old Adam, can produce no praiseworthy and virtuous act. But before embarking further upon an account of the practice of these things, I shall resume the order begun: having defined separation and the number of its species, I shall now declare what the things to be separated are, whence they proceed, and from what the separating power comes. I have sufficiently advised the curious that every body contains two parts, one excrement and the other substance; one essential and the other accidental. Substance, considered simply as I have said, is wholly pure and free from any corruption; excrement, on the contrary, is wholly impure and, mingling with the substance, spoils it and perverts its purity. The generation and formation of substance has been sufficiently elucidated in the first two chapters of this second book. It remains now to decipher the being and qualities of excrements. From what has already been said I infer that nothing should be separated except excrements, laying down this foundation: among passible things in the sublunary world, nothing is devoid of excrements.

¹⁵³. "Reverberant" refers to the action of reflected or driven-back heat. The passage distinguishes mortifying treatment by fire from the subsequent separation accomplished through distillation.

For when God separated the parts of the world, what was coarser in the first matter sank and subsided, being heavier and less subtle.¹⁵⁴

SL_II_03S018 1621 pp 161–162 · scans FR181, FR182

Et de l'amas des feces qui s'assemblerent en bas autour du centre, se forma la terre pourvue de la vraye substance: mais confuse dans l'epaisseur grossiere d'icelle, apres que Phoebus eut tué le monstrueux Python, enflé de l'humeur veneneuse qui s'estoit engendree parmy le limon terrestre. C'est à dire qu'apres que le sec inné eut beu l'humidité superflue par l'operation de la chaleur naturelle, la terre commença de sentir les actions de cette substance cachee dans son sein. Laquelle substance est cette matiere spiritueuse non jamais oisive, mais incessamment empeschee à engendrer & vivifier. Laquelle proprement doit estre en cet endroict appelee terre, parce qu'elle est vrayement la propre & vertueuse substance de la terre, & celle seule qui engendre tous corps par sa propre corporification, selon les idees des individus. Ce qu'autrefois j'ay despeint en l'Ode Pindarique dediee au grand Duc d'Allençon mon tres-honoré seigneur & maistre: de laquelle je rapporteray icy quelques vers à ce propos.

From the mass of dregs that gathered below around the centre, earth was formed, supplied with the true substance, but confused within its coarse thickness, after Phoebus had killed the monstrous Python, swollen with the poisonous moisture that had been generated amid the earthly slime. That is, after the innate dryness had drunk up the superfluous moisture through the operation of natural heat, earth began to feel the actions of this substance hidden within her bosom. That substance is this spirituous matter, never idle but ceaselessly occupied in engendering and giving life. It should properly be called earth here, because it truly is earth's own efficacious substance, and it alone engenders all bodies through its own embodiment, according to the ideas of individual beings. I formerly depicted this in the Pindaric Ode dedicated to the great Duke of Alençon, my most honoured lord and master, from which I shall quote a few verses to this purpose.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴. "Passibles" are things capable of undergoing change or suffering action. Phoebus killing Python is read below as heat drying the primordial earthly slime, rather than merely retold as a classical episode.

¹⁵⁵. The verse quotation begins with one line on this page and continues with seventeen lines on the next. "Corporification" is the spirituous matter's taking bodily form; "ideas" are formative patterns of individual beings.

SL_II_03S019 1621 pp 162–163 · scans FR182, FR183

L'esprit porté sur la face
 De ceste indigeste masse,
 L'environnant tout autour,
 Feit separer la matiere
 Pesante, de la legere,
 Et la noire nuict, du jour.
 Puis de l'humeur amasee
 Le corps plus pesant & froid
 Feit la rondeur compasee
 Que d'un serrement estroit
 L'eau ou l'air contrebalance
 D'un poids si ferme & egal
 Que sans souffrir mesme mal
 Ne peut choir en decadence.
 Puis versant l'ame au dedans
 Et les semences du monde,
 La fait nourrisse feconde
 Du Ciel & des feux ardans.

The spirit borne upon the face
 Of this undigested mass,
 Surrounding it on every side,
 Made the heavy matter separate
 From the light,
 And black night from day.
 Then from the gathered moisture,
 The heavier and colder body,
 It fashioned the measured roundness
 Which, in a tight embrace,
 Water or air counterbalances
 With a weight so firm and equal
 That, without suffering the same ill,
 It cannot fall into decay.
 Then, pouring the soul within
 And the seeds of the world,
 It made her the fruitful nurse
 Of Heaven and the burning fires.

SL_II_03S020 1621 pp 163–166 · scans FR183, FR184, FR185, FR186

Or d'autant que de cette separation universelle, ce qui estoit plus igné & subtil choisit le haut pour son siege; & ce qui estoit grossier & massif devala bas pour s'y reposer, il advint que les corps celestes esloignez & separez de toutes feces immondes resterent immortels, s'estendant en rondeur, tant parce qu'ils s'esleverent d'un mesme vol dés le commencement, qu'à cause que le naturel des choses eternelles desire la forme ronde, qui est la seule forme indeficiente & accomplie. Il advint d'autre part que les grossieres & terrestres demeurerent subjectes à corruption & à mort, pource qu'en la corruption se joignit un assemblément de choses contraires, sçavoir est des elements differents en qualitez, comme chaleur avec froideur & moiteur avec seicheresse. A quoy se mesla aussi la commixtion de ces feces impures qui estoient proprement la lie de la premiere matiere universelle, qui d'elle mesme ne fut pas créée pure comme imaginent

quelques uns, car tout ce qui en seroit sorty & sortiroit encore n'eust onc esté asservy à la mort. Et qui plus est, aucune generation ne pourroit estre faite au monde inferieur, n'y ayant point d'alteration ny mutation des formes, qui n'auroient toutes qu'une mesme face : sans distinction de haut ny de bas. Les choses demeureroient esgalement pures & subtiles, & par consequent privees d'ornement : Voire à parler franchement il n'auroit esté fait aucune creation de la matiere ny du monde. Ce fut donc chose necessaire d'entremesler ces feces grossieres à la substance subtile : Car où il n'y a que pureté il n'y peut avoir d'action, parce que rien ne peut agir sans patient : le pur n'ayant nul empire sur son semblable, ny l'impur sur son pareil. Or la Nature qui est en continuelle action pour separer le pur d'avec l'impur, à la conservation de l'essence & accroissement de la vie, a pour son unique subject cette substance entremeslee d'impuritez, laquelle retenant tousjours l'estat & le naturel de sa premiere creation, ne se nourrit, multiplie, & accroist, qu'avec nourriture multiplication, & accroissement de feces, qui luy sont non pas consubstantielles, mais compagnes de naissance, ou sœur uterines. Qu'ainsi ne soit, ceux qui ont par divine inspiration trouvé le moyen d'extraire cette premiere matiere, & de la corporifier à l'imitation de nature, sçavent par experience que quelque pureté, neteté, & clarté qu'elle semble avoir, si est elle accompagnée de force immondicez terrestres, qui s'en tirent avec grande industrie.

Now since, through this universal separation, what was more fiery and subtle chose the heights for its seat, while what was coarse and massive descended below to rest there, it came about that the heavenly bodies, removed and separated from all filthy dregs, remained immortal, extending into roundness, both because they rose in the same flight from the beginning, and because the nature of eternal things desires round form, which is the only unfailing and complete form. On the other hand, coarse and earthly things remained subject to corruption and death, because in corruption there was joined an assemblage of contrary things, namely elements differing in qualities, such as heat with cold and moisture with dryness. To this was also added the admixture of those impure dregs that were properly the lees of the universal first matter, which was not itself created pure, as some imagine; for everything that had issued or might yet issue from it would never have been subjected to death. What is more, no generation could take place in the lower world, since there would be no alteration or change of forms: they would all have the same appearance, without distinction between high and low. Things would remain equally pure and subtle, and consequently bereft of adornment. Indeed, to speak plainly, there would have been no creation of matter or of the world. It was therefore necessary to mingle these coarse dregs with the subtle substance. For where there is nothing but purity there can be no action, because nothing can act without something acted upon: the pure has no dominion over its like, nor the impure over its equal. Now Nature, which is continually at work separating the pure from the impure to preserve essence and increase life, has as its sole subject this substance mingled with impurities. Always retaining the state and character of its first creation, it is nourished, multiplied and increased only together with the nourishment, multiplication and increase of dregs, which are not of one substance with it, but companions from birth, or sisters of the

same womb. As proof, those who through divine inspiration have found the means of extracting this first matter and embodying it in imitation of Nature know by experience that, whatever purity, cleanness and clarity it appears to possess, it is nevertheless accompanied by many earthly impurities, which are removed with great skill.^{156,157,158,159}

SL_II_035021 1621 pp 166–170 · scans FR186, FR187, FR188, FR189, FR190

Davantage il me semble avoir desja par preuves assez vallables fait connoistre que tout corps massif est alimenté & maintenu, non de cette terre visible excrementeuse, ains seulement de cette matiere spiritueuse, & nous voyons pourtant qu'ils sont tous pleins d'excremens : & que toute leur masse mesme n'est autre chose qu'excrement, auquel cette matiere spirituelle propre à se corporifier est logee invisiblement : car soit que nous mangions ou beuvions tout ce qui entre en nostre estomach en ressort par les conduits à ce destinez, au mesme poids & quantité que nous les avons pris. Ce n'est donc pas de la masse que nous tirons l'huile de nostre vie, mais bien de cette pure essence & substance cachee en son interieur. Bref, excrement n'est autre chose que l'impur domicile de cet esprit nourrissant, & comme un chariot qui le porte aux lieux où s'en doit faire la distribution pour y accomplir la separation & la digestion requise. Les arbres & les plantes n'ont elles pas une masse excrementeuse incorporee en elles, & cette masse est elle pas le suport & conduite de cet esprit vivifiant & vegetant qui les fait croistre ? je ne dy pas que tout ce qui est corporel en l'arbre ou autre individu soit totalement excrement : car en chacun habite je ne sçay quelle partie de substances que je ne puis bonnement appeller corps, mais seulement apte à se corporifier en quelque sorte ; ce que nature ne peut faire d'elle mesme. Car jacoit que ce qui se void & touche soit veritablement engendré par la matiere corporifiable ; si est-ce toutesfois que ce n'est point le corps substantiel, & n'apperoit on rien qu'excrement. De sorte que nature n'y fait jamais rien apparoistre de ce qui est l'essence de la vie, & la substance de la chose ; ou pour dire plus clairement ce qui est de la premiere & derniere matiere : Mais l'art dont l'industrie outrepasse le simple pouvoir de nature, le peut bien faire. Car l'ingenieux phisicien considere qu'encore qu'aux creations naturelles la spiritueuse matiere & substance des choses ne se trouve jamais pure, si est-ce qu'estant meslee parmy les feces, il s'ensuit qu'elle leur est heterogene & estrange, parce que nous la voyons separable aux digestions de l'estomac, qui rejecte les excremens, & retient seulement la substance : non pas que cette separation tombe au sens de la veue, mais de l'intellect, par l'aparition des effects, lors que nous voyons les feces separees & rejectees à part comme inutiles au maintien de l'essence des corps. Puis l'augmentation, restauration, & vivification qui arrive aux corps par cette substance nous le certifie : mais nature nous cache l'operation qui fait ces actions. La substance estant donc separable, il faut bien que la pureté soit innee en elle qui est homogene & semblable en toutes ses parties.

¹⁵⁶. The eighteen verse lines, including the opening line on the preceding page, retain their printed line count. The compact syntax makes the spirit the acting subject and earth the fruitful nurse; "same ill" preserves the poem's compressed formulation.

¹⁵⁷. The sentence continues onto FR185. This part stops at the literal page boundary and supplies no conjectural continuation.

¹⁵⁸. "Patient" is the subject receiving an agent's action, not a sick person; the argument requires a difference between agent and recipient.

¹⁵⁹. The dregs are called "sisters of the same womb": accompanying matter from its origin, yet expressly distinguished from its substance.

Moreover, I believe I have already shown by sufficiently sound proofs that every solid body is nourished and sustained, not by this visible, excrementitious earth, but solely by this spirituous matter. Yet we see that all bodies are full of excrements, and that their entire bulk itself is nothing but excrement, in which this spiritual matter capable of embodiment is invisibly lodged. For whether we eat or drink, everything entering our stomach comes out again through the passages appointed for it, in the same weight and quantity in which we took it. Thus we draw the oil of our life from this pure essence and substance hidden within, rather than from the bulk. In brief, excrement is simply the impure dwelling of this nourishing spirit, and like a chariot carrying it to the places where it must be distributed, so that the requisite separation and digestion may be accomplished there. Do not trees and plants have an excrementitious bulk incorporated in them, and is this bulk not the support and conduit of that life-giving, vegetative spirit which makes them grow? I do not say that everything corporeal in a tree or another individual is wholly excrement: in each there dwells some portion of substances which I cannot properly call body, but only capable of being embodied in some manner, something Nature cannot accomplish by herself. For although what is seen and touched is truly generated by matter capable of embodiment, it is nevertheless not the substantial body, and nothing but excrement is perceived. Thus Nature never makes anything appear there of what constitutes the essence of life and the substance of the thing, or, to speak more clearly, what belongs to first and last matter. But art, whose skill surpasses Nature's unaided power, can indeed do so. For the ingenious natural philosopher considers that, although in natural creations the spirituous matter and substance of things is never found pure, its being mingled among dregs means that it is heterogeneous and foreign to them. We see that it can be separated in the stomach's digestions, which reject the excrements and retain only the substance. This separation is perceived by the understanding, rather than by sight, through the appearance of its effects, when we see the dregs separated and rejected apart as useless for maintaining the essence of bodies. The increase, restoration and enlivening which this substance brings to bodies then assure us of it, but Nature hides the operation producing these actions. Since the substance can therefore be separated, purity must be innate in it, homogeneous and alike in all its parts.^{160,161}

SL_II_03S022 1621 pp 170–171 · scans FR190, FR191

Or cette pureté ne peut estre découverte ny tirée en lumière par nature, qui ne besongne jamais que simplement pour conduire les choses à la perfection de son dessein. Mais l'artiste regarde que la chaleur est la seule voye & l'outil dont nature

¹⁶⁰. "Spiritueuse" and "spirituelle" alternate in the French. The translation retains "spirituous" for the former and "spiritual" for the latter.

¹⁶¹. "First and last matter" links the nutritive beginning with the purified residue later obtained through fire.

se sert pour parvenir à cette perfection ; & que le feu est l'unique purgateur & separateur qui tend tousjours à parfaitement purifier. Puis voyant qu'en tous corps il y a quelque substance pure en son centre, laquelle se peut separer par nature, si non du tout exactement, au moins selon l'estendue des forces de cette nature ; il se resout à prendre le mesme chemin & se servir du mesme instrument que la nature a pris, sçavoir le feu, & le conduire de sorte que sans destruction de cette substance qui est pure en son centre, il brusle & separe tous excemens, jusques à ce qu'ayant atteint une tres-grande pureté, il apperçoive que ce feu n'ait plus de puissance destructive, mais plustost une action propre à la conserver, exalter, & y introduire une tincture & qualité pareille à la sienne ; convertissant en fin toute cette substance tres-monde en sa nature propre. Le ministre de l'art jugeant donc qu'en toutes choses cette substance est infuse ; & que toutes choses peuvent estre bruslees, restant apres leur bruslement une cendre que le feu ne peut devorer ; il a sagement conclud qu'en cette cendre reste il y avoit quelque tresor caché, non subject à la rigueur des flames. Si bien que poursuivant son operation il y trouve du sel, qui n'est point engendré par le feu, mais qui reste vainqueur du feu, comme un pur Or de chacun corps bruslé.

Now this purity cannot be discovered or brought to light by Nature, which works only so as to bring things to the perfection of its design. But the practitioner observes that heat is the sole means and tool Nature uses to reach this perfection, and that fire is the sole purifier and separator, always tending towards perfect purification. Then, seeing that every body has some pure substance at its centre, which Nature can separate, if not with complete exactness, at least to the extent of its powers, he resolves to follow the same path and use the same instrument as Nature, namely fire. He governs it so that, without destroying this substance pure at its centre, it burns and separates all excrements, until, after it has attained very great purity, he perceives that this fire no longer has destructive power, but rather an action fitted to preserve and exalt it and introduce a tincture and quality like its own, finally converting this thoroughly cleansed substance into its own nature. The servant of art therefore judges that this substance is infused in all things, and that all things can be burnt, leaving after their burning an ash which fire cannot devour. He has wisely concluded that in this remaining ash lies a hidden treasure, exempt from the severity of the flames. Thus, pursuing his operation, he finds salt in it, which is not generated by fire but remains the conqueror of fire, like a pure gold from each burnt body.¹⁶²

SL_II_03S023 1621 pp 171–174 · scans FR191, FR192, FR193, FR194

Ce sel est donc la derniere matiere qui demeure des corps, & non la cendre de laquelle il est extrait en dernier ressort, & duquel par apres on ne peut plus rien tirer : Car s'il se convertit en eau par l'humidité, cette eau se recongelle en sel par la chaleur. D'où l'on tire la consequence que telle eau estoit le vray Mercure duquel les corps avoient esté premierement créés : & que cette eau estant cachee dans cette cendre l'empesche de se consommer au feu par bruslement : Tout ainsi que le Mercure universel caché dans le sein de la terre avant la production des corps. C'est pourquoy le docte Rouillasque, appelle en ses escrits cette humidité eau de feu

¹⁶². "Monde" means clean or purified in "tres-monde"; it does not mean "world" in this phrase.

mercurielle, parce que le feu l'engendre & la nourrit, voire augmente sa bonté d'autant plus qu'elle demeure en iceluy plus longuement. Car c'est la dernière operation du feu, que de faire du sel : & le sel n'est autre chose qu'une eau seiche ; qui acquiert & conserve son humeur & sa siccité par le feu ; qui necessairement se trouve de nature pareille. Ce que je dis icy afin que l'on ne trouve estrange que j'aye maintenu dès le commencement de ce livre que le feu n'est point sans humeur, de laquelle estant nourry c'est force qu'il en participe, puisque toutes choses doivent estre alimentees de ce dont elles sont faites. Tellement que le feu & l'humeur sont comme deux corelatifs qui ne peuvent seulement estre imaginez l'un sans l'autre. Et sans doute les elemens ont une telle connexion & afinité entr'eux que l'un participe de l'autre : & chacun d'eux se trouve en son compagnon. Car la terre contient son eau, son air, & son feu : L'eau a son feu, son air, & sa terre : L'air a sa terre, son eau, & son feu : Et le feu a son eau, son air, & sa terre. Sans lesquelles participations, il ne se pourroit faire aucune conversion entr'eux : & n'y auroit nulle simparchie ny convenance.

This salt is therefore the last matter remaining from bodies, rather than the ash from which it is finally extracted; nothing further can afterwards be drawn from it. For if moisture converts it into water, heat congeals that water back into salt. From this we infer that such water was the true mercury from which bodies were first created, and that, hidden in the ash, this water prevents it from being consumed by burning in the fire, just like the universal mercury hidden in the earth's bosom before bodies were produced. This is why the learned Rouillasque calls this moisture mercurial fire-water in his writings: fire generates and nourishes it, and even increases its excellence the longer it remains within it. For the last operation of fire is to make salt, and salt is simply a dry water, which acquires and preserves its moisture and dryness through fire; fire must necessarily be of a similar nature. I say this here so that no one may find it strange that, from the beginning of this book, I have maintained that fire is not without moisture. Since it is nourished by moisture, it must partake of it, because all things must be nourished by that of which they are made. Thus fire and moisture are like two correlatives which cannot even be imagined without one another. Undoubtedly the elements have such connection and affinity among themselves that each partakes of another, and each is found in its companion. For earth contains its water, its air and its fire; water has its fire, its air and its earth; air has its earth, its water and its fire; and fire has its water, its air and its earth. Without these participations no conversion between them could occur, and there would be no sympathy or agreement.^{163,164}

SL_IL_03S024 1621 pp 174-176 · scans FR194, FR195, FR196

On pourra donc recueillir de ce qui a ja esté dit qu'il n'est rien vuide d'excremens : & que excrement & substance sont les deux parties dont tous corps sont composez : & que rien sinon le seul excrement ne doit aussi estre separé du subject, comme

¹⁶³. "Rouillasque" is retained as printed. The passage attributes the expression "mercurial fire-water" to this authority; identification has not been silently imposed.

¹⁶⁴. "Dry water" is the author's deliberate formulation for salt's capacity to become liquid and to return to a solid state.

accidentel, & qui n'a nulle afinité avec l'essence de la substance. On pourra semblablement recueillir que le feu est celui qui seul procure & facilite cette separation. Mais il est temps de dire comment cela se fait, car ce n'est pas assez de proposer que la separation est le commencement des œuvres tant de la Nature que de l'art, ny de sçavoir qu'elles choses sont separables, si l'on ne sçait comment cela doit estre pratiqué. J'ay cy devant dit qu'il y a deux especes de separation, L'une qui se fait par distinction & ornement, de laquelle je me tairay maintenant d'autant qu'elle appartient à la seule nature, & non à l'art. L'autre qui se fait par division ou retrenchement des parties : qui est celle dont je desire esclaircir la pratique. J'ay n'aguere dit que toutes choses visibles & palpables sont composees de ces deux parties contraires, excrement & substance. Quant à la substance, elle est de soy simple & indivisible, soit qu'on la prenne generalement pour la premiere matiere de tout, ou bien pour les especes particulieres, selon l'impression de l'idee ou forme celeste qui est insinuee. C'est à dire qu'au limbe de l'univers, ou bien en chacune espece des corps composez, cette substance est une en essence, vertu, & qualité. Et ne peut on dire qu'en un mesme subject il y ait une partie d'icelle d'une sorte, & l'autre d'une autre : mais il n'est pas ainsi de l'excrement.

From what has already been said, we may therefore gather that nothing is free of excrements; that excrement and substance are the two parts of which all bodies are composed; and that excrement alone should be separated from the subject, as something accidental, having no affinity with the essence of the substance. We may likewise gather that fire alone brings about and facilitates this separation. But it is time to say how this is done: it is not enough to propose that separation is the beginning of the works of both Nature and art, or to know which things can be separated, unless one knows how it should be practised. I said above that there are two kinds of separation. One occurs by distinction and adornment; I shall say no more of it now, since it belongs to Nature alone and not to art. The other occurs by division or removal of parts: this is the one whose practice I wish to explain. I said a little earlier that all visible and tangible things are composed of these two contrary parts, excrement and substance. Substance in itself is simple and indivisible, whether taken generally as the first matter of everything, or in particular species, according to the impression of the idea or celestial form instilled into it. That is to say, in the limbus of the universe, or in each species of compound bodies, this substance is one in essence, power and quality. One cannot say that, within the same subject, one portion of it is of one kind and another of a different kind. Excrement, however, is otherwise.¹⁶⁵

SL_II_03S025 1621 pp 176–178 · scans FR196, FR197, FR198

Surquoy je poseray ce fondement, sçavoir est qu'il n'y a que deux choses par lesquelles toutes separations s'accomplissent, qui sont le feu & l'eau. Et qu'il n'y a que deux choses separables en tous corps, dont l'une se divise par le feu, & l'autre par l'eau. On doit en premier lieu tenir pour chose indubitable que la nature du feu est de consommer & destruire tout ce qui est bruslable : Et celle de l'eau de laver & nettoyer la substance des ordures qui la souillent. Le feu devore tout ce qui est

¹⁶⁵. The first separation orders and adorns creation; the second removes parts from a compound. The practical discussion concerns this second sense.

volatil & de la qualité aeree ; parce que c'est sa propre pasture. L'eau divise tout ce qui est terrestre & grossier. Il faut donc qu'entre ses deux extremes il y ait quelque moyenne disposition qui doive estre sauvee & garantie, n'ayant en soy ny feces ny adustion qui la soubmetent au pouvoir de ces deux expugnateurs. Parquoy c'est chose tres-claire que l'adustion & les feces sont les deux corrupteurs & destructeurs de toutes choses. Ce que le divin Hipocrate avoit bien recognu quand il a dit que toutes maladies viennent de l'air, ou des aliments. Voulant dire que l'excez des viandes pleines d'excremens, & l'air facile à recevoir corruption, & qui facilement corrompt & enflame les excremens par un feu excédant celuy de Nature ; sont causes de toutes les maladies. Car l'excrement des viandes emplit les corps de terrestres impuretez ; Et l'air inflammable est ce qui y engendre la matiere soufreuse & adustible : laquelle aysément concevant l'ardeur, consomme aussi avec elle ce qui est de vital & radical, emporté par la plus grande quantité de ce qui est volatil & bruslable. Les feces terrestres & l'adustion sont donc les deux auteurs de corruption, & ce qui empesche en toutes choses la vigueur des actions substantielles. Que si nous en desirons des preuves familiares, les puanteurs que la digestion & les excremens rendent, nous en assouvront trop. Car ce qui sent mal aux choses que l'on brusle, monstre bien que ce n'est rien de bon. De mesme est il des puantes fumees des excremens sortant des corps, lesquelles proviennent de la corruption.

I shall lay down this foundation: there are only two things by which all separations are accomplished, fire and water; and in every body only two things can be separated, one divided by fire and the other by water. First, it must be held beyond doubt that the nature of fire is to consume and destroy everything combustible, and that of water to wash and cleanse substance of the filth defiling it. Fire devours everything volatile and of an airy quality, because that is its proper food. Water divides everything earthly and coarse. Between these two extremes there must therefore be some intermediate disposition which should be saved and protected, having in itself neither dregs nor adustion to subject it to the power of these two assailants. Hence it is perfectly clear that adustion and dregs are the two corrupters and destroyers of all things. The divine Hippocrates recognised this well when he said that all diseases arise from air or food. He meant that excess food full of excrements, and air which readily receives corruption and readily corrupts and inflames the excrements through a fire exceeding that of Nature, cause all diseases. For the excrement of food fills bodies with earthly impurities; and inflammable air generates in them sulphurous, combustible matter. Readily catching fire, this also consumes with itself what is vital and radical, carried away by the greater quantity of what is volatile and combustible. Earthly dregs and adustion are therefore the two authors of corruption, and what obstructs the vigour of substantial actions in all things. If we desire familiar proofs, the stench given off by digestion and excrements will satisfy us only too well. For the bad smell of things being burnt clearly shows that it is nothing good. The same is true of the

foul fumes of excrements issuing from bodies, which arise from corruption.^{166,167}

SL_II_03S026 1621 pp 178–180 · scans FR198, FR199, FR200

Mais outre cette corruption qu'ils engendrent, il en provient encore deux inconveniens : l'un est l'empeschement de la penetration ; l'autre celui de la fixation : Qui sont les deux actions plus necessaires à la conservation de la vie. Car ce qui nourrit & entretient la vie doit necessairement estre une chose subtile pour penetrer les corps par leurs plus simples parties, afin de renforcer, & substanter, comme une huile secrete, la lumiere de la vie cachee au centre des corps. Que si elle estoit grossiere elle oppileroit, suffoqueroit, voire estouperoit plustost que d'entrer par voyes si delicates & desliees. D'autre part ce qui tient & maintient la vie en estre, doit aussi par raison estre quelque chose de stable & non fuyante. Que si elle estoit volatile, la mort à chacun moment entreroit en nous, introduitte par la corruption qu'engendre la feculente adustion qui continuellement afflige nostre vie. La terreistreté empesche donc l'ingression, & l'adustion empesche la fixation & stabilité. De cecy peut estre tiré un salutaire advis pour la Medecine ; assavoir que tout vray medicament qui est pris interieurement pour restaurer la vie debilitée par maladie, & dechasser la cause de la mort prochaine, doit avoir deux proprieté, sçavoir est de promptement penetrer jusques au centre de la santé, & conserver ce centre, en le dilatant & ramenant par tout le corps. Ce que les anciens ont jadis pratiqué avec heureux & glorieux succès. Et depuis quelque temps ce trop aboyé & envié Paracelse ; qui reprenant leurs traces a decouvert à sa posterité ce que tant de siecles emmoncelez l'un sur l'autre tenoient enseveli. Face & die qui voudra le contraire : mais j'ose affirmer que sans les operations du feu rien ne peut estre conduit à pureté, ny fixation, qui sont deux parties qu'on doit sur tout rechercher & introduire en tous medicaments.

But besides the corruption they generate, two further disadvantages arise from them: one is the obstruction of penetration, the other of fixation, which are the two actions most necessary for preserving life. For what nourishes and sustains life must necessarily be subtle, to penetrate bodies through their simplest parts, in order to strengthen and give substance, like a hidden oil, to the light of life hidden at their centre. If it were coarse, it would obstruct, suffocate, even stop up, instead of entering through such delicate, fine passages. On the other hand, what upholds and maintains life in existence must reasonably also be something stable and not fugitive. If it were volatile, death would enter us at every moment, introduced by the corruption generated by the dreg-laden adustion which continually afflicts our life. Earthliness therefore obstructs entry, and adustion obstructs fixation and stability. From this a salutary counsel for medicine may be drawn: every true medicine taken internally to restore life weakened by disease and drive out the cause of approaching death must have two properties, namely to penetrate swiftly to the centre of health, and preserve that centre by expanding it and carrying it back throughout the body. The ancients once practised this with happy and glorious success. In more

¹⁶⁶. "Adustion" denotes burning or scorching, with the associated corruptible, combustible condition. It is one of the two obstacles to be removed, alongside earthly dregs.

¹⁶⁷. "Viandes" means foods or victuals generally, rather than meat alone.

recent times so has Paracelsus, so excessively barked at and envied, who retraced their footsteps and disclosed to posterity what so many centuries piled one upon another had kept buried. Let whoever wishes act and speak to the contrary: I dare affirm that without the operations of fire nothing can be brought to purity or fixation, two qualities which above all should be sought and introduced into every medicine.^{168,169}

SL_II_035027 1621 pp 180–182 · scans FR200, FR201, FR202

A quoy je suis porté & confirmé par une forte raison : qui est que nul corps vraiment medicinal estant en sa nature premiere, c'est à dire en sa premiere forme, enveloppé dans l'espaisseur excrementieuse de ses feces pleines de corruption, ne peut arriver jusqu'au siege de la santé ; ny la contregarder l'ayant une fois rencontrée ; parce qu'elle n'a point cette subtile penetration, ny cette fixe permanence, requise au restablissement de ce qui est gasté & corrompu ; & à la conservation de ce qui est restably. Car il n'y a nulle apparence que cela se puisse faire par les preparations vulgaires ; soit en substance ou infusion. Quant à la substance, l'impossibilité se trouve d'elle mesme, puis qu'elle ne produit sinon une violente purgation qui tend plus à la debilitation dangereuse, qu'à la restauration salutaire, ainsi que j'ay desja fait voir. Et quant à l'infusion il ne se peut par icelle tirer des simples autre chose qu'un peu de nitrosité qui est en tous corps, avec quelques parties des feces excrementieuses. D'où provient qu'à la verité l'infusion attire quelque goust exterieur de la chose, mais non pas l'interieure vertu, qui en son centre a un goust tout autre que la matiere superficielle. Car il se void ordinairement que les infusions communes sont toutes pleines d'amertume, laquelle on tasche à corriger par le sucre ou le miel : [n']y ayant la plus part des Apoticares l'industrie [de] tirer des choses leur douceur naturelle, de laquelle nature se resjouit. Car toute amertume qui vient du sel, à qui on donne communément l'epithete d'amer, recelle en son profond une douceur qui ne peut estre decouverte par les simples infusions, mais par le feu, avec ingenieux artifice. Estant sans doute cette douceur la perfection de toute medecine.

A strong reason leads and confirms me in this: no truly medicinal body, while in its first nature—that is, its first form, wrapped in the excrementitious thickness of its dregs full of corruption—can reach the seat of health or guard it once it has found it. It lacks the subtle penetration and fixed permanence required to restore what is spoiled and corrupted, and to preserve what has been restored. There is no likelihood that ordinary preparations can accomplish this, whether taken in substance or in infusion. As for the substance, its impossibility is self-evident, since it produces only a violent purgation tending more towards dangerous debilitation than salutary restoration, as I have already shown. As for infusion, it can draw from simples nothing but a little of the nitrous quality present in all bodies, together with some portions of excrementitious dregs. Thus an infusion does indeed draw out some external taste of the thing, but not its inward power, which at its centre has a taste entirely different from the superficial matter. For ordinary infusions are generally seen to be full of bitterness, which one

¹⁶⁸. “Fixation” is the attainment of stability against flight or volatilisation, paired here with the ability to penetrate the body.

¹⁶⁹. “Comme une huile secrete” is the source’s image: life is strengthened like a light supplied with hidden oil.

tries to correct with sugar or honey: most apothecaries lack the skill to draw from things their natural sweetness, in which Nature rejoices. For every bitterness coming from salt, commonly given the epithet bitter, conceals deep within it a sweetness which cannot be discovered by simple infusions, but by fire with ingenious artifice. This sweetness is undoubtedly the perfection of every medicine.^{170,171}

SL_II_035028 1621 pp 182–184 · scans FR202, FR203, FR204

C'est pourquoy Arnauld de Villeneuve dit, si tu sçais adoucir l'amer, tu auras tout le magistere. Ce que Brachesco a bien sceu, comme il le tesmoigne en son dialogue intitulé Demogorgon. Pour revenir donc à mon propos, cette douceur cachee ne se peut manifester qu'elle ne soit entierement desveloppee & delivree de ses feces terrestres, & de cette adustion volatile & aeree. Car le terrestre engendre la saveur estrangere : je parle des propres excremens du sel ; de la diversification desquels selon la diversité des especes, & des lieux où ils sont engendrez, provient telle variété de saveurs ; Car toute saveur est causee par le sel, & plus il y a de sel plus il y a de saveur. D'ailleurs ce qui est aeré & volatil engendre les mauvaises & non naturelles odeurs, qui par l'adustion & inflammation du soufre onctueux & bruslable jette cette puanteur que l'on sent de ce que l'on brusle. Que cette chose volatile soit un excrement il se prouve assez par les puantes fumees des corps bruslans desquels s'engendre la suye atachee aux cheminees & planchers enfumez ; Laquelle retient l'odeur des corps bruslez, & l'amertume des excremens des sels. Et d'abondant se verifie encore par la noirceur & obscurité que cette vapeur imprime en tout ce qu'elle touche, empeschant la plus grande partie de la lumiere & splendeur de Nature, qui desire tousjours la pureté, & se voir separee des tenebres, comme il s'apperçoit en tous corps, desquels les plus parfaits reluisent d'un plus grand lustre, provenant de leur pureté : & les autres demeurent plus ou moins sombres selon leur composition plus ou moins embrouillee de ces impuritez : Ainsi que les metaux parfaits, ou imparfaits : Et les pierres precieuses en donnent ample cognoissance.

This is why Arnauld de Villeneuve says: if you know how to sweeten the bitter, you will have the whole magistry. Brachesco understood this well, as he testifies in his dialogue entitled Demogorgon. To return to my subject, this hidden sweetness cannot be manifested until it is entirely unwrapped and freed from its earthly dregs and from this volatile, airy adustion. For the earthly component generates the foreign flavour: I mean salt's own excrements, whose variations according to the diversity of species and the places where they are generated produce this variety of flavours. Every flavour is caused by salt, and the more salt there is, the more flavour there is. On the other hand, what is airy and volatile generates bad, unnatural odours; through the adustion and inflammation of unctuous, combustible sulphur it gives off the stench we smell from what is burnt. That this volatile thing is an excrement is sufficiently proved by the foul fumes of burning bodies, from which arises the soot adhering to chimneys and smoke-blackened

¹⁷⁰. "Simples" are individual medicinal substances, as opposed to compound medicines.

¹⁷¹. The negative construction on printed p.182 is restored conjecturally as [n']y ayant ... l'industrie [de] tirer. Worn type obscures the French negative and linking word. The argument requires the lack of this skill, supported by Turner 1657, p.144: "most Apothecaries are not so industrious". The brackets distinguish the supplied letters from legible source type. Witness: <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A52581.0001.001>.

ceilings. This retains the smell of the burnt bodies and the bitterness of the excrements of salts. It is further confirmed by the blackness and obscurity which this vapour impresses upon everything it touches, obstructing most of the light and splendour of Nature, which always desires purity and to see itself separated from darkness. This can be perceived in all bodies: the most perfect shine with a greater lustre arising from their purity, while the others remain more or less dark according as their composition is more or less entangled with these impurities. Perfect and imperfect metals, and precious stones, provide ample evidence of it.^{172,173}

SL_II_035029 1621 pp 184–187 · scans FR204, FR205, FR206, FR207

Et si nous voulons quitter les peregrinations lointaines & estranges, & par le conseil de l'oracle finir nos voyages curieux en nous mesme, recherchant bien les causes de nos indispositions & plus fascheuses maladies, nous trouverons qu'elles naissent de ces infectes fumees, qui obscurcissent la lumiere de nostre santé : d'où s'ensuit un apparent indice de ce qui se fait au dedans. Car l'homme sain, à cause de la clairté interne de sa naturelle disposition porte un visage clair, & vivement coloré : Mais le malade, à peine est il frappé du mal qu'il monstre son atteinte en certaine palleur obscure & plombée, qui descolore & ternit le naïf de ce premier teinct. Et tout ce changement procedant seulement des fumees de l'adustion & inflammation du soufre excrementeux, qui s'espendent par tous les membres & les infectent de suye sulfuree, jusqu'en leur superficie, par le moyen des pores qui rendent les corps transperçables. On peut encore dire que cette palleur & descoloremment procede aussi de ce que la nature se sentant offensee & assiegee par la maladie, elle fait retirer tout le sang clair & net, au centre de la santé des corps, qui est le cœur, afin d'y r'assembler & joindre toutes ses forces, pour virilement combattre & soustenir les assaux du mal : delaisant à cette occasion l'exterieur despourveu de cette clairté naturelle. Lequel exterieur demeure comme terre mortifié & reduit à decoloration & obscurité : Parce que la terre en laquelle il commence par le mal à se convertir & retourner, est noire de son naturel, ainsi que le feu est clair & candide du sien, comme deux elemens de qualitez contraires. La terre donc de son costé comme epaisse & tenebreuse, donne la noirceur : & l'adustion du soufre comme fuligineux & fumeux obscurcit pareillement. A raison dequoy l'un & l'autre sont causes de corruption, destruction, & gastement en toutes choses. Et n'y a proprement que ces deux qui machinent & pourchassent la ruyne de tout ; pour ce qu'ils sont en tout : & n'y a rien icy bas entre les composez qui en soit exempt, hormis l'or, & les pierres precieuses, que Nature a elaborees à perfection, autant qu'il luy a esté possible. Tellement que la mort est en tous autres corps une hostesse perpetuelle, qu'ils taschent d'introduiser aux choses pour les destruire.

And if we wish to abandon distant, foreign wanderings and, following the oracle's counsel, end our inquisitive journeys within ourselves, carefully examining the causes of our indispositions and most troublesome diseases, we shall find that they arise from these infected fumes, which darken the light of our health. An outward indication of what takes place within follows from this. For a healthy man, because of

¹⁷². The maxim is attributed here to Arnauld de Villeneuve; "magistry" preserves its chymical sense of the complete work or mastery of the operation.

¹⁷³. The names "Brachesco" and "Demogorgon" are retained as given in this French witness; no title has been silently corrected.

the inward clarity of his natural disposition, has a clear, vividly coloured face. But scarcely has illness struck the sick man before he shows its attack in a certain dark, leaden pallor, which discolours and dulls the natural freshness of his former complexion. All this change proceeds solely from the fumes of the adustion and inflammation of excrementitious sulphur, which spread through all the members and infect them with sulphurous soot, as far as their surface, through the pores that make bodies permeable. One may also say that this pallor and loss of colour occur because Nature, feeling injured and besieged by disease, withdraws all the clear, clean blood to the centre of bodily health, the heart, to gather and unite all its forces there and stoutly fight and withstand the assaults of the illness, thus leaving the exterior bereft of this natural clarity. This exterior remains like mortified earth, reduced to discolouration and darkness, because the earth into which illness begins to convert and return it is naturally black, just as fire is naturally clear and bright: two elements of contrary qualities. Earth, for its part, being thick and dark, therefore produces blackness; and the adustion of sulphur, being sooty and smoky, likewise darkens. Hence both cause corruption, destruction and spoilage in all things. Properly speaking, these two alone plot and pursue the ruin of everything, because they are in everything: nothing among compounds here below is exempt from them, except gold and precious stones, which Nature has worked to perfection as far as it has been able. Thus death is a perpetual guest in every other body, whom they endeavour to introduce into things in order to destroy them.¹⁷⁴

SL_II_03S030 1621 pp 187–189 · scans FR207, FR208, FR209

Mais la nature comme pieuse mere & soigneuse conservatrice de l'œuvre de ses mains, a fait armer en leur faveur deux puissants & subtils champions pour rabattre l'orgueil de ces insolents adversaires, & les chasser hors de leur forteresse. C'est le feu pour l'un, exterminateur de cette adustion sulfureuse : & l'eau pour l'autre, qui separe & emporte cette terrestre feculence. Or comme nature est ingenieuse & subtile en toutes ses operations, aussi a elle laissé l'art doué de pareille subtilité & industrie : Car il n'y a que ces deux voyes pour parvenir aux separations ; Que la nature mesme a suivies dès le commencement du monde, duquel les premieres semences informes, vuides, & confuses, estoient dissoutes pesle-mesle dans les eaux, d'où elles furent separees par le moyen du feu de l'esprit du Seigneur estendu par dessus ; qui fut le premier agent & moteur en la separation du Cahos, dont il s'ensuivit qu'incontinent la lumiere fut separee des tenebres, les formes distinctes de la confusion, les generations de la sterilité, & la mort de la vie. Tellement que si les choses feussent demeurees confuses en leur premier desordre & melange de l'impur avec le pur, de l'excrement avec la substance, de la Terre avec le Ciel, & de la vie avec la mort, tout seroit privé d'action, de puissance, d'essence, & de vie, restant toute la masse inutilement gisante en sa confusion. L'artiste donc estant entré en la consideration de ces choses, & voyant que rien ne peut desployer sa vertu jusques à ce que la confusion des excrements & impuritez en soit bannie, il a choisi l'eau & le feu pour ses coadjuteurs, à l'exemple de Nature, dont il a

¹⁷⁴. The heart is expressly identified as the body's "centre of health". The withdrawal of blood is offered as a second explanation of pallor alongside the smoky-sulphurous account.

curieusement remarqué l'operation, mesme en la generation des metaux, lesquels sont d'autant plus parfaits qu'ils ont esté mieux mondifiez & digerez dans l'estomac de la terre. Parquoy c'est un point qui demeure fixe & resolu, que le feu & l'eau sont les generaux & principaux moyens de separation.

But Nature, like a devoted mother and careful preserver of her own handiwork, has armed two powerful, subtle champions on their behalf, to humble the pride of these insolent adversaries and drive them out of their fortress. One is fire, the exterminator of this sulphurous adustion; the other is water, which separates and carries away this earthly dross. As Nature is ingenious and subtle in all its operations, so it has left art endowed with like subtlety and skill. For there are only these two paths to separation, which Nature itself followed from the beginning of the world. Its first seeds, formless, empty and confused, were dissolved pell-mell in the waters, from which they were separated by the fire of the spirit of the Lord spread above them. This was the first agent and mover in the separation of Chaos, from which it followed that light was immediately separated from darkness, forms distinguished from confusion, generation from barrenness, and death from life. Had things remained confused in their first disorder and mingling of impure with pure, excrement with substance, earth with heaven, and life with death, everything would be deprived of action, power, essence and life, the whole mass lying uselessly in its confusion. The practitioner, having considered these things and seeing that nothing can unfold its power until the confusion of excrements and impurities is banished from it, has therefore chosen water and fire as his assistants, following Nature's example. He has carefully observed its operation, particularly in the generation of metals, which are the more perfect the better they have been cleansed and digested in the stomach of the earth. Thus it remains a settled and established point that fire and water are the general and principal means of separation.¹⁷⁵

SL_II_035031 1621 pp 189–192 · scans FR209, FR210, FR211, FR212

Mais d'autant que la composition des choses est diverse, & que les unes cedent plus difficilement que les autres, il a pareillement esté besoin de diversifier les actions de ces deux, sans toutesfois s'esgarer ny escarter du plain chemin de la Nature. Car aux uns l'adustion & soufre onctueux inflammable & infectant, a voulu estre ostée d'une sorte, & aux autres la terrestre feculence d'une autre. La calcination a esté inventee avec la sublimation, pour purger l'adustion. Et pour la terrestre feculence la distillation & dissolution ont esté mises en usage. L'on a encore practiqué la dessension pour conserver les corps debiles & de facile inflammation : Mais toutes ces choses se font par le feu, comme la calcination, sublimation, & dessension : ou par l'eau, comme la distillation & dissolution. Les manieres & preceptes desquelles sont diffuses en tant de bons livres antiques & modernes que je me deporteray par discretion d'en parler d'avantage, puisque tout mon discours n'y adjoust rien de nouveau, n'y pourroit apporter ornement ny facilité. Il me suffira seulement de dire ce que j'en sçay en general par forme de diffinition. Assavoir, que la calcination a esté inventee pour les matieres dures & rebelles à cause de leur continuité & forte

¹⁷⁵. The account expands the creation sequence of Genesis 1 into a chymical separation of seeds from the primal waters. "Death from life" preserves the source's order.

composition, qui les empesche de recevoir facilement la separation de leurs excremens sans estre divisez par leurs moindres parties. Et de celle cy proviennent quatre utilitez, qui sont le bruslement du soulfre impur & fetide ; la separation plus aysee de la terrestreité superflue, & estrange, La fixation du soulfre interne, & la dissolution plus prompte. Car le naturel du feu est de consommer les parties adustibles qui ne sont de l'essence de la substance : de faciliter la division & rejectement des excremens terrestres : de fixer & affermir le soulfre radical : & de multiplier le sel dans les corps, lequel seul peut apres recevoir la dissolution par l'eau. Or je dy que la calcination tombe seulement sur les corps qui pour leur continuité ceddent à peine : Parce que les esprits ou choses volatiles & legerement fuyantes au feu ne peuvent estre calcinees sans l'adition des choses fixes & dissemblables à leur nature : L'intention ou but de la calcination n'estant autre que de tirer les sels de toutes choses, parce qu'en iceux consiste la meilleure partie & principale vertu secrette des corps ou esprits, esquels est attachee cette adustion corrompante qui pour ce subject se doit en toute sublimation laisser aller & evaporer comme inutile : afin de mieux delivrer des feces terrestres cette moyenne substance qui reste, preparee & acheminee à purification & fixation par l'action du feu.

But because things vary in composition, and some yield less readily than others, it has likewise been necessary to vary the actions of these two, without straying or turning aside from Nature's plain path. In some things adustion and unctuous, inflammable, infecting sulphur had to be removed in one way; in others earthly dross in another. Calcination was devised, together with sublimation, to purge adustion; distillation and dissolution were brought into use for earthly dross. Descension has also been practised to preserve weak bodies which readily catch fire. All these things are performed by fire, as are calcination, sublimation and descension; or by water, as are distillation and dissolution. Their methods and precepts are set out in so many good ancient and modern books that I shall discreetly refrain from speaking further of them, since my whole discourse, adding nothing new, could bring neither embellishment nor greater ease. It will suffice to state what I know of them in general by way of definition. Calcination was devised for hard, refractory materials whose continuity and strong composition prevent the easy separation of their excrements without their being divided into their smallest parts. Four benefits arise from it: the burning of impure, fetid sulphur; the easier separation of superfluous, foreign earthliness; the fixation of internal sulphur; and swifter dissolution. For the nature of fire is to consume combustible portions that do not belong to the essence of the substance; to facilitate the division and rejection of earthly excrements; to fix and strengthen radical sulphur; and to multiply salt in bodies, which alone can afterwards undergo dissolution by water. I say that calcination applies only to bodies which yield with difficulty because of their continuity, since spirits, or volatile things readily fleeing fire, cannot be calcined without adding fixed things unlike their nature. The intention or purpose of calcination is simply to draw the salts from all things, because in them reside the best portion and chief secret power of bodies or spirits. To these is attached that corrupting adustion, which for this

reason must in every sublimation be allowed to depart and evaporate as useless, in order better to free from earthly dregs the intermediate substance that remains, prepared and directed towards purification and fixation by the action of fire.¹⁷⁶

SL_II_03S032 1621 pp 193 · scans FR213

Or cette pratique de sublimation a esté trouvee pour ce que la calcination qui ne se peut accomplir sans extreme violence de feu esleveroit le pur avec les feces sans aucun avancement de separation ny purification. Il est bien vray que la sublimation requiert quelque violence de feu, mais c'est alors seulement que la chose sublimable est profondement meslee & attachee aux feces ou chaux de quelque corps fixe, pour plus arrester & retenir les immondices terrestres. Et cette maniere de sublimer est la plus seure ; si ce n'est aux choses qui ont leurs feces capables de s'arrester d'elles mesmes. La dessention se pratique pour deux utilitez : l'une afin de tirer l'huile des vegetaux, sans les brusler. L'autre pour mondifier les corps fusibles avant qu'ils soient rendus fuyants. Voyla les trois manieres de separation qui se font par le feu.

Now this practice of sublimation was devised because calcination, which cannot be accomplished without extreme violence of fire, would raise the pure together with the dregs, without any advance in separation or purification. It is indeed true that sublimation requires some violence of fire, but only when the sublimable thing is deeply mingled and attached to the dregs or calx of some fixed body, so as better to arrest and retain the earthly impurities. This manner of sublimation is the safest, except for things whose dregs are capable of staying behind of themselves. Descension is practised for two purposes: one is to draw oil from vegetable substances without burning them; the other is to cleanse fusible bodies before they become fugitive. Those are the three manners of separation performed by fire.¹⁷⁷

SL_II_03S033 1621 pp 194-196 · scans FR214, FR215, FR216

Il reste les deux autres qui se font par l'eau, sçavoir la distillation, & la dissolution. La premiere se fait par l'inclinement & le filtre, afin de tirer la limpidité des choses dissoutes en l'eau, avec l'eau : Car celle qui se fait par l'alembic je la mets du rang des sublimateurs, d'autant qu'elle se fait par l'eslevation & non par le lavement. Celle cy qu'aucuns tiennent pour indifferente & de peu d'efficace, n'est pas toutesfois à rejeter, mais plustost à estimer, comme l'une des principales operations de la nature ; qui l'a establie pour seul moyen de separer les immondices terrestres ouvertes & desliees par la calcination precedente, & preparees à la separation : & par ainsi conduire & acheminer les choses à l'avancement de leur perfection ; à la pureté de laquelle cette maniere de distiller les esleve & sublime : estant pour ce subject de quelques sages ditte secreta sublimation. La seconde operation qui se fait par l'eau, sçavoir la dissolution, est faite par chaleur humide & moderee, comme celle du fient de cheval ; du bain Marie ; de la vapeur de l'eau bouillante, ou par l'infusion dans l'eau : ou bien par inhumation en lieux humides : mais toutes ces flesches volent à un mesme blanc, qui est de reduire en eau les choses calcinees, afin que par cette liquefaction les terres en filtrant demeurent affaisses au fond du vaisseau. La reiteration de cette pratique est tres-subtile & necessaire, presqu'en

¹⁷⁶. The five named operations are distinguished by their purposes here. Their classification under fire or water is the author's explicit scheme.

¹⁷⁷. "Chaux" is rendered "calx", the calcined material of a body. It is not necessarily ordinary lime.

toutes choses : Car si par une calcination continue on vouloit separer les plus simples parties d'un composé, & reduire en sel ce qu'il a d'essence salee, il en arriveroit un inconvenient irreparable, car la force intemperee & assidue des flammes sublimeroit & contraindroit à la fuite, la meilleure & plus grande partie de ce que l'on cherche avec tant de soing ; de sorte qu'il ne resteroit que bien peu de la matiere soluble avec grande quantité de feces. Outre, que par une trop longue demeure au feu cette matiere restee se pourroit vitrifier. Il est donc meilleur de ne point gesner ou violer nature par l'excès d'une precipitation, & recourir patiemment aux reiterations.

There remain the other two, performed by water: distillation and dissolution. The first is done by tilting and filtering, to draw out the clear portion of things dissolved in water, together with the water. For I place distillation by alembic among sublimations, since it takes place by rising and not by washing. This operation, which some regard as immaterial and of little efficacy, should nevertheless not be rejected, but rather esteemed as one of Nature's principal operations. Nature has established it as the sole means of separating the earthly impurities opened and loosened by the preceding calcination and prepared for separation, thus leading and directing things towards the advancement of their perfection. This manner of distilling raises and sublimates them to its purity, and for this reason some sages call it secret sublimation. The second operation performed by water, namely dissolution, is done by moist, moderate heat, such as that of horse dung, the bain-marie, or the vapour of boiling water; or by immersion in water, or burial in damp places. All these arrows fly towards the same target: to reduce calcined things to water, so that through this liquefaction the earths, in filtering, remain settled at the bottom of the vessel. Repetition of this practice is most subtle and necessary in almost everything. For if one wished by continuous calcination to separate the simplest parts of a compound and reduce its saline essence to salt, an irreparable disadvantage would arise: the immoderate, unremitting force of the flames would sublime and compel to flight the best and largest part of what one seeks with such care, leaving very little soluble matter with a great quantity of dregs. Moreover, remaining too long in the fire could vitrify this residual matter. It is therefore better not to torture or violate Nature through excessive haste, but patiently to have recourse to repetitions.¹⁷⁸

SL_II_03S034 1621 pp 196–198 · scans FR216, FR217, FR218

Cet inconvenient m'arriva une fois en la calcination du Cristal commun, que voulant purger de ses excrements pour le reduire en vraye essence par une longue ignition, je trouvay entierement vitrifié avec ses feces, & partant inutile à mon dessein, & à tout autre ouvrage. Car encore que le Cristal paroisse clair, lucide, & transparent, les premieres fumees noires, puis violettes qui se presentent en sa calcination, avec une odeur puante & sulfuree, tesmoignent bien sa terresteité excrementeuse : tout ainsi que les blanches qui les suivent sont indices vrais de l'homogeneité de la substance, qui demeure en fin claire & flotante en petite quantité, tant qu'elle soit parvenue à la Nature & consistance de pur sel cristallin : & durant ces reiterations dernieres

¹⁷⁸. "Distillation" here includes decanting and filtration. The author expressly distinguishes this washing operation from alembic distillation, which he classes as sublimation.

l'odeur ingrate qui se sent és premieres se change en une tres-souefve & plaisante, semblable à la poudre de violette. Or de la reiteration des calcinations outre les choses predittes arrivent deux biens : L'un, que la chose calcinee acquiert par l'accoustumance du feu cette subtilité & permanence aux medicamens desquelles j'ay desja parlé : L'autre, que ce qui est souvent dissout acquiert penetration, ingression prompte & subtile, & puissante vertu de transmuier l'estat du patient, de maladie à santé, de langueur à vigueur, de destruction à restauration & parfaict amandement. Voyla les voyes ordinaires de toutes separations qui ne tendent à autre but qu'à sequestrer les pures substances de leurs excrements corrompans, & les eslever de la lourde epaisseur terrestre à la pureté ignee : & bref d'imperfection à perfection.

This disadvantage once befell me in calcining common crystal. Wishing to purge its excrements and reduce it to its true essence through prolonged ignition, I found it entirely vitrified with its dregs, and therefore useless for my design or any other work. For although crystal appears clear, lucid and transparent, the first black fumes, then violet ones, which appear during its calcination, with a foul, sulphurous smell, clearly attest its excrementitious earthliness. Likewise, the white fumes following them are true indications of the homogeneity of the substance, which finally remains clear and floating in a small quantity, until it has attained the nature and consistency of pure crystalline salt. During these final repetitions, the unpleasant smell perceived in the first changes into a very sweet, pleasant one like violet powder. Besides the things already mentioned, two benefits arise from repeated calcinations. One is that the calcined thing, through becoming accustomed to fire, acquires that subtlety and permanence in medicines of which I have already spoken. The other is that what is often dissolved acquires penetration, swift and subtle entry, and a powerful virtue for transforming the patient's state from disease to health, from languor to vigour, from destruction to restoration and complete recovery. These are the ordinary paths of all separations, whose sole aim is to set pure substances apart from their corrupting excrements and raise them from heavy earthly thickness to fiery purity: in brief, from imperfection to perfection.^{179,180}

SL_IL_03S035 1621 pp 198–200 · scans FR218, FR219, FR220

Ce qu'a voulu enseigner Hermes, quand il a dit que l'on separe la terre du feu, & pour s'interpreter luy mesme a adjousté ces mots, & le subtil de l'espais. Ce qu'il veut estre fait doucement, & avec grande industrie. Car en parlant de la preparation de l'esprit general du monde apres sa terrification, & par un mesme moyen ouvrant le chemin à celle de tous individus, il a voulu faire entendre qu'en cette terre il y a quelque chose difficile à retenir & garder, assavoir un esprit leger & volatil qui se conserve par le temperament du feu, & qui au contraire s'esvanouiroit facilement avec la partie separable qui abonde tousjours plus, & surmonte en quantité le plus de substance fixe, si l'on ne gouvernoit l'operation avec patiente douceur, &

¹⁷⁹. The failed treatment of common crystal is a first-person report used to argue for repetition rather than continuous heating.

¹⁸⁰. Printed page 197 reads "claire & flotante" (the type is imperfect). "Floating" preserves that reading; "flowing" would require a different reading.

ingenieuse methode. A quoy l'artiste doit observer une maxime importante : c'est la distinction des trois soulfres, dont les deux sont separables, assavoir l'externe qui se perd par la calcination & dissolution ; & l'interne qui dispaeroist par la seule decoction ; Mais le tiers est celuy que l'on appelle fixe : qui est proprement le vray soulfre de Nature, & le propre subject de la substance, auquel les Philosophes ont donné le nom d'agent, ou grain fix, ou element du feu, en leur compost phisique. Quant à l'externe, c'est le premier volatil & adustible, d'autant qu'il est entierement estranger, & la premiere pasture du feu. L'interne est plus uny & enraciné dans la substance, & partant ne desloge qu'avec plus grande violence & continuation de feu : C'est pourquoy avant son partement il prend toutes couleurs, commençant par la noirceur, qui est la premiere marque de terrestreité, d'adustion, & corruption : & l'avantcourriere de putrefaction & mortification. Puis traversant par les autres moyennes arrive peu à peu à la blancheur, qui est la couleur de l'air, d'où elle monte à la couleur ignee, qui est la rougeur, en laquelle se termine la puissance de l'art, & l'empire du feu : outre laquelle il n'y a plus de progression.

This is what Hermes wished to teach when he said that one separates earth from fire, and, to interpret himself, added these words: and the subtle from the thick. He wishes this to be done gently and with great skill. For, speaking of the preparation of the universal spirit of the world after its conversion into earth, and by the same means opening the path to preparing every individual thing, he wished us to understand that this earth contains something difficult to retain and preserve: a light, volatile spirit, conserved by the moderation of fire. Conversely, it would readily vanish with the separable portion, which always abounds more and exceeds the fixed substance in quantity, unless the operation were governed with patient gentleness and ingenious method. In this the practitioner must observe an important maxim: the distinction between the three sulphurs. Two are separable: the external, lost through calcination and dissolution, and the internal, which disappears through decoction alone. The third is what is called fixed: properly the true sulphur of Nature and the proper subject of the substance, which the Philosophers have named the agent, fixed grain, or element of fire in their physical compound. The external is the first volatile and combustibile sulphur, since it is entirely foreign and fire's first food. The internal is more closely united and rooted in the substance, and therefore departs only with greater violence and continuation of fire. Thus before departing it takes on every colour, beginning with blackness, the first mark of earthliness, adustion and corruption, and the forerunner of putrefaction and mortification. Then, passing through the other intermediate colours, it gradually reaches whiteness, the colour of air; from there it rises to the fiery colour, redness, in which the power of art and dominion of fire come to their end, beyond which there is no further progression.^{181,182}

¹⁸¹. "Terrification" here means conversion into earth. "Esprit general du monde" is rendered "universal spirit of the world", following the policy's distinction from the simpler "world spirit".

¹⁸². The three sulphurs have different statuses: external and internal sulphur are separable, while fixed sulphur is the true sulphur of Nature.

SL_II_03S036 1621 pp 200–203 · scans FR220, FR221, FR222, FR223

Chose que les Poètes ont fabuleusement depeinte sous le personnage de l'inconstant Prothee qui se transformoit en diverses figures monstrueuses pour espouventer & destourner ceux qui taschoient à le captiver. Or cette variété de couleurs est causée par le soufre interne, vray auteur & producteur de toutes les teintures & divers bigarremens qu'on void par nature & par art en toutes les choses du monde, & se peuvent distinctement remarquer en la decoction de ce premier subject universel, ainsi qu'il me les a (comme j'ay desja dit) produites une fois. Mais aussi tost que la blancheur se montre, aussi tost apparoist le soufre de Nature, que Geber dict estre blanc par dehors, & rouge en son interieur : car cette blancheur est en fin suivie de la rougeur, sans autre ayde que du feu continué & accru par degrez, qui a fait dire à quelqu'un des sages que leur pierre au blanc estoit un anneau d'or couvert d'argent. J'ay bien voulu en passant dire ce peu de mots des couleurs que l'on trouve designees en tous les bons auteurs : Non pour presumer d'enseigner icy les preparations & operations que je sçay bien estre necessaires à l'accomplissement de leur grand Elixir tant exalté & haut loué par eux : Mais seulement pour faire recognoistre aux curieux disciples de la docte Medee, qui par une soigneuse & profonde inquisition taschent d'entrer au sacraire de la mystérieuse Phisique : quels sont en toutes choses les soufres qu'il faut oster ou conserver. Croyant avoir assez dignement employé le temps que je desrobe aux negoces œconomiques où je suis attaché, si je puis redonner quelque vigueur & estincelle de vie à cette languissante partie de Philosophie naturelle, que les envieux de sa gloire ont ensevelie toute vive dans le tombeau de la calomnie, sous le titre odieux de transmutation abusive & falsification des metaux : Quoy que la seule ignorance du vray mystere les empeschant d'en faire la distinction, donne place à leur mesdisance : qui pour tout fondement s'appuie malicieusement sur l'effronterie de certains affronteurs, coureurs, & vendeurs de fumees, qui voillent & couvrent du manteau sacré de cette belle vierge, leur eshontée & impudique sophistication : du fard de laquelle ils charment les yeux des credules ; & comme traistresses Sirenes, plongent les curieux en Caribde & en Scille.

The poets have depicted this in fable through the figure of changeable Proteus, who transformed himself into various monstrous shapes to terrify and turn aside those who tried to capture him. Now this variety of colours is caused by internal sulphur, the true author and producer of all the tinctures and varied markings seen through Nature and art in all the things of the world. They can be distinctly observed in the decoction of this first universal subject, just as it once produced them for me, as I have already said. But as soon as whiteness appears, the sulphur of Nature also appears, which Geber says is white outside and red within. For this whiteness is finally followed by redness, with no other aid than fire continued and increased by degrees. This led one of the sages to say that their stone at the white stage was a gold ring covered in silver. I have willingly said these few words in passing about the colours indicated in all the good authors, not presuming to teach here the preparations and operations which I well know are necessary to accomplish their great Elixir, so exalted and highly praised by them, but solely to enable the inquisitive disciples of learned Medea, who through careful, profound inquiry endeavour to enter the sanctuary of mysterious natural philosophy, to recognise which sulphurs in all things must be removed or preserved. I believe the time I steal from the

household affairs to which I am bound will have been employed worthily enough if I can restore some vigour and spark of life to this languishing part of natural philosophy. Those who envy its glory have buried it alive in the tomb of calumny under the odious name of fraudulent transmutation and falsification of metals. Yet only ignorance of the true mystery prevents them from making the distinction and gives scope to their slander. Its entire foundation rests maliciously upon the effrontery of certain swindlers, wanderers and sellers of smoke, who veil and cover their shameless, unchaste adulteration with this fair virgin's sacred mantle. With its paint they enchant the eyes of the credulous and, like treacherous Sirens, plunge the inquisitive into Charybdis and Scylla.^{183,184,185}

¹⁸³. The gold ring covered in silver expresses the red interior beneath the white stage; the witness attributes the image only to "one of the sages".

¹⁸⁴. "Medea" evokes the learned enchantress as an emblem of chymical art; the text addresses her inquisitive disciples.

¹⁸⁵. Chapter III ends here on printed page 203, before the heading "De la montee de l'esprit au Ciel, & de sa descente en terre" for Chapter IIII.

4 The Spirit's Ascent into Heaven and Descent into Earth

De la montee de l'esprit au Ciel, & de sa descente en terre. CHAPITRE IIII.

Chapter outline

The divine remedy and the analogy between spiritual and bodily preservation.

Knowledge of particular things through their universal causes and the work of purification.

The universal spirit's embodiment, preparation and medicinal power.

Poetic and mythological accounts of the work, including Jason and the Golden Fleece.

The guarded transmission of natural and scriptural mysteries.

SL_II_045001 1621 pp 203–205 · scans FR223, FR224, FR225

Ce grand & souverain auteur de toutes choses, prevoyant des le commencement du monde que l'infection & corruption feroient une mortelle guerre en toutes choses composées de corps & d'esprit; voulut opposer à cette dissention un remede certain, afin de sauver l'un & ne perdre pas l'autre. Car l'esprit & la substance estant enveloppez dans les corps, & les corps enfouis dans la corruption; Il estoit impossible qu'estans les corps assaillis & surmontez par la corruption, l'esprit logé dans eux n'en receust perte & dommage; & demeurast avec les corps esclave de la mort, qui sans intervalle est aux aguets pour surprendre la nature, & entre en tous genres & especes pour y exercer sa tyrannie. La preuve en est trop suffisante en la fin naturelle & quelquefois precipitee des animaux, vegetaux, & minéraux, que nous voyons arriver par accident de corruption. Et qui mortifiant les corps il advient que les esprits courent mesme fortune. C'est à dire que leurs vertus vivifiantes sont du tout aneanties. Mais pource qu'en toutes ses œuvres cet admirable ouvrier a voulu faire estinceler le feu de l'amour parfait qu'il porte à l'homme qu'il avoit destiné de toute eternité pour l'unique instrument de sa gloire; assubietissant à luy seul tout ce qu'il feroit de plus esmerveillable en la creation de l'univers: il a en sa faveur estably des remedes souverains tant pour purifier & accomplir les choses qu'il avoit créées pour son usage, que pour le garder & conserver luy mesme contre les assauts de cette corruption mortelle.

This great and sovereign author of all things, foreseeing from the beginning of the world that infection and corruption would wage a mortal war in everything composed of body and spirit, chose to oppose this discord with a sure remedy, so as to save the one without losing the other. For since spirit and substance were enclosed within bodies, and bodies buried in corruption, it was impossible for bodies to be assailed and overcome by corruption without the spirit lodged in them suffering loss and injury, and remaining with them enslaved to death. Death is constantly on the watch to take nature unawares, and enters every genus and species to exercise its tyranny. There is more than sufficient proof in the natural, and sometimes premature, end of animals, plants and minerals, which we see occur through the accident of corruption. As it puts bodies to death, their spirits meet the same fate: that is, their life-giving powers are entirely extinguished. Yet in all his works this admirable craftsman wished to make the fire of his perfect love for

humanity shine forth. From all eternity he had appointed humanity as the sole instrument of his glory, subjecting to it alone the most wonderful things he would make in the creation of the universe. In its favour he therefore established sovereign remedies, both to purify and perfect the things he had created for human use, and to guard and preserve human beings themselves against the assaults of this mortal corruption.¹⁸⁶

SL_II_045002 1621 pp 205–207 · scans FR225, FR226, FR227

Cognoissant donc que les deux parties de l'homme estoient créées l'une en l'autre; assavoir l'esprit au corps; & que le corps est continuellement assiégué de la corruption, par la sensualité qui l'attire & alleche à l'intemperance, engendrant l'infection & degast de tous les membres, il preveit que l'esprit qui en est l'hoste ne pourroit y demeurer exempt de sa corruption contagieuse. Aussi voyons nous ordinairement que l'homme entierement adonné aux intemperances corporelles & desbordé aux sensualitez, devient par mesme moyen meschant & licentieux en tous desbordements d'esprit, faisant banqueroute à l'amour & crainte de Dieu: à l'honneur & gloire du monde: à la pitié vers les siens: & à la charité à l'endroit du prochain. De sorte que mourant sinistrement veauté dans le boubier de ses crimes, il est impossible que l'esprit ne participe aux peines comme il aura participé aux voluptés. Et considerant que toute la generation humaine depuis le premier excez advenu par les mords de la pomme deffendue, ne cessoit de courir à cette mort; & que par ce moyen la ruine de tout l'homme estoit incurable; il a prevenu ce malheur par un remede merueilleux & hors de la comprehension humaine.

Knowing, then, that the two parts of the human being had been created one within the other—the spirit within the body—and that the body is continually besieged by corruption through the sensuality that attracts and entices it into excess, bringing infection and wasting to all its members, he foresaw that the spirit which dwells there as a guest could not remain exempt from its contagious corruption. Indeed, we commonly see that someone wholly given over to bodily excess and unrestrained sensuality becomes, by the same means, wicked and licentious in every disorder of the spirit. Such a person defaults on the love and fear of God, on honour and glory in the world, on dutiful affection towards their own family, and on charity towards their neighbour. Thus, when they die miserably, wallowing in the mire of their crimes, the spirit cannot fail to share in the punishments as it has shared in the pleasures. And considering that the whole human race, ever since the first transgression brought about by the bites taken from the forbidden apple, had never ceased to hasten towards this death, and that the ruin of the whole human being was thereby incurable, he forestalled this misfortune with a wonderful remedy beyond human comprehension.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶. Corruption here concerns the dissolution and loss of life-giving power in a compound body. The chapter will extend this physical vocabulary into an explicitly moral and theological comparison; the changing context should govern the sense.

¹⁸⁷. 'Faisant banqueroute' applies the language of bankruptcy to obligations towards God, family and neighbour. 'Defaults on' preserves that governing metaphor. The apple is specified by this witness; the translation does not replace it with the more general biblical 'fruit'.

Car sçachant que par l'esprit & le corps l'homme participoit du Ciel & de la terre, il a voulu que le remede eust semblable participation. Ce qui s'est trouvé en Jesus-Christ nostre unique sauveur, restaurateur, & conservateur, descendu du Ciel en terre, lequel retenant toutefois sa deité entiere, s'est miraculeusement fait homme avec un mystere incompris & incomprehensible au sens commun, d'autant que le salut ne pouvoit provenir de la terre seule où regnoit la corruption; ains estoit necessaire que l'eau en decoulast d'enhaut où est la fontaine de pureté. Il est donc venu en terre pour habiter en nous & avec nous, afin de nous renfermer dans les barrieres de justice & temperance, en nous regenerant à une vie nouvelle, par un changement d'esprit & de corps; mortifiant ceux de corruption & peché, pour donner la naissance à ceux de netteté & vertu. Ce qui ne pouvoit arriver que par luy seul à cause des extremités des deux natures qu'il convenoit prendre, se faisant divin & humain, afin de moyenner l'alliance des choses basses avec les hautes, esloignes l'une de l'autre par cette distance incompatible de mort & de vie, de corruption & de pureté. La terre a receu ce tresor inestimable & trop excédant son merite, par un moyen qu'elle n'a sceu comprendre: d'où, apres la regeneration projetee par l'eau de purification, & le feu du saint Esprit, il est remonté au Ciel, entierement despouillé des accidents & passions corporelles seulement, & non pas du corps qu'il a emporté incorruptible & glorieux, ayant acquis immortalité par sa mort. Et de la dextre du pere il redescendra en terre apres l'universelle conflagration pour renouveler le monde & separer les bons exaltez & destinez à la vie, d'avec les mauvais deprimez & condamnez à la mort.

For, knowing that through spirit and body humanity partook of heaven and earth, he wished the remedy to have the same participation. This was found in Jesus Christ, our sole saviour, restorer and preserver, who descended from heaven to earth. While retaining his entire divinity, he miraculously became human through a mystery beyond the understanding and comprehension of ordinary sense. Salvation could not proceed from the earth alone, where corruption reigned; the water had to flow down from above, where the fountain of purity is. He therefore came to earth to dwell in us and with us, to contain us within the bounds of justice and temperance, regenerating us into a new life by a change of spirit and body: putting to death those of corruption and sin, and bringing forth those of cleanness and virtue. This could be accomplished by him alone, because of the extremes of the two natures he had to assume, becoming divine and human in order to mediate the union of lower things with higher, separated from one another by that incompatible distance between death and life, corruption and purity. The earth received this inestimable treasure, far beyond its deserts, by a means it could not comprehend. From there, after the regeneration set forth through the water of purification and the fire of the Holy Spirit, he ascended again into heaven, entirely stripped only of bodily accidents and passions, and not of the body itself, which he took with him incorruptible and glorious, having acquired immortality through his death. From the Father's right hand he will descend to earth again after the universal conflagration, to renew the world and separate the good,

exalted and appointed to life, from the wicked, cast down and condemned to death.¹⁸⁸

SL_II_04S004 1621 pp 209–211 · scans FR229, FR230, FR231

Voila comme le souverain pere de misericorde a pourveu au salut de l'homme, dont le corps conjoint avec l'esprit a pareillement son conservateur que le Ciel a fait naistre au monde, & qui doit estre recherché & decouvert par la lumiere de Nature; estant l'homme pour cet effect doué de ratiocination & jugement, afin de pouvoir cognoistre & comprendre les dons qui luy sont presentez. Mais cet homme qui pour faire une telle recherche avoit esté créé comme celeste, s'est oublié luy mesme, employant plustost ce qu'il avoit de noble & divin en soy à je ne sçay quelles vanitez frivoles & perissables qu'à l'inquisition de l'utile sapience, & solide verité. Bref il a mieux aymé suyvre l'inclination de sa terrestre geniture, que la divine & celeste intelligence, qu'il a laissé croupir en luy, comme une chose indifferente, & qui luy auroit esté casuellement transmise d'en haut. C'est pourquoy de tout temps la race des hommes quasi esteinte avant qu'avoir veu la lumiere: (excepté quelques uns que un Astre favorable a regardez d'un bon œil en naissant,) s'est plus avidement acharnee à la possession des tresors & biens perissables, qu'elle n'a pensé à l'acquisition des celestes dons & precieuses richesses que la bonne mere Nature luy estalle publiquement & en tous lieux, pour le salut & maintien de sa vie: endommagée plustost que secourue par l'abondance qui est communement enveloppee de mortelle corruption. Et se void clairement que les plus spirituels d'entre le vulgaire ayant aucunement entreveu le brillant esclat de ces richesses infinies, ne se sont amusez qu'à leur superficie; delaisant laschement la divine vertu recelee en leur centre. Ce qui a causé tant d'erreurs, non seulement en leur medecine, mais aussi en leur philosophie; qu'elles vont toutes deux rapant & chancelant dans les tenebreuses grottes d'incertitude, pour n'estre guidees d'aucune vive lumiere.

Thus the sovereign Father of mercy has provided for humanity's salvation. The body joined with the spirit likewise has its preserver, which heaven has brought forth into the world and which must be sought and discovered by the light of Nature. For this purpose humanity is endowed with reasoning and judgement, so as to recognise and understand the gifts presented to it. Yet the human being, created as heavenly in order to undertake such a search, has forgotten himself. He employs what is noble and divine in him upon all manner of frivolous, perishable vanities, rather than in seeking useful wisdom and substantial truth. In short, he has preferred to follow the inclination of his earthly birth instead of his divine and heavenly understanding. He has allowed that understanding to stagnate within him, as though it were a matter of indifference, casually transmitted to him from above. Hence the human race in every age, almost extinct before seeing the light apart from a few whom a favourable star regarded kindly at their birth, has fastened more greedily upon the possession of treasures and perishable goods than it has thought of acquiring the heavenly gifts and precious riches which good mother Nature displays openly and

¹⁸⁸. The distinction between bodily 'accidents and passions' and the body itself is explicit. 'Accidents' are contingent conditions or properties; 'passions' here includes things suffered. The argument depends on a preserved body whose corruptible conditions have been removed.

everywhere for the salvation and maintenance of its life. That life is harmed rather than helped by an abundance commonly wrapped in mortal corruption. We can clearly see that even the more discerning among ordinary people, after glimpsing something of the brilliant splendour of these infinite riches, have lingered only over their surface, weakly abandoning the divine power hidden at their centre. This has caused so many errors in their medicine, and also in their philosophy, that both creep and stagger through the dark caverns of uncertainty, guided by no living light.^{189,190}

SL_II_045005 1621 pp 211–214 · scans FR231, FR232, FR233, FR234

R'appellant donc les esprits à la clarté qui les doit conduire vers le souverain remède que Dieu a particulièrement destiné pour la conservation de l'homme en le comblant des benedictions celestes, j'oseray avec toute l'humilité & sincerité requise & bienseante à ma portee & profession, non comme Theologien, mais seulement comme simple disciple des Philosophes, crayonner icy quelques naïves conceptions, que les amateurs de verité pourront autant favoriser qu'ils les trouveront raisonnables. Je diray donc que toute intelligence que l'homme seul communique à l'homme est incertaine & confuse; pource qu'en luy logent ordinairement ignorance & irresolution. Mais celle qu'il reçoit de la lumiere universelle est tres-claire, & tres-fermement appuyee sur un fondement inebbranlable. Car sçavoir absolument, est cognoistre les choses par leurs causes premieres; & n'y a jamais de certitude aux secondes, jusques à ce que l'on soit parvenu à leur source. C'est pourquoy la Nature des especes ne peut estre cognüe si la cognoissance de leur genre n'a precedé. Ny les Natures des Microcosmes (dont le nombre est infiny) sans avoir premierement compris celle du grand monde qui leur a donné l'estre. L'homme aussi ne peut estre bien cognu sans la prealable cognoissance du Macrocosme, duquel il n'est que l'effigie: non plus que ce Macrocosme sans avoir apprehendé dequoy & comment il est fait. Car en qu'elle façon pourroit-on cognoistre l'homme qui n'est à son commencement qu'un peu de glaïre ou musilage informe, ny comme il monte à la perfection, si l'on n'a cognu ceux qui l'ont engendré, non pas les seconds parents, qui sont le pere & la mere, Mais les premiers, assavoir le Ciel & la Terre. Et si mesme l'on n'avoit parfaite intelligence de la creation premiere de ceux cy, comment les pourroit on cognoistre? Tout ainsi que le limbe de l'homme gist en la matrice où il n'est qu'un peu de fange, qui par apres se forme sur l'exemplaire des parents; & par les mesmes progres & façons qu'ils furent parfaits. Ainsi le Ciel & la Terre, & tout ce qui est en iceux, c'est à dire tout ce grand monde, est comme un limbe & masse dans le cahos, dont on ne peut avoir aucune lumiere si l'on ne contemple les projects & progres de sa distinction & formation. Venons donc à l'original afin d'en cognoistre les extraicts: & par le patron jugeons des choses imitees.

Recalling minds, then, to the light which should lead them towards the sovereign remedy that God has especially appointed for humanity's preservation, filling it with heavenly blessings, I shall venture, with all the humility and sincerity required and fitting to my capacity and

¹⁸⁹. The favourable star belongs to the source's astrological explanation of exceptional understanding. The surface/centre contrast then distinguishes possession of an outward substance from knowledge of the power hidden within it.

¹⁹⁰. The original errata on FR342 directs 'la race des hommes quasi esteinte avant', omitting the printed 'est'. The French reading and English syntax follow that correction, treating the phrase as a qualification of the subject before its main verb.

calling, to sketch a few straightforward conceptions. I do so as a simple pupil of the Philosophers, rather than as a theologian; lovers of truth may favour these conceptions in so far as they find them reasonable. I shall therefore say that all understanding which human beings alone communicate to one another is uncertain and confused, since ignorance and irresolution commonly dwell within them. But the understanding received from the universal light is very clear, firmly supported upon an unshakable foundation. To know absolutely is to know things through their first causes; there is never certainty about secondary causes until one has reached their source. Hence the nature of species cannot be known unless knowledge of their genus has come first. Nor can the natures of the microcosms, infinite in number, be known without first understanding that of the great world which gave them being. The human being likewise cannot be properly known without prior knowledge of the macrocosm, whose image he is; nor can this macrocosm be known without grasping what it is made of and how. How could one understand a human being, initially only a little formless slime or mucilage, or how he advances to perfection, without knowing those who generated him? I mean the first parents, heaven and earth, rather than the secondary parents, his father and mother. And how could one know even these without a complete understanding of their first creation? The human limbus lies in the womb, where it is only a little mire, and afterwards forms upon the pattern of its parents, by the same stages and means through which they were perfected. In the same way heaven and earth and everything within them—that is, the whole great world—exist as a limbus and mass within chaos. No light can be obtained concerning it unless one considers the designs and stages of its differentiation and formation. Let us therefore turn to the original in order to understand its copies, and judge the things imitated by their pattern.^{191,192}

SL_II_04S006 1621 pp 214–217 · scans FR234, FR235, FR236, FR237

Je dy que le premier & souverain createur (qui est comme le point duquel partent toutes les choses, & l'inepuisable source d'où decoulent cette infinité de ruisseaux,) a une nature qui luy est particuliere; assavoir de produire & conserver tout en l'univers: Car c'est le propre du parfaitement bon autheur de produire & procreer les choses, puis les entretenir & conserver quand il les a créées. De ce premier effect, qui est la creation, le secret en est caché à tous, & ne l'avons que comme en effigie aux generations. Mais le second est ouvert pour le moins aux illuminez, comme esleuz & nez de l'esprit; non pas aux enfans de la chair; afin que ces precieuses marguerites ne soient indignement prostituees aux salles & stupides pourceaux.

¹⁹¹. A genus is the more general class to which a species belongs. Macrocosm means the great world; microcosm, a small world. The source uses this logical and cosmological hierarchy to argue that particular bodies must be understood through their universal origin.

¹⁹². 'Limbe' is retained as 'limbus': a primordial or generative matrix/mass in the author's natural philosophy. In this passage it is applied both to human generation and to the world's emergence from chaos; it is not the theological limbo of souls.

Or le premier & plus excellent degré de cette conservation a esté fait & enseigné par Jesus-Christ, en la maniere cy devant declaree: lequel a voulu estre imité en toutes choses, s'estant avec un mistere indicible luy mesme donné pour patron de toutes les bonnes œuvres qui se doivent faire au monde. Car la Nature marche tousjours d'un mesme pas sans jamais quitter ses sentiers qu'elle suit exactement en tous ses ouvrages. Ainsi donc que le pere & commun conservateur a pourveu à la commune conservation des la naissance du monde; La Nature a semblablement fait son project des le commencement, & s'est de tout temps employee à ses productions avec une action continuelle. Car tout ainsi qu'il a esté necessaire que tout salut vint d'enhaut pour la conservation de la partie spirituelle de l'homme, il a esté expedient par la mesme necessité que celuy des corps sourdist de la mesme roche; d'autant que des choses basses où est le siege & habitacle de la corruption mortelle ne peuvent proceder salut ny vie. C'est pourquoy le Ciel comme fontaine perpetuelle d'immortalité & perfection va continuellement influant ses vertus sur le corps de la terre, que les Astres benins favorisent de leurs aspects amoureusement pitoyables en consideration des mortels affligez; afin d'engendrer en elle par ces influxions un Esprit immortel & vivifiant, qui prenant corps au sein de cette feconde mere a monstré & dilaté ses vertus par toutes les parties du monde; les departant à chacune creature selon sa portee. Et de là sont procedees les forces particulieres reconnues par leurs effects aux herbes, bestes, pierres, & autres choses qui ont tiré de cet Esprit general, cette infinité de puissantes proprietéz, qui font quasi miracle en la conservation de nos corps, & de tous autres.

I say that the first and sovereign creator, who is like the point from which all things depart and the inexhaustible source from which this infinity of streams flows, possesses a nature peculiar to himself: to produce and preserve everything in the universe. For it is the property of a perfectly good author to produce and bring forth things, and then to maintain and preserve them once he has created them. The secret of this first effect, creation, is hidden from everyone. We possess it only as an image in acts of generation. The second, however, is open at least to the enlightened, as those chosen and born of the spirit, and not to the children of the flesh, so that these precious pearls should not be shamefully exposed to filthy and stupid swine.

The first and most excellent degree of this preservation was accomplished and taught by Jesus Christ in the manner already declared. He wished to be imitated in all things, having, through an ineffable mystery, offered himself as the pattern of all the good works that should be done in the world. For Nature always proceeds at the same pace, never leaving the paths which she follows exactly in all her works. Just as the Father and universal preserver provided for universal preservation from the world's birth, so Nature likewise formed her design from the beginning and has always carried on her productions through continual activity. Just as all salvation had necessarily to come from above for the preservation of humanity's spiritual part, so the preservation of bodies, by the same necessity, had to spring from the same rock. Neither salvation nor life can proceed from lower things, where mortal corruption has its seat and dwelling. Heaven, as the perpetual fountain of immortality and perfection, therefore continually

pours its powers into the body of the earth. The kindly stars favour it with lovingly compassionate aspects, in consideration of afflicted mortals, so as to generate within it through these influences an immortal, life-giving spirit. Taking a body in the bosom of this fruitful mother, that spirit has manifested and extended its powers throughout every part of the world, distributing them to each creature according to its capacity. From it proceed the particular powers recognised by their effects in plants, animals, stones and other things. These have drawn from the universal spirit that infinity of potent properties which work almost miraculously in preserving our bodies and all others.^{193,194,195}

SL_II_045007 1621 pp 217–220 · scans FR237, FR238, FR239, FR240

Or comme Dieu a bien voulu enrichir les hommes des perfections de son fils, selon l'estendue de leur naturel: Et toutesfois n'a pas voulu que chacun d'eux estant souillé de vice allast chercher son remede & parfaict salut en son semblable, mais bien en celuy seul qui estoit le vray Ocean duquel leur estoit decoulee cette perfection. Aussi Nature qui s'est tousjours rendue exacte observatrice des volonte de Dieu & imitatrice de ses operations, n'a point estably la parfaite vertu de guarison & restauration aux herbes & creatures particulieres, mais a voulu qu'on la cherchast precisément au centre d'où elle leur est generalmente communiquee, assavoir dans la terre, où cet Esprit vivifiant s'engendre: Car si les simples sont douez des vertus de guarir, restaurer, nourrir, & conserver, de combien en doit estre mieux pourveu celuy qui les leur depart, & duquel toutes choses les reçoivent? Or pour prouver que la terre est la tresoriere & dispensatrice de ces vertus, la seule experience journaliere suffit pour toutes raisons. Il faut bien qu'elle les possede toutes, car autrement elle ne les pourroit donner. C'est donc une chose digne d'admiration & d'estonnement que tant de grands personnages ayent consommé le temps de leurs estudes & pratiques à puiser l'eau des simples ruisseaux desja fort esloignez de la pure limpidité de leur source, comme ayant passé par l'impur limon des terres immondes & ne se sont avisez de courir droit à la propre fontaine. Non que je vueille despiser les medicaments speciaux, mais je voudrois que l'on cherchast le general, sans toutesfois delaisser les particuliers. Car jaçoit que celuy là suffisse pour toutes guarisons, si est-ce que ceux cy sont encore louables pour mettre fin à certains maux exterieurs qui n'assaillent que la superficie, & non pas le centre de la santé.

Retournant donc à mon but je diray derechef que la terre est la matrice en laquelle le Ciel a engendré cet Esprit nourrisseur, restaurateur, & conservateur des corps, duquel seul toute solidité & perfection de guarison peut & doit estre puisee. Or comment il faut trouver & prendre cet Esprit puissamment vertueux, tout homme prudent qu'un sincere desir portera à cette utile recherche, doit sur tout estre adverti de suivre incessamment le dessein tracé de la main divine, sur lequel Nature mesme se forme & guide: combien que Dieu excedant infiniment la Nature ne soit en façon quelconque attaché aux raisons naturelles, non plus qu'un souverain monarque aux loix qu'il auroit prescrites, lesquelles toutesfois ses peuples observeroient sans

¹⁹³. The 'first effect' is creation; the 'second' is preservation. That distinction governs the remainder of the analogy. Generation provides an image of creation, while the knowledge of preservation is said to be accessible to a properly prepared recipient.

¹⁹⁴. 'Marguerites' means pearls here, as the following swine image makes clear; it does not mean daisies. The allusion is to the injunction concerning pearls and swine in Matthew 7:6.

¹⁹⁵. 'Influxions' and the stars' 'aspects' describe the causal descent of celestial powers in the source's cosmology. They should not be replaced with a particular modern physical force. The ensuing embodiment gives these powers a terrestrial seat.

demander pourquoi il les auroit ainsi établies. Mais qui a mieux ensuivy les traits de ce divin modele que le vieil Trismegiste, qui premier apres le deluge (selon le dire d'aucuns) ayant ouvert aux hommes les misteres de la parfaicte cognoissance de Dieu, a parfaitement touché ceux de la Nature?

God has been pleased to enrich human beings with the perfections of his Son according to the extent of their natural capacity. Yet he did not wish each of them, stained with vice, to seek a remedy and complete salvation in another person like themselves, but in him alone, the true ocean from which that perfection had flowed to them. So too Nature, always an exact observer of God's will and imitator of his operations, has not placed the perfect power of healing and restoration in particular plants and creatures. She has willed that it should be sought precisely at the centre from which it is communicated to them all: in the earth, where this life-giving spirit is generated. If simples are endowed with the powers to heal, restore, nourish and preserve, how much better provided with them must be the one that distributes those powers, from which everything receives them? To prove that the earth is their treasury and distributor, daily experience alone suffices in place of every argument. She must possess them all, for otherwise she could not give them. It is therefore a matter for wonder and astonishment that so many great persons have spent the time of their studies and practice drawing water from mere streams, already far removed from the pure clarity of their source after passing through the impure mud of unclean earths, without thinking to go directly to the fountain itself. I do not wish to disparage specific medicines. I would have the universal remedy sought without abandoning particular ones. Although the former suffices for every cure, the latter are still commendable for putting an end to certain external ailments which assail only the surface, rather than the centre of health.

Returning to my purpose, I shall say again that the earth is the womb in which heaven has generated this spirit that nourishes, restores and preserves bodies. From it alone the full substance and perfection of healing can and should be drawn. As for how this powerfully efficacious spirit is to be found and taken, every prudent person led by a sincere desire to undertake this useful search must above all be advised to follow continually the design traced by the divine hand, upon which Nature herself is formed and guided. God, infinitely exceeding Nature, is in no way bound by natural reasons, any more than a sovereign monarch is bound by the laws he has prescribed, although his peoples would observe them without asking why he had established them in that form. Yet who has followed the lines of this divine model better than ancient Trismegistus? First after the Flood, according to some accounts, he disclosed to human beings the mysteries

of the perfect knowledge of God, and comprehensively addressed those of Nature.^{196,197,198}

SL_II_04S008 1621 pp 221–223 · scans FR241, FR242, FR243

Car outre ce qu'il a angeliquement esclarcy la divinité, par le Pimandre, où il manifeste avec une doctrine admirable, la creation du grand & petit monde; leur commencement, progres, & duree: continuant d'un mesme vol cette sacree Philosophie en l'Asclepe, il semble que d'un Esprit & voix prophetique il declare hautement la regeneration de l'homme se devoir un jour faire par l'entremise du fils de Dieu, revestu de la robe humaine. Et si a encore industrieusement frappé le mesme blanc en la table d'esmeraude, où il dit: qu'ainsi que toutes les choses du monde sont créées d'un seul subject, par la medication d'un, qui est Dieu; son magistere (qui est cette souveraine & generale medecine) sera parfaite & accomplye de cette chose unique par adaptation. Cette adaptation, n'est-ce pas le miroir où nous voyons enigmatiquement representee la meditation divine; pour monstrier que Nature ensuit necessairement les pas de son maistre: tout ainsi qu'es autres livres il a tesmoigné que l'auteur de la regeneration à salut devoit venir du Ciel & se faire homme, vivant entre les hommes pour leur edification. Aussi dit il en sa table (qu'il a laissee comme un testament & dernier tesmoignage de l'excellence de ses hautes conceptions) que cet Esprit general conservateur des corps, auquel il attribue le nom de pere de la perfection de tout le monde, est descendu des Cieux, assavoir du Soleil & de la Lune, qu'il a dit au Pimandre estre les principaux gouverneurs en cette Monarchie mondaine, afin de se corporifier en la terre, qu'il nomme sa nourrice, par le moyen de l'air qu'il dit l'avoir porté en son ventre, d'autant que les influences celestes ne pourroient estre communiées à la terre, si l'air qui premier les reçoit ne les portoit comme mediateur & leur servoit de vehicule. Et tout ainsi que le divin restaurateur & protecteur des ames n'a rien quitté de sa divinité se faisant homme, aussi dit il que cet Esprit universel conservateur des corps garde & maintient sa force entiere estant converty en terre; c'est à dire en prenant corps terrestre.

Besides explaining divinity in an angelic manner through the Pimander, where he sets forth, with admirable teaching, the creation of the great and little world, their beginning, development and duration, he continues this sacred philosophy in the same flight in the Asclepius. There he seems, with prophetic spirit and voice, to proclaim that humanity's regeneration was one day to be accomplished through the Son of God, clothed in human dress. He has also skilfully aimed at the same mark in the Emerald Table. There he says that, just as everything in the world is created from one single subject through the medication of one, who is God, his magistry—that sovereign and universal medicine—will be perfected and completed from this unique thing by adaptation. Is this adaptation not the mirror in which we see divine

¹⁹⁶. 'Simples' are medicinal materials considered individually, as opposed to compounded preparations. The author acknowledges particular remedies while claiming a more comprehensive source of efficacy; the claim is his, and does not identify a modern universal medicine.

¹⁹⁷. FR238 is physically continuous between FR237 and FR239 but is printed '118' where 218 is expected. The source label is retained and explained; no page of text is supplied by conjecture.

¹⁹⁸. The source itself qualifies the placement of Trismegistus after the Flood: 'according to some'. That chronology is reported as the author's received account, not supplied as an established modern date. 'Nature' here operates under a divine pattern even though God is said to exceed natural causes.

meditation enigmatically represented, showing that Nature necessarily follows her master's steps? In his other books he likewise testified that the author of regeneration unto salvation must come from heaven and become human, living among human beings for their edification. In his Table, which he left as a testament and final testimony to the excellence of his lofty conceptions, he also says that this universal spirit which preserves bodies, and to which he gives the name father of the perfection of the whole world, descended from the heavens: from the sun and moon, which he called the chief governors of this worldly monarchy in the Pimander. It descended in order to acquire a body in the earth, which he calls its nurse, through the air, which he says carried it in its belly. Celestial influences could not be communicated to the earth unless the air, which receives them first, bore them as a mediator and served as their vehicle. Just as the divine restorer and protector of souls relinquished none of his divinity in becoming human, so he says that this universal spirit which preserves bodies keeps and maintains its entire power when converted into earth—that is, when taking an earthly body.^{199,200,201}

SL_II_04S009 1621 pp 223–225 · scans FR243, FR244, FR245

Dieu a voulu que son propre Fils nostre Redempteur, fust luy mesme regeneré en son humanité par l'eau du Baptisme & le feu du saint Esprit. Non pas qu'au centre de sa Nature il eust besoin aucun d'estre purgé, mais seulement parce qu'il estoit parmy le monde & les hommes souillez de corruption; ausquels il vouloit en tout & par tout estre vray patron de renouvellement & purification: leur donnant un visible & ample tesmoignage qu'il estoit quant à la chair de leur nature; non pas souillé ny corrompu, mais passible & mortel aussi bien qu'eux. Semblablement la bonne mere nature a voulu que son fils premier né, qui en son centre est de substance pure, fust neantmoins renouvelé & comme regeneré par l'eau & le feu; c'est à dire par la separation de ce qui est terrestre d'avec ce qui est igné; de ce qui est espais d'avec ce qui est subtil; & pour dire en un mot de l'impur d'avec le pur. Ce qu'entend Hermes disant qu'on separe la terre du feu: non pas que l'on doive faire separation de sa terre propre ny de son propre feu: Car l'homme ne separera point ceux que Dieu a conjoints; mais seulement de ce qui est impur & grossier, d'avec le pur & subtil de la substance de cette terre & de ce feu propre, qui sont les parties ou Elements de nostre esprit corporifié.

God wished his own Son, our Redeemer, himself to be regenerated in his humanity through the water of baptism and the fire of the Holy Spirit. This was not because the centre of his nature had any need to be purged, but because he was among the world and human beings stained by corruption. To them he wished to be, in everything and

¹⁹⁹. Pimander and Asclepius are titles of writings attributed here to Hermes Trismegistus. Their interpretation as a prophecy of Christ belongs to this author's argument, rather than an independently established historical account.

²⁰⁰. FR241 prints 'medication'; FR242 then prints 'meditation'. Both readings are visually clear and retained, rather than silently replaced with 'mediation' or a familiar version of the Emerald Table. 'Magistery' names the completed work or commanding preparation here.

²⁰¹. The original errata, FR342, corrects the opening to 'angeliquement esclaircy la divinité' and removes the question mark after 'edification'. Those instructions are followed. The same errata sheet supplies minor readings adopted at printed pp.213,217 and220.

everywhere, the true pattern of renewal and purification. He gave them visible and ample testimony that in the flesh he shared their nature: unstained and uncorrupted, yet capable of suffering and mortal as they were. Likewise, good mother Nature wished her firstborn son, pure in substance at his centre, nevertheless to be renewed and, as it were, regenerated by water and fire. That means separating what is earthly from what is fiery, what is dense from what is subtle—in a word, the impure from the pure. This is what Hermes means when he says that earth is to be separated from fire. It does not mean separating the subject's own earth from its own fire, for human beings will not separate those whom God has joined. It means separating the impure and coarse from the pure and subtle in the substance of this earth and its own fire, which are the parts or elements of our embodied spirit.^{202,203}

SL_IL_04S010 1621 pp 225–227 · scans FR245, FR246, FR247

Mais outre cette intelligence qui se presente la premiere aux yeux de l'intellect; il y en a encore une autre plus cachee: car ayant signifié par la separation de la terre d'avec le feu, celle du gros & du subtil; il a encore voulu dire qu'il falloit separer les qualitez naturelles de ces deux elements, en despouillant l'humide froideur attachee aux choses terrestres & graves, sans lesquelles elle ne peut subsister, pour revestir la chaude siccité, qui est de la nature du feu, & par consequent legere & spirituelle: C'est pourquoy il adjouste qu'il monte de la terre au ciel, assavoir d'imperfection à perfection: car Paracelse appelle le feu firmament. Or comme rien ne peut parvenir à la perfection celeste sans avoir premierement quitté l'imparfaicte & passible escorce mortelle, en laquelle proprement surabonde cette qualité de froideur qui cause l'accident de la mortification, comme la chaleur engendre la vie: aussi la tressage Nature a estably cette reigle qu'il faut que son subject endure & passe par l'obscur noirceur de la mort, pour atteindre une claire & candide immortalité & renouvellement de vie: c'est à dire une essence impassible, sur laquelle ny le feu, ny la corruption n'ayent plus aucun pouvoir. Et de vray cette acquisition de vie par la mort se pratique naturellement en toutes creatures vitales: Car il faut que tout sperme ou semence aux animaux se mortifie en la matrice; & aux vegetaux dans la terre: avant qu'aucune croissance vegetable, ou specification se puisse faire. Que si cette reigle s'observe religieusement aux membres; de combien doit elle estre recommandee & suivie plus exactement au chef? Et si par cette mortification la vie des accessoires acquiert quelque duree: combien plus s'approchera de la perpetuité celle du principal? Jesus-Christ mesme nous enseigne ces choses par la similitude du grain qu'il a dit ne pouvoir fructifier s'il ne meurt premierement: signifiant le mystere de sa Resurrection que sa mort devoit precéder. Car il voulut mourir pour renaistre à une plus durable & glorieuse vie: se montrant en cela, non seulement exemplaire des hommes, mais vray patron de toute la Nature.

Besides this meaning, which first presents itself to the eyes of the intellect, there is another, more hidden one. Having signified the separation of coarse from subtle by that of earth from fire, he also wished to say that the natural qualities of these two elements had to be

²⁰². 'Passible' means capable of undergoing suffering. The source expressly distinguishes that condition from stain or corruption. The natural comparison likewise distinguishes a pure centre from accidental impurities.

²⁰³. 'Those whom God has joined' echoes the scriptural formulation concerning marriage. Here it concerns the proper earth and fire of the embodied subject: removing impurity must preserve their necessary conjunction.

separated. One must strip away the moist coldness attached to earthly and heavy things, without which it cannot subsist, and put on the warm dryness which belongs to the nature of fire and is therefore light and spiritual. Hence he adds that it ascends from earth to heaven: from imperfection to perfection, for Paracelsus calls fire the firmament. Nothing can attain heavenly perfection without first leaving behind the imperfect, suffering, mortal husk in which that quality of coldness especially abounds, causing the condition of mortification, just as heat generates life. So all-wise Nature has established the rule that her subject must endure and pass through death's dark blackness to reach a clear, radiant immortality and renewal of life: an essence incapable of suffering, over which neither fire nor corruption has any further power. Indeed, this acquisition of life through death occurs naturally in all living creatures. Every sperm or seed in animals must undergo mortification in the womb, and in plants in the earth, before any growth or specification of the plant can take place. If this rule is faithfully observed in the members, how much more exactly must it be commended and followed in the head? If through this mortification the life of accessory things acquires some duration, how much closer to perpetuity will the life of their principal come? Jesus Christ himself teaches us these things through the likeness of the grain which, he said, cannot bear fruit unless it first dies. He signified the mystery of his Resurrection, which his death had to precede. He wished to die in order to be born again into a more lasting and glorious life, showing himself thereby to be both humanity's exemplar and the true pattern of all Nature.^{204,205}

SL_II_04S011 1621 pp 227–230 · scans FR247, FR248, FR249, FR250

Ce saint & docte Hermite Romain reveremment & souventefois allegué par tous les philosophes naturels qui ont escrit depuis quinze cens ans: Morien, en dit autant du grain fix auquel Nature a donné pouvoir de parfaire & multiplier les metaux. Car il dit que s'il n'est pourry & noircy il ne pourra estre accompli, & sera reduit à rien. Je me suis licencié de dire cecy, afin d'apprendre aux moins instruits comment on doit recognoistre le createur par les simples creatures. Et d'autant que les hommes vulgaires mandient cette cognoissance des choses plus esloignées, faisant comme ceux qui demandent la perfection des sciences aux escoliers de la dernière classe, au lieu de consulter les vieux oracles des plus sages docteurs: J'ay bien voulu par ces naïves conceptions les conjurer d'employer l'excellence de cette ame ratiocinante qui leur est donnée pour enquerir quel est ce souverain principe, par les choses plus exquises qui nous donnent & conservent la vie, & à toutes les creatures mortelles.

La mortification precede donc necessairement toute entree à la Vie, & principalement en cet esprit premier né de Nature alors qu'il a pris corps. Car l'on ne peut autrement separer de luy ce qui empesche sa regeneration à vie, & la

²⁰⁴. 'Specification' is the acquisition of a determinate kind or form. 'Mortification' here is a stage leading to renewed life; its sense cannot be reduced to bodily extinction in every instance or to a purely moral exercise.

²⁰⁵. The grain's death before fruitfulness alludes to John 12:24. The source develops its own natural-philosophical application. Its attribution of 'firmament' to Paracelsus is retained; no unverified work or page reference is supplied.

purification de son essence. Non pas qu'en cette mort il perde son corps par bruslement & destruction de feu, ny par la pourriture: mais tout ainsi qu'en la germination des semences la putrefaction n'aneantit point ce qui se corporifie en elles: ou bien tout ainsi que le precieux corps de nostre Redempteur ne fut nullement empiré, destruit, ny corrompu; ayant tousjours en luy ce centre & germe de vie par lequel il ressuscita, auquel ces deux natures furent tellement jointes ensemble qu'elles ne s'abandonnerent jamais: car la corporelle retint la spirituelle icy bas autant qu'il fut necessaire pour nostre salut, & l'esprit emporta le corps au Ciel pour sa gloire, apres le mystere accomply. C'est pourquoy en l'exaltation du Mercure ou esprit universel, apres le premier degré qui se fait en sa preparation par la separation, tout ce qui reste en luy corporel & spirituel est rendu volatil, parce que la vertu eslevante surmonte encore la vertu fixante. Toutesfois à la fin le fix retient avec soy le volatil par l'action de la chaleur aydante, qui augmentant les forces des deux plus nobles elements aneantit totalement le pouvoir des deux plus imbeciles.

Morien, that holy and learned Roman hermit, reverently and frequently cited by all the natural philosophers who have written these past fifteen hundred years, says as much of the fixed grain to which Nature has given the power to perfect and multiply metals. He says that unless it is putrefied and blackened it cannot be completed, and will be reduced to nothing. I have allowed myself to say this in order to teach the less instructed how to recognise the creator through his simple creatures. Ordinary people beg this knowledge from more remote things, behaving like those who ask pupils in the lowest class for perfection in the sciences instead of consulting the ancient oracles of the wisest teachers. Through these straightforward conceptions I have therefore wished to entreat them to employ the excellence of the reasoning soul given to them, in order to inquire into this sovereign principle through the most excellent things which give and preserve life in us and in every mortal creature.

Mortification therefore necessarily precedes every entrance into life, especially in this firstborn spirit of Nature once it has taken a body. There is no other way to separate from it what prevents its regeneration into life and the purification of its essence. This death does not mean that it loses its body through burning and destruction by fire, or through putrefaction. Rather, just as in the germination of seeds putrefaction does not annihilate what acquires a body within them, so the precious body of our Redeemer was in no way impaired, destroyed or corrupted. It always contained that centre and germ of life through which he rose again. Within it the two natures were so joined together that they never abandoned one another: the bodily nature retained the spiritual here below for as long as our salvation required, and the spirit bore the body into heaven for its glory after the mystery had been accomplished. Accordingly, in the exaltation of mercury, or universal spirit, after the first stage accomplished in its preparation through separation, everything bodily and spiritual that remains within it is made volatile, because the elevating power still overcomes the fixing

power. In the end, however, the fixed retains the volatile with itself through the action of assisting heat. By increasing the strength of the two nobler elements, that heat entirely extinguishes the power of the two weaker ones.^{206,207}

SL_II_04S012 1621 pp 230–232 · scans FR250, FR251, FR252

Ce qu'a voulu signifier Hermes en l'un de ses traictez par l'oyseau plumeux qui est retenu par l'oyseau sans plumes. Et Nicolas Flamel par les deux dragons l'un garny d'aisles, & l'autre non, qu'il a fait représenter, en l'une des arches du cimetiere de S. Innocent à Paris. Et dans un autre tableau de pierre à costé du grand Autel de l'Eglise de sainte Genevieve des ardans, qu'il a fait bastir. Mais sans nous esgarer dans les destours de ces dedalles; voyons nous pas que tous les vegetables ne cessent de croistre & monter en l'air par la force de cet esprit volatil, lequel (comme j'ay dit au premier livre) les esleveroit encore davantage pour le desir qu'il a de retourner au lieu d'où il est party, s'ils n'estoient contretenus & arrestez par leur propre terre & masse corporelle, en laquelle est caché je ne sçay quoy de fixe. Or pour n'estre accusé de contradiction par quelques uns non encore usitez aux termes communs de nos maistres, je me veux expliquer, en les advertissant que je n'entens nullement que cette spiritualité volatile soit ce que j'ay cy devant appelé souphre volatil & separable, qui est l'un des auteurs de corruption: Mais seulement la plus simple partie de cette vapeur primeraine, qui ne perd jamais son interne subtilité & acuité, dont le naturel est de s'eslever & tendre à la perfection. Car sublimer proprement selon le vray sens des Philosophes n'est autre chose que de parfaire, & d'exalter les matieres d'imperfection à perfection. Tout ainsi donc que ce Mercure a sa substance eslevable; aussi a il sa substance fixable. Quant à la premiere elle luy est innee d'elle mesme: Mais quant à la seconde encore qu'il l'ait en son centre (c'est à dire en puissance) elle ne peut toutesfois sortir en effect sinon par le secours de l'art.

This is what Hermes wished to signify in one of his treatises by the feathered bird held by the featherless bird; and Nicolas Flamel by the two dragons, one winged and the other without wings, which he had represented on one of the arches of the cemetery of Saint Innocent in Paris, and in another stone panel beside the high altar of the church of Sainte-Geneviève-des-Ardents, which he had built. But without losing ourselves in the turnings of these labyrinths, do we not see that all plants continually grow and rise into the air through the power of this volatile spirit? As I said in the first book, it would raise them even further, through its desire to return to the place from which it departed, if they were not restrained and held back by their own earth and bodily mass, in which something fixed lies hidden. To avoid being accused of contradiction by those not yet accustomed to our masters' common terms, I wish to explain myself. By this volatile spirituality I do not mean what I earlier called volatile and separable sulphur, which is one

²⁰⁶. The 'fixed grain' is a stable generative principle of the work, rather than an identified cereal ingredient. The author presents Morien as an ancient authority and supplies a sweeping chronology of reception; that chronology is preserved as his statement, without assigning it independent historical confirmation.

²⁰⁷. Fixed and volatile name contrasting behaviours within the prepared subject. 'Exaltation' brings an increase of power or perfection. The passage explicitly warns against reading its required death as wholesale destruction of the body it seeks to preserve.

of the causes of corruption. I mean only the simplest part of that primordial vapour, which never loses its internal subtlety and sharpness, and whose nature is to rise and tend towards perfection. Properly speaking, in the Philosophers' true sense, to sublime is simply to perfect and exalt materials from imperfection to perfection. Just as this mercury has its substance capable of being raised, so it also has a substance capable of being fixed. The first belongs to it innately. The second, although present at its centre—that is, potentially—cannot come into actual effect except through the assistance of art.^{208,209}

SL_II_045013 1621 pp 232–235 · scans FR252, FR253, FR254, FR255

Et pour monstrer plus clairement par quelles voyes la Nature procede en ses operations, j'estime estre bien raisonnable de dire icy quelque chose des causes & manieres de fixation. Reprenant donc cet axiome indubitable allegué des le commencement de ce livre; qu'en l'ordre & constitution du monde est observee une reigle infaillible & perpetuelle, que tout ce qui a vie doit avoir quelque duree en icelle; & que rien n'est produit sous le Ciel qui n'ait quelque espece de vie en soy, je diray que cette duree se fait par conservation, aspirante à une perpetuité. Car le but de la Nature est de vouloir perpetuer: estant le propre du bon autheur de vouloir tousjours conserver l'ouvrage de ses mains, jusques à ce qu'il soit arrivé au terme de la vieillesse; & que la lumiere de la vie s'esteigne par les froides bruines de la mort, aux pieds de laquelle il fait de necessité que toutes choses naissantes se prosternent, par cette inevitable loy imposee à tout ce qui prend commencement, de prendre fin. Que si les choses demeuroient en leur premier extreme, qui est le naistre ou le commencer, sans s'avancer au second, qui est le mourir ou le finir, tout resteroit en son Chaos, ou pour mieux dire rien ne consisteroit; & seroient les principes de tout subiect inutiles, voire destruits d'eux mesmes. Pour eviter auquel inconvenient Nature a estably cet ordre & progression des choses, estant en continuelle action & motion, c'est à dire conservation & perpetuation. Or ce qui estend la vie, & mesme ce qui la conserve, ne peut estre sans quelque fixation & consistance durable contre les assauts de la destruction: Et cette essence conservatrice est en quelques especes plus fixe qu'es autres, à raison dequoy elles sont de plus longue & durable vie, comme plus difficiles à destruire ou mortifier: ainsi que le Cerf & le Corbeau entre les animaux: Le chesne entre les plantes: & l'Or entre les mineraux. Ce qui leur vient de la commixtion des elemens en eux plus egalle & plus digeste, en sorte que la mort, de qui le propre est de diviser & disjoindre, ne peut si facilement entrer en ces composez trop fermement liez & cimentez par une forte digestion. Et tant plus les corps sont pourvus de ces deux remedes, tant moins sont ils subiects aux accidens de mortelle corruption.

To show more clearly the paths Nature follows in her operations, I think it very reasonable to say something here about the causes and methods of fixation. I therefore return to the unquestionable axiom cited at the beginning of this book: that in the order and constitution of the world an unfailing and perpetual rule is observed, whereby everything that has life must have some duration in it, and nothing is produced

²⁰⁸. The monumental images and their connection with Flamel are reported as Nuysement's assertions. Winged and unwinged creatures serve his explanation of volatile and fixed powers; the attribution does not by itself establish authorship of a Flamel text.

²⁰⁹. Potentiality ('en puissance') and actuality ('en effect') explain why an innate capacity can require art to become operative. The author also expressly distinguishes the desired volatility from the separable sulphur he blames for corruption.

beneath heaven without some kind of life within itself. I say that this duration is achieved by preservation aspiring towards perpetuity. For Nature's aim is to perpetuate. A good maker always wishes to preserve the work of his hands until it reaches the limit of old age and the light of life is extinguished by death's cold mists. At death's feet all things that are born must necessarily bow, through the inevitable law imposed on everything that begins: that it must also end. If things remained at their first extreme, birth or beginning, without advancing towards the second, death or ending, everything would remain in its chaos—or rather nothing would subsist—and the principles of every subject would be useless, indeed destroyed by themselves. To avoid this difficulty, Nature established this order and progression of things, remaining in continual action and motion: that is, preservation and perpetuation. What extends life, and even what preserves it, cannot exist without some fixation and lasting stability against the assaults of destruction. This preserving essence is more fixed in some species than in others. They consequently have longer and more enduring lives, being harder to destroy or put to death: the stag and raven among animals, the oak among plants, and gold among minerals. This comes from the more equal and better digested mixture of their elements. Death, whose property is to divide and separate, cannot enter so easily into these compounds, so firmly bound and cemented by a powerful digestion. The more bodies are provided with these two remedies, the less they are subject to the accidents of mortal corruption.²¹⁰

SL_II_04S014 1621 pp 235–237 · scans FR255, FR256, FR257

Mais parce que la Nature ne peut de soy mesme atteindre à la perfection de cette union & digestion, elle ne peut aussi de tout point sauver ny garantir les corps de finalle destruction. Or l'industrie de l'art qui l'a tousjours surmontee (encore qu'il soit conduit par elle, & ne puisse rien de luy seul) considerant ces choses s'est efforcé de l'imiter & outrepasser par le propre cours de sa mesme voye. Car voyant qu'en tous corps la conservation & prolongement de vie se faisoit par chose tendante à fixation, laquelle mesme procedoit par union & digestion, (car rien ne se peut fixer s'il n'est homogene & d'une seule Nature,) l'artiste a imaginé & pratiqué de trouver la mesme chose fixable, & la conduire à parfaicte fixation par les mesmes sentiers, ordre, & operation de la Nature; assavoir par la separation des parties estranges, en unissant les homogenes par longue & ingenieuse digestion des choses unies. Mais d'autant qu'il n'y avoit moyen de la separer ny tirer des corps individus & specifiquez à cause de cette union compacte, & digestion ja par trop avancee en eux; il a esté contrainct de le rechercher dans les flancs de la mere qui l'engendre, sçavoir la terre, de laquelle toutes choses procedent: Car le tirer d'ailleurs en son entiere & premiere vertu seroit œuvre inutile, & chose du tout impossible; & de la luy penser redonner seroit un labeur long & fort douteux: Qui a fait dire avec raison à certain Poëte:

Icy, ou en nul lieu est ce que nous querons.

²¹⁰. 'Digestion' means a process of maturation, integration and preparation, extending here to the constitution of minerals as well as living bodies. 'Fixed' describes resistance to separation and dissolution; these are the author's linked explanations of durability.

But because Nature cannot by herself attain the perfection of this union and digestion, neither can she altogether save or protect bodies from final destruction. Considering these things, the ingenuity of art, which has always surpassed her—although guided by her and unable to do anything by itself—has sought to imitate and exceed her by following the very course of her own path. Seeing that in all bodies the preservation and prolongation of life came through something tending towards fixation, which itself proceeded by union and digestion—for nothing can be fixed unless it is homogeneous and of a single nature—the artist devised and practised a way of finding that same fixable thing and bringing it to perfect fixation by Nature's own paths, order and operation. This means separating foreign parts and uniting homogeneous ones through a long and skilful digestion of the things united. But there was no way of separating or extracting it from individual bodies already determined to a species, because of their compact union and the digestion already too far advanced within them. The artist therefore had to seek it in the womb of the mother that brings it forth: namely the earth, from which all things proceed. To draw it from elsewhere with its entire and original power would be a futile undertaking and utterly impossible; to think of restoring that power to it would be a long and very doubtful labour. This rightly made a certain poet say:

Here, or nowhere, is what we seek.²¹¹

SL_II_04S015 1621 pp 237–239 · scans FR257, FR258, FR259

Et veritablement ceux là se sont lourdement abusez qui ont suivy des chemins escartez & tortueux, s'amusant à la commune signification ou escorce des parolles des sages, & non à la vive moelle de leur intention. Ils devoient donc premierement sacrifier à l'infenalle Junon; car là estoit le chef & la source des choses. Les prudents & mieux entendus commencent toutes leurs œuvres par la racine, & non par les rameaux: Elisant (comme dit le docte Bacon.) une chose sur laquelle Nature a seulement commencé ses premieres operations, par l'assemblément & mixtion proportionnee d'un pur & vif mercure, avec semblable souphre; congelez en masse solide: O parolles sacrees, esquelles ce bon Anglois, ou plustost ce bon Ange, a clairement despeint cette unique & vraye matiere dont tous les Philosophes ont tant escrit de volumes sous diverses figures, & fabuleux enigmes: non pour la cacher malicieusement; mais pour reserver le privilege de cette cognoissance aux doctes & pieux; qui l'ayant une fois decouverte par leur assiduele estude, & cheres experiences, la desguisent & ornent à leur tour. Et pour ne laisser aux maistres l'opinion que par ignorance j'apporte ce passage en cet endroit improprement, & prenne Martre pour Renard; voulant entendre que cette matiere si ingenieusement representee par Bacon soit ce premier & general Esprit que j'ay pris pour subiect de ce livre: je les supplieray de croire que je sçay bien quelle difference il y a entre le pere & le fils; ou entre l'engendreur & producteur & ce qu'il a produit & engendré: Osant dire sans vanité que je cognois l'un & l'autre par raison & experience. Car le sage a voulu instruire les inquisiteurs des principes minéraux pour la confection de

²¹¹. The 'artist' is the practitioner of art, whose work follows and advances natural operations. The text distinguishes the unqualified generative source from bodies already fixed within a particular species; it supplies no modern chemical identification of that source.

la pierre des Philosophes; leur decouvrant la premiere matiere metallique preparee, composee, & specifiee par Nature: Et je traite de la matiere universelle non encore specifiee; qui se peut proprement dire matiere premiere de cette premiere matiere metallique; comme estoit ce generalissime genre des genres tant celebre par Raymond Lulle: mais je me suis servy de cette sentence pour exemple & autorité, sans toutefois qu'il y ayt rien d'absurde, puisque cet Esprit universel est pere commun du mercure & du souphre contenus & proportionnez par Nature dans cet unique subiect des maistres.

Those who followed remote and winding paths have indeed gravely deceived themselves, attending to the ordinary meaning or outer bark of the sages' words rather than the living marrow of their intention. They should first have sacrificed to infernal Juno, for there lay the head and source of things. The prudent and better informed begin all their works with the root rather than the branches, choosing—as the learned Bacon says—something upon which Nature has only begun her first operations, through the proportioned gathering and mixture of a pure and living mercury with a similar sulphur, congealed into a solid mass. Sacred words! In them this good Englishman, or rather this good angel, has clearly depicted that unique and true matter about which all the Philosophers have written so many volumes beneath diverse figures and fabulous enigmas. They did so not to conceal it maliciously, but to reserve the privilege of this knowledge for the learned and devout, who, once they discover it through constant study and costly experiments, disguise and adorn it in their turn. To prevent the masters from thinking that ignorance makes me introduce this passage improperly here, taking a marten for a fox, as though the matter so skilfully described by Bacon were that first and universal spirit I chose as this book's subject, I ask them to believe that I know the difference between father and son, or between the generator and producer and what it has produced and generated. Without vanity, I dare say that I know both by reason and experience. For the sage wished to instruct those investigating mineral principles for making the Philosophers' stone, revealing to them the first metallic matter prepared, compounded and determined to a species by Nature. I discuss universal matter, not yet determined to a species, which may properly be called the first matter of that first metallic matter, like that most general genus of genera so celebrated by Raymond Lull. I have used this saying as example and authority, without any absurdity, since this universal spirit is the common father of the mercury and sulphur contained and proportioned by Nature within this unique subject of the masters.^{212,213}

²¹². 'Englishman' and 'angel' translate a deliberate play on Anglois and Ange. The authority is named simply Bacon in this passage; the praise and the words attributed to him are presented as Nuysement's citation, rather than a verified claim about the authorship of a particular Baconian treatise.

²¹³. The correction 'father' rather than 'son' is central to the argument. Nuysement insists that his universal matter precedes the first metallic matter of the stone; calling both 'first' does not make them identical.

SL_II_04S016 1621 pp 239–241 · scans FR259, FR260, FR261

Or je desire que l'artiste curieux considere icy deux choses: l'une de choisir par subtile imagination une Nature vivifiante & capable de conserver tous corps: L'autre d'eslire une chose qui se puisse de soy mesme vivifier & rengendrer. Et ne veux toutesfois entendre qu'il faille prendre deux choses ou matieres diverses & separees, assavoir l'une agente, & l'autre patiente, mais bien seulement une qui ayt les deux vertus ensemble de vivifier & d'estre vivifiee. Quant à la vivification active j'en ay desja suffisamment parlé: mais quant à la passive je dy qu'il faut que tout principe aye son origine en luy mesme, car s'il naissoit d'ailleurs il ne seroit plus principe. Et puisqu'il donne l'estre à toutes choses il est necessaire qu'en les engendrant il puise de luy mesme ce refournissement & perpetuelle plenitude: à cause dequoy il est en continuelle action & mouvement à vivification, qui l'empesche de mourir, parce qu'il n'est jamais delaisé de soy mesme, ayant son mouvement de luy & dedans luy. Ce que Macrobe a subtilement disputé sur le songe de Scipion s'attachant à l'ame de l'homme, combien que sa dispute se puisse encore mieux adapter à mon intention, la faisant servir pour l'ame ou Esprit du monde, qui est le subiect que je traicte.

I wish the enquiring artist to consider two things here: first, to choose through subtle imagination a life-giving nature capable of preserving all bodies; second, to select something able to give life to itself and generate itself anew. I do not mean that two different and separate things or materials must be taken, one acting and the other acted upon, but only one that possesses both powers together: to give life and to receive life. I have already spoken sufficiently about active vivification. As for passive vivification, I say that every principle must have its origin within itself, for if it arose elsewhere it would no longer be a principle. Since it gives being to all things, it must, in generating them, draw this replenishment and perpetual fullness from within itself. For that reason it remains in continual life-giving action and motion, which prevents it from dying, because it is never forsaken by itself, having its movement from itself and within itself. Macrobius subtly discussed this in connection with the Dream of Scipio, applying it to the human soul. His argument can be adapted still better to my intention, by applying it to the soul or spirit of the world, which is the subject I discuss.^{214,215}

SL_II_04S017 1621 pp 241–243 · scans FR261, FR262, FR263

Parquoy de ses mesmes arguments je tireray cestuy-cy: Tout ce qui se meut de soy est principe de mouvement & en continuelle vie; celui qui est en continuelle vie ne peut avoir vivification que de soy, il est donc luy mesme vivifiable? Or l'Esprit general du monde est tel. Et puis qu'il se convertit en corps dans la terre; ou pour mieux dire qu'il y prend son siege pour se corporifier & convertir en terre; en laquelle (ainsi qu'a dit Hermes) toutes ses vertus, actions, & qualitez demeurent entieres, il s'ensuit qu'estant vital, luy mesme se refournit de vie en se multipliant par sa propre vertu. Ce que nous apercevons en ce Mercure universel lequel se nourrit & refournit tousjours dans sa miniere, de sorte qu'encore que l'on en tire ce

²¹⁴. The French contrasts agent and patient: that which acts and that which receives an action. Both capacities are required within one subject. 'Imagination' here belongs to the practitioner's discerning choice; it is not permission to invent a substitute material.

²¹⁵. Macrobius and Scipio's dream are named here as an argument about self-motion and the soul. Nuysement openly transfers the reasoning to the world spirit rather than claiming that this is its original subject.

qu'on pourra, si est ce qu'il y recroistra autant qu'auparavant, & en quelque lieu qu'il soit jetté jamais il n'y deffaudra. Non pas que je vueille dire qu'il s'engendre de la terre, mais en la terre, par toutes les parties de laquelle il rampe & s'espand incessamment par multiplication & vegetation. Ce que les anciens ont voulu signifier par ce serpent que Moyse mesme a dit aller glissant sur la terre & se nourrir de la poussiere d'icelle. C'est ce qui a meu les cabalistes de l'appeller Prince des sepulchres, d'autant qu'il y devore & consomme les corps gisans lors qu'il les convertit en terre. Non pas que les corps morts ny la terre soient son aliment, mais ils sont le siege où il se repaist & alimente.

From these same arguments I shall therefore draw this one: everything that moves itself is a principle of motion and continually alive; what is continually alive can receive life only from itself, so is it not itself capable of being given life? The universal spirit of the world is such. Since it changes into a body in the earth—or rather, makes its seat there in order to take bodily form and change into earth, in which, as Hermes said, all its powers, actions and qualities remain entire—it follows that, being alive, it replenishes itself with life, multiplying through its own power. We perceive this in that universal mercury which continually nourishes and replenishes itself within its mine: however much may be extracted, just as much will grow again as before; and wherever it is cast, it will never fail there. I do not mean that it is generated from the earth, but within the earth, through every part of which it creeps and spreads ceaselessly by multiplication and growth. This is what the ancients meant by that serpent which Moses himself said goes gliding over the earth and feeds upon its dust. This moved the cabalists to call it Prince of Sepulchres, because it devours and consumes the bodies lying there when it converts them into earth. Dead bodies and the earth are not its food; rather, they are the seat where it feeds and sustains itself.^{216,217}

SL_II_04S018 1621 pp 243–245 · scans FR263, FR264, FR265

C'est le lieu où il se meut, tourne, & coule sans repos, dont Medée advertit Jason, luy disant:

Voy le Dragon veillant, de fureur forcené,
Qui d'escaille bruyante a le corps entourné:
Dont le gosier sifflant fumee & feu desferre:
Et qui par replis tors va baliant la terre
De sa large poitrine, en la poudre imprimant
Les sinueux sillons qu'il trace incessamment.

J'ay bien voulu mettre en jeu ces deux considerations; non seulement pour faire voir quelle doit estre la recherche de ce Mercure, mais aussi pour verifier que ce qu'il contient de fixable en luy n'est autre chose que cette essence vivifiante, laquelle estant deuement fixee perpetue & conserve la vie en tous corps où elle entre, en dechassant par sa pureté les excrements; & parfaissant les choses imparfaites par sa

²¹⁶. The distinction between 'from the earth' and 'within the earth' is explicit. The following serpent image illustrates the spirit's continual movement and replenishment; it does not authorise an editor to equate the universal mercury with an identified mineral.

²¹⁷. The serpent's dust recalls Genesis 3:14. Here the author applies that scriptural image to his account of the world spirit and then distinguishes its dwelling-place from its nourishment.

perfection. Le but de la fixation tant naturelle qu'artificielle est la perpetuation & conservation, qui se font par le moyen de la teinture que le Mercure acquiert par cette fixation. Car la teinture est veritablement la vie: & la vie n'est autre chose que ce qui couvre, peint, & colore le corps de ce teint qui le fait paroistre vital; & qui se perd & esteint à l'aborder de la mort. C'est pourquoy Nature a voulu que le sang où consiste la vie feust teint en rouge: & que plus il seroit pur, clair, & vif en rougeur, le corps parust & feust en effect plus sain, plus beau, plus disposé, & plus vigoureux. Comme au contraire estant par accident troublé, espaisi, & chargé de noirceur aduste, ou changé en faulses couleurs, le corps sentist & patist la rigueur du mal en l'interieur, & en donnast les tesmoignages au dehors par son descoloremment. Nous remarquons le semblable aux vegetaux desquels la vigueur vitale aparoit en leur vive verdeur, de laquelle le changement denonce la decadence, & acheminement à leur mort. Le semblable est aux metaux, dont la perfection ou imperfection se discerne par leurs couleurs.

This is the place where it moves, turns and flows without rest, of which Medea warns Jason, saying:

See the watchful dragon, frenzied with fury,
 Its body encircled in rattling scales;
 From its hissing throat it lets loose smoke and fire,
 And with twisting coils sweeps the earth
 With its broad breast, imprinting in the dust
 The winding furrows that it traces ceaselessly.

I have chosen to bring these two considerations into play, not only to show how this mercury must be sought, but also to demonstrate that what it contains capable of fixation is nothing other than that life-giving essence. When duly fixed, this perpetuates and preserves life in every body it enters, driving out excrements by its purity and perfecting imperfect things through its perfection. The aim of fixation, both natural and artificial, is perpetuation and preservation, achieved through the tincture which mercury acquires by this fixation. For tincture is truly life, and life is nothing other than what covers, paints and colours the body with the tint that makes it appear alive, and which is lost and extinguished at the approach of death. That is why Nature ordained that the blood in which life consists should be dyed red: the purer, clearer and more vividly red it is, the healthier, more beautiful, more agile and more vigorous the body should appear and actually be. Conversely, when through an accident it is clouded, thickened and laden with scorched blackness, or changed to false colours, the body should feel and suffer the severity of illness within and show evidence of it outside by its discolouration. We observe the same in plants, whose vital vigour appears in their lively greenness: a change in this announces their decline and approach to death. The same is true of

metals, whose perfection or imperfection is discerned by their colours.^{218,219}

SL_II_04S019 1621 pp 245–248 · scans FR265, FR266, FR267, FR268

L'or a de soy mesme une force aymantine qui atire les cœurs par le lustre brillant de son estincelante & pure teinture, en laquelle Nature a estallé tout ce qu'elle pouvoit de mieux, ayant toutefois reservé à l'industrie de l'art de la surmonter encor, voire jusqu'en infinité, par la graduation supresme qu'il adjoust à cette splendeur naturelle qui luy acquiert nom de Soleil terrestre. L'artiste exalte donc par son labeur la couleur orangee en laquelle Nature a borné son pouvoir en ce precieux chef d'œuvre, jusques au plus haut degré de rougeur obscure: par laquelle augmentation les metaux imparfaits sont colorez en certaine quantité au degré naturel par la projection de cette teinture artificielle: monstrant bien que cette citrine couleur que la Nature a introduite en l'or n'est qu'un acheminement à la rougeur, où gist le comble de la parfaite vertu de conserver & multiplier. Qui est cause que ce metal, quoy qu'excellent sur tous les autres, ne leur peut de soy departir perfection; ny plaine conservation aux corps humains: comme trop vrayement ont presumé & publié plusieurs milliers d'affronteurs, alchimistes, & paresseux Physiciens; les uns avec leurs amalgames, fusions, & dissolutions sophistiques; & les autres par leurs infusions fantastiques, & confections ridicules. Mais si ces deux especes de curieux s'estoient un peu plus profondement plongez en cet Océan de merveilles, ils auroient reconnu que la supresme rougeur acquise, est un accident inseparable, produisant l'un & l'autre miracle par l'excès de la chaleur qui pourtant ne consomme que les superfluitez impures, & non la substance des corps; qu'au contraire elle maintient & multiplie en toute egallité; combien que les philosophes la disent estre autant pardessus le feu vulgaire, que le vulgaire est par dessus la chaleur naturelle des animaux. Il est bien vray que Paracelse fait grand cas en son traité des Teintures de celle qu'il extrait de l'or par l'esprit du vin, & luy attribue force belles vertus; aussi bien qu'à celles de l'anthimoine & du corail. Ausquelles il semble vouloir preferer celle du Mercure, qu'il dit devenir toute teinture estant une fois conduit à parfaite fixation: & qu'il penetre les corps par leurs plus simples parties à cause de sa pure subtilité. Ce que je ne croy nullement qu'il ait entendu dire du Mercure vulgaire, ains de celui des sages, auquel seul l'art aydant la nature peut introduire ces deux choses, assavoir teinture parfaite, & fixation accomplie.

Gold has of itself a magnetic power which attracts hearts through the brilliant lustre of its sparkling and pure tincture. In this Nature has displayed all the best she could achieve, while nevertheless reserving to the skill of art the power to surpass it still further, even to infinity, through the supreme graduation which art adds to that natural splendour, earning gold the name of terrestrial Sun. By his labour the artist therefore exalts the orange colour at which Nature has bounded her power in this precious masterpiece to the highest degree of dark redness. Through this increase, imperfect metals in a certain quantity are coloured to the natural degree by projection of this artificial tincture. This clearly shows that the citrine colour Nature introduced into gold is only an approach towards redness, where the fullness of the perfect

²¹⁸. The dragon quotation has six substantive lines; printer wraps have been joined. Its watchfulness and restless motion continue the preceding account of the spirit's activity.

²¹⁹. Nuysement's argument connects tincture, visible colour and vital power across animal, vegetable and metallic bodies. 'Tincture' here carries that explanatory range; it is not limited to a modern medicinal extract.

power to preserve and multiply resides. For this reason, although this metal excels all the others, it cannot of itself impart perfection to them, or complete preservation to human bodies, as many thousands of impostors, alchemists and idle physicians have all too truly presumed and proclaimed: some through their amalgams, fusions and sophistical dissolutions, others through their fantastic infusions and ridiculous confections. Had these two sorts of seekers plunged a little more deeply into this ocean of marvels, they would have recognised that the supreme redness acquired is an inseparable accident, producing both miracles through an excess of heat. Yet this heat consumes only impure superfluities, not the substance of bodies, which it instead maintains and multiplies in complete evenness, although the philosophers say it is as far above ordinary fire as ordinary fire is above animals' natural heat. It is certainly true that in his *Treatise of Tinctures* Paracelsus sets great store by the tincture he extracts from gold through spirit of wine, attributing many fine powers to it, as also to those of antimony and coral. He seems to wish to prefer to these the tincture of mercury, which he says becomes entirely tincture once brought to perfect fixation, penetrating bodies in their simplest parts through its pure subtlety. I do not believe at all that he meant ordinary mercury, but the mercury of the sages, into which alone art, assisting nature, can introduce those two things: perfect tincture and accomplished fixation.²²⁰

SL_II_04S020 1621 pp 248–250 · scans FR268, FR269, FR270

La teinture est donc, à proprement parler, la pure substance des choses, & le corps n'est que l'excrement. Ce qui se manifeste bien en ce que les corps apres la separation de leur teinture demeurent inutiles, sans vertu, & corruptibles; tout ainsi qu'une charongne privee de vie, mouvement, & couleur vitale. Parquoy l'on peut dire que la teinture est le but de la fixation: afin que par sa permanente assiduité au feu elle acquiere une perpetuation & conservation au corps qui la reçoit. Or la maniere de parvenir à ce degré de fixation où gist l'accomplissement de toute l'œuvre, n'est autre que de conserver par prudence les choses legeres & fugitives, & patiemment les accoustumer au feu, jusques à ce qu'ils le puissent souffrir tres-violent. C'est pourquoy tous les bons Auteurs ne preschent autre chose à leurs disciples que la patience, qu'ils disent estre de la part de Dieu, & la hastiveté de la part du diable. Surquoy je diray pour maxime infaillible que rien ne se peut fixer sans precedente calcination, qui se doit faire par la conjonction de l'esprit fixable avec chose entierement convenable à sa nature, & qui le puisse retenir au feu de calcination, afin que par ce moyen s'accoustumant peu à peu à soustenir la chaleur, il soit plus apte à souffrir l'augment du feu dernier qui donne la fixation. Et la raison pourquoy l'on y doit proceder avec cette discretion, est que voulant par trop de promptitude precipiter cette operation, la spiritualité speciale qui cause la teinture s'envolleroit; abandonnant son corps sans y pouvoir imprimer sa vertu tingente. De sorte qu'il faudroit necessairement redonner à ce corps exanimé nouvel esprit, paravant y pouvoir introduire la couleur desirée: qui est l'un des plus grands secrets de l'art spagirique: car c'est l'esprit qui colore par le moyen du feu, & non autre chose quelconque.

²²⁰. The account distinguishes gold's natural colour and power from the further perfection claimed for art. It also expressly separates the mercury of the sages from ordinary mercury. These distinctions qualify the therapeutic and transmutation claims.

Tincture, then, is properly speaking the pure substance of things, while the body is only the excrement. This is clearly shown by the fact that after their tincture has been separated, bodies remain useless, powerless and corruptible, like a carcass deprived of life, movement and vital colour. We may therefore say that tincture is the aim of fixation, so that through its lasting attendance upon the fire it may acquire perpetuation and preservation for the body receiving it. The way to reach that degree of fixation in which the accomplishment of the entire work resides is simply to preserve light and fugitive things prudently and accustom them patiently to fire, until they can withstand it at great violence. That is why all good authors preach nothing to their disciples but patience, which they say is on God's side, while haste is on the devil's. On this point I shall state as an infallible maxim that nothing can be fixed without a preceding calcination. This must be achieved by conjoining the fixable spirit with something wholly suited to its nature, capable of retaining it in the fire of calcination. By this means it gradually becomes accustomed to sustaining heat and more able to withstand the increase of the final fire that gives fixation. The reason for proceeding with such discretion is that if one tried to hurry this operation through excessive speed, the particular spirituality causing the tincture would fly away, abandoning its body without being able to impress its tinging power upon it. It would then necessarily be required to give this lifeless body a new spirit before the desired colour could be introduced. This is one of the greatest secrets of the spagyric art: for it is the spirit that colours through the agency of fire, and nothing else whatsoever.^{221,222}

SL_IL_04S021 1621 pp 250-252 · scans FR270, FR271, FR272

Or cette teinture accomplit & souverainement exalte en nostre Mercure, il s'ensuit qu'il s'esleve au supresme degré de perfection: voire (à parler comme Hermes) qu'il monte au Ciel. Si qu'après avoir enduré tous les tourments mortels, il a repris nouvelle vie. C'est à dire que luy ayant fait passer les tenebreux destroits de la putrefaction, ensevely dans le sepulchre d'un vaisseau, il s'esleve neantmoins à la resurrection par le despoillement de toutes choses mortiferes & corrompantes; au moyen dequoy il a atteint le souverain degré d'excellence. Ce qui se fait en separant la terre du feu; le subtil de l'espais, & puis en fixant par chaleur graduee les parties ainsi depurees. Mais pour parler sans embage ny enigmes, cette montee au Ciel (qui est la sublimation & exaltation de ces parties elaborees à perfection) ne se feroit jamais si la separation & purification d'icelles n'avoit precedé, & donné lieu à la fixation qui est l'extreme & dernier but où l'art aspire. D'où nous remarquons qu'elle se fait pour deux fins principales: l'une pour perpetuer la teinture, l'autre pour separer & tirer du Mercure le soufre volatil & bruslable qui est en son centre, & qui n'en voudroit partir s'il n'estoit importuné par la longue action du feu continuel, qui doit estre réglé, de peur que la precipitation violente feist eslever dès le commencement le pur esprit du Mercure non encore affermi. Ce

²²¹. The reading *exanimé* ('lifeless') follows the original errata at FR342, which corrects printed p.250, line10. The body text prints *examiné*. The correction is adopted openly in the French reading text and English translation.

²²². The author's sequence is preservation of the volatile subject, gradual habituation to heat, then fixation. The translation retains those relations without adding temperatures, durations or an identified reagent.

que le Comte de la Marche Trevisane a couvertement enseigné, disant: que le fuyant ne s'envole devant le poursuivant, & que le feu se face de mainte maniere comme il veut estre fait. C'est à dire que la partie spirituelle ne soit contraincte par ardeur intemperée d'abandonner la partie corporelle qui en fin la doit fixer par l'action de son soulfre interne aydé du feu extérieur & commun, discrettement conduit par les degrez requis: où gist la principale industrie de l'operation.

Once this tincture has been accomplished and supremely exalted in our mercury, it follows that the mercury rises to the highest degree of perfection—or, to speak as Hermes does, ascends into heaven. Thus, after enduring every mortal torment, it has taken on new life. That is to say, after being made to pass through the dark straits of putrefaction, buried in the sepulchre of a vessel, it nevertheless rises to resurrection by stripping off everything deadly and corrupting, thereby attaining the highest degree of excellence. This is done by separating earth from fire, the subtle from the dense, and then fixing by graduated heat the parts thus purified. But to speak without circumlocution or riddles, this ascent into heaven, which is the sublimation and exaltation of those parts worked to perfection, would never occur unless their separation and purification had preceded it and made way for fixation, the ultimate and final aim to which art aspires. We observe that this is done for two principal ends: one to perpetuate the tincture, the other to separate and draw from the mercury the volatile and combustible sulphur within its centre. This would not willingly leave unless pressed by the long action of continual fire, which must be regulated lest violent haste cause the pure spirit of mercury, not yet made firm, to rise at the outset. The Count of the Trevisan March taught this covertly, saying that the fugitive must not fly away before its pursuer, and that the fire should be made in various ways as it wishes to be made. That is, immoderate heat must not force the spiritual part to abandon the bodily part which must finally fix it through the action of its internal sulphur, assisted by external, ordinary fire, discreetly conducted through the required degrees. In this resides the chief skill of the operation.^{223,224}

SL_II_04S022 1621 pp 252–255 · scans FR272, FR273, FR274, FR275

Mais (dira quelqu'un) si la fixation luy acquiert avec cette subtilité penetrante une permanence au feu, comment est il possible que par apres il se puisse derechef sublimer? Qu'on luy redonne des aisles de cire, & l'on verra qu'il n'aura point de repos qu'il ne se soit eslevé de terre pour essayer de sortir de la tour où il est enfermé. Qu'on prenne garde toutefois que trop à coup il ne vueille monter, de crainte que le Soleil fonde sa cire, & brusle ses plumes, le precipitant dans la mer. On fera donc comme le sage Dedalle observant le milieu des deux extremes: d'autant que si le vol est bas, l'humidité des ondes apesantira ses aisles: & s'il est hautain, le feu les bruslera. Ne fut ce pas l'impatient & aveugle desir qu'eut Icare de

²²³. The passage explicitly explains resurrection and ascent through putrefaction, purification and fixation. Its interpretation of 'sublimation' should be read alongside the later denial that Hermes necessarily means a physical rise to the top of the vessel.

²²⁴. The compressed saying attributed to the Count is followed by Nuysement's own explanation. Its awkward fire-formula is retained rather than replaced by an unverified version from another author.

devancer Dedalle qui le perdit malgré le paternel precepte? & d'où proceda le pernicieux trebuchement de Phaëton guidant les chevaux de Phebus, sinon pour s'estre estimé plus capable de cette conduite que le maistre qui l'enseignoit? & qui luy avoit dit:

D'aller par ce chemin non ailleurs je t'avoué:
Remarque seulement les traces de ma rouë:
Et pour donner par tout une chaleur egalle
Trop tost vers terre & Ciel ne monte ny devalle:
Car en montant trop haut le Ciel tu brusleras:
Et devallant trop bas la terre destruiras.
Mais si par le milieu ta carriere demeure
La cource est plus unie & la voye plus seure.

Toutefois ce n'est pas assez d'avoir dit ces choses, quoy que veritables, selon le sens mystique de nos devanciers: Il faut que j'explique leur intention envelopée dans le voile obscur de ces parolles fabuleuses, qui ne sont que pour les experts du mestier.

But, someone will say, if fixation gives it permanence in fire together with this penetrating subtlety, how can it afterwards be sublimed again? Give it wings of wax once more, and you will see that it will have no rest until it has risen from the earth to try to escape the tower in which it is confined. Take care, however, that it does not seek to rise too suddenly, lest the Sun melt its wax and burn its feathers, plunging it into the sea. We must therefore act like wise Daedalus, keeping midway between the two extremes: if the flight is low, the moisture of the waves will weigh down its wings; if it is high, fire will burn them. Was it not Icarus's impatient and blind desire to outstrip Daedalus that destroyed him, despite his father's instruction? And what caused Phaethon's disastrous fall while guiding Phoebus's horses, except that he thought himself more capable of directing them than the master who taught him and had told him:

I allow you to go by this path and no other:
Mark only the tracks of my wheel;
And to give equal heat everywhere,
Do not rise or descend too swiftly towards earth or heaven:
For by rising too high you will burn the heavens,
And by descending too low you will destroy the earth.
But if your course keeps to the middle,
The track is more even and the way more secure.

Yet it is not enough to have said these things, true though they are according to our predecessors' mystical sense. I must explain their intention, wrapped in the dark veil of these fabulous words, which are only for those expert in the craft.²²⁵

²²⁵. The stories of Icarus and Phaethon carry the local argument about avoiding extremes and following regulated degrees. The Phaethon quotation has eight substantive lines; the archaic first-line wording *je t'avoué* is retained in the French and rendered from its immediate sense of an authorised course.

Scache donc tout curieux, & jamais ne sorte hors de cette lice; que quand Hermes a dit que cette chose monte de la terre au Ciel, puis derechef descend du Ciel en terre, acquerant les vertus de tous les deux ensemble, il n'a point entendu par cette montee que la matiere se doit eslever ny sublimer au sommet du vaisseau: Mais seulement qu'en luy redonnant apres qu'elle est parvenue à la fixation parfaite certaine portion de sa partie spirituelle (dont l'Hortulan dit qu'il faut avoir bonne quantité en reserve pour cet effect) elle se dissoudra & deviendra toute spirituelle, quittant sa consistance terrestre pour prendre l'aërienne, qui est le Ciel des Philosophes: puis estant parvenue à telle simplicité, elle sera congelee & ramenee en terre par nouvelle decoction qui se fera par les mesmes degrez de chaleur, jusques à ce que le corps ayt tellement embrassé l'Esprit qu'ils soient rendus inseparables: ainsi aura elle la subtilité celeste, & la fixation terrestre. Suivant donc tousjours le plein chemin de la nature, si cet Icare ne se pouvoit du tout eslever (c'est à dire subtilier) il luy faudra renforcer ses aisles, conjoignant nouvelles plumes avec nouvelle cire: c'est à dire par dissolutions reiterees, que les maistres repetent si souvent qu'ils en semblent importuns: si ce n'est à ceux qui entendent la consequence de telle repetition. Ce qui se fait pour mieux unir les choses en les meslant par leurs moindres parties. A quoy l'on ne pourroit parvenir autrement, non plus qu'à la commixtion des deux sans la purification de l'un & de l'autre: en gardant toutefois exactement la volatilité à l'esprit delivré d'impuritez terrestres: & acquerant entiere fixation au corps despouillé de toutes feces internes. C'est donc par les dissolutions que cette chose monte au Ciel: & par les congelations qu'elle redescend en terre.

Let every seeker therefore know this, and never depart from this course: when Hermes said that this thing rises from earth to heaven and then descends again from heaven to earth, acquiring together the powers of both, he did not mean by this ascent that the matter must rise or be sublimed to the top of the vessel. He meant only that after it has reached perfect fixation, by giving it back a certain portion of its spiritual part—which Hortulanus says must be kept in good quantity in reserve for this purpose—it will dissolve and become entirely spiritual, leaving its earthly consistency to take on an airy one, which is the philosophers' heaven. Having reached such simplicity, it will then be congealed and brought back to earth through a fresh decoction, performed by the same degrees of heat, until the body has so embraced the spirit that they become inseparable. Thus it will possess heavenly subtlety and earthly fixation. Following always the plain path of nature, if this Icarus cannot rise completely—that is, become subtle—its wings must be strengthened by joining new feathers with new wax: that is, through repeated dissolutions. The masters repeat these so often that they seem tiresome, except to those who understand the consequence of such repetition. This is done to unite things better by mingling them in their smallest parts. It could not be achieved otherwise, any more than the mingling of the two could be achieved without purifying both: nevertheless, the spirit, freed from earthly impurities, must carefully retain its volatility, while complete fixation is acquired for the body stripped of all its internal dregs. It is therefore through dissolutions that

this thing ascends into heaven, and through congelations that it descends again to earth.^{226,227}

SL_II_04S024 1621 pp 267–268 · scans FR277, FR278

Ce qui est naïvement exprimé par deux antiques vers Latins; que j'ay expliquez en ce quatrain:

Si le fixe tu sçais dissoudre,
Et le dissout faire voller:
Puis le vollant fixer en poudre,
Tu as dequoy te consoler.

Ce corps ainsi glorifié montera donc au Ciel sur les aisles de son esprit: puis en la mesme perfection qu'il y sera monté il redevlera en terre pour separer le bon du mauvais: pour conserver & vivifier l'un; pour tuer & consommer l'autre. C'est à sçavoir qu'en tous les corps où il entrera il en chassera l'impureté, amendant & conservant la pure substance d'iceux; car les reiterees solutions & fixations luy auront donné une force de penetrer les corps, dans lesquels autrement il n'auroit peu entrer. Il faut donc replonger le jeune Hermaphrodite & la delicate Salmacis dans la fontaine, afin qu'ils s'embrassent; & que Salmacis ravie de contentement puisse dire: Avienne qu'en aucun temps ce bel adolescent ne soit separé de moy, ny moy de luy; & qu'en mutuelle felicité amour perpetue nostre conjunction: ainsi nos deux corps n'aurent qu'un cœur & une mesme face. Puis faire que l'Isle de Delle apparaisse immobile; portant Apollon & Diane que Latone y a enfantez. Fable qui ne veut nous apprendre autre chose sinon que l'on congele & fixe cette matiere dissoute, en laquelle sont contenus le Soleil & la Lune des Philosophes.

This is naturally expressed in two ancient Latin verses, which I have explained in this quatrain:

If you know how to dissolve the fixed,
And make the dissolved take flight,
Then fix the flying thing in powder,
You have something to console you.

The body thus glorified will therefore ascend into heaven on the wings of its spirit, then descend again to earth in the same perfection in which it rose, to separate good from bad: to preserve and quicken the one, to kill and consume the other. That is, it will drive impurity from every body it enters, improving and preserving their pure substance, for repeated solutions and fixations will have given it the power to penetrate bodies which it could not otherwise have entered. The young Hermaphrodite and delicate Salmacis must therefore be plunged again into the fountain so that they embrace, and Salmacis, transported with delight, may say: 'May this beautiful youth never at any time be separated from me, nor I from him; and in mutual happiness may love perpetuate our conjunction, so that our two bodies have but one heart

²²⁶. Nuysement explicitly denies that Hermes' ascent must mean a physical rise to the vessel's top. His interpretation concerns a change in the matter's consistency through renewed dissolution, followed by its return through congelation.

²²⁷. The numbering jumps directly from 255 to 266 between FR275 and FR276; the sentence continues across the images without a textual gap.

and one face.' Then the island of Delos must be made to appear immovable, bearing Apollo and Diana, whom Latona bore there. This fable seeks to teach nothing other than that this dissolved matter, containing the philosophers' Sun and Moon, is congealed and fixed.²²⁸

SL_II_04S025 1621 pp 268–270 · scans FR278, FR279, FR280

Je n'entends pas (comme j'ay desja dit) que le Lecteur de ce livre y pense trouver les Mines du Perou pour assouvir son avidité: bien qu'en plusieurs endroicts j'aye fait assez voir aux dessillez que je n'en ignore nullement les vrais chemins; quoy que je ne me sois encore peu resouldre d'entreprendre un si long voyage; pour certaines raisons conformes à celles qui empescherent le bon Trevisan par l'espace de deux ans apres qu'il en eut parfaite cognoissance par les livres. J'estalle donc seulement icy une drogue precieuse, ou plustost un tresor inestimable que la pieuse Nature nous donne pour l'entretien & prolongation de nostre vie; dont elle a receu de Dieu la charge & protection generale. Ce que je fais à la verité, porté d'un louable desir de servir au public de toute mon industrie; apres que l'Astre favorable de l'experience m'a conduit au port salulaire où je tasche d'adresser les curieux. Car j'ay quelquefois si heureusement traicté cet Esprit universel qu'avec une trespetite quantité j'ay soulagé cent personnes presque accablez de diverses infirmitéz. Il n'y a nul doute qu'une infinité d'excellents esprits sont entrez fort avant en cette forest profonde & traversee d'obscurs sentiers; qui la voyant remplie de monstres espouvantables se sont tellement estonnez que rebroussant chemin ils se sont divertis d'une si utile entreprise. Ainsi qu'avec un docte & ingenieux pinceau a mystiquement depeint le gentil Poliphile; le courage duquel toutefois n'ayant jamais fleschi sous toutes ces terreurs Paniques, luy a donné l'audace de franchir l'un & l'autre bord de cette forest noire: & surmontant tous obstacles l'a conduit sain & sauf au plaisant & désiré sejour de sa chere Polia, r'enclose au riche temple de Vesta.

I do not intend, as I have already said, that the reader of this book should expect to find the mines of Peru in it to satisfy his greed, although in several places I have shown sufficiently to those whose eyes are opened that I am by no means ignorant of the true paths to them. Nevertheless, I have not yet been able to resolve upon so long a journey, for certain reasons like those which restrained good Trevisan for two years after he had acquired perfect knowledge of it from books. I therefore display here only a precious drug, or rather an inestimable treasure, which devout Nature gives us for the maintenance and prolongation of our life, whose general care and protection she has received from God. In truth, I do this moved by a praiseworthy desire to serve the public with all my skill, after the favourable star of experience has led me to the salutary harbour towards which I try to direct seekers. For I have sometimes treated this universal spirit so successfully that with a very small quantity I have relieved a hundred persons almost overwhelmed by various infirmities. There is no doubt that countless excellent minds have ventured far into this deep forest, crossed by dark paths. Seeing it filled with terrifying monsters, they

²²⁸ The source refers to two Latin verses but prints its own four-line French explanation here; no Latin text has been reconstructed. The following mythological conjunctions are interpreted explicitly as dissolution and fixation.

became so astonished that they turned back and abandoned so useful an undertaking. Thus the pleasing Poliphilus has mystically depicted it with a learned and ingenious brush. His courage, however, never yielded to all these Panic terrors, giving him the boldness to pass from one edge of this black forest to the other. Surmounting every obstacle, it led him safe and sound to the pleasant and desired dwelling of his dear Polia, enclosed within the rich temple of Vesta.^{229,230}

SL_II_045026 1621 pp 270–273 · scans FR280, FR281, FR282, FR283

J'avouë bien que le chemin qu'il tint est ouvert à chacun; Mais tous n'ont pas comme luy le fillet d'Ariadne pour se conduire és destours de ce labyrinthe: & chacun n'est pas un Thesée pour pouvoir surmonter le Minotaure. Il est certain que Nature (comme trescharitable mere) propose & offre à tous ce precieux & unique tressor de vie: & Dieu, pere universel, tient pour tous en toute saison amplement ouverte la porte de cette caverne fatale.

Dont à tous la descente est commune & facile;
Mais de qui la sortie est chose difficile:
En l'un se voit l'ouvrage, en l'autre est le labeur:
Peu d'hommes engendrez des Dieux ont eu cet heur;
Fors ceux que Jupiter le juste ayme & suporte:
Ou l'aisle des vertus jusqu'aux Astres emporte.

Il faut donc premierement trouver ce brillant rameau consacré à l'infenalle Junon: duquel Virgile dit:

Que toute la forest tient couvert de ses ombres,
Enfermé de ramparts espais, obscurs, & sombres:
Sans lequel il n'est point permis de devaller
Dans les lieux souterains. Toy donc qui veux aller
Recherchant la vertu des secrets de Nature,
Par l'incognuë horreur de mainte voye obscure,
Où la faveur des Cieux te peut seule avancer,
Cherche-le avec les yeux d'un sublime penser,
Et l'ayant decouvert, ta main pure & sans tache
L'empoigne en reverence, & prompte, main l'arrache,
Car il suit volontiers l'heureux qui l'a requis,
Depuis que les destins l'ont une fois permis:
Sinon, il n'y a force ou fer qui le destache,
Et plus fort on le cherche & plus fort il se cache.

I readily acknowledge that the path he followed is open to everyone. But not everyone possesses Ariadne's thread, as he did, to guide them through this labyrinth's windings, nor is everyone a Theseus capable of overcoming the Minotaur. It is certain that Nature, like a most charitable mother, proposes and offers this precious and unique treasure of life to all. God, the universal father, keeps the door of this fateful cavern wide open to everyone in every season.

²²⁹. The relief of a hundred sufferers is Nuysement's own report, preserved with its stated small quantity and without an added diagnosis or medical verification.

²³⁰. The forest and Poliphilus episode continues the argument that a path may be open yet difficult to negotiate. 'Panic' retains the source's association of fear with Pan, developed in the later mythological interpretation.

Descent into it is common and easy for all,
 But departure from it is a difficult thing;
 In the one the work is seen, in the other lies the labour;
 Few men begotten of the gods have had this fortune,
 Except those whom righteous Jupiter loves and supports,
 Or whom the wing of virtues bears up to the stars.

First, therefore, one must find that shining bough consecrated to
 infernal Juno, of which Virgil says:

Which the whole forest keeps hidden in its shadows,
 Enclosed by thick, dark and sombre ramparts:
 Without it no one is permitted to descend
 Into the underground places. You, then, who wish to go
 Seeking the power of Nature's secrets
 Through the unknown horror of many a dark path,
 Where only heaven's favour can advance you,
 Seek it with the eyes of an exalted thought;
 And having found it, let your pure and stainless hand
 Grasp it reverently and swiftly pluck it free,
 For it willingly follows the fortunate man who has sought it,
 Once the fates have granted their permission:
 Otherwise no force or iron can detach it,
 And the harder it is sought, the more firmly it hides.²³¹

SL_II_04S027 1621 pp 273–274 · scans FR283, FR284

Or si la nature a bien eu le soing de cacher ces choses, de peur qu'elles fussent prostituées indifféremment à tous, & que les pourceaux vinsent fleurir la marjollaine, ou, comme l'on dit, fouiller au jardin où croissent les roses: il ne se faut esmerveiller que les sages anciens & modernes se soient étudiés à ourdir tant de fabuleux voiles & figures énigmatiques pour les couvrir en les montrant: car ils sçavoient bien que la cérémonieuse Nature ne veut point qu'on la voye nue. Autrement elle n'eust jamais pris la peine de se masquer de tant de formes diverses & d'espèces différentes, afin que par l'infinité de ces variables figures, ses vénérables secrets fussent préservés du mépris ordinairement commun aux choses trop communes. C'est pourquoi j'en traite encore icy avec même solennité & retenue, pour ne tomber au péril de celui qui divulga les secrets mystères des Déeses Éleusines, qu'il n'est encore permis à nul des mortels d'esclaircir, parce qu'elles veulent toujours demeurer secrètes & chastes, & non pas se voir abandonnées à l'usage public ainsi que courtisanes eshontées. Et si j'en parle dignement à mon tour, ceux qui sont avancés en l'inquisition de tels secrets le jugeront facilement, car l'expérience est la vraie & irréprochable maîtresse des choses.

Now, if nature has taken such care to conceal these things, lest they
 should be prostituted indiscriminately to everyone, and pigs should
 come to sniff the marjoram—or, as the saying goes, root in the garden

²³¹. The cavern quotation has six substantive lines. The golden-bough quotation has fourteen across FR282–FR283; its page turn falls after the tenth line. Both retain the line structure of this French witness.

where the roses grow—we should not wonder that ancient and modern sages have laboured to weave so many veils of fable and enigmatic figures, covering these things while displaying them. They knew well that ceremonious Nature does not wish to be seen naked. Otherwise she would never have troubled to mask herself in so many diverse forms and different species, so that through the infinity of these changing figures her venerable secrets might be preserved from the contempt usually shared by things that are too common. That is why I too discuss them here with the same solemnity and restraint, lest I incur the danger of the man who divulged the secret mysteries of the Eleusinian goddesses. No mortal is yet permitted to make these plain, because the goddesses wish always to remain secret and chaste, rather than see themselves abandoned to public use like shameless courtesans. Whether I in turn speak worthily of them will readily be judged by those who have advanced in the investigation of such secrets, for experience is the true and irrefragable mistress of things.²³²

SL_II_04S028 1621 pp 274–277 · scans FR284, FR285, FR286, FR287

Au reste l'on ne doit trouver estrange si j'ay quelquefois autorisé les operations naturelles & spagyriques par quelques conformitez qu'elles ont aux sacrez mysteres du Christianisme, lesquels je n'entens aucunement profaner; ains au contraire en celebrer l'excellence, & les faire toucher au doigt par les tesmoignages du soing que l'Eternel auteur du monde a eu de pourvoir au salut des ames & des corps. Qui a meu certain autheur tresdocte, d'escrire que la vraye Chimie (que Paracelse appelle Spagirie) suit pas à pas le train de l'Evangile, parce que par son moyen, avec l'ayde du feu, sont esprouvees toutes les œuvres & puissantes vertus de la Nature, que les anciens mesme insinuoient en leur vieille Theologie: comme les Bracmanes & Gimnosophistes en leur Gimnosophie: & sur tous les Ægyptiens. Car la magie de tout le Paganisme, ny les fabuleuses involutions des Poëtes n'estoient, & ne signifioient autre chose que le discours de tout ce livre. Ce que le docte & subtil Bracesco a diligemment examiné, quoy que l'envieux Toladanus ayt escrit contre, apres s'estre veu deceu en l'experience du secret que par importunité il croyoit avoir arraché de luy: s'estant imaginé qu'il tenoit l'escume du fer commun pour le Mercure des sages; puis qu'il luy avoit asseuré qu'il se tire d'une chose vile, de petit prix, & que l'on jette par les rues: Ne prenant pas garde que les maistres discrets desguisent leur vraye matiere en luy donnant le nom de tous les metaux, sans tromperie aucune: car ceux qui la connoissent sçavent trop qu'elle les contient tous sept ensemble: & leur demanderois volontiers s'ils croyent que le Cosmopolitain ayt entendu parler de l'Acier vulgaire, quand il a dit en son enigme que Neptune luy monstra sous une roche deux mines cachées, l'une d'Or & l'autre d'Acier. Il est trop habile homme pour avoir eu une si frivolle pensée: mais il a nommé sa matiere de ce nom pour la conformité qu'elle a par son lustre poly avec l'acier. Et vrayment c'eust esté chose bien indigne du nom de sage à Bracesco de descouvrir en un moment un secret qu'il avoit peut estre acheté des deux tiers de son age.

Nor should it seem strange if I have sometimes lent authority to natural and spagyrical operations through certain correspondences they have with the sacred mysteries of Christianity. I have no intention of

²³². The Eleusinian goddesses furnish an analogy for protected knowledge. The passage explains why Nuysement claims both to reveal and to veil his subject; it does not identify a particular historical divulger.

profaning those mysteries. On the contrary, I mean to celebrate their excellence and make them almost tangible through the evidence of the care with which the eternal author of the world has provided for the salvation of souls and bodies. This moved a certain very learned author to write that true Chymistry, which Paracelsus calls Spagyria, follows the course of the Gospel step by step. Through it, with the aid of fire, all the works and mighty powers of Nature are put to the proof. The ancients themselves intimated these in their old theology, as did the Brahmans and Gymnosophists in their Gymnosophy, and above all the Egyptians. For all the magic of paganism and the poets' entanglements of fable were, and signified, nothing other than the subject of this entire book. The learned and subtle Bracesco examined this diligently, although the envious Toladanus wrote against him after finding himself disappointed in the trial of the secret which he thought his importunity had wrested from him. He had imagined that Bracesco took the scum of common iron for the mercury of the sages, since he had assured him that it is drawn from something base, of little price, which people throw into the streets. He failed to observe that discreet masters disguise their true matter by giving it the names of all the metals, without any deception: those who know it know very well that it contains all seven together. I would gladly ask them whether they believe the Cosmopolite meant ordinary steel when he said in his riddle that Neptune showed him two hidden mines beneath a rock, one of gold and the other of steel. He is too accomplished a man to have entertained so frivolous a thought. He named his matter in this way because its polished lustre resembles steel. Indeed, it would have been quite unworthy of Bracesco's reputation as a sage to disclose in a moment a secret for which he had perhaps paid two-thirds of his lifetime.^{233,234,235}

SL_II_04S029 1621 pp 277–280 · scans FR287, FR288, FR289, FR290

Mais afin que je dye ma part du sens couvert sous ces Mithologies, voyons nous pas clairement que l'antique Demogorgon pere de tous les Dieux, ou plustost de tous les membres du monde, que l'on dit habiter au centre de la terre, couvert d'une chappe verte & ferrugineuse, nourrissant toutes sortes d'animaux, n'est autre chose que l'Esprit universel qui du ventre du Cahos obeissant à la voix du Seigneur meit en lumiere les Cieux, les Elements, & tout ce qui est en iceux, qu'il a tousjours depuis entretenus & vivifiez: car il se loge veritablement au milieu de la terre, ainsi que je l'ay amplement déclaré au commencement de ce livre, c'est à dire, au centre du monde où il est placé comme en son trosne, & d'où comme du cœur de ce grand corps, & siege de la vie universelle il produit, anime, & nourrit tout: Mais ce manteau verd & ferrugine dont il est revestu, peut il estre imaginé autre chose que

²³³. Spagirie is expressly presented here as Paracelsus's name for true chymistry. Nuysement uses the comparison with Christianity to defend his explanatory method; the passage does not equate the two without qualification.

²³⁴. Bracesco and Toladanus are retained in the forms transmitted by this witness. The quarrel is reported by Nuysement; its events and the accusation of envy have not been independently established here.

²³⁵. The distinction between ordinary steel and the Cosmopolite's figurative 'steel' is explicit. The author's own warning prevents the poetic name from being treated as an unqualified ingredient-identification.

la superficie de la terre qui l'enveloppe, laquelle est noirastre & de couleur de fer, esmaillee & peinte de toutes sortes d'herbes & de fleurs. Virgile parfaitement instruit en tous ces secrets mystiques, a donné à cet Esprit ou ame du monde le nom de Jupiter, qu'il fait invoquer à son pasteur Damete pour le principe de ses chants, d'autant (dit il) que de luy toutes choses sont remplies. Et ce Dieu des forests Pan, adoré des bergers, peut estre tenu pour la mesme chose. Car outre ce nom qui signifie tout, on le fait encore seigneur des forests, parce que les Grecs le tenoient pour recteur du Cahos qu'ils nomment autrement Hilé, signifiant une forest. Orphee en son Hymne l'appelle donc:

Pan le fort, le subtil, l'entier, l'universel.
 Tout air, tout eau, tout terre, & tout feu immortel.
 Qui sieds avec le temps dedans un trosne mesme,
 Au regne inferieur, au moyen, au supreme.
 Concevant, engendrant, produisant, gardant tout:
 Principe en tout, de tous, qui de tout viens à bout.
 Germe du feu, de l'air, de la terre, & de l'onde.
 Grand esprit avivant tous les membres du monde,
 Qui vas du tout en tout les natures changeant,
 Pour ame universelle en tous corps te logeant,
 Ausquels tu donnes estre, & mouvement, & vie:
 Prouvant par mille effects ta puissance infinie.

But to give my own share of the meaning concealed beneath these mythologies, do we not clearly see that ancient Demogorgon, father of all the gods—or rather of all the members of the world—who is said to dwell at the centre of the earth, covered in a green and rusty mantle and nourishing every kind of animal, is nothing other than the universal spirit? From the womb of Chaos, obeying the Lord's voice, this spirit brought to light the heavens, the elements and everything within them, which it has ever since maintained and quickened. For it truly lodges in the midst of the earth, as I explained fully at the beginning of this book: that is, at the centre of the world, where it is seated as upon its throne. From there, as from the heart of this great body and the seat of universal life, it produces, animates and nourishes everything. What else can we imagine the green and rusty mantle clothing it to be, but the surface of the earth which envelops it, dark and iron-coloured, enamelled and painted with every kind of herb and flower? Virgil, perfectly instructed in all these mystical secrets, gave this spirit or soul of the world the name of Jupiter, whom he makes his shepherd Damoetas invoke at the beginning of his songs, because, he says, all things are filled with him. Pan too, the god of the forests worshipped by shepherds, may be understood as the same thing. Besides his name, which means 'all', he is made lord of the forests because the Greeks considered him governor of Chaos, which they otherwise call Hyle, meaning a forest. Thus Orpheus in his hymn calls him:

Pan the strong, the subtle, the whole, the universal,
 All air, all water, all earth, and all immortal fire;
 You who sit with time upon one and the same throne,
 In the lower realm, the middle, and the highest;
 Conceiving, engendering, producing, preserving all:
 Principle in all, of all, who accomplish everything;
 Seed of fire, of air, of earth, and of the waters;
 Great spirit quickening all the members of the world,
 You who move through all in all, changing their natures,
 Lodging in every body as its universal soul,
 To which you give being, and movement, and life,
 Proving by a thousand effects your infinite power.^{236,237}

SL_IL_045030 1621 pp 280–282, 293 · scans FR290, FR291, FR292, FR293

Saturne, fils de Cœlie & de Vesta, (qui sont le Ciel & la Terre) & mary d'Opis sa sœur, (qui est cette vertu aydante & conservatrice de tout) represente le mesme Demogorgon. Car ses enfans qu'il devore & puis les revomit, sont-ce pas les corps ausquels il a donné l'estre en chacun des trois genres, lesquels en leur fin se reduisent en luy, pour en reproduire de nouveaux: afin que par cette perpetuelle vicissitude, l'ordre estably dés la creation du monde, puisse à jamais s'entretenir & conserver? On le peint chenu & sordide: la teste couverte: la main armee d'une faux: & pour sa devise on luy donne un serpent qui se recourbant en figure circulaire, mord sa queue. Il est veritablement tres-vieil, puis qu'il est principe de tout: Il a les cheveux & la barbe blanche, qui luy vont croissant comme il se void en maint endroit, ne plus ne moins que font les choses germinantes. Il est sordide & mal propre de luy mesme, à cause de la terrestre immondicité qui se joint à luy, pleine d'adustion sulphuree & corrompante. Sa teste est couverte; C'est à dire que le chef de sa perfection est caché sous la voile de son impurité, qui le rend incognu de plusieurs; joint la difficulté de son obscure recherche. Sa faux, est la mordante poncticité dont il tranche & devore tout. Et le serpent qui mord sa queue, est sa vertu & nature regenerante, par laquelle il se refournit & r'engendre luy mesme ainsi que l'on dit du Phenix: à cause dequoy on luy donne quelquefois ce nom. De sorte qu'il est tousjours comme en ronde & indeficiente croissance, rampant par la terre à la façon des serpents. J'entens desja quelqu'un me relever, & dire que c'est bien mal conceu à moy l'intention des inventeurs de cette fabuleuse description de Saturne, qu'ils ont pris pour le plomb. D'autant que selon les escrits de tous les sçavants en la generation des metaux, c'est le plus ancien & premier né de tous; par la naturelle congelation du Mercure es veines des rochers. Lequel devore tous les autres à cause de sa crudité qui le rend abundant en Sel; car c'est du Sel que luy provient cette mordante & devorante action; comme il s'esprouve assez par les coupelles des affineurs, où il revomit l'Or & l'Argent, qu'il a bien eu puissance d'engloutir, mais non de consommer & destruire; parce qu'en leur decoction ils ont acquis une fermeté & fixation capable de resister à la debile chaleur de son estomach avide. Je ne reprouve entierement ce sens, d'autant qu'il est conforme en quelques points à la description susdite; mais ne l'estant pas en tous comme est celuy que j'ay

²³⁶. Demogorgon, Jupiter and Pan are treated here as different mythological figures for one universal agency. These equations belong to Nuysement's interpretation; the translation preserves their stated sequence without presenting them as independent historical facts.

²³⁷. The French hymn has twelve substantive lines. Printer wraps within long lines are joined here; the English preserves the twelve-line structure. The attribution to Orpheus is the source's own.

deschiffré, je me persuade que si nous passons par le jugement des experts, le dementy ne sera point pour moy.

Saturn, son of Coelie and Vesta, who are Heaven and Earth, and husband of his sister Ops, who is the power that assists and preserves everything, represents the same Demogorgon. For are the children he devours and then vomits up again not the bodies to which he has given being in each of the three kinds, which at their end are reduced into him so that he may produce new ones? Through this perpetual succession, the order established at the creation of the world may thus maintain and preserve itself for ever. He is painted grey-haired and filthy, his head covered, his hand armed with a scythe; for his device he is given a serpent which bends into a circle and bites its own tail. He is truly very old, since he is the principle of everything. His hair and beard are white and keep growing upon him, as can be seen in many places, just as germinating things grow. He is filthy and unclean in himself because of the earthly impurity that joins itself to him, full of sulphurous and corrupting burning. His head is covered: that is, the summit of his perfection is hidden beneath the veil of his impurity, which makes him unknown to many, besides the difficulty of searching him out in obscurity. His scythe is the biting sharpness with which he cuts down and devours everything. The serpent biting its tail is his regenerative power and nature, through which he replenishes and engenders himself anew, as is said of the phoenix; for this reason that name is sometimes given to him. Thus he is always in a kind of circular and unfailing growth, creeping along the earth like serpents. Already I hear someone correcting me, saying that I have badly understood the intention of those who invented this fabulous description of Saturn, by whom they meant lead. For according to the writings of all who understand the generation of metals, it is the oldest and first-born of them all, through the natural congelation of mercury in the veins of rocks. It devours all the others because of its rawness, which makes it abound in salt; for from salt comes its biting and devouring action. This is sufficiently proved in the refiners' cupels, where it vomits up gold and silver, which it had the power to swallow but not to consume and destroy, because in their decoction they acquired a firmness and fixation capable of resisting the feeble heat of its ravenous stomach. I do not reject this meaning entirely, since it agrees in some points with the foregoing description. But since it does not agree in every point, as does the meaning I have deciphered, I am persuaded that if we submit to the experts' judgement, I shall not be the one proved wrong.^{238,239,240}

²³⁸. The opposing interpretation identifies Saturn with lead; Nuysement accepts a partial fit while arguing that his universal-spirit reading fits the entire description. These are competing interpretations within the passage, not interchangeable names adopted without discussion.

²³⁹. Adustion denotes a condition of burning or scorching; poncticité denotes the sharp, biting quality invoked throughout this account. The translation conveys the qualities without assigning a modern chemical composition.

Maye representoit la terre, ainsi appelee, comme ayeule ou grande mere de laquelle cet esprit ou Mercure universel prend sa naissance de la pure & invisible semence de Jupiter, qui est l'air. Car il sort veritablement d'elle par ce moyen; comme explique fort discretement ce docte Cosmopolitain en ses riches traittez. Ce Mercure est peint avec des aisles en plusieurs endroits, pour monstrier qu'il est fuyant & volatil de sa Nature. Sa teste est couverte d'un chapeau, pour les mesmes raisons que j'ay n'aguier alleguees en parlant de Saturne. Il porte un caducee & verge fatalle entortillee de serpens, tant pour signifier sa vertu renovatrice, que pour ce que j'ay dit du serpent de Saturne. Avec laquelle verge il ouvre le Ciel & la Terre; & donne la mort & la vie. Or cette verge represente la puissante Nature, par laquelle montant au Ciel & descendant aux enfers, c'est à dire en la terre, il acquiert les vertus des choses superieures & inferieures. Par cette mesme puissance il tire les ames de l'Orque, endort, & ferme les yeux d'un sommeil Eternel, ainsi que chante Virgile. Aussi est il appellé de quelques uns Theriaque & Venin, sçavoir mort & vie; selon l'usage & les doses d'iceluy, parce que toute la vie consiste en Temperance & Justice, & la mort en l'excès, qui est leur contraire. Il y a une infinité de semblables mysteres en cette payenne Theologie qui n'ont autre but que celuy auquel je vise. Mais il faudroit un ample volume à part: & craindrois d'ennuyer le Lecteur par les trop frequentes repetitions de mesmes choses. Il me suffira donc d'en avoir superficiellement discouru ce peu, pour donner à cognoistre que tous ces commentaires mythologiques avec leurs sens historiaux allegoriques, & autres fantasques resveries, n'ont jamais donné tour ny atteinte aux secrettes fixions Poëtiques; dont la pluspart ne sont inventees que pour insinuer covertement les admirables operations de la naturelle spagirique. Comme entre les autres celle de Jason & Medée, selon le tesmoignage de Suïdas elegamment raporté par Crisogone Polidore en sa preface sur les œuvres de Geber.

Maya represented the earth, so called as the grandmother or great mother from whom this spirit, or universal mercury, takes its birth through Jupiter's pure and invisible seed, which is the air. For it truly comes forth from her by this means, as the learned Cosmopolite explains most discreetly in his rich treatises. This mercury is depicted with wings in many places, to show that it is fugitive and volatile by nature. Its head is covered by a hat for the same reasons I gave a little earlier when speaking of Saturn. It carries a caduceus, a fateful rod entwined with serpents, both to signify its renewing power and for the reasons I gave concerning Saturn's serpent. With this rod it opens heaven and earth and gives death and life. Now this rod represents powerful Nature, through which, by ascending into heaven and descending to the underworld—that is, into the earth—it acquires the powers of higher and lower things. Through this same power it draws souls from Orcus, brings sleep and closes eyes in an eternal slumber, as Virgil sings. It is therefore called by some both theriac and venom, meaning death and life, according to its use and doses: for all life consists in temperance and justice, and death in excess, their opposite. There are infinitely many such mysteries in this pagan theology whose aim is no different from mine. But these would require a substantial

²⁴⁰. The printed numbering jumps from 282 to 293 between FR292 and FR293. The sentence continues directly across the images; the missing numerical range does not mark a gap in this passage.

volume of their own, and I should fear boring the reader by repeating the same things too often. It will therefore suffice to have touched briefly upon them, to make clear that all these mythological commentaries, with their historical and allegorical meanings and other fanciful reveries, have never encompassed or grasped the secret poetic fictions. Most of these were invented only to intimate covertly the admirable operations of natural spagyria. Among them is the story of Jason and Medea, according to the testimony of Suidas, elegantly reported by Chrysogonus Polydorus in his preface to the works of Geber.²⁴¹

SL_II_045032 1621 pp 295–297 · scans FR295, FR296, FR297

En faveur de laquelle je me dispenseray du silence promis, pour declarer que ce nom de Medée veut dire cogitation, meditation, ou investigation; tirant sa derivation d'un mot qui signifie Principe, Origine, source, ou raison. Car toute meditation, cogitation, ou investigation, doit sans doute avoir quelque principe ou raison pour fondement sur qui elle soit appuyee, & d'où elle sorte: luy donnant occasion de faire telle recherche avec ratiocination. Cette Medée apprit à Jason (qui est l'inquisiteur ou Philosophe) deux choses ausquelles consiste toute la Philosophie. La premiere est de conquerer la toison d'or, qui est l'art destiné aux transmutations metalliques avec les choses minerales. La seconde est la restauration des corps debilitez par maladies; en les guarissant promptement & parfaitement: puis leur restituant cette jeunesse ou premiere vigueur alentie, & presque esteinte par le froid aconit des ans: Chassant des corps par cette medecine uniquement universelle, toutes humeurs & superfluitez corrompues & corrompantes qui les conduisent à leur fin, le plus souvent precipitee par l'excès de tels accidents impreveus. Ces deux miraculeux effects furent atteints & accomplis par Jason, observant religieusement les utiles conseils de la sage Medée: apres toutesfois une longue & laborieuse navigation suivie d'infinis perilleux hazards, à cause du dragon & des Taureaux qu'il luy convient dompter. Or cette navigation est la penible recherche & douteuse experience des choses, où l'on vogue souvent tout le temps de la vie sans pouvoir arriver au port de cette immense mer de la Nature.

For this story's sake I shall dispense with my promised silence, to declare that the name Medea means cogitation, meditation or investigation, deriving from a word which signifies principle, origin, source or reason. For every meditation, cogitation or investigation must undoubtedly have some principle or reason as its foundation, upon which it rests and from which it proceeds, giving occasion for such a search through reasoning. This Medea taught Jason, who is the enquirer or philosopher, the two things in which all philosophy consists. The first is to win the Golden Fleece, which is the art directed towards metallic transmutations by means of mineral things. The second is to restore bodies weakened by disease, curing them promptly and perfectly, then restoring their youth or original vigour, slowed and almost extinguished by the cold aconite of the years. By this uniquely universal medicine, all corrupted and corrupting humours and superfluities are

²⁴¹. 'Theriac and venom' states the author's contrast between life-giving and deadly uses of one subject, qualified by use and dose. It is preserved as his historical medical claim, without identifying a modern remedy.

driven from bodies: these bring them to their end, which is most often hastened by an excess of such unforeseen accidents. Jason attained and accomplished these two miraculous effects by religiously observing the useful counsels of wise Medea, though only after a long and arduous voyage followed by countless perilous hazards, because of the dragon and bulls he had to subdue. Now this voyage is the laborious search and uncertain trial of things, in which one often sails throughout an entire lifetime without being able to reach the harbour in this immense sea of Nature.²⁴²

SL_II_045033 1621 pp 297–299 · scans FR297, FR298, FR299

Ces Taureaux monstrueux qu'il faut assujettir & accoupler au joug, sont les fourneaux où se doivent faire les operations; lesquels representent naïvement la teste d'un Taureau, & jettent le feu par les yeux & la gorge ainsi que dit la fable. Car il est necessaire qu'il y ait des souspiraux par lesquels soient reiglez les degrez de la chaleur, & le feu preservé d'estouffement, d'autant que si l'on n'est maistre du feu il arrivera beaucoup d'accidents pendant le cours de l'œuvre, qui frauderoient l'ouvrier de son attente. J'en puis parler comme expert: car de neuf vaisseaux que je mis en decoction pour trouver le vray degre de chaleur, les huit perirent; & ne me resta que celui par le moyen duquel furent faites les experiences dont j'ay cy devant parlé. Ce dragon tousjours veillant est ce Mercure general que Cadmus sceut autresfois tuer, c'est à dire fixer. Le champ de Mars où il falloit semer les dents du serpent martial, n'est autre chose que le vaisseau dans lequel s'eslevent ces soldats armez de lances aiguës. Lequel vaisseau ne doit point estre en cet endroit un allembic de verre comme pense & dit Pollidore: Mais une forme de Cabacet ainsi que dit la fable, estroit en bas & s'eslargissant fort par le haut. Et faut qu'il soit de bonne terre bien cuicte: & non de fer ou de verre. Au fond duquel s'eslevera un camp armé & herissé de lances, qui semblent horriblement irritees, se coucher l'une contre l'autre pour combatre ainsi qu'en plain champ de bataille. Voila ce qu'a ingenieusement inventé le Poëte, pour faire admirer au vulgaire comme fort estrange & inouïe, une chose tellement familiere, que si je la nommois on se mocqueroit de luy & de moy.

These monstrous bulls which must be brought under control and coupled to the yoke are the furnaces in which the operations must be performed. They naturally represent a bull's head and cast fire from their eyes and throat, as the fable says. For there must be vents through which the degrees of heat are regulated and the fire kept from suffocation: unless one is master of the fire, many accidents will occur during the work and disappoint the worker's expectation. I can speak of this from experience. Of nine vessels which I put into decoction to find the true degree of heat, eight perished; only the one remained through which the experiments I mentioned earlier were performed. This ever-watchful dragon is the universal mercury which Cadmus once knew how to kill—that is, to fix. The field of Mars in which the martial serpent's teeth had to be sown is nothing other than the vessel within which those soldiers armed with sharp spears arise. At this point that

²⁴². The proposed meanings and derivation of Medea's name are part of Nuysement's allegorical reading. The passage's equation of Medea with investigation is not supplied as a verified modern etymology.

vessel must not be a glass alembic, as Polydorus thinks and says, but the shape of a cabasset helmet, as the fable says, narrow below and widening greatly at the top. It must be made of good, well-fired earth, rather than iron or glass. At its bottom there will rise an armed camp bristling with spears, which seem terribly incensed, lowering themselves against one another to fight as on an open battlefield. This is what the poet has ingeniously invented, to make ordinary people marvel at something as very strange and unheard-of which is so familiar that, if I named it, they would mock both him and me.²⁴³

SL_II_045034 1621 pp 299–302 · scans FR299, FR300, FR301, FR302

Mais apres que Jason eut accomply ses labeurs, il luy fallut encore endormir le dragon veillant qui gardoit la toison d'Or; & l'assoupir de sorte que de son gosier ne sortit plus ny feu ny fumee. Ce qu'il feit, en le noyant dans les eaux Stigiennes: c'est à dire, en le redissolvant & refixant avec son esprit. Il ne restoit donc plus à Jason pour posseder la toison d'Or, & rajeunir son pere Æson agravé de vieillesse extreme, sinon un seul labeur que Medée luy enseigna pour couronner ses bons offices: c'estoit la fermentation & conjunction du beurre du Soleil avec la paste de ce Mercure preparé; qui de soy n'est capable de produire deux si excellents effects: n'estant à vray dire, que la terre où l'on doit semer le pur froment que Nature a produit & conduit à la perfection qui luy est concedee. Par ce dernier labeur il se veid enfin maistre de ce double tresor, qu'il emporta glorieusement au lieu de sa naissance: avec lequel il se combla de richesses, & son vieil pere de vigoureuse santé: banissant de luy les importunes langueurs que traîne apres soy le long age. Je laisseray donc maintenant Jason & sa Medée jouir de leur felicité, & diray seulement que rien ne pourroit estre exprimé par ce dragon veillant & jettant le feu par la gorge, plus proprement que nostre esprit ou Mercure, qui est la chose du monde la plus vive & inflammable: Estant à cette occasion appellé eau ardante, ou de vie, parce comme dit Bracesco qu'elle ard soudainement avant sa coagulation, & n'est pas eau de vigne ains de vie, à cause qu'elle vivifie tout. Que si on le contemple en son aparente superficie, qui pensera jamais qu'il y ayt en luy quelque chose de fixe & non consommible, veu que si legerement il s'alume & s'esvanouit au moindre attouchement du feu? Ny qu'il y eust en son centre une vertu conservatrice de la vie, monstrant evidemment qu'il est tout enveloppé de mortel venin, destruisant plustost que vivifiant?

But after Jason had completed his labours, he still had to lull to sleep the watchful dragon guarding the Golden Fleece, making it so drowsy that neither fire nor smoke came from its throat. He did this by drowning it in the Stygian waters: that is, by dissolving it again and fixing it again with its spirit. For Jason to possess the Golden Fleece and rejuvenate his father Aeson, weighed down by extreme old age, only one labour then remained. Medea taught it to him to crown her good services: the fermentation and conjunction of the butter of the Sun with the paste of this prepared mercury. By itself this mercury cannot produce two such excellent effects, being, properly speaking, only the earth in which one must sow the pure wheat that Nature has produced and brought to the

²⁴³. The enlarged French print is read Cabacet, a historical spelling of cabasset, a helmet. Richelet's *Dictionnaire françois* (1759), p.371, records both forms and the helmet sense. Nuysement describes a vessel of that shape, narrow below and widening above; the comparison does not identify a modern apparatus.

perfection granted to it. Through this last labour he finally found himself master of this double treasure, which he carried triumphantly to his birthplace. With it he filled himself with riches and his aged father with vigorous health, banishing from him the troublesome debility that advanced age drags behind it. I shall now leave Jason and his Medea to enjoy their happiness and say only that nothing could be more fittingly expressed by this watchful dragon casting fire from its throat than our spirit or mercury, which is the liveliest and most inflammable thing in the world. For this reason it is called burning water or water of life, because, as Bracesco says, it burns suddenly before its coagulation and is not water of the vine but of life, since it quickens everything. Yet if one considers its outward surface, who would ever think it contained anything fixed and inconsumable, seeing how readily it catches fire and vanishes at the slightest touch of flame? Or that it had at its centre a power preserving life, when it plainly shows itself wholly wrapped in deadly venom, destroying rather than quickening?²⁴⁴

SL_II_04S035 1621 pp 302–303 · scans FR302, FR303

Mais comme Dieu constitua le Cherubin ardent avec le glaive enflamé pour garder l'arbre de vie, aussi Nature a establi ce dragon veillant & jette-feu pour empescher l'entree du jardin où elle a planté l'arbre precieux portant les pommes dorees: c'est à dire la congnoissance des plus occultes secrets de son tresor: que les doctes anciens ne vouloient nullement escrire, ains seulement enseigner de bouche à ceux qu'ils en cognoissoient dignes. Qui a esté la cause que ces grandes & admirables sciences se sont esvanouies, & par laps de temps ont esté tenuës des ignorants pour contes faits à plaisir. Ce qu'Esdras prevoyant devoir avenir par les bannissemens, tueries, fuittes, & captivitez de la gent Israelite, & craignant que tels arcanes perissent, parce que sans le benefice de l'escriture la memoire des hommes ne pouvoit estre grandement durable, il assembla tous les sages qui restoient jusques au nombre de septante, lesquels reduirent ces choses avec luy en autant de livres, comme il se tesmoigne quand il dit: apres quarante jours le Seigneur parla, disant: les choses que tu as premierement escrites propose les publiquement afin que tous les lisent: mais les derniers septante livres, tu les conserveras afin de les bailler aux sages de ton people, car en iceux est contenuë la veuë, l'intelligence & la source: Et je le fis ainsi.

But just as God stationed the burning cherub with the flaming sword to guard the tree of life, so Nature established this watchful, fire-spitting dragon to bar entry to the garden where she planted the precious tree bearing golden apples: that is, the knowledge of the most hidden secrets of her treasure. The learned ancients would not commit these to writing at all, but taught them only by word of mouth to those they judged worthy. This caused those great and admirable sciences to vanish and, with the passing of time, to be considered by the ignorant as stories invented for amusement. Esdras foresaw that this would happen through the banishments, killings, flights and captivities of the Israelite people. Fearing that such arcana would perish, because without the benefit of writing human memory could not endure very long, he

²⁴⁴ The opposition between *eau de vigne* and *eau de vie* plays on 'vine' and 'life' while expressly rejecting an ordinary identification. 'Butter of the Sun', 'paste' and 'wheat' likewise remain the author's terms; no modern substance or supplementary procedure is supplied.

assembled all the sages who remained, seventy in number. With him they set these things down in as many books, as he himself testifies when he says: 'After forty days the Lord spoke, saying: Make public the things you have written first, so that everyone may read them. But preserve the last seventy books to give to the sages of your people, for in them are contained sight, understanding and the source. And I did so.'²⁴⁵

SL_II_045036 1621 pp 303–305 · scans FR303, FR304, FR305

Pic de la Mirandolle estimé de son temps un miracle en doctrine, parle de ces livres avec tresgrande reverence: & voicy ses parolles. Ceux cy (dit il) sont les septante livres de la caballe, esquels à bon droit Esdras a dit hautement que gisent la veuë, l'intelligence & la source, c'est à dire l'ineestimable Theologie de la supreme divinité: la fontaine de sapience: l'entiere methaphisique des intelligences: le fleuve de science, c'est à dire la tresferme Philosophie des choses naturelles. Ces livres ayant esté longuement cachez furent par Xiste Pontife quatriesme du nom commencez à traduire en langue Latine pour l'utilité de nostre religion: mais ce bon œuvre fut interrompu par sa mort. Toutefois ils sont en telle estime & reverence entre les Hebrieux qu'il n'est licite à aucun de les toucher s'il n'a l'aage de quarante ans. Et c'est une chose admirable qu'il y a en cette doctrine cabalique avec les decrets quelques points du Christianisme. Tout cecy est tiré de mot à mot des escrits de ce renommé Comte de la Mirandolle.

Or n'ayant à mon avis rien oublié de ce qui estoit necessaire au dessein que je me suis proposé d'interpreter selon mon sens le contenu de la table d'Hermes, qui est une obscure Caballe Philosophique: je me retireray de cet Ocean de merveilles, pour m'essuyer aux rays du Soleil de vos faveurs: disant pour adieu à vostre Altesse, & prouvant par raisons legitimes, que la vraye Philosophie est l'heur, l'honneur, & la gloire de tout le monde.

Pico della Mirandola, considered in his time a marvel of learning, speaks of these books with very great reverence. Here are his words: 'These', he says, 'are the seventy books of the cabala, in which Esdras rightly declared that sight, understanding and the source reside: that is, the inestimable theology of the supreme divinity; the fountain of wisdom; the entire metaphysics of the intelligences; the river of knowledge—that is, the most firmly grounded philosophy of natural things. After these books had long remained hidden, Pope Sixtus, the fourth of that name, had their translation into Latin begun for the benefit of our religion; but this good work was interrupted by his death. Nevertheless, they are held in such esteem and reverence among the Hebrews that no one may touch them before reaching forty years of age. It is a marvellous thing that this cabalistic doctrine, together with its decrees, contains certain points of Christianity.' All this is taken word for word from the writings of that renowned Count of Mirandola.

²⁴⁵. The witness gives both seventy surviving sages and seventy reserved books. The account and quotation are translated as transmitted here. The following passage explicitly invokes Pico and says the material has been taken from his writings; the text has not been silently replaced by a modern scriptural version.

Now, having in my judgement omitted nothing necessary to the design I set myself—to interpret according to my own understanding the contents of Hermes' table, which is an obscure philosophical cabala—I shall withdraw from this ocean of marvels to dry myself in the rays of the Sun of your favours, bidding Your Highness farewell and proving by legitimate reasons that true philosophy is the happiness, honour and glory of the whole world.

Book Three and Concluding Texts

Book Three

Troisiesme Livre

Chapter outline

Nature's treasury in the earth and the human pursuit of longer life.

The excellence of intellect illustrated by Philon's speech.

Philosophical knowledge, salt and the preservation of life.

The universal spirit and the Emerald Table restated in verse.

SL_IIIS001 1621 pp 305–306 · scans FR305, FR306

Quelque magnifique & ingenieux Prince voulant bastir un somptueux Palais, commandera aux Architectes qu'ayant ordonné l'assiete des principaux membres, & designé leurs enrichissemens; ils pratiquent au lieu plus seur & commode un cabinet où il puisse retirer & conserver ses tresors & plus precieux tiltres. Afin qu'outre le plaisir qu'il pourra prendre en cela, il puisse à point nommé en tirer luy mesme ce qu'il voudra donner: sans que les effects de sa liberalité dependent d'autres que de luy. Car il advient souvent à plusieurs grands qu'ils sont indignement contraincts de mandier de leurs serviteurs (au hazard mesme d'un impudent refus) un present de peu de valeur dont ils desirent recognoistre les merites de quelque homme vertueux.

A magnificent and ingenious prince who wishes to build a sumptuous palace will command the architects, once they have arranged its principal parts and designed their adornments, to make a private chamber in the safest and most convenient place, where he can deposit and preserve his treasures and most precious documents of title. Besides the pleasure he may take in this, he will then be able at the appointed moment to withdraw for himself whatever he wishes to give, without the exercise of his generosity depending upon anyone else. Many great men are often shamefully compelled to beg from their servants, even at the risk of an impudent refusal, some gift of little value with which they wish to acknowledge the merits of a virtuous man.²⁴⁶

SL_IIIS002 1621 pp 306–308 · scans FR306, FR307, FR308

Ce prince, est la riche & abondante Nature, qui par la meditation divine a construit ce grand Palais du monde; au milieu duquel elle a placé le globe de la terre pour luy servir de cabinet, & y assembler ce qu'elle a de plus precieux par les contributions qu'elle exige de tous les autres membres & Provinces de l'univers. Tirant incessamment de ce tresor inepuisable l'entretien de son bastiment, & la substantation de toutes ses creatures. Lesquelles pour cette cause elle a logees en icelle, afin d'estre comme les enfans tousjours proche de la mamelle de leur mere.

²⁴⁶ The third book begins here in the French witness. Combach's 1651 Latin also contains it, beginning at printed page 190, whereas Turner's 1657 English ends at the close of Book II. The palace is an analogy for the world and its central treasury, the earth; the following paragraph explicitly supplies the interpretation. Latin control: <https://books.google.com/books?id=uCVnVywqslsC&pg=PA190>

Car tout ce qui vit au monde habite en cette terre, sentant bien par un instinct naturel qu'en elle est assis le magasin & source de la vie. C'est pourquoy les corps sensibles discourent & vont autour d'icelle à la recherche de leur aliment, lequel comme benigne mere elle donne & fournit aux insensibles; substantant & augmentant les uns & les autres par le benefice de vegetation. De sorte que ceux qui sont attachez à elle par les racines, comme l'enfant au ventre de sa mere par le nombril, reçoivent & tirent d'elle sans travail leur manger & leur boire, c'est à dire leur vie, qui leur manque aussitost qu'ils en sont separez & retranchez: Comme nous l'appercevons journellement aux arbres arrachez, & branches coupees.

This prince is rich and abundant Nature, who through divine meditation has constructed this great palace of the world. In its midst she has placed the globe of the earth as her private chamber, gathering there her most precious possessions through the contributions she exacts from all the other members and provinces of the universe. From this inexhaustible treasury she continually draws the maintenance of her building and the sustenance of all her creatures. She has lodged them in the earth for this reason, so that, like children, they may always be close to their mother's breast. Everything living in the world inhabits this earth, sensing by natural instinct that the storehouse and source of life are established within it. Thus bodies capable of sensation range about it in search of nourishment, while, like a kindly mother, she gives and supplies that nourishment to insensible bodies. Through the benefit of growth she sustains and increases both. Those attached to her by roots, like a child attached to its mother's womb by the navel, receive and draw their food and drink from her without labour. That is to say, they draw their life, which fails them as soon as they are separated and cut off from her, as we see daily in uprooted trees and severed branches.^{247,248}

SL_IIIS003 1621 pp 308–311 · scans FR308, FR309, FR310, FR311

Mais les autres qui n'y sont liez par attachements, pourchassent & ne cherchent qu'en elle cette vie qu'ils cognoissent y estre cachee: Les uns par le seul enseignement de Nature: Les autres par advertissement d'experience joint à celui de Nature encore. Enquoy certainement toutes ces creatures font bien voir qu'en la terre est un tres-riche & perpetuel tresor de vie: & qu'elles r'entroient volontiers en ses entrailles pour en estre plus abondamment participantes. Ce qui a donné subject à l'homme (auquel comme plus excellent d'esprit, a esté concedé du Ciel de pouvoir rechercher & decouvrir les choses par les raisons) d'entrer en la curiosité du prolongement de la vie; qu'il a jugé devoir estre tiree & puisee de cette terre qui la depart à tout, nourrissant, soustenant, & conservant tout: & qui jamais ne diminuë ou manque en sa puissante fecondité; car son centre est tousjoursourny & plein de cet esprit vivifiant: n'estimant donc rien si precieux & cher que le tresor de la vie, pour laquelle seule il se hazarda à tous perils, & soubmet à tous travaux, & souvent inutilement; il a voulu surpasser tous autres animaux en cette curieuse recherche;

²⁴⁷. The source prints 'meditation divine', retained here as 'divine meditation'. The image makes Nature's order purposeful. The centrally placed earth and the living, nourishing world belong to the cosmology argued throughout the work.

²⁴⁸. 'Sensible' and 'insensible' distinguish beings possessing sensation from those that do not. 'Vegetation' means nutritive growth and increase, extending beyond the modern category of plants.

afin que comme il est créé de Dieu très parfait au respect de toutes autres créatures terriennes, il s'eslevast d'un vol plus hardy à la connoissance des choses. Car encore que les brutes ayent commune avec nous cette manière de raison, qui est selon l'ame vitale, que les Grecs appellent raison cachée au dedans, & que les uns en ayent plus que les autres; si est-ce qu'ils ne sont capables des arts, excepté quelques uns, comme a dit Galien, ausquels toutefois la dextérité vient plustost par nature que par institution, qui ne peut bonnement tomber qu'en l'homme: lequel seul se doit dire capable de les apprendre, & enseigner aux autres, contemplant par l'œil d'une profonde & plus qu'humaine cogitation les choses cachées dans la terre, sous les eaux, voire même au dessus des Cieux: & de sa propre industrie acquérant le [plus] parfait de tous les biens, qui est la philosophie: parce que le Ciel & la Nature ont comme à l'envy l'un de l'autre contribué leur mieux pour sa perfection. J'estime donc n'estre hors de propos de rapporter icy quelques vers, où j'ay depeint cette excellence en certain dialogue, auquel je fais disputer Thimon & Philon sur la félicité ou infélicité de l'homme.

The others, which are not bound to the earth by such attachments, pursue and seek only within her that life which they know is hidden there. Some follow Nature's teaching alone; others add the instruction of experience to that of Nature. All these creatures certainly show that the earth holds an exceedingly rich and perpetual treasury of life, and that they would gladly re-enter her inward parts to share in it more abundantly. This has given man, to whom Heaven has granted, as the being more excellent in spirit, the power to investigate and discover things by reasoning, an interest in prolonging life. He has judged that life must be drawn and taken from this earth, which distributes it to everything, nourishing, sustaining and preserving all, and which never diminishes or fails in its powerful fertility, for its centre is always furnished and full of this life-giving spirit. Valuing nothing as precious and dear as the treasure of life, for whose sake alone he exposes himself to every danger and submits to every labour, often fruitlessly, he has wished to surpass all other animals in this searching inquiry. Since God created him most perfect in comparison with every other earthly creature, he would rise with bolder flight to the knowledge of things. Although brute beasts share with us that kind of reason which belongs to the vital soul, called by the Greeks reason hidden within, and although some possess more of it than others, they are nevertheless incapable of the arts, apart from a few exceptions mentioned by Galen. Even in those, however, skill comes through nature rather than instruction, which can properly take place only in man. He alone should be called capable of learning the arts and teaching them to others, contemplating with the eye of profound and more than human thought the things hidden in the earth, beneath the waters and even above the heavens, and acquiring by his own skill the most perfect of all goods, philosophy. Heaven and Nature have each contributed their best to his perfection, as if in rivalry. I therefore think it appropriate to repeat here some verses in which I depicted this excellence in a dialogue, making

Timon and Philon dispute whether man is fortunate or
unfortunate.^{249,250,251}

SL_IIIS004 1621 pp 311–312 · scans FR311, FR312

PHILON.

Supprimant du procès les deux tiltres meilleurs,
Tu produis l'inventaire & l'extrait des malheurs,
Et pour rendre la cause obscure & my-partie,
Tu nous depeints tout l'homme en sa moindre partie:
Partie où luist pourtant parmy l'humanité
Je ne sçay quoy de grand qui sent sa deité.
Mais considere l'homme en sa forme plus digne:
Forme dont estincelle une lumiere insigne
Qui tout autre animal force à le redouter;
A recevoir ses loix & se laisser dompter.

PHILON.

Leaving the two strongest titles out of the case,
You produce the inventory and extract of misfortunes,
And, to make the cause obscure and divided,
You portray the whole man in his lesser part:
A part in which, even amid humanity, there shines
Something great that gives a sense of his divinity.
But consider man in his more worthy form,
A form from which a splendid light sparkles,
Compelling every other animal to fear him,
To receive his laws and submit to being tamed.²⁵²

²⁴⁹. The barely legible word before 'parfait' on printed page 310 is supplied as [plus] in the French reading text. The comparative superlative construction and the surviving final letters support the restoration.

²⁵⁰. The distinction between inward reason and learned arts belongs to the author's comparison of animal and human capacities. Galen is cited as an authority, but the passage does not name a work or provide an exact citation.

²⁵¹. The following passage is an excerpt from a dialogue in which Philon answers Timon's account of human misery. It is additional verse within Book III, distinct from the nine separately headed sonnets preserved later in the scanned volume.

²⁵². The legal language of a case, titles and an inventory frames the dispute over human happiness. Philon objects that Timon has represented the whole person through the lesser part alone. 'Form' in the ensuing argument points towards intellect and the powers proper to the human being.

SL_IIIS005 1621 pp 312–313 · scans FR312, FR313

Voy ce noble intellect, ce vif esprit qui volle
 Du Levant au Couchant, de l'un à l'autre Polle
 En l'instant d'un moment, sur l'aëlle du penser
 Que Mercure ou Iris ne sçauroient devancer:
 Aigle qui d'un œil fixe en leur splendeur regarde
 Le Soleil jaunissant & la Lune blafarde,
 Qui a cognu leur trace, & distingué les tours
 Que l'un & l'autre acheve en parfaissant son cours,
 Qui clarissant l'ombré & les nocturnes voilles
 A veu des plus hauts Cieux les dernieres estoilles:
 Et nous a ramené les occultes raisons
 Pourquoi leurs tours divers vont changeant les saisons,

See that noble intellect, that lively spirit flying
 From east to west and from one pole to the other
 In a single instant, upon the wing of thought,
 Which Mercury or Iris could not overtake:
 An eagle gazing with a steady eye into the splendour
 Of the yellowing sun and the pallid moon,
 Who has learnt their paths and distinguished the circuits
 Which each completes in finishing its course,
 Who, illuminating shadow and the veils of night,
 Has seen the farthest stars of the highest heavens,
 And brought back to us the hidden reasons
 Why their diverse revolutions change the seasons,²⁵³

SL_IIIS006 1621 pp 313–314 · scans FR313, FR314

Comment ces yeux divins pleurent leurs influences,
 Pour animer les corps de celestes essences.
 Comment du plus subtil de ces perleuses pleurs
 Se fait l'email exquis des printannieres fleurs,
 Du moins subtil la feuille, & du plus gros l'escorce:
 Qui malgré les saisons maintient l'arbre en sa force:
 Comment l'Esprit du monde unique & general
 Produit un triple-germe, & en tous est égal:
 Comme en sa pureté les gemmes il procreë,
 Et l'Or dans les boyaux de la terre il concreë,
 Puis comment cet esprit de tous corps est extraict
 Pour l'opposer aux coups de l'homicide traict.

²⁵³. Mercury and Iris function in this verse as familiar figures of exceptional speed. The image praises the speed and reach of thought; it does not report a physical journey between the poles or stars.

How those divine eyes weep their influences
 To animate bodies with heavenly essences;
 How from the subtlest of those pearly tears
 The exquisite enamel of spring flowers is made,
 From the less subtle the leaf, and from the grossest the bark,
 Which keeps the tree strong despite the seasons;
 How the one universal spirit of the world
 Produces a threefold seed, yet is equal within all;
 How in its purity it brings forth precious stones,
 And forms gold within the bowels of the earth;
 Then how this spirit is extracted from every body
 To oppose the blows of the death-dealing dart.²⁵⁴

SL_IIIS007 1621 pp 314–315 · scans FR314, FR315

Cet intellect fut l'œil dont on dit que Lincee
 Avoit des grands rochers l'espaisseur transperce,
 Veu Pluton en son trosne & cognu ce que font
 Les Nymphes sous l'azur de l'Ocean profond:
 Comment la riche perle est produitte, & s'augmente
 Dans le marbre poly de sa couche luisante.
 Et comment le coral seroit pris des nauchers
 Ainsi qu'une herbe molle attachee aux rochers.
 Qui a fait voyager par mer comme par terre,
 Deffendre & augmenter son pays par la guerre,
 Construire des Citez, & les fortifier,
 Attendre un ennemy, ou l'aller deffier.

This intellect was the eye with which Lynceus is said
 To have pierced the thickness of great rocks,
 Seen Pluto upon his throne and learnt what the nymphs do
 Beneath the azure of the deep ocean:
 How the precious pearl is produced and grows
 Within the polished marble of its shining bed,
 And how coral might be gathered by sailors
 Like a soft herb attached to the rocks;
 The intellect that enabled travel by sea as by land,
 Defence and enlargement of one's country through war,
 The building of cities and their fortification,
 Waiting for an enemy or going out to challenge him.²⁵⁵

SL_IIIS008 1621 pp 315 · scans FR315

Qui du grand corps du monde a fait l'anatomie,
 Imité des hauts Cieux l'Angelique harmonie
 Et qui a tout reduit aux equitables loix
 Du compas, de la reigle, & du nombre, & du poids.

²⁵⁴. Influence is conceived as something flowing from the heavens into lower bodies. The verse connects celestial action, vegetative growth, mineral generation and the proposed extraction of a medicine within one explanatory sequence.

²⁵⁵. Lynceus is the figure of extraordinary sight invoked by the source; Pluto's throne extends that sight to what is hidden underground. The pearl's 'marble' is a poetic description of its hard, polished bed, not an editorial identification of shell material as geological marble.

The intellect that made an anatomy of the world's great body,
Imitated the angelic harmony of the high heavens,
And brought everything under the just laws
Of compass, rule, number and weight.²⁵⁶

SL_IIIS009 1621 pp 315–316 · scans FR315, FR316

C'est pourquoy Dieu le crea, sa face & la veuë eslevee vers le Ciel, non pas inclinee & flechissant vers la Terre, ainsi qu'àux autres animaux desnuez de raison, qui n'ont soin que de la mangeaille. De sorte que rien ne manque à sa perfection qu'une vie plus longue, & moins traversee d'ennuis & maladies, pour pouvoir atteindre l'entiere cognoissance des choses, & faire valloir cet impreciabile joyau d'intelligence dont il est seul gratifié par un special privilege. Cette imagination feist naistre l'audace à Paracelse de murmurer contre Nature, l'accusant d'inconsideration en ce qu'elle a donné à quelques animaux irraisonnables & inutiles l'usufruit d'une tres longue & saine vie, combien que cette grace leur soit indifferente: & qu'elle a desnié aux hommes ce bien tant désiré & necessaire, veu que c'estoit le seul moyen de les rendre accomplis aux plus rares sciences.

For this reason God created him with his face and gaze raised towards Heaven, rather than inclined and bent towards the earth like the other animals, which lack reason and care only about eating. Thus his perfection lacks nothing but a longer life, less beset by troubles and diseases, so that he may attain full knowledge of things and make use of that priceless jewel of intelligence with which he alone has been endowed by special privilege. This thought gave Paracelsus the boldness to complain against Nature, accusing her of thoughtlessness for granting some irrational and useless animals the enjoyment of a very long and healthy life, although this favour is a matter of indifference to them, while denying human beings a good so desired and necessary, since it was the only means of bringing them to accomplishment in the rarest sciences.²⁵⁷

SL_IIIS010 1621 pp 316–318 · scans FR316, FR317, FR318

L'homme a donc genereusement resolu de s'acquérir par art ce que Nature luy avoit refusé, de sorte que desployant les forces de cet intellect il a entrepris de monter par l'eschelle de la Philosophie au plus haut estage des secrets naturels, à sçavoir à la restauration & prolongement de la vie, outre les communes bornes de leur espece. Car en cela gist la fin & principal but de tous les Philosophes, qui ne sceurent jamais rien trouver de plus grand parmy la spacieuse forest de l'investigation des arcanes du monde: duquel sans doute cette Philosophie est l'heur, l'honneur & la gloire. Car en tout l'univers il se remarque seulement trois sortes de biens: assavoir ceux qu'on attribue à la fortune, comme les richesses, grandeurs, & dignitez. Ceux qu'on donne à la felicité du corps, comme la jeunesse, la santé, la force, & la disposition. Et ceux qui appartiennent à l'esprit, qui sont les sciences. Quant aux deux premiers ils sont incertains & perissables, & ne peuvent d'eux memes conserver ny assurer la plus necessaire partie de l'homme, qui est la vie: d'autant que les uns & les autres sont

²⁵⁶. The fifty-line extract ends by joining investigation of the world with the ordering disciplines of measure and harmony. Its final line echoes the vocabulary of measure, number and weight familiar from Wisdom 11:20, without being a literal quotation of that verse.

²⁵⁷. Paracelsus is the authority named by Nuysement for the complaint. No title or exact citation is supplied here, so the note does not turn the reported sentiment into a verified quotation from a particular Paracelsian work.

subjects à mutation & decadence. Mais le tiers estant acquis par moyen plus solide, peut non seulement donner les deux autres, mais encore les munir contre les accidens du sort & de la corruption mortelle, de l'assurance & conservation qui leur manque. J'entens toutefois ce qui en effect est veritablement science, comme est la parfaite cognoissance des œuvres & secrets de Nature: pour monter à laquelle, toutes les autres ne sont que simples eschelons. C'est pourquoy les hommes excellens ont tenu fort peu de compte du premier de ces trois biens, qu'ils ont negligé, voire abhorré pour vacquer plus librement à la poursuite & acquisition des deux autres. Mais bien plus ardamment à celle du tiers, comme celuy de qui depend absolument la seure & libre possession des precedens.

Man has therefore nobly resolved to acquire by art what Nature refused him. Deploying the powers of this intellect, he has undertaken to climb the ladder of philosophy to the highest stage of natural secrets, namely the restoration and prolongation of life beyond the ordinary limits of his species. Here lies the end and principal aim of all philosophers. In the spacious forest of inquiry into the world's arcana, they have never been able to find anything greater. This philosophy is undoubtedly the world's happiness, honour and glory. Throughout the universe only three kinds of goods are found: those attributed to fortune, such as wealth, greatness and dignities; those assigned to bodily well-being, such as youth, health, strength and fitness; and those belonging to the spirit, which are the sciences. The first two are uncertain and perishable. Of themselves they cannot preserve or secure what is most necessary in man, life itself, because both are subject to change and decline. The third, acquired by a more solid means, can give the other two and also fortify them against the accidents of fortune and mortal corruption with the security and preservation they lack. I mean, however, what is truly knowledge in effect, such as perfect knowledge of Nature's works and secrets. All the other sciences are merely steps by which to climb to it. Excellent men have therefore set very little store by the first of these three goods, neglecting and even abhorring it so that they might apply themselves more freely to pursuing and acquiring the other two. They have pursued the third still more ardently, for secure and free possession of the others depends wholly upon it.^{258,259}

SL_IIIS011 1621 pp 318–320 · scans FR318, FR319, FR320

Car comme en toutes creatures il n'y a rien de plus exquis ny desirable que la vie, qui donne sentiment, vegetation, & consistance à tout; aussi n'est il rien de plus riche & precieux que ce qui la peut entretenir & conserver outre l'aage commun. Or est il tout apparent que la vie est une chose celeste & divine: ce qui la peut entretenir doit donc estre de pareille nature; pource que toutes choses sont entretenues de cela mesme dont elles sont procedees. Mais encore veux je plustost dire que ce conservateur de vie est la vie mesme. Car l'estendue & prolongement d'icelle se fait

²⁵⁸. The three goods are those of fortune, body and spirit. The paragraph claims that the third can supply and protect the others, which explains the work's recurring phrase 'happiness, honour and glory'. 'Science' here is systematic knowledge, especially knowledge of Nature's causes and operations.

²⁵⁹. The source page corresponding to FR318 is misprinted 218. It is the continuation of page 317, not a second occurrence of the earlier Book II page 218. Scan identifiers distinguish the two locations.

par addition & refournissement, afin d'éviter le vuide ou defaillance en icelle. Les viandes que nous prenons ne nous servent que de cela, parce qu'elles participent de la vie de l'univers; & en contiennent en elles quelque particule, que le cuisinier de Nature en tire & exprime pour la joindre à la nostre. Mais parce que le peu qu'elles en ont est trop enveloppé de corruption excrementeuse, & n'est parfaitement fixe pour résister aux assauts de sa destruction, qui est ce feu contre nature, lequel sans cesse agit pour essayer à la bannir de nous avec l'humide radical, & l'enlever hors de son domicile, il seroit impossible à l'homme d'acquiescer par les viandes seules cette longueur de vie. Parquoy c'est force de la tirer des corps plus purs: & la développer encore de tout ce qui la pourroit infecter & empêcher de produire en nous l'effect auquel le Ciel l'a destinée, qui est d'accroître & vivifier la nostre.

Since nothing in any creature is more excellent or desirable than life, which gives sensation, growth and cohesion to everything, nothing is richer or more precious than what can maintain and preserve life beyond the common age. It is quite apparent that life is something heavenly and divine. What can maintain it must therefore be of a like nature, because everything is sustained by that from which it came. Indeed, I would rather say that this preserver of life is life itself. Its extension and prolongation occur through addition and replenishment, avoiding any emptiness or failure within it. The foods we take serve us only in this way: they participate in the life of the universe and contain some particle of it, which Nature's cook draws and presses out to join to our own. Yet the little they possess is too enveloped in excremental corruption and insufficiently fixed to resist the assaults of its destroyer, the fire contrary to Nature. That fire acts without cease, trying to drive life from us together with the radical moisture and remove it from its dwelling. It would therefore be impossible for man to gain this length of life from foods alone. He must draw it from purer bodies and free it further from everything that might infect it and prevent it from producing in us the effect for which Heaven appointed it, namely to increase and enliven our own life.^{260,261}

SL_IIIS012 1621 pp 320–323 · scans FR320, FR321, FR322, FR323

Mais plustost est il tres-necessaire d'entrer au corps du monde, & y prendre cette generale vie qui ne defaut jamais; ains porte en elle mesme sa multiplication & dilatation, afin de la produire apres en nous, autant que les forces de nostre naturelle composition le pourront porter: car il ne faut pas estimer que par cela nous puissions devenir immortels; puisque tout ce qui porte masse corporelle en soy, c'est à dire excrement & corruption, ne se peut perpetuer: Et faudroit que nous feussions despouillez de tout corps auparavant que nous peussions arriver à ce tiltre: parce qu'apres ce despouillement nostre vie demeurant libre, ressemble veritablement à la vie universelle du grand monde, à laquelle se reunissant elle se resjouit en icelle comme en sa propre nature, suivant la reigle qui veut que tout retourne au lieu d'où il est party. Ce que Theophraste a voulu entendre par l'ame de

²⁶⁰. The 'cook' is an image for Nature's digestive and assimilative work. The food supplies life-bearing matter, while digestion separates what can nourish from what must be rejected. This is the author's explanation of nutrition, not a modern physiological account.

²⁶¹. Radical moisture is the sustaining moisture rooted in the living body. The fire 'contrary to Nature' is destructive in this argument, distinct from beneficial natural heat. 'Fixed' denotes resistance to dissipation or volatilisation in the historical vocabulary.

ceux qui vivront au quint, c'est à dire, qui seront desliés de la masse composee des quatre elements, & vivront en un cinquiesme plus parfait que les quatre: secret que la seule intelligence embasmee de l'essentielle odeur de la Philosophie est capable de comprendre. Car ce quint element n'est pas une chose situee au dessus de la terre, de l'eau, de l'air, & du feu, comme ayant à la separation du Cahos monté plus haut qu'eux à cause d'une plus grande legereté: Mais c'est proprement un Esprit simple de soy, qui se mesle indifferemment par tout; qui nourrit & anime tout, & donne essence à toutes choses: estant neantmoins en son centre (c'est à dire, en sa propre nature) libre de toute corporeité, qui est le vray domicile de la mort. Car puisque la consistance luy provient des corps, il faut de necessité qu'avant cette consistance & specification il soit tres simple & purement spirituel, non meslé ny embrouillé dans la confusion des elements assemblez, & par consequent non subject à corruption & mortification: laquelle mortification aux corps n'est pourtant pas l'aneantissement de cest Esprit, mais seulement la separation & bannissement d'iceluy: pource que sentant le soufre corrompant qui maistrise tout le corps, s'emparer d'iceluy & l'occuper entierement, il est contraint d'abandonner la place, & s'en retourner d'où il est venu, assavoir au centre de cette grande sphere de vie, laissant les masses corporelles & excrementueuses à la terre d'où elles furent prises.

It is especially necessary, rather, to enter the body of the world and take there that universal life which never fails, but carries its multiplication and expansion within itself. We may then bring it forth in ourselves to the extent that the powers of our natural composition can bear it. We must not imagine that this can make us immortal, for everything bearing corporeal mass within itself, that is, excrement and corruption, cannot endure perpetually. We would have to be stripped of all bodily matter before reaching that condition. After this stripping away, our life, remaining free, truly resembles the universal life of the great world. Reuniting with it, life rejoices in it as in its own nature, following the rule that everything returns to the place from which it departed. This is what Theophrastus meant by the soul of those who will live in the fifth: those released from the mass composed of the four elements, who will live in a fifth more perfect than the four. Only an intelligence imbued with the essential fragrance of philosophy can comprehend this secret. This fifth element is not something situated above earth, water, air and fire, as though, when chaos was separated, it had risen higher than they through greater lightness. It is properly a spirit simple in itself, mingling everywhere without distinction, nourishing and animating everything and giving being to all things. Nevertheless, in its centre, that is, in its own nature, it is free from all corporeality, which is the true dwelling of death. Since its bodily consistency comes to it from bodies, it must necessarily, before that consistency and determination to a species, be entirely simple and purely spiritual, neither mixed nor entangled in the confusion of the assembled elements, and consequently not subject to corruption and death. Yet death in bodies is not the annihilation of this spirit, but only its separation and banishment. Perceiving that the corrupting sulphur which masters the whole body is seizing and occupying it entirely, the spirit is compelled to abandon the place and return whence it came, to the centre of that great sphere of

life, leaving the corporeal and excremental masses to the earth from which they were taken.^{262,263,264}

SL_IIIS013 1621 pp 323–325 · scans FR323, FR324, FR325

Or d'autant que ce grand monde & sa vie consistent en forme spherique, qui est la rondeur indeficiente, les sages anciens ont pris argument de l'estimer eternel; & que toutes les lignes & la circonference du globe procedent du centre, comme d'une source: Car elles sont l'une & l'autre faites de points individus, la longue ou ronde estendue desquels ne scauroit seulement estre imaginee sans un centre. Il est bien raisonnable de croire que le centre de la vie universelle est le siege du plus grand de tous les tresors du monde, duquel la terre est le vray point central. Aussi le centre de la vie est en icelle terre, qui a esté choisie par cette universelle mere de famille pour cabinet & magasin de ses richesses, qu'elle y amasse & assemble pour les en tirer à propos & les employer à l'entretien de son admirable edifice, & substantiation de ses enfans & domestiques. Celuy donc qui aura le Ciel si propice qu'il puisse une fois entrer dans ce riche & somptueux cabinet, duquel la seule Philosophie porte la clef, aura il pas subject de dire qu'il a monté au Ciel comme ces deux esleuz de Dieu Enoch & Helie: & devallé jusqu'aux enfers comme ces trois Heros Orphee, Hercule, & Thesee? Mais ces faveurs singulieres ne sont concedees sinon aux enfans des Dieux, qui sous la benediction paternelle en ont peu obtenir l'ouverture par la main secourable de cette Royne des Arts, la profonde Philosophie, que l'on peut justement nommer l'heur, l'honneur, & gloire du monde, puisqu'elle exalte l'homme par dessus l'homme mesme, d'une distance autant esloignee que celle qui separe le Ciel d'avec la Terre: Et enrichit, honore, & decore ses amans par dessus l'excellence humaine de tous autres, autant ou plus que Cræsus surpassoit en opulence le pauvre Irus d'Homere, que le midy du plus beau jour d'Esté passe en lumineuse ardeur la plus obscure & froide nuit d'Hyver: ou que le brillant & pur or surmonte en lustre, valeur, & vertu la vile crasse du fer.

Since this great world and its life subsist in spherical form, an unfailing roundness, the ancient sages drew an argument for considering it eternal. All the lines and the globe's circumference proceed from the centre as from a spring, for both are made of indivisible points, whose straight or circular extension cannot even be imagined without a centre. It is quite reasonable to believe that the centre of universal life is the seat of the greatest of all the world's treasures, of which the earth is the true central point. The centre of life is therefore in this earth, chosen by that universal mother of the household as the private chamber and storehouse of her riches. She heaps and gathers them there, to draw them forth at the proper time and employ them in maintaining her admirable building and sustaining her children and household. Whoever finds Heaven so favourable that he can once enter this rich

²⁶². The explicit qualification is essential: the author claims the possibility of prolonged bodily life, not bodily immortality through a medicine. The subsequent stripping away of body belongs to his account of the soul and universal life.

²⁶³. Theophrastus here follows the preceding reference to Paracelsus and is read as his learned name, rather than silently identified with Aristotle's ancient successor. The passage itself does not name the work cited.

²⁶⁴. The fifth element is defined by the author as an all-pervading simple spirit, not as a fifth spatial layer above the other four. 'Mortification' is rendered as death where the discussion concerns living bodies; it need not have the same practical sense as the death or decomposition of a material during an operation.

and sumptuous chamber, whose key philosophy alone carries, surely has reason to say that he has ascended to Heaven like God's two chosen ones, Enoch and Elijah, and descended to the underworld like those three heroes, Orpheus, Hercules and Theseus. Yet these singular favours are granted only to the children of the gods. Under their father's blessing they have obtained its opening through the helpful hand of that queen of the arts, profound philosophy. It may rightly be called the world's happiness, honour and glory, since it raises man above man himself by a distance as great as that separating Heaven from earth. It enriches, honours and adorns its lovers above the human excellence of all others, as much as, or more than, Croesus surpassed Homer's poor Irus in wealth, as the noon of the finest summer day surpasses the darkest and coldest winter night in luminous heat, or as bright and pure gold surpasses the base dross of iron in lustre, value and power.^{265,266,267}

SL_IIIS014 1621 pp 325–326 · scans FR325, FR326

O grande, ô venerable, ô divine Philosophie! qu'heureux est le mortel à qui tu fais la grace de daigner recevoir ses vœux, d'exaucer ses prières & de combler son ame de l'incomparable félicité qu'apporte la parfaite cognoissance des choses plus cachees: ausquelles ne pourroit jamais arriver la comprehension humaine, sans y estre portee sur tes aelles infatigables. Car scauroit on imaginer pour le bonheur de l'homme quelque bien esgallable aux deux que tu eslargis à tes favoris; les rendant asseurez d'une saine & longue vie, & d'une abondance inespuisable de tresors, que rien ne leur peut oster ny seulement diminuer, sitost qu'une fois tu les as fait possesseurs de cette supreme & miraculeuse medecine. De laquelle Nature mesme en sa complainte parle ainsi:

O great, venerable and divine philosophy! How fortunate is the mortal to whom you grant the favour of deigning to receive his vows, answer his prayers and fill his soul with the incomparable happiness brought by perfect knowledge of the most hidden things. Human understanding could never reach them without being borne there upon your tireless wings. For man's happiness, can any good be imagined equal to the two which you bestow upon your favourites? You secure them a healthy and long life and an inexhaustible abundance of treasures, which nothing can take from them or even diminish once you have made them possessors of this supreme and miraculous medicine. Nature herself speaks of it thus in her lament:²⁶⁸

²⁶⁵. The argument from spherical form is the author's cosmological reasoning. 'Indivisible points' should not be mistaken for a statement of modern mathematical analysis.

²⁶⁶. Enoch and Elijah supply biblical figures of ascent; the three classical heroes supply figures of descent to the underworld. The juxtaposition supports a philosophical interpretation of ascent and descent, rather than documenting a traveller's literal itinerary.

²⁶⁷. Croesus is the conventional example of great wealth; Irus is the beggar in Book 18 of Homer's *Odyssey*. Their unequal fortunes are an analogy for the superiority the author assigns to philosophical knowledge.

²⁶⁸. The promises belong to Nuysement's praise of philosophy and its medicine. They are translated as the author's claims, with his own earlier qualification against bodily immortality retained in the preceding discussion.

SL_IIIS015 1621 pp 326 · scans FR326

Qui guarit toute maladie,
 Et qui l'a jamais ne mandie:
 Qui en a une once & un seul grain
 Tousjours est riche & tousjours sain:
 En fin se meurt la creature
 De Dieu contente & de Nature.

It cures every disease,
 And whoever has it never begs;
 Whoever has an ounce and a single grain
 Is always rich and always well;
 At last the creature dies,
 Content with God and with Nature.²⁶⁹

SL_IIIS016 1621 pp 326–332 · scans FR326, FR331, FR332

Sans lesquelles benedictions la vie n'est nullement vie, ains une odieuse langueur, comparable à quelque Mer tumultueuse que plusieurs vents contrairement soufflans renversent flot sur flots, engloutisse enfin nostre pauvre nef tourmentee au plus profond des tenebreux abismes de mort. Car nous avons dés le naistre pour ennemis intestins l'escadron des maladies, dont le nombre est presque infiny: puis par le dehors le bataillon maudit des incommoditez que l'inhumaine pauvreté conduit. Et ces deux adversaires venant à conspirer contre la vie, & pratiquer leurs secrettes intelligences, jugez un peu quelle deffence la pourroit preserver de leurs assauts. Outre lesquels nuisent encore les desdains & mutations de la fortune; contre laquelle l'Esprit humain (couvert des armes inexpugnables & invincibles de l'auguste Sapience) s'oppose virilement: De quelles loüanges donc sçauroit on assez dignement decorer celuy qui nous a premier revelé les principes & preceptes de la Philosophie? Mais plustost comment a peu l'Esprit humain penetrer si vivement jusques au cœur du monde & de la Nature par la recherche de telles merveilles? Celuy certainement qui premier fut regardé d'un si bon Astre qu'il sceut comprendre & pratiquer ces hauts & ocultes mysteres par une experience pleine de raisons,

[Estoit] enfans d'un Dieu, ou quelque Dieu luy infuse.

Without these blessings life is no life at all, but a hateful languishing, like a tumultuous sea where winds blowing against one another overturn wave upon wave and finally swallow our poor tossed vessel into the deepest dark abysses of death. From birth we have as inward enemies the squadron of diseases, almost infinite in number, and outwardly the accursed battalion of troubles led by inhuman poverty. When these two adversaries conspire against life and pursue their secret agreements, consider what defence could preserve it from their assaults. Besides these, the scorn and changes of fortune do further harm. Against fortune the human spirit, clothed in the unassailable and invincible arms of august wisdom, stands courageously opposed. With what praises, then, could we sufficiently and worthily adorn the person

²⁶⁹. This six-line quotation is separate from Philon's fifty-line speech and the nine sonnets. Even within its extravagant promise, the creature eventually dies. Combach reproduces it in French and supplies a Latin rendering in his 1651 version, pages 204–205. Control: <https://books.google.com/books?id=uCVnVywqslsC&pg=PA205>

who first revealed philosophy's principles and precepts to us? Rather, how could the human spirit penetrate so powerfully to the heart of the world and Nature through the search for such wonders? The first person to fall under so favourable a star that he could understand and practise these lofty and hidden mysteries through experience supported by reason

Was the child of a god, or some god inspires him.^{270,271}

SL_IIIS017 1621 pp 332–333 · scans FR332, FR333

A cette occasion la venerable antiquité nous a voulu persuader qu'Apollon fut l'inventeur & superintendant de la medecine. Laquelle il donna en partage à son fils Esculape, comme chose tres-precieuse; avec deffences tres-estroites d'en divulguer le secret à peine d'estre chastié comme sacrilege & impie. En fin, quiconque gousté, embrasse, & possède ce fruit divin de la Philosophie, il est comme assis au coupeau d'une montagne inaccessible, d'où il void les autres occupez à choses basses & pueriles. Tellement qu'il contente les yeux de son noble intellect, espandant leurs regards par dessus les conceptions des plus renommez entre le vulgaire. Car les sciences populaires & communes donnent du ventre en terre, & vont simplement rampant autour de l'insipide escorce & vaine superficie des choses. Mais la vraye Philosophie, qui est proprement la mesme Gimnosophie des Indis, Magie des Ægiptiens, & caballe des Juifs; penetre jusques au cœur de la moëlle, & ne laisse aucune particule de la composition des corps qu'elle n'examine parfaitement. Que si nous la mettons à la balance contre la scolastique, nous trouverons plus d'inegalité au poids qu'entre la ponce & le plomb: car celle là chemine par les tenebres du doute, tastonnant avec le baston de la seule conjecture. Qui a fait errer les plus experts, & quittant le vray & plain chemin de la Nature, les a esgarez dans les destours de ce labyrinthe; despourvus du filet de nostre belle Ariadne.

For this reason venerable antiquity wished to persuade us that Apollo was the inventor and overseer of medicine. He gave it as an inheritance to his son Asclepius as something most precious, strictly forbidding disclosure of its secret on pain of punishment as a sacrilegious and impious man. In the end, whoever tastes, embraces and possesses this divine fruit of philosophy is as though seated on the summit of an inaccessible mountain, from which he sees others occupied with low and childish things. He thus satisfies the eyes of his noble intellect, extending their gaze above the conceptions of those most celebrated among ordinary people. Popular and common sciences lie with their bellies upon the ground and merely crawl around the tasteless bark and empty surface of things. True philosophy, however, which is properly the same as the gymnosophy of the Indians, the magic of the Egyptians

²⁷⁰. Four unnumbered sonnet leaves occur between printed pages 326 and 327 in this scan, even interrupting the word 'engloutisse'. Four further leaves occur between printed pages 330 and 331. This edition reads the prose continuously by its printed pagination, then presents the nine sonnets together in their preserved sequence. Their exact scan locations remain recorded.

²⁷¹. The first word of the short italic verse on printed page 328 is worn and provisionally supplied as [Estoit]; independent readers could not establish all its letters. The final word is read infuse, rather than inspire, from the enlarged image. Combach's Latin page 206 gives the sense 'surely the son of some god, or some god flows into him'. This supports the translation's contrast between divine descent and inspiration, but does not restore the missing French letters. Control: <https://books.google.com/books?id=uCVnVywqIsC&pg=PA206>

and the cabala of the Jews, penetrates to the heart of the marrow and leaves no particle of the composition of bodies unexamined. If we weigh it in the balance against scholastic learning, we find a greater difference in weight than between pumice and lead. The latter walks through the darkness of doubt, groping with the staff of conjecture alone, which has led even the most experienced astray. Leaving Nature's true and plain road, they have wandered in the windings of this labyrinth without the thread of our beautiful Ariadne.^{272,273,274}

SL_IIIS018 1621 pp 333–339 · scans FR333, FR334, FR339

Ce qui a privé la medecine ordinaire d'operer puissamment comme la spagirique à l'encontre des maladies fixes & rebelles, non pource que ses professeurs ne soient grandement doctes; mais parce que son fondement n'est point assis au centre des choses, ains en la seule superficie. Comme pour exemple, quand ils usent de la decoction de racines d'Avoyne seiches pour soulager les affligez du Calcul, (à quoy elles sont veritablement fort propres, ainsi que je l'ay veu pratiquer au docte Pena,) & ne s'avisent pas d'extraire de ce simple ce qui luy cause tel effect. Lequel tiré & préparé artistement, pris en petite quantité, donneroit garison parfaite, au lieu de simple soulagement. D'autant que sans s'amuser au vulgaire axiome qui veut que le contraire garris le contraire; la pierre ou le Calcul estant endurci dans les corps par le Sel qui est l'unique coagulateur, il doit estre curé par le sel des individus que le Ciel a douez de faculté proprement efficace & particuliere contre ce mal. Alors sera vraiment guarý le contraire par son contraire, encore que l'on ait appliqué le sel contre un mal procedant du Sel, qui sont deux semblables, mais leurs effects sont differens: car l'huile de Sel dissout toutes pierres que le Sel avoit endurcies: si bien que l'un force l'autre de luy ceder. Ne plus ne moins qu'il se void experimenter à ceux qui s'estant bruslez les doigts les r'approchent & tiennent le plus pres du feu qu'ils peuvent endurer, afin que la plus grande chaleur dissipant la moindre, la douleur vienne à s'apaiser. Tout ce que la paresse des Phisiciens vulgaires objecte contre ces remedes nouveaux pour eux, c'est de les nommer corrosifs, & partant tres pernicleux à prendre par dedans. Ce que je leur concederois facilement s'ils estoient pris seuls & en quantité excessive. Mais ceux qui les sçavent prendre & donner se mocquent de tels discours.

This has deprived ordinary medicine of the power to act against fixed and stubborn diseases as spagyric medicine does. It is not because its practitioners lack great learning, but because its foundation is set at the surface of things rather than their centre. For example, they use a decoction of dried oat roots to relieve those afflicted with stones. The roots are indeed well suited to this, as I have seen the learned Pena demonstrate in practice. Yet they do not think to extract from this simple the thing which causes that effect. Once extracted and skilfully prepared, it would, taken in a small quantity, give a perfect cure instead

²⁷². The identifications of gymnosophy, Egyptian magic and Jewish cabala are Nuysement's claims about a common ancient wisdom. They should not be read as an adequate description of the distinct traditions named.

²⁷³. The demonstrative translated 'the latter' refers by sense to scholastic learning, the subject of the criticism. The source's pronoun is less explicit. Ariadne's thread supplies the recurring image of a guide through a labyrinth of inquiry.

²⁷⁴. Pumice and lead give a deliberately extreme comparison of light and heavy materials. The rhetorical weight assigned to philosophy should not be converted into a quantitative laboratory instruction.

of mere relief. Without dwelling upon the common axiom that contrary cures contrary, the stone or calculus, hardened in bodies by salt, the sole coagulating agent, must be treated by the salt of those particular things which Heaven has endowed with an efficacious faculty specifically directed against this disease. Contrary will then truly be cured by contrary, although salt has been applied against an illness proceeding from salt. The two are alike, but their effects differ: oil of salt dissolves all stones which salt had hardened, so that one forces the other to yield. It is just as is seen in those who, after burning their fingers, bring them back and hold them as close to the fire as they can bear, so that the greater heat, dispersing the lesser, may cause the pain to subside. All that the indolence of ordinary physicians objects against these remedies, which are new to them, is to call them corrosive and therefore most harmful to take internally. I would readily concede this if they were taken alone and in excessive quantity. But those who know how to take and administer them laugh at such talk.^{275,276,277}

²⁷⁵. Spagyric medicine is the author's name for medicine based on the separation, preparation and recombination of a material's active principles. 'Simple' means a medicinal substance considered individually, here the oat root. The identity of Pena is not established from this passage alone.

²⁷⁶. This paragraph records historical therapeutic claims, including the proposed use of corrosive preparations and a harmful analogy about burns. It supplies neither present-day medical advice nor evidence of safety or efficacy. The author's small-quantity qualification is retained without adding a dose or a modern substance identification.

²⁷⁷. Oil of salt is retained as the historical expression. Although some later uses of the name refer to an acid preparation, this passage does not provide enough preparation detail to identify a single modern reagent with confidence.

Description of the Universal Spirit of the World

Description de l'Esprit universel du Monde

SL_SONNET_01S001 1621 Unnumbered sonnet leaf 1 · scans FR327

Il est un Esprit-corps, premier né de Nature;
Tres commun, tres caché, tres vil, tres precieux:
Conservant, destruisant, bon & malicieux:
Commencement & fin de toute creature.

Triple en substance il est, de sel, d'huile, & d'eau pure;
Qui coagule, amasse, & arrouse, ès bas lieux.
Tout, par sec, onctueux, & moite, des hauts Cieux,
Habile à recevoir toute forme & figure.

Le seul Art, par Nature, à nos yeux le fait voir:
Il recelle en son centre un infiny pouvoir,
Garny des facultez du Ciel & de la Terre.

Il est Hermaphrodite; & donne accroissement
A tout où il se mesle indifferemment,
A raison que dans soy tous germes il enserre.

There is a spirit-body, Nature's first-born,
Most common, most hidden, most base, most precious,
Preserving, destroying, good and mischievous,
The beginning and end of every creature.

Triple in substance, it is salt, oil and pure water,
Coagulating, gathering and watering here below
All things, through the dry, oily and moist, from the high heavens,
Able to receive every form and figure.

Art alone, through Nature, makes it visible to our eyes;
It conceals within its centre an infinite power,
Furnished with the faculties of Heaven and earth.

It is hermaphrodite and gives increase
To everything with which it mingles, without distinction,
Because within itself it encloses every seed.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁸. The spirit-body holds together predicates which ordinary classification would separate. The triad is stated here as salt, oil and water; it must not be silently replaced by a different familiar alchemical triad. Hermaphrodite indicates combined generative capacities within the philosophical account.

The World Is Full of the Spirit through Which All Things Live

Que le monde est plein d'Esprit par lequel toutes choses vivent

SL_SONNET_02S001 1621 Unnumbered sonnet leaf 2 · scans FR328

Ce grand corps, du grand Dieu creature premiere,
Fut remply d'un Esprit dès le commencement,
Omniforme en semences, & vif en mouvement,
Dont il anime tout, & met tout en lumiere.

De la terre & des Cieux c'est l'ame nourrissiere,
Et de tout ce qui vit en eux pareillement.
En terre il est vapeur, au Ciel feu proprement,
Triple en une substance & premiere matiere.

Car de trois, & en trois, par Nature provient,
Et redevient tout corps, dont le baume il contient,
Ayant pour geniteurs le Soleil & la Lune.

Par l'air il germe en bas, & recherche le haut:
La terre le nourrit dedans son ventre chaut:
Et des perfections il est cause commune.

This great body, the great God's first creature,
Was filled with a spirit from the beginning,
Of every form in seeds, and living in movement,
With which it animates all and brings all to light.

It is the nourishing soul of earth and heavens,
And likewise of everything living within them.
In earth it is vapour, in Heaven properly fire,
Triple in one substance and first matter.

For from three and into three it proceeds through Nature,
And becomes again every body whose balsam it contains,
Having the sun and moon as its begetters.

Through air it germinates below and seeks the heights;
The earth nourishes it within her warm womb,
And it is the common cause of perfections.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁹ Omniforme means possessing or capable of all forms. Its relation to seeds explains how one spirit can underlie diverse kinds. The poetic sequence repeats the work's account of solar and lunar generation, air as the medium and earth as the nourishing womb.

Commentary or Exposition of the Table of Hermes Trismegistus, Treating the Universal Spirit of the World. The Text of That Table Is Contained in the Sonnet Below.

Commentaire ou exposition de la table de Hermes Trismegiste traittant de l'Esprit general du monde. Le texte de laquelle table est contenu au Sonnet cy dessous.

SL_SONNET_03S001 1621 Unnumbered sonnet leaf 3 · scans FR329

C'est un point asseuré plein d'admiration,
Que le haut & le bas n'est qu'une mesme chose:
Pour faire d'une seule en tout le monde enclose,
Des effects merueilleux par adaptation.

D'un seul en a tout fait la meditation,
Et pour parents, matrice, & nourrice, on luy pose
Phœbus, Diane, l'air, & la terre, ou repose
Cette chose en qui gist toute perfection.

Si on la teinct en terre elle a sa force entiere:
Separant par grand art, mais facile maniere,
Le subtil de l'espais, & la terre du feu.

De la terre elle monte au Ciel: & puis en terre,
Du Ciel elle descend, Recevant peu à peu,
Les vertus de tous deux qu'en son ventre elle enserre.

It is a certain truth, filled with wonder,
That above and below are but one and the same thing,
To produce, from one thing enclosed throughout the world,
Marvellous effects through adaptation.

The meditation of one has made all from one,
And as its parents, womb and nurse are named
Phoebus, Diana, air and earth, where rests
That thing in which all perfection lies.

If it is tinged into earth, its power is entire,
Separating by great art, yet in an easy manner,
The subtle from the thick, and earth from fire.

From earth it rises to Heaven; then into earth
It descends from Heaven, receiving little by little
The powers of both, which it encloses in its womb.^{280,281}

²⁸⁰. The historical heading continues: 'The text of which Table is contained in the sonnet below.' The poem is Nuysement's verse presentation of the Emerald Table; it is not an independently established ancient French wording. Phoebus and Diana name sun and moon.

²⁸¹. The printed teinct is retained as 'tinged'. The principal argument concerns the spirit's taking an earthly form and retaining its power. The sonnet itself explicitly separates earth from fire; that order is preserved instead of substituting a more familiar wording from another version of the Table.

Sonnets Containing the Arguments of This Book: On the Adaptation of Divine, Natural and Artificial Things

Sonnets contenant les arguments de ce livre de l'adaptation des choses Divines Naturelles et Artificielles

SL_SONNET_04S001 1621 Unnumbered sonnet leaf 4 · scans FR330

Dieu, la Nature, & l'Art, Triade incomparable,
Ravissent tout esprit en l'admiration
Du dessein, du labeur, de la perfection,
Où reluit de tous Trois la puissance incroyable.

Bien qu'en ses hauts projets Dieu soit inimitable,
Nature en ses progrès suit son intention:
Et puis l'Art qui adjouste à la simple action,
Fait admirer Nature, & se rend admirable.

Qui contemple, & comprend, d'un jugement profond,
Dieu, la Nature, & l'Art, void & sçait comme ils font
Ordonnans, produisans, & parfaisans les choses:

Car Dieu, Nature, & l'Art, d'un Triangle divin,
Sont le commencement, le milieu, & la fin,
De tout ayant en eux toutes vertus encloses.

God, Nature and Art, incomparable triad,
Transport every mind into admiration
Of design, labour and perfection,
In which the incredible power of all three shines.

Though God is inimitable in his lofty purposes,
Nature in her progress follows his intention;
Then Art, adding to the simple action,
Makes Nature admired and itself admirable.

Whoever contemplates and understands with profound judgement
God, Nature and Art sees and knows how they act,
Ordering, producing and perfecting things.

For God, Nature and Art, in a divine triangle,
Are the beginning, middle and end
Of everything, enclosing within themselves all powers.²⁸²

²⁸². The sequence associates divine design, Nature's production and Art's completion. It is a triad within Nuysement's account of making, not a replacement of the persons of the Christian Trinity. The triangle is verbal here; no unlocated historical diagram is reconstructed.

The Powers of This Universal Spirit, Both in the Limbus of Its Chaos and in Particular Bodies

Des forces de cet Esprit universel tant au limbe de son Cahos qu'es corps speciaux

SL_SONNET_05S001 1621 Unnumbered sonnet leaf 5 · scans FR335

En l'Esprit general contenant la semence
Tant de mort que de vie, il faut considerer
Double force, & le faut doublement admirer
Par suc ou par venin, doubles en leur essence.

Le suc double entretient tous corps par sa presence:
Le venin double aussi les fait tous consommer:
Conservant, destruisant, par sel doux & amer,
D'une vertu benigne, ou d'aspre vehemence.

Voyla ses facultez avant qu'il soit esclos
De l'immondicité de son limbe & Cahos:
Ayant mesmes effects tiré hors sur la terre.

Mais quand il a receu la separation
Du suc & du venin par preparation,
Lors tout bon, à tous maux, il fait mortelle guerre.

In the universal spirit, containing the seed
Of death as well as life, we must consider
A double power and admire it doubly,
Through sap or venom, both double in their essence.

The double sap maintains all bodies by its presence;
The double venom likewise makes them all waste away,
Preserving and destroying through sweet and bitter salt,
With a kindly power or harsh violence.

These are its faculties before it has emerged
From the uncleanness of its limbus and chaos,
Having the same effects when drawn out upon the earth.

But when it has received the separation
Of sap and venom through preparation,
Then, wholly good, it wages mortal war on every ill.^{283,284}

²⁸³. Limbus is the enclosing matrix of the spirit's unseparated condition. Sap and venom express opposed nourishing and destructive powers. Their separation, rather than a denial that harmful powers exist, grounds the sonnet's account of preparation.

²⁸⁴. The final tercet says that the spirit receives the separation of sap and venom through preparation. The concluding claim of power against every ill belongs to the author's philosophical medicine.

Separating Pure Substance from Accidental Impurities, and the Means by Which Such Separations Are Made in All Things

Des separations de la substance pure d'avec les impuretez accidentelles et par quels
moyens se font telles separations en toutes choses

SL_SONNET_06S001 1621 Unnumbered sonnet leaf 6 · scans FR336

Comme pour l'ornement de la masse indigeste
Nature usa premier de separation:
Ainsi tout art qui vise à la perfection,
Doit suivre cette reigle & sentier manifeste.

La substance a par tout l'excrement qui l'infecte
Soit par limon terrestre ou par adustion,
Mais l'art par lavement ou calcination,
Usant d'eau, ou de feu, en bannit cette peste.

L'industrie de l'art peut seule separer
Et par nouvelle vie apres regenerer
Tout en tout, de tout vice exemptant l'ame pure.

Qui donc entend bien l'art d'user d'eau & de feu,
Sçait les deux vrays sentiers qui montent peu à peu
Au plus haut des secrets de toute la Nature.

As, to adorn the undigested mass,
Nature first employed separation,
So every art aiming at perfection
Must follow this rule and manifest path.

Substance everywhere bears the excrement infecting it,
Whether through earthly slime or scorching;
But Art, through washing or calcination,
Using water or fire, banishes that plague.

Art's skill alone can separate
And afterwards regenerate through new life
All in all, freeing the pure soul from every fault.

Whoever therefore understands the art of using water and fire
Knows the two true paths which climb little by little
To the highest of all Nature's secrets.^{285,286}

²⁸⁵. The 'undigested mass' is the unarticulated first condition of the world. Adustion means scorching or burning. 'Accidental' in the heading distinguishes acquired or adherent impurities from the pure substance's essential nature.

²⁸⁶. The poem pairs washing with water and calcination with fire. Its general account of purification is preserved without supplying a recipe, temperature or operational sequence absent from the verse.

The Embodiment of the Universal Spirit in All Things, and the Preservation of Heavenly and Earthly Powers within It

De la corporification de l'Esprit general en toutes choses et de la conservation des
vertus celestes et terrestres en iceluy

SL_SONNET_07S001 1621 Unnumbered sonnet leaf 7 · scans FR337

Des globes Ætherees pleins de feu vigoureux,
D'un rouer sans repos l'influence devalle
Sur le corps de la terre, & d'ardeur animalle
Perce de tous costez son grand ventre poreux.

Ce ventre alors s'emplit d'aere feu vaporeux,
Sans cesse alimenté d'une humeur radicalle,
Qui dans ces larges flancs prend corps d'eau mineralle,
Par la concoction de son feu chaleureux.

Cette eau coagulable engendrant toutes choses,
Terre pure devient, qu'en soy tient encloses
Par tresferme union les vertus des hauts Cieux.

Et d'autant qu'en effect sont conjoints dedans elle
Et la terre, & le Ciel, du beau nom je l'appelle,
De Ciel terrifié, tres digne & precieux.

From the ethereal globes filled with vigorous fire,
Through ceaseless revolution influence descends
Upon the earth's body, and with animating heat
Penetrates her great porous womb on every side.

That womb then fills with airy vaporous fire,
Continually fed by a radical moisture,
Which within those broad flanks takes the body of mineral water
Through the digestion of its warming fire.

This coagulable water, generating all things,
Becomes pure earth, which holds enclosed within itself,
In the closest union, the powers of the high heavens.

And since within it are indeed conjoined
Both earth and Heaven, I call it by the beautiful name
Of earth-made Heaven, most worthy and precious.^{287,288}

²⁸⁷. The historical heading reads conservation, preservation, not concentration. The verse explains a passage from heavenly influence through vapour and mineral water to earth while preserving the heavenly powers.

²⁸⁸. Ciel terrifié literally makes Heaven earthly or turns it into earth. 'Earth-made Heaven' preserves that deliberate formulation; terrifié does not mean frightened here. 'Concoction' is the gradual digestion or maturation performed by heat.

The Ascent of This Universal Spirit to Heaven and Its Descent into Earth, and the Correspondence of the Two Great Purifiers, Divine and Natural

De la montee de cet Esprit general au Ciel et de sa descente en terre et de la conformité des deux grands purificateurs Divin et Naturel

SL_SONNET_08S001 1621 Unnumbered sonnet leaf 8 · scans FR338

Ce grand Dieu qui à tous donne & garde la vie,
Establit pour remede aux ames & aux corps
Deux purificateurs de tous souillemens ords,
Dont la corruption à vice les convie.

Aux maux de tous les deux il pourvoit & obvie,
Leur ouvrant de la terre & du Ciel les tresors:
Tresors tressouverains contre les durs efforts
Que fait sur l'ame & corps la mort pleine d'envie.

Ce sont les deux auteurs de nos restaurations,
Ayans de terre & Ciel participations:
Pour aux extremitez moyenner alliance.

C'est pourquoy l'un & l'autre est du Ciel devallé
Bas en terre; & au Ciel derechef revolé,
Pour redescendre en terre avec toute puissance.

The great God who gives and preserves life in all
Established, as a remedy for souls and bodies,
Two purifiers of every foul defilement
With which corruption invites them to vice.

He provides for and forestalls the ills of both,
Opening to them the treasures of earth and Heaven,
Treasures most sovereign against the harsh assaults
Which envious death makes upon soul and body.

These are the two authors of our restorations,
Participating in earth and Heaven,
To mediate an alliance between the extremes.

Therefore each descended from Heaven
Down into earth, and flew again to Heaven,
To descend once more to earth with all power.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁹. The heading distinguishes divine and natural purification while the poem brings them into correspondence. The ascent and descent language participates in the book's reading of the Emerald Table. The analogy does not erase the distinction between the theological restoration of the soul and the proposed natural medicine of the body.

Sonnet on the Conclusion of This Book

Sonnet sur la conclusion de ce livre

SL_SONNET_09S001 1621 pp 332 · scans FR340

Qui cherche donc l'honneur, la gloire, & l'heur du monde,
Soit Philosophe, artiste, & il en jouira;
Car la Philosophie en fin le conduira
Au sommet des tresors dont la Nature abonde.

De luy la nuit d'erreur où vainement se fonde
L'aveugle opinion elle dissipera;
Et de la verité le jour éclaircira
La tirant hors du sein de la machine ronde.

Quand Jason eut conquis ce bien tant désiré,
Qui par l'experiment le rendit asseuré
De vivre riche & sain plus qu'il n'eust osé croire:

Desdaignant la misere, & bravant le trespas;
Egal aux demidieux ne possedoit il pas
Du monde universel l'heur, l'honneur, & la gloire?

Whoever therefore seeks the world's honour, glory and happiness,
Let him be philosopher and practitioner, and he will enjoy them;
For philosophy will at last lead him
To the summit of the treasures in which Nature abounds.

It will dispel from him the night of error
On which blind opinion vainly rests,
And brighten the daylight of truth,
Drawing it out from the bosom of the rounded world.

When Jason had won that good so greatly desired,
Which through experience assured him
Of living rich and healthy beyond what he had dared believe,

Disdaining misery and defying death,
Equal to the demigods, did he not possess
The universal world's happiness, honour and glory?^{290,291}

²⁹⁰. Artiste denotes a practitioner of an art, not specifically a modern fine artist. Jason's acquisition of the Golden Fleece is read as a figure for the philosophical good. The final question returns to the work's recurring triad of happiness, honour and glory.

²⁹¹. FIN, End, follows the sonnet in the historical printing. The original errata lists follow it and are retained in the next section.

Original Errata for the Treatises on Salt

Fautes à corriger aux Traitez du Sel

Chapter outline

The printer supplies corrections to wording, letters and punctuation.

The stated page references are preserved even where the intended location is uncertain.

SL_ERRATA_TREATISES001 1621 Original errata leaf, recto · scans FR341

Page 3. ligne 15. faites un c au lieu d'une r à ce mot cette.

Pag. 9. lig. 17. mettez sur la fin de ladite ligne est source, au lieu de & source.

Pag. 10. lig. 21. ostez le [s] qui est à ce mot seuls, car il faut seul.

Pag. susdite ligne suivante ostez deux ee de ces mots dite animale. Car il faut dit animal.

Pag. 11. lig. 4. apres ce mot plantes, mettez deux points au lieu de la virgule.

Pag. 19. lig. 13. faites une r à ce mot iner, car il semble que ce soit un t.

Pag. 22. l. 17. effacez que, & mettez en reste Qu'une.

Pag. susdite lig. 20. effacez ce mot est, car il n'y doit pas estre, & faut seulement cet esprit donc (par les philosophes appellé Mercure).

Pag. 26. lig. 20. au lieu de menees, il faut escrire meuës.

Pag. 3. lig. 14. au lieu de supreme, il faut sperme.

Pag. 40. lig. premiere, au lieu de Phisique, il faut Chimique.

Pag. 50. lig. 14. au lieu de royees, il faut rosées.

Pag. 56. lig. 7. au lieu de Mercuce, il faut Mercure.

Pag. 91. lig. 4. il faut respondray & non respouderay.

Pag. 93. lig. 14. il faut tout ainsi que fit le corps de la Terre dans le premier limbe des eaux.

Pag. 99. lig. derniere, lisez, appris les vertus.

Pag. 108. lig. derniere, lisez ne laissent à se cuire.

Pag. 112. l. 10. lisez le pur de l'impur.

Page 3, line 15: in the word cette, print a c in place of an r.

Page 9, line 17: at the end of the line put est source ('is the source') in place of & source ('and source').

Page 10, line 21: remove the [s] from the word seuls, since the reading should be seul ('alone').

On the following line of the same page, remove the two e's from dite animale: the reading should be dit animal ('the said animal').

Page 11, line 4: after plantes ('plants'), put a colon in place of the comma.

Page 19, line 13: make the letter r in iner clear, since it looks like a t.

Page 22, line 17: delete que and put Qu'une ('that a') in its place.

On line 20 of the same page, delete est, which should not be there. The reading should simply be cet esprit donc (par les philosophes appellé Mercure): 'this spirit, then (called Mercury by the philosophers)'.

Page 26, line 20: in place of menees ('led'), write meuës ('moved').

Page 3, line 14: in place of supreme ('supreme'), read sperme ('seed').

Page 40, first line: in place of Phisque ('physical'), read Chimique ('chymical').

Page 50, line 14: in place of royees, read rosées ('dews').

Page 56, line 7: in place of Mercuce, read Mercure ('Mercury').

Page 91, line 4: the reading should be respondray ('I shall answer'), rather than respouderay.

Page 93, line 14: read 'just as the body of the Earth did in the first limbus of the waters'.

Page 99, last line: read appris les vertus ('learnt the virtues').

Page 108, last line: read ne laissent à se cuire ('do not cease to cook').

Page 112, line 10: read le pur de l'impur ('the pure from the impure').^{292,293,294,295}

SL_ERRATA_TREATISES002 1621 Original errata leaf, verso · scans FR342

Pag. 148. lig. 8. lisez quelques unes de leurs potions.

Pag. 151. lig. 13. lisez, il a fallu que par nécessité.

²⁹². The original page and line numbers are retained, including the second reference to page 3. Its correction supreme → sperme appears to concern the occurrence on printed page 30. The French reading text incorporates identifiable corrections, while this list remains available as evidence of the printer's instructions.

²⁹³. The page 19 entry concerns a small type shape. It does not justify replacing interne ('inward') in the Virgilian verse with inert. The precise isolated spelling iner is retained here as printed.

²⁹⁴. The page 40 instruction could not be matched to the stated location, which begins Les semences. No unlocated occurrence has been silently replaced elsewhere. The faulty form respouderay on page 91 confuses u and n; the correction has been expanded from the printer's nasal abbreviation as respondray.

²⁹⁵. In the page10 instruction, the name of the letter after le is absent or lost in the scanned print; [s] is supplied openly from the explicit final reading seul, correcting seuls. The page19 line number reads13, independently confirmed from an enlarged crop.

Pag. 163. lig. 10. lisez plus igné & subtil.

Pag. 166. l. 13. lisez, par experience que quelque pureté.

Pag. 184. lig. 7. lisez, que cette vapeur imprime en tout.

Pag. 196. lig. 10. lisez, & recourir patiemment.

Pag. 210. lig. 11. lisez, la race des hommes quasi esteinte avant.

Pag. 213. lig. 16. lisez, mais les premiers, assavoir le Ciel & la Terre.

Pag. 217. lig. 7. lisez, les forces particulieres reconnuës par.

Pag. 220. lig. 16. lisez, les auroit ainsi establies.

Pag. 221. lig. premiere & seconde, lisez, angeliquement esclaircy la divinité.

Pag. 222. lig. 8. ostez l'interrogant qui est apres ce mot edification.

Pag. 250. lig. 10. lisez, à ce corps exanimé.

Page 148, line 8: read quelques unes de leurs potions ('some of their potions').

Page 151, line 13: read il a fallu que par necessité ('it was necessary that, of necessity').

Page 163, line 10: read plus igné & subtil ('more fiery and subtle').

Page 166, line 13: read par experience que quelque pureté ('by experience that, whatever purity').

Page 184, line 7: read que cette vapeur imprime en tout ('which this vapour imprints in everything').

Page 196, line 10: read & recourir patiemment ('and patiently have recourse').

Page 210, line 11: read la race des hommes quasi esteinte avant ('the human race almost extinguished before').

Page 213, line 16: read mais les premiers, assavoir le Ciel & la Terre ('but the first, namely Heaven and Earth').

Page 217, line 7: read les forces particulieres reconnuës par ('the particular powers recognised by').

Page 220, line 16: read les auroit ainsi establies ('would have established them in this way').

Page 221, first and second lines: read angeliquement esclaircy la divinité ('angelically illuminated the divinity').

Page 222, line 8: remove the question mark after edification ('edification').

Page 250, line 10: read à ce corps exanimé ('to this lifeless body').

Original Errata for the Philosophical Poem

Fautes survenuës au Poëme Philosophic

Chapter outline

Four corrections refer to a separate publication of 1620.

SL_ERRATA_POEMS001 1621 Original errata leaf, verso · scans FR342

Page 21. ligne 21. ostez point, & mettez &, car il faut bien peu d'air & de feu.

Pag. 32. lig. 20. ostez un e qui est à ce mot encore, parce qu'il faut encor.

Pag. 65. lig. derniere, au lieu de maux, écrivez en marge mors.

Pag. 77. lig. 13. au lieu de pourpre cirien, mettez Tirien.

Page 21, line 21: remove the full stop and put an ampersand, giving 'for very little air and fire is needed'.

Page 32, line 20: remove an e from encore, since the reading should be encor ('still').

Page 65, last line: in the margin write mors in place of maux ('ills').

Page 77, line 13: in place of pourpre cirien, put Tirien ('Tyrian purple').^{296,297}

²⁹⁶. These corrections are printed in the selected 1621 volume, so they are retained here. They refer to Nuysement's separately published *Poeme philosophic de la vérité de la phisique minérale* (1620), whose eighty-page text is not present in the governing scan and is not included in this edition. They are distinct from the nine concluding sonnets translated above. Source: <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/b25tx6h>

²⁹⁷. The page65 entry prints mors, without a t; that spelling is retained rather than silently modernised. The isolated correction does not supply enough context to settle its sense. The page77 line number is13, independently confirmed from the original image.

Keyword Essays

Salt and Embodiment

Salt gives embodiment a tangible point of entry into a philosophy otherwise occupied with invisible powers. In Book II, the author identifies it as the first body through which first matter becomes perceptible. His reasoning connects dissolution, coagulation and hardness: water encounters a dissoluble substance within earth, and that substance gradually acquires a metallic body. Salt names the capacity for such material formation across many kinds of things. The claim that salts are as numerous as the things of the world already makes this a varied category. Its unity lies in a shared formative office. See salt as the first palpable body.

Embodiment also explains why the spirit can remain powerful after becoming earth. The author argues that the process cannot remove the very powers that caused it. The resulting matter may carry impurities while retaining an inward purity which purification makes effective. Its proposed medicinal action depends on penetrating bodies and preserving the radical moisture akin to itself. This argument makes a distinction within earthly matter, between an active substance and the surrounding mass. The latter nevertheless supplies the bodily support without which the spiritual substance cannot subsist. See power retained through embodiment and the necessary bodily vehicle.

Salt appears again at the opposite end of a body's history. Extracted from ash, it is called the last remaining matter; moisture turns it into water and heat returns that water to salt. The beginning and remainder of embodiment thus answer one another. Fire itself must participate in moisture, because the author holds that nourishment and original constitution belong together. These interchanges explain why salt, water and fire repeatedly overlap in his language. Their connection is argued through transformations and shared properties, while ash remains distinguishable from the salt concealed within it. Reading those relations keeps the claim about embodiment precise. See salt as the last matter.

Body, Soul and Spirit

The three terms first explain how the world holds together. Body is available to the senses, whereas soul is too subtle to join coarse matter directly. Spirit supplies the affinity required between them, sharing in each extreme and carrying the soul's activity into the whole. The comparison with Christ's mediation makes the structure of this argument explicit: reconciliation requires a participant in both natures. Within the cosmological account, spirit therefore has a connective task. Soul animates, body receives, and the intermediate spirit makes their association possible. See spirit as the mediator.

These distinguishable tasks do not produce three independently existing ingredients. The discussion of the moon insists that body, spirit and soul are always associated; an apparent separation can leave two concealed in the third. The reader is asked to recognise their continuing presence through examination by fire. This explains the author's readiness to call matter spirit and spirit body while preserving differences of action. His account of specification adds a further distinction: the world soul communicates formative powers through spirit, but the ideal intellect itself is not drawn down into matter. The language tracks different relations within one generative process. See the inseparability of the three and soul, forms and ideal intellect.

When the discussion turns to human beings, bodily association acquires a more troubled character. The heavenly and earthly persons are described as captive and prison. The difficulty is how essential purity can survive continual contact with corruption, illustrated by a precious liquid spoilt in a foul vessel. Sobriety, fasting and regeneration answer that difficulty within the author's Christian argument. This gives bodily life a double significance across the book: a body enables the spirit's presence, yet its impurities can obstruct and stain what it carries. That strain helps explain why separation and renewed association matter so much. See the heavenly person and the earthly prison.

Motion, Nourishment and Life

Motion establishes the book's first argument for a living world. The author carefully identifies the relevant movement as passage from imperfection towards form and perfection. Plant growth and the hardening of stones therefore count as evidence alongside more readily visible activity. A vital spirit distributes the soul's power from earth's centre, compared to a heart, throughout the world's body. Life belongs to the process by which a thing takes shape and continues to develop. This account extends animation to mineral formation without granting every body the same capacities of sensation or growth. See formative movement and the world's heart and different capacities for life.

Nourishment connects ongoing life to that original formation. The opening of the chapter on first matter states that things are nourished by what makes them. Spirit consequently accounts for their breathing, growth and persistence, while its failure explains dissolution and death. Solar action increases its vitality, but particular seeds develop according to their species and form. The common source therefore produces bounded and differentiated lives. At the larger scale, celestial powers gather within earth because their downward movement reaches a centre beyond which it cannot continue. This accumulated supply supports the author's picture of continuing generation. See constitution and nourishment and the gathering of celestial powers.

The comparison with eating gives this circulation a specific mechanism. According to the author, the visible mass of food does not become flesh

in its entirety. Nature draws out an invisible juice capable of becoming substance within the eater, while the remaining mass is evacuated. He uses this account to distinguish earth's coarse bulk from its hidden productive substance. Nourishment thus involves selective attraction and incorporation, followed by the removal of what cannot serve the living body. The distinction matters for the later medicinal argument: successful preservation requires the vital portion to act freely. The book's cosmology and its account of digestion are connected through this repeated pattern of reception, selection and renewed bodily growth. See digestion and hidden nourishment.

Knowledge, Experience and Ethical Restraint

The preface gives inquiry a purpose by placing the search for truth above possession and gain. Food sustains life, and life is to be spent exercising reason in that search. This hierarchy explains the author's hostility towards readers attracted only by riches. His defence of chymistry follows from the same purpose: experience of its operations is presented as necessary for perceiving natural principles and universal matter. He also submits his arguments to readers capable of judging their reasons and authorities. Knowledge requires participation in the work, together with the ability to assess what that work is said to disclose. See life directed towards truth and experience and informed judgement.

Experience includes unsuccessful intervention. Recalling a prolonged calcination of common crystal, the author reports that it became vitrified together with its dregs and was useless for his intended work. Transparent appearance had not guaranteed the desired purity. His discussion interprets fumes, smell and the remaining substance as signs by which an operation must be judged. Those observations remain embedded in his account of pure substance and excrement, but the admitted failure gives that account a practical problem to explain. It also prevents the reader from equating sustained application of fire with success. See the unsuccessful calcination of crystal.

Restraint concerns both the proposed benefit and its disclosure. The author directs readers towards preserving life and describes public service as his reason for displaying a medicinal treasure, while refusing to promise riches that would satisfy greed. Yet he also defends veils, fables and selective explanation: nature's secrets must be protected from indiscriminate exposure and contempt. These commitments create a question within the book itself. How can an author serve the public while withholding the fullest explanation of his matter? His answer gives experienced readers a privileged role in recognising what has been shown. The reader can examine whether a particular obscurity teaches discrimination or merely asks for trust. See service and the medicinal aim and guarded disclosure.

Hermes and the Emerald Table

Sal Lumen reads the Emerald Table as a compact account capable of bearing more than one related application. Nuysement accepts Hortulan's interpretation of the sun as philosophical gold and father of the stone, while observing that this commentary passes from Nature's root principles to alchemy's particular principles. He then explains how Hermes can address both the universal spirit and the mineral matter produced from it. The different readings concern connected levels of generation, rather than interchangeable names for one ordinary substance. A reader therefore needs to establish the scale of an argument before assigning its terms a single meaning. See Hortulan's particular interpretation and the universal and mineral applications.

The claim that power remains entire when the spirit becomes earth gives the second book a problem to solve. Taking body might appear to deprive the spirit of the celestial powers responsible for its formation. Nuysement instead makes matter a receptacle of formative possibilities, diversified as particular beings develop. Its desire for embodiment belongs to an active process initiated by celestial fire. The Table thus supplies a proposition which the surrounding natural philosophy must explain: bodily consistency and retained power have to be understood together. The argument does more than repeat an authoritative sentence. See retaining power in embodiment.

The practical interpretation is equally selective. Hermes's instruction to separate gently becomes a reason to preserve a valuable volatile spirit while removing what accompanies it. Later, ascent and descent are explained through dissolution and renewed congelation, rather than the material's reaching the vessel's top. Such explanations make the short Hermetic formulations depend on extended accounts of purpose, sequence and management. Their brevity does not remove the need for judgement, and a familiar image cannot by itself settle which operation is intended. See gentleness and the retained spirit and the specified meaning of ascent.

Separation and the Conditions of Purity

Separation begins with knowledge of an intended end. Nuysement compares possession of suitable matter without the ability to work it to an architect's possession of building materials without knowledge of construction. He also distinguishes two kinds of separation. Nature distributes and differentiates a plant's parts for beauty and use; another separation removes what opposes the substance's preservation and activity. The second procedure cannot be understood simply as making every portion visibly distinct. Its criterion is whether something belongs to the substance's essence or obstructs its powers. See matter, purpose and skill and the two kinds of separation.

Purity nevertheless has a complicated place in this cosmology. The author argues that an entirely pure, undifferentiated beginning would

provide neither the contrasts required for action nor the changing forms required for generation. Dregs accompany substance from birth without being identical with its essence. Their original necessity therefore does not make their continued presence beneficial at every stage. The extracted salt is subsequently described as the last matter remaining from bodies, distinguished from the ash carrying it and capable of passing into water and back into salt. Purification is a directed transformation within this account of matter's development. See why mixture was necessary and salt as the remaining matter.

The conditions of successful removal are consequently important. In the account of washing and dissolution, preceding calcination opens and loosens earthly impurities; liquefaction then permits their separation. Repetition allows the operator to advance without driving away the desired portion through continuous violent heating. Even an operation called distillation must be read locally, since Nuysement places decanting and filtering under that name while assigning alembic distillation to sublimation. The reader should follow what each action separates, preserves and prepares, rather than assume that one familiar operation name carries a uniform meaning throughout the book. See washing, dissolution and repeated work.

Fire, Ascent and Return

Fire connects movement with the manifestation of life. In the account of embodiment, the light element naturally tends upward, yet its movement begins below, at the world's centre. Its vaporous breath carries the activity which is to be distributed through the spherical world. Elsewhere, ascent describes a change in quality: the subject leaves an imperfect condition and acquires a fiery perfection. These passages connect direction, activity and transformation without making every upward movement the same event. The relation between a spatial image and a material change has to be established in its immediate argument. See fire's movement from the centre and ascent as a change of condition.

The author expressly distinguishes the volatile spirituality that raises and perfects from the separable volatile sulphur associated with corruption. His account therefore requires the reader to ask what is flying and what should remain. He also rejects a simple identification of Hermetic ascent with matter reaching the top of a vessel. Dissolution restores an airy condition after fixation; renewed decoction brings the subject back to earthly consistency. Repeated changes are meant to unite bodily stability with spiritual subtlety, until the two can no longer be separated. Return is essential to this proposed conjunction. See two meanings of volatility and dissolution, return and union.

Fire's usefulness consequently depends on its governance. Nuysement reports that prolonged ignition ruined an attempt to purify common crystal: the material vitrified together with its dregs and became useless

for his purpose. This admission gives practical weight to the surrounding arguments for repetition and patience. A powerful agent can destroy the conditions needed for the intended transformation, even while it appears to be accelerating purification. The episode also separates the appearance of clarity from the author's desired state of purity. Crystal's visible transparency does not, in his account, prove that it lacks excrementitious matter. See the unsuccessful treatment of crystal.

Regeneration, Christian Analogy and Material Change

Regeneration is presented through the difficult relation between death and renewed life. The grain of wheat supplies a comparison, but Nuysement immediately limits its human application: bodily death alone cannot confer incorruptible life, since that would give the wicked the same advantage as the virtuous. What must die is the old corruption, which he connects with inherited disorder, excess and intemperance. His distinction between the heavenly and earthly human then explains why essential purity requires preservation within a corruptible dwelling. Moral reform and material vulnerability become closely connected in this argument. See the death of the old human and the two humans and regeneration.

Water and fire organise the comparison more precisely. The author places baptism and the Holy Spirit beside the washing and consuming actions through which substances are prepared for renewed activity. Christ's blood is associated with the true water; the heart becomes the inward globe warmed by the Holy Spirit's rays. Chymical fire is then compared with that inward action because it consumes alien impurity around a body. The shared structure is removal of corruption followed by freer operation of what is preserved. The argument assigns distinct objects to the actions: sins and affections in one application, excrementitious matter in another. See water, fire and the inward globe.

The fourth chapter adds safeguards against equating regeneration with destruction. Christ's renewal is said to provide a pattern, although his nature's centre did not need purging. Material mortification likewise need not mean that the subject loses its body through annihilation. The seed comparison preserves a centre of life through putrefaction; the account of the Redeemer preserves bodily and spiritual union through death and exaltation. These qualifications matter because the desired result requires continuity as well as change. A reader can trace the author's comparisons without assuming that every theological term names a material constituent. See the pure centre and the pattern and mortification without bodily annihilation.

Short Glossary

These concise definitions explain terms as they function in this volume. French forms and fuller discussions appear in the Contextual Lexicon. Linked passages take precedence over any single general definition.

Air

Air bears celestial influences, mediates between elements and nourishes life. In the particular work it can also name the volatile vapour opposed to fixed earth. SL_I_06S001; SL_I_06S002.

Ascent and descent

Ascent and descent include changes between spiritual subtlety and earthly consistency. The author expressly distinguishes this meaning from simply raising material to a vessel's top. SL_II_04S023; SL_II_04S023.

Body

Body is the determinate material condition in which powers operate. The spirit mediates its union with soul, while bodily composition also carries the possibility of corruption. SL_I_02S001; SL_IIIS012.

Centre

Centre names the inward source of life and effective powers, as well as the earth's central storehouse in the cosmological account. Its contrast with surface also describes depth of knowledge. SL_I_01S001; SL_IIIS018.

Chaos

Chaos is the undifferentiated mixture from which forms and powers become manifest through separation. The book applies this pattern both to cosmic formation and to salt still dissolved in its water. SL_II_02S008; SL_II_03S030.

Corruption

Corruption may name a generative loss of form or an impurity destructive of existing life. The distinction is local, especially when natural operations enter medical and religious comparisons. SL_I_05S002; SL_II_04S001.

Earth

Earth receives influences, holds seeds and nourishes generated bodies. It also names the fixed portion or residue in particular operations, according to context. SL_I_07S001; SL_IIIS002.

Embodiment

Embodiment is the spirit's acquisition of determinate bodily form without the loss of its powers. Vapour, water, mucilage and solidity describe successive relations within that account. SL_II_01S001; SL_II_04S008.

Experience

Experience tests and teaches, but includes failed trials and must be interpreted with reason. The author's practical and medical reports remain historical testimony, rather than independently replicated results. SL_PREFACES003; SL_II_04S033.

Fire

Fire is the active mover of generation, maturation and dissolution. It acts with coessential moisture and can name central, innate, celestial or ordinary fire in different contexts. SL_II_01S002; SL_II_01S003.

First matter

First matter may name the universal source or a particular matter derived from it. The phrase must be read at the level specified by the surrounding argument. SL_I_04S005; SL_I_09S004.

Fixed and volatile

Volatile matter rises or escapes; fixed matter endures and remains. The intended result combines subtle penetration with lasting fixation, rather than simply discarding one side. SL_II_04S012; SL_II_04S023.

Form

Form gives a thing its specific character and generative relation, exceeding outward shape. The soul supplies formative causes and the spirit embodies them in matter. SL_I_09S001; SL_II_01S007.

Gift

Natural life and knowledge are offered as gifts, but their possession requires discernment, labour and favour. The imagery combines generosity with the difficulty of qualified reception. SL_II_04S026; SL_IIIS013.

Knowledge

Knowledge proceeds through first causes and inward relations, rather than stopping at appearances or the outer wording of authorities. Reason, experience and illumination all figure in its proposed acquisition. SL_II_04S005; SL_II_04S015.

Light

Light denotes both visible manifestation and the insight through which causes become intelligible. Universal light grounds understanding without making reasoning and experience unnecessary. SL_PREFACES001; SL_II_04S005.

Magistry

Magistry names the philosophical work or its accomplished preparation. Its intended subject and end depend on the local distinction between universal medicine and the particular metallic work. SL_I_06S002; SL_II_04S008.

Matrix and womb

A matrix or womb receives and supports generation. The earth is the general womb, while particular sites affect the form and condition of what is generated there. SL_I_04S001; SL_II_01S007.

Medicine

The sought medicine preserves and prolongs life by drawing upon its universal source. The text retains particular remedies and expressly denies that bodily life thereby becomes immortal. SL_II_04S007; SL_IIIS012.

Mercury

Mercury can name the universal generative spirit or a particular mercurial subject derived from it. Its local action and specification take precedence over identification with ordinary quicksilver. SL_I_03S002; SL_II_01S006.

Microcosm

A microcosm is a little world whose organised powers reflect the greater whole. The term applies to generated bodies generally, while humanity receives a particular intellectual dignity. SL_I_01S008; SL_II_04S005.

Moon

The moon nourishes radical moisture as a maternal contribution to generation. The particular philosophical moon is expressly distinguished from ordinary silver and joins body with seed. SL_I_05S003; SL_I_05S004.

Motion and rest

Natural motion includes growth and movement towards form. Universal self-renewing activity is distinguished from the finite course of particular bodies and from the stability sought through fixation. SL_I_01S001; SL_II_04S016.

Nature and art

Nature originates the species whose powers art develops, purifies and multiplies. Art may exceed ordinary natural completion while remaining dependent on Nature's materials and order. SL_I_09S004; SL_II_04S014.

Perfection

Perfection is completion at a particular degree and according to a subject's nature. Natural completion and the further efficacy attributed to art remain distinguishable. SL_I_08S001; SL_II_04S019.

Philosophy

Philosophy is the effective understanding of Nature's principles and hidden operations, directed chiefly towards life's preservation. Its cosmological, practical, literary and religious arguments remain connected. SL_IIIS010; SL_II_04S036.

Putrefaction

Putrefaction enables passage from one form to another within generation. The account gives it a constructive place without treating every corruption or failed preparation as beneficial. SL_I_05S002; SL_II_04S021.

Quintessence

The fifth essence is the separable simple spirit described in relation to the four elements. Book III expressly denies that its fifthness is merely a position above them. SL_I_03S001; SL_IIIS012.

Radical moisture

Radical moisture sustains life at its root and is exhausted by destructive heat. It is a historical explanatory term, not an identification of one modern bodily substance. SL_II_01S004; SL_IIIS011.

Root

Root denotes origin, nourishment or the basis of an operation. Its location depends on whether the passage discusses celestial reception, the central storehouse or the return of distilled water. SL_I_06S001; SL_I_09S004.

Salt

Salt is the first palpable body of the embodied spirit and the last matter sought in resolution. Particular salts and their impurities must be distinguished; no single modern compound is securely identified. SL_II_02S004; SL_II_03S023.

Secrecy

Secrecy governs qualified disclosure through fable, analogy and reserved teaching. The author presents concealment as compatible with instruction, while acknowledging the danger that unwritten knowledge may disappear. SL_II_04S027; SL_II_04S035.

Seed

Seed is the generative power and its bearer, visible or hidden. A shared universal source produces effects according to the particular species receiving it. SL_I_01S007; SL_I_09S002.

Separation

Separation removes or distinguishes particular parts according to its context. Hermes' earth and fire are interpreted as impurity and purity within the subject, whose proper union must be preserved. SL_II_04S009; SL_II_04S014.

Soul

The soul animates and bears formative causes; the spirit communicates and embodies its powers. The ideal intellect is distinguished from the soul attracted by material forms. SL_I_09S001; SL_I_09S001.

Sulphur

Sulphur may be a purified constituent fitted for perfection or a corrupting power associated with impurity and destructive heat. Its meaning depends on its condition and subject. SL_II_03S035; SL_IIIS012.

Sun

The celestial sun awakens and nourishes generative heat. The philosophical sun can name living gold in the particular work; the text expressly allows both levels. SL_I_04S002; SL_I_04S003.

Vital heat

Vital heat is the inward activity sustaining generation and maturation, awakened by wider natural powers. Its moderation, continuity and relation to moisture determine its effects. SL_II_01S008; SL_I_03S003.

Water

Water can name primordial moisture, mercurial water or a means of dissolution and washing. Its local office is distinguished from fire's removal of combustible impurity. SL_II_02S004; SL_II_03S030.

World spirit

The general spirit carries the soul's powers into bodies and is itself capable of embodiment. Its universal scope exceeds the particular metallic work. SL_I_02S001; SL_II_01S006.

Contextual Lexicon

These articles follow the vocabulary of the complete 1621 French work in its new English translation. Each entry distinguishes local meanings and levels of argument; its two exact English quotations link to stable passage labels. Historical cosmological and medical assertions are explained as the author's claims.

Air

Air carries and mediates life. Breathing begins the chapter's account, but the argument extends beyond the visible breath of animals to plants, elemental mixture and celestial influence. Air makes the general spirit fruitful and carries natural forms like a mirror. The text consequently sometimes treats it less as one element among others than as the glue joining their different natures.

A particular operational reading is also supplied. The volatile part rising as vapour is called air, while the fixed part remaining below is called earth. This does not erase the broader cosmological use; it shows why the same language can serve more than one scale of explanation. Air should therefore be followed through its action and relation to other terms. Substituting a modern atmospheric gas would remove the formative and mediating functions on which the account depends.

Passage SL_I_06S001: "air is a vital spirit, passing through and penetrating everything"

Passage SL_I_06S002: "They take this volatile part for air, as indeed it is, and the fixed part for earth"

Source forms: air; vent; substance aëreuse.

See also: Fixed and volatile, World spirit.

Ascent and descent

Ascent and descent are explained through changing states as well as vertical imagery. The chapter expressly says that ascent need not mean matter moving to the top of a vessel. After fixation, the return of a reserved spiritual portion makes the subject dissolve and become airy; renewed decoction then brings it back to earthly consistency. These explanations qualify a merely literal reading of the celestial journey.

The pattern also carries the book's religious comparisons. Christ's descent and return provide an exemplary relation between higher and lower, while the natural work seeks a subject whose powers remain entire through its changes. Mythic flights and underworld journeys add further interpretive figures. None of these should erase the author's explicit operational distinction: dissolution supplies the ascent,

coagulation the descent, and their repetition aims at inseparable union and penetrating efficacy.

Passage SL_II_04S023: "he did not mean by this ascent that the matter must rise or be sublimed to the top of the vessel"

Passage SL_II_04S023: "through dissolutions that this thing ascends into heaven, and through congelations that it descends again to earth"

Source forms: monter; descendre; ciel; terre.

See also: Fixed and volatile, Separation.

Body

Body is the condition in which a power becomes materially present, determinate and able to operate within a particular thing. In the opening account, coarse body cannot be joined directly to the most subtle soul, so a mediating spirit shares the nature of both. Later embodiment is necessary because a vapour remaining wholly intermediate would not generate an individual. The vocabulary thus belongs to an argument about effective union.

Yet body also sets a limit. Book III associates bodily mass with excremental corruption and rejects the inference that a preserved human body could live for ever. Its loss does not annihilate the universal spirit. These claims should be kept together: the body is indispensable to individual natural operation, while its particular composition is also vulnerable to dissolution. The distinction is historical and conceptual, rather than a modern division of matter from measurable energy.

Passage SL_I_02S001: "Their union therefore needs a third thing sharing the nature of both, something that is spirit-body"

Passage SL_IIIS012: "We must not imagine that this can make us immortal, for everything bearing corporeal mass within itself"

Source forms: corps; corps spirituel; masse corporelle.

See also: World spirit, Embodiment.

Centre

The centre is both a location of distribution and an image of inward causal understanding. The earth's central storehouse supplies the members of the spherical world as a heart supplies a body. Book III returns to this spatial arrangement through Nature's treasury, explaining why the greatest treasure of universal life is sought in the earth rather than on its outward surface.

The same book contrasts medicine founded on the surface with inquiry into the effective centre of a thing. This does not mean that every

mention of centre denotes the same geographical point. A body's inward efficacy, the source of universal life and the practitioner's depth of understanding belong to connected comparisons. Following the transition between them preserves the argument without converting its symbolic and physical geography into a map of modern terrestrial structure.

Passage SL_I_01S001: "The source and mine of this spirit lies at the centre of the earth"

Passage SL_IIIS018: "its foundation is set at the surface of things rather than their centre"

Source forms: centre; cœur; milieu; chambre.

See also: Earth, Knowledge.

Chaos

Chaos is the confused condition in which the world's contents are present before their differentiation. It supplies the large-scale pattern for understanding how a body's powers remain obscured within mixture. The account of salt dissolved in water calls that state a limbus or chaos, then interprets the appearing deposit through the separation that made dry land visible in the first creation.

Confusion does not mean an absolute absence of potential. Rather, the principles cannot unfold their effective powers while pure and impure, light and heavy remain mingled without distinction. Separation allows form and action to become manifest. This analogy helps connect cosmology with the practitioner's work, but the two scales remain distinguishable: ordinary art does not claim to create from nothing. The term should therefore be read as a condition of undifferentiated mixture in this argument, without importing a modern mathematical theory of chaotic systems.

Passage SL_II_02S008: "Let us consider Nature's salt while it is still in its limbus or chaos"

Passage SL_II_03S030: "forms distinguished from confusion, generation from barrenness, and death from life"

Source forms: Chaos; limbe; masse confuse; Hyle.

See also: First matter, Form.

Corruption

Corruption can be the loss of a form which permits another generation, or an invading impurity which threatens an existing body's life. The author defines the first use explicitly when discussing heat and moisture, but the later medical and religious comparisons give the

second use moral and mortal force. Context must establish which relation is being described.

The distinction prevents the inference that all corruption is either productive or wholly destructive. Putrefaction may be required in a governed transformation, while foreign corrupting parts must be removed to preserve a subject's pure powers. Death itself need not annihilate the universal spirit, though the particular body loses its living form. The book's several uses therefore form a connected vocabulary with genuine differences. Preserving those differences is more useful than replacing every occurrence with decay, sin or a single modern chemical process.

Passage SL_I_05S002: "Here I call corruption the change and passage from one form to another"

Passage SL_II_04S001: "infection and corruption would wage a mortal war in everything composed of body and spirit"

Source forms: corruption; corrompre; infection; pourriture.

See also: Putrefaction, Medicine.

Earth

Earth is the receiving body, common mother and storehouse within which the universal spirit becomes evident. It is not treated as inert dirt alone. Celestial rays converge upon it, seeds are lodged within it, and the same body nourishes what it produces. Book III expands this role into the image of a prince's private treasury, from which Nature maintains her household.

The author nevertheless distinguishes the earthen vessel from the generative spirit it contains. Extracted earth may be replenished through exposure to air, while particular bodies ultimately return to earth after losing their living form. These relations explain why earth can be both mother and residue. They also warn against a single modern material identification: the ordinary ground, the fixed part of an operation and the world's central chamber are related but contextually different uses.

Passage SL_I_07S001: "She is also the foundation and base of all the elements"

Passage SL_IIIS002: "In its midst she has placed the globe of the earth as her private chamber"

Source forms: terre; grande ayeulle; mere; nourrice.

See also: Centre, Matrix and womb.

Embodiment

Embodiment is the passage through which the universal spirit becomes a determinate body and can generate particular things. Because it gives bodies to other things, the author reasons that it must itself be capable of bodily form. Its first rising vapour is intermediate, and subsequent condensation, thickening and mucilage describe the transition towards solidity rather than an instantaneous appearance of finished matter.

The vocabulary also preserves continuity. Conversion into earth does not remove the spirit's powers; it provides a seat for their operation. At a later stage, purification and repeated union seek to combine subtlety with firmness rather than reverse embodiment altogether. The author's account is consequently not a simple descent from good immateriality into bad matter. It explains the condition of effective natural life while acknowledging the corruption associated with particular bodily masses.

Passage SL_II_01S001: "what body this spirit takes, and how it is itself embodied while embodying all other things"

Passage SL_II_04S008: "this universal spirit which preserves bodies keeps and maintains its entire power when converted into earth"

Source forms: corporification; corporifier; prendre corps.

See also: Body, First matter.

Experience

Experience is both a ground of judgement and a record of costly uncertainty. The preface makes chymical experience necessary for perceiving principles and universal matter, while the chapter on mythic disclosure calls it the irreproachable teacher. This authority does not remove the need for reasons or careful interpretation: the author repeatedly links observed effects with an account of their inward causes.

The narrative of nine vessels gives experience a sharply particular form. Eight fail while the practitioner searches for the proper degree of heat, leaving one through which the cited trials are made. Such reported trials support the author's claim to practical acquaintance without becoming independently reproduced experiments in this edition. The distinction matters especially for medicinal success stories. They are evidence of what the author asserts and how he argues, not modern confirmation of efficacy or a promise that repetition will succeed.

Passage SL_PREFACES003: "neither natural principles nor true universal matter will ever be perceived except through experience of the chymical art"

Passage SL_II_04S033: "Of nine vessels which I put into decoction to find the true degree of heat, eight perished"

Source forms: experience; espreuve; experimenter.

See also: Knowledge, Nature and art. Read with Book II.2 §9, where expected metallic transmutation fails while medicinal effects are asserted, and Book II.3 §34, which reports an unsuccessful prolonged calcination.

Fire

Fire is the active mover which brings powers into effect, yet it never operates without a receptive subject. Its root is placed centrally, and its first immediate action is vapour. The account therefore rejects the inference that hot, dry fire could have no relation to moisture. Moisture feeds and sustains it, while the two coessential principles become the parents of embodiment.

The same activity can generate, mature and finally dissolve a body. Fire's destructive effect is consequently not the whole meaning of the term. Ordinary burning supplies an example through ash and salt, whose hidden fire is said to survive further burning. The inward, celestial and ordinary registers require contextual attention rather than a single substitution of visible flame. The book's explanation remains a historical theory of natural action, not a measured account of combustion in present-day chemistry.

Passage SL_II_01S002: "For vapour is the first and immediate action of fire"

Passage SL_II_01S003: "fire and coessential moisture are like the male and female of every generation"

Source forms: feu; feu central; feu inné; feu vulgaire.

See also: Vital heat, Water.

First matter

First matter is a relational expression whose level must be identified locally. Primordial matter precedes the celestial sun, yet solar action subsequently nourishes and brings its generative capacities into effect. The particular mineral matter of the stone is produced from this general source. A repeated phrase therefore calls the universal spirit the first matter of the first matter of bodily gold and silver.

This layered account prevents the term from being reduced to a single starting ingredient. The author accepts the special preparation of mineral matter while insisting upon an earlier general spirit common to all three natural kinds. Human art works with a species whose beginning Nature has already provided. Reading first matter

contextually means retaining this sequence of dependence, rather than identifying every primal or proximate material with ordinary metal, quicksilver or common salt.

Passage SL_I_04S005: "it is the first matter of the first matter of bodily gold and silver"

Passage SL_I_09S004: "Nature generates and brings forth the species, which art afterwards extends and multiplies"

Source forms: premiere matiere; matiere primeraine; matiere generale.

See also: World spirit, Nature and art.

Fixed and volatile

Fixed and volatile describe capacities in relation to heat, movement and retention. A volatile part rises as vapour; a fixed part remains below. The later account carefully distinguishes the simplest rising spirituality from volatile sulphur which causes corruption. This qualification is essential: the author does not regard every fugitive constituent as the same thing or give volatility an entirely negative value.

Fixation serves preservation, but the work does not end in an unresponsive lump. The fixed subject must be dissolved and returned to a spiritual condition, then congealed again so that heavenly subtlety and earthly firmness coexist. Repeated solutions improve union through the smallest parts. A simple opposition between active spirit and useless fixed body would thus misread the intended conjunction. These terms indicate stages and powers within a historical process, rather than modern analytical categories with constant definitions.

Passage SL_II_04S012: "By this volatile spirituality I do not mean what I earlier called volatile and separable sulphur"

Passage SL_II_04S023: "Thus it will possess heavenly subtlety and earthly fixation. Following always the plain path of nature"

Source forms: fixe; volatil; fixation; fugitif.

See also: Ascent and descent, Separation.

Form

Form makes a body the particular kind of thing that it is. The world soul supplies seminal reasons corresponding to ideas, while the spirit embodies received forms in elemental matter. Passage from imperfection to perfection is consequently a movement involving form, not simply a change of place. The book's repeated vocabulary of specification is essential to this distinction.

The shared source does not make every body interchangeable. Different species receive fitting powers, while particular metallic bodies can differ

in accidents despite a common substance and seed. The intended purification and perfection therefore preserve a determinate relation rather than generate an arbitrary new kind. Form also changes through corruption, making another generation possible. These relations should not be reduced to outward shape alone: although shape can be visible, the causal and generative character of form carries much of the argument.

Passage SL_I_09S001: “through this spirit it fashions as many species in matter”

Passage SL_II_01S007: “these bodies do not differ at all in substance, but only in the accidents which befall them”

Source forms: forme; forme specifique; Idee; specification.

See also: Seed, Corruption.

Gift

Gift describes the availability of natural riches and the favour required to recognise them. Nature is represented as a charitable mother offering the treasure of life widely, yet the successful reader also needs discernment, virtue and divine permission. The open door and the difficult return are held together. The book does not infer that a widely offered good is automatically easy to possess.

The dedication gives generosity another concrete setting. Patronage, teaching and transmitted works enable the author’s own inquiry, while the promised medicine is justified through preservation rather than naked greed. These relations make receiving and using knowledge ethical matters. They should not be converted into a rule that pious language guarantees technical success, nor reduced to a transaction in which a gift purchases revelation. Gift names a dependence whose recipient still has work and judgement to exercise.

Passage SL_II_04S026: “Nature, like a most charitable mother, proposes and offers this precious and unique treasure of life to all”

Passage SL_IIIS013: “these singular favours are granted only to the children of the gods”

Source forms: don; faveur; grace; tresor.

See also: Secrecy, Philosophy.

Knowledge

Knowledge is ordered by causes. The account begins from the great world to understand its copies, and from genera to understand species. The author therefore asks readers to move beyond visible effects towards the origin which makes those effects possible. In this

programme, creation, generation and the recognition of universal matter are not optional digressions from a purely practical manual.

The distinction between surface and centre also defines failure. Readers may possess learned words yet miss the intention hidden beneath them, while practitioners can labour on the wrong matter despite extensive effort. Neither authority alone nor private certainty substitutes for the combination of reasoning, chymical experience and qualified interpretation claimed by the book. Its religious account of illumination belongs to that combination. A contextual reading preserves these stated grounds without equating the author's certainty with present-day verification of his natural or medicinal conclusions.

Passage SL_II_04S005: "To know absolutely is to know things through their first causes"

Passage SL_II_04S015: "attending to the ordinary meaning or outer bark of the sages' words rather than the living marrow of their intention"

Source forms: science; cognoissance; entendement; causes.

See also: Light, Philosophy.

Light

Light names disclosure and the capacity to understand causes as well as visible brightness. The preface contrasts enlightened inquiry with minds darkened by ignorance, while the chapter on ascent and descent calls knowledge received from universal light clear and securely founded. This vocabulary makes the reader's intellectual condition relevant to the interpretation of natural operations, rather than treating explanation as a merely external delivery of facts.

Yet illumination does not remove reasoning or experience. The book asks how the great world was formed so that its human image can be understood, and describes the works of Nature as available for examination through fire. Light therefore joins a religious and philosophical account of insight to the disciplined reading of effects. Its use should not be turned into a modern physical theory of light, nor into permission to disregard the author's repeated distinctions of cause, matter and stage.

Passage SL_PREFACES001: "Human minds are commonly darkened by the fog of ignorance"

Passage SL_II_04S005: "the understanding received from the universal light is very clear, firmly supported upon an unshakable foundation"

Source forms: lumiere; lumiere universelle; rayon de science.

See also: Knowledge, Experience.

Magistry

Magistry names the accomplished philosophical work and the ordered achievement through which a prepared subject gains its intended efficacy. Its content must be gathered from the surrounding description rather than assumed from the title alone. In the account of distillation, earth cleansed through its own returned water is said to guide and perfect the magistry with God's aid.

The later Hermetic interpretation associates the magistry with universal medicine and adaptation. Yet the book repeatedly distinguishes the universal source from the first metallic matter selected for the particular stone. This distinction prevents the technical name from identifying a single substance wherever it occurs. The word may carry authority and the promise of mastery, but it does not replace the stated sequence of selection, purification, union, digestion and fixation. Its best explanatory value lies in that local relation between the work, its prepared subject and its end.

Passage SL_I_06S002: "when cleansed, with God's help it will guide and perfect the entire magistry"

Passage SL_II_04S008: "his magistry—that sovereign and universal medicine—will be perfected and completed from this unique thing by adaptation"

Source forms: *magistere*; *œuvre*; adaptation.

See also: Medicine, Separation.

Matrix and womb

Matrix makes generation intelligible through a receiving and formative place. The earth is the common womb of things because it receives celestial influences and contains their seeds; a particular mineral site is likewise a womb whose disposition affects the body produced there. Human conception supplies an analogous example in which gathered seed-fluids are aided by the woman's natural heat.

The image does not make every womb interchangeable. The general earth receives powers on behalf of the whole lower world, while particular places contribute accidents to bodies sharing one seed. The vessel of art can reproduce a relation of containment without creating the originating natural power. Matrix is therefore both a spatial and causal term: it identifies where matter is received and worked upon, not merely a decorative maternal metaphor or a modern laboratory specification.

Passage SL_I_04S001: "the earth is like the common womb of all things"

Passage SL_II_01S007: “according to the disposition of the places or wombs in which they are generated”

Source forms: matrice; sein; vaisseau.

See also: Earth, Seed.

Medicine

Medicine supplies a principal purpose for the inquiry into universal life. The author seeks a preserving source richer than the powers communicated to particular plants and creatures, yet explicitly refuses to abandon useful specific remedies. The relation is one of source and derived efficacy, rather than a claim that every ordinary treatment is wholly worthless. The desired remedy also connects bodily preservation with the broader language of divine provision.

Book III gives the aim a limit: prolongation does not make a corporeal person immortal. It further distinguishes alleged relief from a more complete extracted effect and recognises that dose and preparation matter in accusations of corrosiveness. These are the claims and distinctions of historical medicine. Their faithful presentation does not establish present-day therapeutic efficacy or turn the volume’s descriptions into instructions for contemporary treatment.

Passage SL_II_04S007: “I would have the universal remedy sought without abandoning particular ones”

Passage SL_IIIS012: “We must not imagine that this can make us immortal”

Source forms: medecine; remede universel; simples; conservation.

See also: Radical moisture, Gift.

Mercury

Mercury is expressly a name for the multiform spirit producing bodies, and the universal Mercury is distinguished from particular mercuries proceeding from it. The text also speaks of mercurial water, mineral mercury and living silver in specific operations. These related expressions do not license the replacement of every Mercury with ordinary quicksilver. The author’s explanation depends on differences of scale and function.

In the triad proposed through glass, salt and mercury, the mercurial or watery contribution gathers and condenses. Elsewhere a purified metallic subject receives the capacity to enter and perfect its own kind. The common name therefore links mobility, nourishment and generation without making all named subjects identical. The contextual question is what Mercury does, where it is found and how it has been

specified. Only where tangible quicksilver is unambiguous does that narrower English name help.

Passage SL_I_03S002: "This spirit, then, is called Mercury by the philosophers because it takes many forms"

Passage SL_II_01S006: "many call the Mercury of Mercuries, because all the others proceed universally from it"

Source forms: Mercure; eau mercurielle; Mercure des Mercures.

See also: Water, World spirit.

Microcosm

Microcosm extends beyond the human being alone. The opening book calls generated bodies little worlds because their parts, powers and qualities reproduce relations belonging to the greater whole. Humanity receives special attention through intelligence and the arts, but the underlying analogy concerns the organisation of bodies generally. It is an argument from shared structure, not simply a flattering title for human importance.

The later epistemic claim follows this dependence: the small worlds cannot be fully understood without the great world which gives them being. To know a human body therefore requires knowledge of more primary parents, heaven and earth, as well as its immediate parents. This movement between scales helps explain the prominence of creation and universal matter in a book directed towards particular preservation. It does not claim that every bodily part has a uniquely deciphered modern astronomical counterpart.

Passage SL_I_01S008: "there are as many microcosms as there are bodies generated in the world"

Passage SL_II_04S005: "Nor can the natures of the microcosms, infinite in number, be known without first understanding that of the great world"

Source forms: microcosme; petit monde; grand monde; macrocosme.

See also: Knowledge, Body.

Moon

The moon is mother because lunar influence fosters the radical moisture required by generation. Heat and moisture perform complementary offices, figured as male and female. This account does not merely attach gender to two celestial bodies: it argues that neither contribution can accomplish generation without the other. Their temperate conjunction allows conception and the receipt of life.

The particular philosophical moon is then distinguished from ordinary silver. It is described as the true matter which gathers body and seed within its belly and retains them inseparably. The sun and Mercury thus stand in a relation sustained by the moon rather than simply naming three metals to be assembled. The universal and particular explanations should remain connected while preserving this stated difference. No modern hormonal, astronomical or chemical mechanism is supplied by the author's maternal vocabulary.

Passage SL_I_05S003: "but the moisture called radical is fostered by lunar influence"

Passage SL_I_05S004: "This moon is not ordinary silver, but the true matter of the stone"

Source forms: Lune; humidité Lunaire; mere.

See also: Radical moisture, Matrix and womb.

Motion and rest

Movement first means the natural passage towards form and perfection, not merely displacement from place to place. Plant growth and the concretion of stones therefore count among its examples. The continuous movement of the whole world then supports the claim that its life does not fail. Circular return has a particular place because it does not exhaust itself at an external endpoint.

The later argument describes the universal principle as receiving replenishment from itself. Its ceaseless action explains why the source of life is not consumed by the lives it generates. Particular bodies nevertheless move towards their ending and undergo transformation, so the world's continuing activity does not promise their indefinite duration. Rest is consequently a problem when it would mean the cessation of generative action, but lasting fixation remains desirable when it preserves a body against destructive separation.

Passage SL_I_01S001: "movement from privation to form, or, to speak more clearly, from imperfection to perfection"

Passage SL_II_04S016: "it remains in continual life-giving action and motion, which prevents it from dying"

Source forms: mouvement; motion; repos; perpetuation.

See also: Perfection, Fixed and volatile.

Nature and art

Nature originates species and distributes their powers; human art works with what she has begun. The first book gives this dependence a clear limit: art extends and multiplies a species but cannot usurp the

originating act granted to Nature. The practitioner therefore begins from a root already specified, rather than expecting arbitrary bodies to emerge from unrelated materials.

The later discussion also says art can surpass the degree of union and digestion Nature ordinarily achieves. This is not a cancellation of dependence, because the means still follow her paths and art can do nothing alone. The tension defines the proposed partnership: observation, selection and controlled preparation bring a natural capacity further into effect. Reading either claim by itself would produce a false absolute, making the worker either powerless or an unrestricted creator. Both agency and limit belong to the book's explanation.

Passage SL_I_09S004: "human art cannot do what is granted to Nature alone"

Passage SL_II_04S014: "has sought to imitate and exceed her by following the very course of her own path"

Source forms: Nature; Art; industrie humaine; artiste.

See also: Perfection, Experience.

Perfection

Perfection means completion according to the nature and end of the subject. Gold is naturally more perfected than impure metals, yet the work claims a further degree which art can introduce. The first book explicitly limits one discussion to simple natural perfection; the later account distinguishes this from an intensified tincture and accomplished fixation. These degrees should not be flattened into one universal endpoint.

The word also connects operation with preservation. A subject perfected through purification, union and digestion is said to communicate an efficacy unavailable to the ordinary body. Ascent into heaven can name this movement towards completion, while descent gives the completed subject a renewed earthly relation. The claims are internally ordered even where their promised effects exceed modern confirmation. Perfection here is therefore a technical and causal attainment within the author's natural philosophy, not merely praise or a claim that every finished object becomes immortal.

Passage SL_I_08S001: "it would perfect nothing. Here, however, we mean simple and natural perfection"

Passage SL_II_04S019: "the power to surpass it still further, even to infinity, through the supreme graduation which art adds"

Source forms: perfection; parfaire; accomplissement; exaltation.

See also: Nature and art, Fixed and volatile.

Philosophy

Philosophy is the knowledge and effective investigation of Nature's hidden principles, praised as the world's happiness, honour and glory. The book places life's preservation above the mere possession of wealth, while allowing true knowledge to secure other goods. Its subject consequently exceeds a metallic transmutation even where the particular art supplies an accepted example. Understanding causes and exercising their powers belong together in this ideal.

The final book contrasts this depth with learning that remains at the surface and follows conjecture. Such polemic should be read as the author's evaluation, not an independent judgement on every other discipline. His philosophical figures also depend on religious and literary interpretation, so the modern separation of technical science from poetry would be misleading here. The proper contextual question is what kind of knowledge he claims, how he supports it and towards what use he directs it.

Passage SL_IIIS010: "perfect knowledge of Nature's works and secrets. All the other sciences are merely steps by which to climb to it"

Passage SL_II_04S036: "true philosophy is the happiness, honour and glory of the whole world"

Source forms: philosophie; sapience; philosophie naturelle.

See also: Knowledge, Experience.

Putrefaction

Putrefaction is the passage through which an existing form yields to generation. The author explicitly defines corruption in this setting as change from form to form, preventing the word from meaning only ruin. Seeds in the earth or womb provide the recurring examples, and the vessel later becomes a sepulchre from which a purified subject is said to rise.

This generative role does not mean that every damaged material has become better. The account demands a suitable subject, separation of corrupting parts and regulated heat, while premature flight can leave a body lifeless. Putrefaction is therefore one relation within an ordered transformation, not a sufficient operation on its own. Its language also supports comparisons with death and resurrection, but those comparisons should retain the distinction between natural preparation and the Christian mystery invoked to interpret it.

Passage SL_I_05S002: "change and passage from one form to another, which cannot occur without putrefaction"

Passage SL_II_04S021: “after being made to pass through the dark straits of putrefaction, buried in the sepulchre of a vessel”

Source forms: putrefaction; pourriture; mortification.

See also: Corruption, Ascent and descent.

Quintessence

The fifth essence is introduced as the simple subtle essence which can be separated from coarse bodies and elemental superfluity. The name is relational: four elements are already in view, and the fifth is characterised through purification and remarkable operation. The passage does not identify an ordinary fifth ingredient to be added to the other four.

Book III explicitly rejects a merely spatial interpretation in which the fifth rose above the elements through greater lightness when chaos was divided. It is instead a simple spirit mingling everywhere, nourishing and giving being. The account also distinguishes its simplicity from the bodily specification that exposes individuals to corruption. These statements connect quintessence with universal life while limiting what can be inferred from its name. It is not a historically validated label for a single modern extract or chemical element.

Passage SL_I_03S001: “nothing other than a simple, subtle essence, which philosophers call the fifth”

Passage SL_IIIS012: “It is properly a spirit simple in itself, mingling everywhere without distinction”

Source forms: quinte essence; quinte; cinquiesme element.

See also: First matter, Chaos.

Radical moisture

Radical moisture is moisture at the root of an individual’s life, not merely dampness on its surface. The moon fosters it, heat acts upon it, and the body’s life fails when it is exhausted. The word radical therefore marks a sustaining relation. It should not be read as the name of a modern chemical radical or as a precise identification of a bodily fluid.

Book III connects this vulnerability with the proposed preservation of life. Ordinary food contains some universal life, but its corrupting burden and insufficient fixation leave it unable to secure the desired extension by itself. The argument seeks a purer replenishment while still denying bodily immortality. Radical moisture links those claims: it helps explain what must be sustained and what hostile fire is said to drive away. The promised efficacy remains the author’s historical medical claim.

Passage SL_II_01S004: "the radical moisture which is the seat and preserver of life"

Passage SL_IIIS011: "trying to drive life from us together with the radical moisture"

Source forms: humide radical; humidité radicale; humeur.

See also: Medicine, Vital heat.

Root

Root can mean the origin of a power, its continuing nourishment or the basis from which an operation must begin. The world spirit's nourishing source is located at the earth's centre, yet another chapter places its root in air. These claims address different relations: a central storehouse distributes life, while air carries the influences which replenish and make the spirit fruitful.

The work also interprets roots through practical imagery. Water rising into a vessel's head is harvested at a mountain's summit, then returned to its roots when it falls upon its own earth. The human practitioner must similarly begin from the root of a species already initiated by Nature. Following the local comparison avoids forcing every root into a botanical organ or treating differences of position as accidental contradictions in the text.

Passage SL_I_06S001: "the mines of things have their roots in the air and their heads or summits in the earth"

Passage SL_I_09S004: "provided the operation begins from the root of the species"

Source forms: racine; source; miniere.

See also: Air, Centre.

Salt

Salt is the first palpable body through which the spirit becomes visible, and also the last matter extracted when bodies are resolved. The book connects these positions by the claim that composition and resolution have like principles. Salt therefore marks a cycle of embodiment and return, rather than merely appearing as one ordinary ingredient among others. Its dissolution and coagulation help make this account intelligible.

The particular salts remain various. Earthly dregs and combustible impurity must be distinguished from the pure substance sought within them, and whiteness alone does not prove complete purification. The book's language of taste, vitrification and medicinal power belongs to these local arguments. It offers no secure basis for identifying its true

salt throughout with sodium chloride or one modern compound. Nor should the universal and particular levels be collapsed simply because both use the same substantive name.

Passage SL_II_02S004: "salt is the first body through which it becomes palpable and visible"

Passage SL_II_03S023: "This salt is therefore the last matter remaining from bodies"

Source forms: sel; vray sel; sel secret; sel cristallin.

See also: Embodiment, First matter.

Secrecy

Secrecy works through selective disclosure. Fables and enigmatic figures cover what they also display, enabling a qualified reader to recognise relations which an unprepared one may misunderstand. The author gives this reserve an ethical rationale: precious knowledge should not be exposed to contempt or indiscriminate misuse. He nevertheless presents his own exposition as a service to seekers, so concealment and instruction remain intertwined.

The closing discussion of oral teaching and written preservation makes the problem historical as well as rhetorical. Without writing, rare learning can disappear; with writing, it can reach readers unable to interpret it. Mythic veils and reserved books answer that tension within the author's account. They do not authorise an editor to supply an unstated substance or secret solution. The contextual task is to follow the distinctions and explanations actually given, acknowledging where the text retains its restraint.

Passage SL_II_04S027: "weave so many veils of fable and enigmatic figures, covering these things while displaying them"

Passage SL_II_04S035: "taught them only by word of mouth to those they judged worthy"

Source forms: secret; arcane; enigme; fable; voile.

See also: Knowledge, Gift.

Seed

Seed names a power of generation as well as its visible bearer. Plant grain and animal generative fluid are accessible examples, but mineral seed is said to require philosophical extraction and is more readily inferred than seen. Hidden seeds within the elements help explain the author's claim that generation can occur without an immediately visible parent or previously planted grain.

The universality of the source does not erase specific limitation. Each recipient draws powers suited to its own seed, just as different animals derive appropriate nourishment from the same food. A mineral spirit prepared by art manifests mineral effects rather than producing an arbitrary animal or plant. Seed therefore links common origin with determinate reproduction. The historical assertions about generation from mud and corruption remain part of that argument, without becoming an editorial endorsement of spontaneous generation.

Passage SL_I_01S007: "Metals likewise have their seed, but it can be seen only by true philosophers"

Passage SL_I_09S002: "not all of them entirely, but those belonging to its seed and others that accord with it"

Source forms: semence; sperme; raison seminale.

See also: Form, Root.

Separation

Separation has more than one object. It may distinguish water from earth during a practical account, remove corrupting foreign parts, or describe death as the spirit's departure from a body. The later interpretation of Hermes expressly denies that the subject's own earth should simply be torn from its own fire. What must be separated there is coarse impurity from the pure substance of the joined subject.

The aim is therefore a more effective union as much as division. Homogeneous parts are joined through digestion, and the purified spirit and body subsequently undergo repeated dissolution and fixation. Reading separation only as the extraction of an isolated ingredient would obscure that destination. Equally, its medical and theological comparisons cannot be assumed to state identical operations. Each passage identifies what is being removed, what must be retained and which relationship the separation is intended to improve.

Passage SL_II_04S009: "It does not mean separating the subject's own earth from its own fire"

Passage SL_II_04S014: "separating foreign parts and uniting homogeneous ones through a long and skilful digestion"

Source forms: separation; extraction; depuration.

See also: Embodiment, Fixed and volatile. Read with Book II.3 §24 and Book II.3 §25, which distinguish adornment from removal and define the offices of fire and water.

Soul

Soul is the animating and formative principle whose powers the spirit communicates through the world. The distinction matters because the book repeatedly pairs the terms without treating them as synonyms. The soul contains seminal causes corresponding to heavenly ideas; the spirit receives and embodies the forms which arise through them. Its universal presence also explains how particular lives participate in the life of the whole.

Attraction requires another distinction. The account does not say that the ideal intellect itself is drawn into a material object. Rather, the soul endowed with its powers is enticed by forms suited to it. Food and generation then illustrate how a recipient draws what agrees with its own species. The soul's relation to matter is consequently selective and formative, not an unrestricted capacity for one kind to generate anything whatsoever.

Passage SL_I_09S001: "the soul endowed with its powers and attracted by material forms"

Passage SL_I_09S001: "as many ideas as there are in the heavens, so many seminal causes and reasons it possesses"

Source forms: ame; ame du monde; ame universelle.

See also: Seed, Form.

Sulphur

Sulphur has contrasting roles within the same natural philosophy. The purified sulphur belonging to gold is a material prepared for gradual perfection, while corrupting sulphur participates in impurity. Book II makes a more precise distinction among external separable sulphur, internal sulphur removed through continued decoction, and fixed sulphur proper to the substance. The word therefore cannot be assigned a uniformly beneficial or harmful value; its relation to the subject is essential.

The medical argument likewise gives corrupting sulphur an aggressive action against life. It inflames heat, exhausts radical moisture and can drive the spirit from its bodily dwelling. These claims belong to the book's explanation of degeneration, not to an editorial diagnosis in modern biochemical terms. The Paracelsian triad is explicitly named, but Nuysement also develops a different triad of glass, salt and mercury. That distinction should remain visible rather than forcing all substances into one standard scheme.

Passage SL_II_03S035: "the distinction between the three sulphurs. Two are separable: the external"

Passage SL_IIIS012: “the corrupting sulphur which masters the whole body is seizing and occupying it entirely”

Source forms: soufre; soulfre; soufre corrompant.

See also: Mercury, Corruption.

Sun

The sun is father through its continuing action upon matter, even though primordial matter precedes the celestial sun itself. Its rays vivify seeds, awaken innate heat and help bring natural capacities into effect. The author anticipates the chronological objection and answers it by distinguishing origin from subsequent nourishment. The reciprocal language in which the sun revives its father belongs to this reasoning.

Another level identifies the philosophical sun with living gold and accepts its role in the particular stone. Nuysement does not reject that interpretation; he places it within a broader account of universal generation. Ordinary gold can also enter fermentation without being identical to invisible living gold. A reader must therefore ask which sun is acting in a passage. The celestial source, philosophical gold and ordinary metal cannot be substituted for one another without losing those distinctions.

Passage SL_I_04S002: “the sun comes to warm and revive its father, weighed down with age”

Passage SL_I_04S003: “By the sun he understands philosophical gold, which he calls the father of the stone”

Source forms: Soleil; Soleil celeste; Soleil terrestre.

See also: Moon, Nature and art.

Vital heat

Vital heat acts from within the generated thing while being awakened and sustained by powers beyond it. The acorn’s innate fire does not begin the whole process unaided: central fire, strengthened by the sun, raises the vapour which rouses it. This layered agency explains why inward heat and external influence are discussed together rather than offered as competing accounts.

Moderation and continuity also matter. In the account of mineral formation, sustained heat gradually thickens mercurial water and brings it towards solidity; excess inflammatory action can instead exhaust the moisture that preserves life. Heat is therefore neither an unqualified good nor a numerical setting. Its meaning depends upon the body, the stage and the moisture with which it acts. A modern reader should not infer temperatures or a practical regimen which the passage does not give.

Passage SL_II_01S008: "raising and multiplying its vapour, awakens and rouses the innate fire within the acorn"

Passage SL_I_03S003: "it thickens and hardens under the prolonged action of continuous heat"

Source forms: *chaleur vitale*; *chaleur naturelle*; *chaleur innee*.

See also: Fire, Radical moisture.

Water

Water names primordial moist nature, a medium of dissolution and a particular mercurial condition. The book's argument repeatedly moves between these scales. Vapour condenses into water, water thickens through moderated heat, and a dried moist nature is returned to water so that its earthly impurities may be separated. These are relations within generation and purification, rather than evidence that every named water is interchangeable.

The chapter on separation gives water a distinct office beside fire: it washes away earthly dross while fire removes combustible adustion. Repetition prevents an excessive heat from driving off the desired subtle portion or vitrifying the residue with its dregs. Calling water an assistant therefore does not make any available liquid a suitable choice. Its purity, relation to the subject and stage of operation remain decisive within the historical account, which supplies no universal modern solvent identification.

Passage SL_II_02S004: "this dried moist nature was originally water, it must also be reduced to water by water"

Passage SL_II_03S030: "One is fire, the exterminator of this sulphurous adustion; the other is water, which separates and carries away this earthly dross"

Source forms: *eau*; *nature humide*; *eau mercurielle*; *eau permanente*.

See also: Fire, Separation.

World spirit

The spirit of the world is the material and operative connection through which the world's life becomes present in particular bodies. It nourishes, moves and embodies, while receiving direction from the soul whose powers it carries. The book therefore neither treats it as merely a human inward experience nor leaves it as an entirely detached immaterial being. Its apparent subtlety must be read alongside its capacity to take body.

The distinction between general spirit and particular mineral matter is equally necessary. Nuysement accepts a metallic work, yet repeatedly

returns to the universal source from which animal, vegetable and mineral generations proceed. Book III turns this cosmology towards the preservation of human life. These related uses give the term its range; they do not establish that every occurrence names one separable substance recognised by modern chemistry.

Passage SL_I_02S001: "The world is therefore nourished by this spirit and stirred by the soul infused into it through this same spirit"

Passage SL_II_01S006: "This rising vapour is therefore not yet body, but something intermediate between body and spirit"

Source forms: Esprit du monde; Esprit general; Esprit universel.

See also: Soul, Embodiment.

Relations within the Text

These sixteen relationships follow comparisons or explanations made in Sal Lumen. The linked passages show how a term changes with the scale of the argument: universal generation, a particular living body, the work of art or a Christian mystery.

Sixteen relationships explained by the author

Concept	Relations in text	Linked passages
Natural movement and continuing life	The motion of the world soul is offered as the source of bodily motion and evidence that the world lives.	Motion
Spirit between soul and body	Spirit shares the nature of both extremes and binds them, as Christ's divine and human natures enable mediation between God and humanity.	Mediation
The sun as father	Solar heat awakens earthly seeds; in the particular alchemical reading, philosophical gold is the father of the stone.	Sun; Gold
The moon as mother	Lunar moisture and solar heat are paired as conditions of generation.	Generation
Roots in air, summits in earth	Calid's reversed plant image explains how air fosters the growth of a mine within earth.	Airy root
Earth as mother and nurse	Earth receives celestial powers, bears seeds and supplies the exhalations from which different terrestrial bodies form.	Earth; Exhalations

Concept	Relations in text	Linked passages
Salt, first matter and last residue	The saline residue of resolution is used to identify the body's first matter; salt-making then models the appearance of earth from primordial waters.	First matter; Salt-making
Earth's centre and preserved celestial power	Heavenly influences converge in matter; its conversion into earth is therefore said to preserve, rather than extinguish, their powers.	Retained power; Specification
Distinction within a plant and removal of impurity	Bark, wood, leaves and fruit remain connected parts; impurity, by contrast, must be removed to release the substance's powers.	Distinction; Removal
The grain's death and renewed generation	The grain's putrefaction provides a model for the mortification that must precede the regeneration of matter.	Mortification
Water, fire and Christian regeneration	Water's washing and fire's consuming are compared with baptism, Christ's blood and the fire of the Holy Spirit.	Two means; Actions; Pure centre
Phoebus, Python and the first earth	The killing of Python is read as natural heat drying superfluous moisture, so that the generative substance becomes active within earth.	Python; Ode
Fire and water as agents of separation	Calcination, sublimation and descension are grouped under fire; distillation and dissolution under water.	Classification; Sublimation; Washing

Concept	Relations in text	Linked passages
Repeated treatment and patient skill	Alternating dissolution and calcination is preferred to an uninterrupted fire that carries off the desired substance or vitrifies the remainder.	Repetition; Crystal; Gentleness
Winged and wingless creatures	Hermes's birds and Flamel's dragons express a volatile power restrained by a fixed component.	Birds and dragons
Ascent to heaven and descent to earth	Dissolutions make the matter spiritual or airy; renewed congelations bring it back to bodily consistency and fixation.	Ascent and descent

The sun and moon supply an account of generative heat and moisture. The author also accepts Hortulan's particular reading of philosophical gold as father of the stone. These applications belong to connected levels of his argument. Their connection does not make every term a single ordinary material or provide a general list of planetary assignments. See the particular interpretation and the two generative conditions.

Separation requires its own distinction. Different parts of a plant remain joined through shared substance and power, while obstructive impurity is removed. Original mixture may be necessary for generation without being useful at every later stage. This is why the account can describe dregs as present from the beginning and still make purification the artist's purpose. See distinction, removal and the original mixture.

The Christian comparisons likewise retain qualifications. In the account of regeneration, water washes and fire consumes corruption; the later treatment expressly says that Christ's centre needed no purging. The shared pattern does not give sin and material dregs the same identity. The author's own defence of sacred correspondences should be read with those limits. See the parallel actions, the uncorrupted centre and the defence of correspondence.

Names of operations follow the local definitions. In particular, watery distillation means washing or filtration here, while alembic distillation is classified as sublimation. Useful volatility must also be distinguished from the volatile sulphur called corrupting. Finally, the author interprets Hermetic ascent through dissolution and return through congelation, rather than requiring travel to the vessel's top. See the watery operations, the qualification of volatility and ascent and return.

Discussion Guide

Session 1 — What Makes the World Alive?

Readings: Knowledge and the use of life; Natural motion; Soul, spirit and body; Union and specification.

Reconstruct the author's argument for a living world before deciding how its claims should be assessed. Keep motion, life and intelligence distinct while tracing the bonds he places between them.

1. Which observations and which inferred principles support the claim that the world lives? Where does the argument move beyond what the senses directly show?
2. Why must soul and body be joined through a mediator, and what makes spirit suitable for that role?
3. How can the universal spirit remain one while producing animals, plants and minerals with different powers?
4. The preface gives life a purpose in the pursuit of truth. How does that purpose alter the significance of the later desire to prolong life?

Session 2 — Reading Hermes across Scales

Readings: The Table in a sonnet; The sun as father; The particular alchemical reading; The moon as mother; The root in air; Earth as nurse.

Follow how a compact authoritative saying becomes an extended argument about creation, generation and art. Mark each change of scale and the evidence offered for it.

1. How does the sonnet organise the claims that the prose chapters explain at length? Which expressions still require interpretation after the sonnet has been read?
2. How does the author answer the difficulty that the sun both comes from matter and fathers it?
3. Where does the broad natural interpretation differ from Hortulan's alchemical interpretation, and why does the author accept both?
4. Do the parental and botanical figures clarify a causal account, supply it with authority, or do both? Test your answer against one complete passage.

Session 3 — Taking Body without Losing Power

Readings: The problem of embodiment; Vapour, water and solidity; The acorn and the oak; First and last matter; The familiar salt operation; Power retained in earth.

Trace the sequence from vapour to body and identify the work done by experiment, analogy and first principles. Examine how visible earth differs from the generative substance said to lie within it.

1. Why does the author think that what gives bodies to other things must itself take body? What further steps are needed to reach his account of salt?
2. What would count as the first matter of a body if its final residue disclosed its origin? How does the ice-and-water example support that rule?
3. In the acorn argument, which possible sources of the oak's growth are rejected, and on what grounds? How convincing is the remaining explanation?
4. How can embodiment preserve celestial powers rather than imprison or destroy them? Distinguish the author's claims about potential forms from their appearance in a particular species.

Session 4 — Separation, Corruption and Regeneration

Readings: Distinction among parts; Removal of contraries; Mortification and renewal; Heavenly and earthly humanity; Water and fire; The limit of the Christ comparison; The defence of sacred correspondences.

Keep the two kinds of separation apart. Then follow the transfer between material purification and Christian regeneration, noting both the parallels and the explicit qualifications.

1. Why does the difference between a leaf and a root call for distinction rather than removal? How does this clarify the treatment of impurity?
2. What does the grain's death contribute to the account of regeneration? Does the analogy explain a mechanism, order a sequence, or justify a necessary loss?
3. Which actions are shared by baptismal water, Christ's blood, the Holy Spirit and the material agents? Where must their objects and effects remain different?
4. How does the claim that Christ's centre needed no purging qualify the comparison? Does the later defence of sacred correspondences answer every difficulty a reader might raise?

Session 5 — Skill, Evidence and the Ends of the Art

Readings: Kinds of operation; The need for repetition; The failed crystal experiment; Useful and corrupting volatility; Ascent interpreted; The hierarchy of goods; The limit of longevity.

Compare the author as interpreter of authoritative sayings with the author describing practical difficulty. Ask how these forms of knowledge support the benefits promised at the book's end.

1. What does the crystal failure teach that the general classifications do not? How does it change the reader's understanding of strength, speed and patience?
2. Why can volatility be either desirable or corrupting? What would be lost by giving each repeated term one fixed modern equivalent?
3. How does the explicit explanation of ascent and descent change a literal reading of Hermes? What part is assigned to repeated human intervention?
4. The conclusion promises longer life and material abundance while denying bodily immortality. How does its hierarchy of goods relate these aims to the search for knowledge, and what evidence would be needed to assess the promised effects?

Selected Annotated Bibliography

Governing French source

Nuysement, Clovis Hestean de. *Traitez de l'harmonie et constitution generale du vray sel, secret des Philosophes, & de l'Esprit universelle du Monde, suivant le troisieme Principe du Cosmopolite*. Paris: Jérémie Périer and Abdias Buisard, 1621.

Governing witness for the new translation. The actual title page reads 1621; the privilege is dated 6 November 1620. The body contains Book I, nine chapters; Book II, four chapters, despite its table's omission of IV; and additional Book III prose, with concluding sonnets. The text reaches printed p. 332 and is followed by errata. The supplied scan has not established a complete original plate suite.

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k656273>

<https://resources.warburg.sas.ac.uk/pdf/fgh5802b3217134.pdf>

French catalogue controls

Wellcome Collection. Records for *Traitez dv vray sel, secret des philosophes, et de l'esprit general dv monde*. Paris: Périer and Buisard, 1621. Physical record hngyrnr; electronic-reproduction record j7xjuhu.

Institutional descriptions identify the French witness, record its engraved plate and warn of pagination errors. The records give differing corrected page totals, so the actual sequence and printed labels govern the edition's locators. The electronic reproduction's modern date is not an original publication date.

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/hngyrnr>

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/j7xjuhu>

Latin transmission

Nuysement, Clovis Hestean de. *Tractatus de vero sale secreto philosophorum, & de universali mundi spiritu*. Translated by Ludovicus Combachius. Cassellis: typis Jacobi Gentschii, impensis Sebaldi Koehlers, 1651.

The actual title qualifies its association of the Cosmopolite with Sendivogius. Book III begins on p. 190 with the palace analogy, independently confirmed by the index. Its ending includes further prose, French verse, an authorial concluding sonnet and Combach's Latin imitation. The checked ending does not establish reproduction of the French nine-sonnet suite. This witness helps distinguish differences

already present in transmission from changes that cannot safely be assigned to a particular translator.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=uCVnVywqslsC&pg=PP7>

<https://books.google.com/books?id=uCVnVywqslsC&pg=PA190>

<https://books.google.com/books?id=uCVnVywqslsC&pg=PA209>

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<https://opac.lbs-braunschweig.gbv.de/DB=2/PPN?PPN=092274803>

Printed English transmission

Nuysement, Clovis Hestean de. *Sal, Lumen, & Spiritus Mundi Philosophici: or, The Dawning of the Day*. Translated by Robert Turner through Combach's Latin. London: J. C. for Martha Harrison, 1657.

Two-book English body ending on p. 220 at the point corresponding to the French Book II explicit. The dedication and other English preliminaries belong to this printing's reception setting. The e-rara catalogue misreads the printer's initials as F. C.; the title image shows J. C. Wellcome describes the Ekins title-page issue as apparently a reissue and explicitly corrects the older Jacques de Nuisement attribution.

<https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-5033>

<https://www.e-rara.ch/cgj/content/titleinfo/1507169>

<https://www.e-rara.ch/cgj/content/structure/1507169>

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/nw727we8>

Encoded English comparison text

Text Creation Partnership. EEBO-TCP A52581: *Sal, lumen, & spiritus mundi philosophici*. Phase 2, 2011; encoded edition of the London 1657 Harrison printing.

Diplomatic transcription from the British Library copy's EEBO image set 52617. The current XML header applies CC0 to encoded text, expressly excluding page images. Marked illegibles and foreign-language omissions require facsimile checking. Two duplicate-page markers at 100–101 do not represent missing substantive pages. It is a comparison tool, not the source wording of the new French-based translation.

<https://raw.githubusercontent.com/textcreationpartnership/A52581/master/A52581.xml>

<https://github.com/textcreationpartnership/A52581>

English manuscript transmission

Nuysement, Clovis Hestean, sieur de. *Treatises of the true salt, the philosophers secrett, and of the generall spiritt of the world*. English manuscript, England, second half of the seventeenth century. University of Pennsylvania Libraries, Ms. Codex 501.

Catalogued as an English translation from the first French edition. The three books occupy manuscript pp. 1–141; Book III begins at p. 126 with the palace analogy. The catalogue's broad date range, 1650–1699, does not establish priority over Turner. The translator is unnamed. Sampled ending images do not establish translation of the complete French sonnet suite.

<https://openn.library.upenn.edu/Data/0002/html/mscodex501.html>

https://openn.library.upenn.edu/Data/0002/mscodex501/data/mscodex501_TEL.xml

https://openn.library.upenn.edu/Data/0002/mscodex501/data/web/2506_0143_web.jpg

https://openn.library.upenn.edu/Data/0002/mscodex501/data/web/2506_0158_web.jpg

Boundary control: separate publication

Nuysement, Clovis Hestean de. *Poeme philosophic de la vérité de la phisique minérale*. Paris: Jérémie Périer and Abdias Buisard, 1620.

Separate eighty-page publication, described by Wellcome as bound with one copy of the 1621 treatise. It helps explain an errata reference and bibliographical confusion around 1620. It is distinct from the nine concluding sonnets within the selected 1621 volume and is not silently appended to the present translation.

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/b25xtx6h>

<https://www.e-rara.ch/cgj/content/titleinfo/2034455>

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Comparison sources: Ludwig Combach's Latin translation, *Tractatus de vero sale secreto philosophorum, & de universali mundi spiritu* (Kassel, 1651), Universidad Complutense de Madrid copy digitised by Google Books; Robert Turner's *Sal, Lumen, & Spiritus Mundi Philosophici* (London, 1657), including the Jung Foundation copy digitised on e-rara and EEBO-TCP A52581; and University of Pennsylvania Libraries, Ms. Codex 501, available through OPenn. The bibliography identifies the particular records and pages consulted.

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