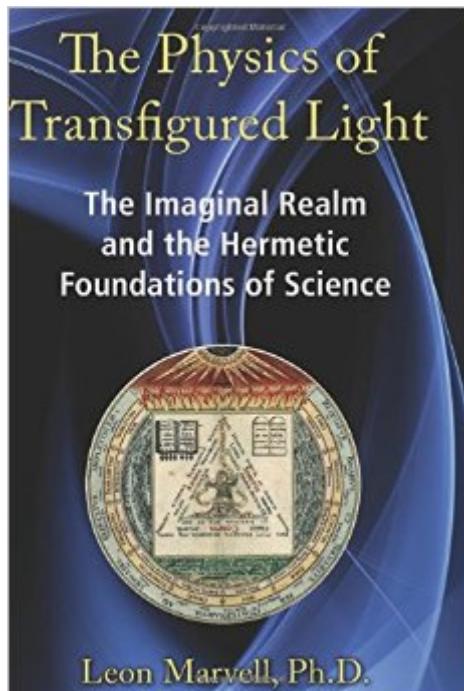


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The Physics Of Transfigured Light: The Imaginal Realm And The Hermetic Foundations Of Science



Synopsis

Reveals the Hermetic underpinnings of modern scientific theories • Offers a full reconsideration of the history of science from Newton to the present day as well as a Platonic-Hermetic perspective on modern technology • Examines Hermetic resonances among the ideas of Gurdjieff, Robert Fludd, Marsilio Ficino, and cybernetics; Einstein and the Tibetan Bardo; Neoplatonism and artificial intelligence; and Rosicrucianism and the internet • Shows how Hermetic doctrine is at the heart of what modern physics is now rediscovering: that consciousness permeates everything

Contemporary scientific disciplines such as chaos and complexity theory, artificial intelligence, and cognitive science treat themselves as new fields of inquiry, but many of these ideas can be traced back to Hermeticism, the European intellectual tradition sparked by the rediscovery of the *Corpus Hermeticum* and Platonic texts in the 15th century. Building a map of the progression of scientific thought across centuries and continents, Leon Marvell examines the ancient roots of Hermeticism, its rise during the Renaissance, and its suppression during the scientific revolution of the Enlightenment. He reveals how three main Hermetic ideas--the divine spark within each individual, the subtle body, and the *anima mundi* or world soul--have continually emerged at the cutting edge of science and philosophy throughout the ages because these ideas represent universal truths recognized by each era of human civilization. Marvell examines Hermetic resonances among the ideas of Gurdjieff, Robert Fludd, Marsilio Ficino, and cybernetic theory; Einstein and the Tibetan Bardo; and Neoplatonism and the work of AI scientist Christopher Langton. He reveals how the Rosicrucian description of the Invisible College also describes the instant availability of knowledge via the Internet, and he shows how Hermetic thought is at the heart of what modern physics is rediscovering: that consciousness permeates everything and the universe cannot be reduced to the random play of matter. Offering a full reconsideration of the history of science from Newton to the present day as well as a Platonic-Hermetic perspective on modern technology, Marvell reveals the pattern that connects the sciences, philosophy, and ancient knowledge and opens a potentially rich field of inquiry for 21st-century science.

Book Information

Hardcover: 352 pages

Publisher: Inner Traditions; 2 edition (May 7, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1620554828

ISBN-13: 978-1620554821

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.9 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars See all reviews (1 customer review)

Best Sellers Rank: #711,090 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #106 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Occult & Paranormal > Hermetism & Rosicrucianism #2110 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > New Age & Spirituality > New Thought #3637 in Books > Science & Math > History & Philosophy

Customer Reviews

Marvell's book is an examination of how Hermetic thought has influenced modern science from fractal geometry and non-linear dynamics, to cybernetics, artificial intelligence and modern physical field theory. Marvell covers a range of ideas from scholars throughout history such as Plato, Aristotle, Robert Fludd, Gottfried Leibniz and contemporary thinkers such as Gregory Bateson and Rene Thom. According to Marvell, the seeds of modern science have not fallen too far from the tree of Hermetic thought. The science of Artificial Intelligence and its dream that soon computing technology will create machines with a kind of transcendent self awareness at the supposed "singularity point," reflects the Hermetic notion that mind is deeply interconnected with the universe. The singularity is nothing more than the hope that humankind can engineer this cosmic interconnectedness through computing technology. Marvell notes that the very notion of information is nothing more than a notion of "form" or pattern - a pattern that is a "difference that makes a difference" - as he quotes from Gregory Bateson. Thom's Catastrophe Theory which describes such pattern as being represented by a geometry in a higher dimensional space describes not just describe the physical world but the world of biology and of the psyche. This physical and psychical world can be described as connected by light and by the abstract notion of the perfect circle or sphere which in hermetic thought unites the individual Mind with the Cosmic Mind. These ideas are expressed in works influenced by or congruent with Hermetic thinking such as Leibniz's Monadology, the Jewish mystical text - the Kabbalah - and even the oriental philosophy of Daoism. The universe is, in essence, one great self-reflective organism.

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