

LULLY'S THEORY
of
THE PHILOSOPHER'S FIRES

explained by:

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LULLY'S THEORY

Of our Fires without whose knowledge the Magistry is not perfected.

In this there are contrary operations, because as Fire against Nature resolves the spirit of a fixed body into the water of a cloud, and the body of a volatile spirit is thereby fixed into congealed earth; so, on the contrary, the Fire of Nature congeals the dissolved spirit of a fixed body into a glorious Earth, and resolves the fixed body of a volatile spirit not into the water of a cloud but, into the water of the Philosophers. Because that which is fixed by virtue of the Fire of Nature becomes volatile; a spiritual body into a spirit; humid into dry; heavy into light - and on the contrary fire against nature changes volatile into fixed, and fixed into volatile; body into spirit and spirit into body; humid spirit has the form of the water of the cloud and a constrictive ponderosity.

Understand by this that fire against nature is so called because it is against all natural operations, for the token which the fire of nature composes this always decomposes and destroys and carries to corruption unless the nature of fire be added.

Hence we say that such fire in the operation of Nature is not of the virtue and operation of our magistry, but that fire only which is purely natural.

There are Four Fires.

1. Natural which is in our Ardent water perfectly rectified.
2. Unnatural, as the heat of a dung-hill, a vintage, etc.
3. Elemental, which is common fire.
4. Against Nature, a heat corroding all things, as aqua fortis, which is drawn, from vitriol salt petre, etc. & sal armoniac and other mineral things.

And you must know that the heat of the Elemental fire can never draw sulphur of nature from the veins of a body, which nevertheless the Fire of Nature by its own attractive virtue easily does.

RIPLEY'S EXPLICATION.
of the aforesaid Theory of Raymond Lully.

"Fire against Natures" namely corrosive Aqua fortis dissolves the SPIRIT OF A FIXED BODY, such as Sol or Luna "INTO THE WATER OF A CLOUD" penetrating its parts by the power of its igneity and joining itself in the ratio of its humid substance.

"And the body of a volatile spirit" namely Mercury vulgar "is fixed into congealed earth" by sublimation of it from vitriol in which it is projected. That FIRE AGAINST NATURE which ascends in the belly of quicksilver, when separated is called our invisible sulphur. But "THE FIRE OF NATURE" that is the heat of Ardent water as aforesaid "CONGEALS THE DISSOLVED SPIRIT OF A FIXED BODY" (that is the subtle and spiritual made earth of the body of Gold & Silvers first separated from corrosive water and calcined for 8 days, or until it increases and is augmented like a sponge) and draws it upward by its own attractive virtue into the Sol, or Gold of Nature, which, appears resplendent and crystalline like the eyes of fishes - into a glorious earth which is done in a cold place.

Hence he says "IT CONGEALS" & not that it coagulates because coagulation takes place in heat but congealation in cold; and therefore it follows that "THE BODY OF A VOLATILE SPIRIT IS FIXED BY FIRE AGAINST NATURE", by whose virtue the aforesaid quicksilver is drawn back into the form of a congealed earth and becomes fitter for fixation under the Elemental Fire, until it shall be unwilling to smoke, but shall become an earth, giving no fusion, because it receives fusion from the oil of the Stone. "IT IS RESOLVED" etc., namely by the attractive virtue of the said Ardent water "NOT INTO THE WATER OF A CLOUD, BUT INTO THE WATER OF PHILOSOPHERS" which is a dry water; because the dissolution of the one is the congealation of the other, in which congealation the said spiritual body becomes foliated earth, which is called sulphur of Nature, and thus, by virtue of the attractive water, volatile; namely that which by virtue of the fire against Nature inherent in itself had been made fixed by elemental fire, as was said before.

And for this reason he says "BECAUSE THAT WHICH IS FIXED BY VIRTUE OF THE FIRE OF NATURE BECOMES VOLATILE, AND A SPIRITUAL BODY," that is Mercury fixed, "IN A SPIRITUAL NATURE" and volatile from fire; in which matter there are two bodies, flying silver and spiritual gold, that is the white and cloudy tincture of the mineral Stone; which although at that time it has not the redness in (F?)ACT, nevertheless, as will afterwards appear in practice, it has the power of making red. And "HUMID INTO DRY," namely because ardent water is dessicated and congealed by the dissolution of the secreted gold in its belly, which also makes the stone volatile and at the same time fixed according to the will of the operator.

And "PONDEROUS, LIGHT," that is the body of quicksilver, which in its crude and unfixed nature is heavy, becomes light, because it is elevated after the digestion of its crudity into crystalline earth, which has not its pristine ponderosity.

"AND ON THE CONTRARY, FIRE AGAINST NATURE, (that is the aforesaid great corrosive, which is called the acute water of Philosophers, or the spirit of vitriol itself elevated by mercury from its veins) CHANGES VOLATILE," that is quicksilver sublimed "INTO FIXED" "AND THE FIXED" namely the body of gold and silver "INTO VOLATILE" by dissolution and separation of its parts mutually.

And the "BODY" namely of a fixed metal "INTO SPIRIT."

"AND SPIRIT" namely of quicksilver "INTO BODY".

"THE HUMID SPIRIT HAS THE FORM OF THE WATER OF THE CLOUD - AND A CONSTRICTIVE PONDEROSITY" because it is our unctuous humid which is the nearest matter of our philosophical mercury, which is our menstruum and our linary perfectly rectified upon its own proper earth.

And it is fire against Nature which enters our minor Alchemical works, but not our greater physical work or natural work, and, therefore in the end he says "SUCH FIRE" namely against Nature "IN OUR OPERATION IS NOT OF THE VIRTUE

AND OPERATION OF OUR MAGISTRY," but that which is of its virtue and operation "IS FIRE WHICH IS PURELY NATURAL" namely the fire of our ARDENT OILY WATER which is purely natural, and therefore to human bodies is a chief medicine. And therefore Geber (?) the philosopher says of it "THE WHOLE BENEFIT OF OUR STONE IS MADE BY VIRTUE OF THE FIRE OF NATURE." But of fire against nature says Lully "ALL ALCHEMIC GOLD MADE FROM CORROSIVES CORRODES AND DESTROYS NATURE, WHEREFORE IT ENTERS NOT HUMAN MEDICINES."

And observe in what manner it is understood by what is said above, as it is said "AZOC AND FIRE WOULD SUFFICE THEE IF THOU KNOWEST THE MANNER OF THE FIRE" Azoc is mercury & Fire is that menstrual heat; both which would suffice if thou knowest the manner of the fire, that is with what fire thou shouldest complete the Magistry, which without the attractive virtue of the fire of nature that is in the menstruum never will be done.

Agreeably to this the Philosophers say "TAKE FIRE AND PUT FIRE IN FIRE UNTIL FIRE MELTS IN FIRE." That is take mercury sublimate, which is fire against Nature, and having put it first to be fixed by Elemental Fire, when fixed put it into the fire of Nature, that is in our water, until fire in fire liquifies: that is until that fire against Nature liquifies in the menstrual fire of Nature - that is be resolved into the substance of a soul (anima) that is of water; which after its fixation, by virtue of an oiliness acquired from the menstruum will have a liquifying virtue; which before, on account of its siccity, it had not. For after its first fixation it was a calxy earth and being deprived of its extraneous humidity, by the virtue of desiccation and fixation in Elemental fire, in so much that for siccity it be melted. because, as the Philosophers say, spirits are not fixed until they become earth and hence they give no fusion.

Wherefore it behoves that for its lost radical humidity, it should regain a new humidity, much better, because not aquaeous, such as that was, but oliagenous that it might be melted; since the ingressive and penetrative virtue of the Elixir is chiefly made by virtue of the oil not burning, which is to be acquired partly from our menstruum, partly from the ferment, which is gold or silver.

Thus it is clear that the fire of Nature clothing itself with its own vegetative power revivifies every dead body, and resuscitates into a crystalline matter, which is called the SALT of Nature, and our Philosophical quicksilver sublimated; and that it matters not out of what earth that be elevated as long as it is that earth fixed, that white and subtile earth exempt from all humidity; because mercury implanted in such a earth, namely our oily mercury, makes it fusible and apt to receive any form whatsoever.

And therefore the Philosopher GUIDO said of the earth "IT NEED NOT BE MINDED OF WHAT UNCLEAN SUBSTANCE IT BE, PROVIDED IT BE FIXED." And MARIA the Prophetess says "THE BODY, WHICH IS TAKEN OUT OF THE LITTLE HILLS, IS A WHITE CLEAR BODY, SUFFERING NEITHER PUTRIFACTION NOR MOTION."

Such an earth in its calcination requires a great igneity in itself, and mercury has the power of tinging it and of rendering it fusible, whence GUIDO says "EARTH AND FIRE DESICCATE WATER AND AIR." They drink them up and fix them because every metal consists only of two namely of sulphur for the earthy part and mercury for the watery part; and the ancient Philosophers, inventors of this science endeavoured to do upon the earth, namely of metals in a few days, what Nature scarcely effects in the earth in a thousand years.

We are not to mind of what earth, of what substance it be, if however it be fixed, subtile and igneous, that it may be in the place of sulphur for the earthy part, if mercury be well combined with it, namely our mercury which is humid and unctuous, until it be perfected into a matter fit to be reduced, by addition of the ferment, to the nature of a metal, that in all things we may seem to be the least repugnant to the intention of the Philosophers. For what is Gold and Silver but red earth and white earth, oilified as well from mercury pure and unctuous that they may be melted; from which mercury earth is tinged, and perfected by congealation into white and cloudy.

Hence Avicena says of gold and silver "TAKE AWAY FROM THEM QUALITY AND THERE WILL NOT BE CONTENTION." But in this Art is weaker than Nature, because without the ferment the Stone is not reduced to the nature of metal, whereas Nature acts contrarily in its operation creating from sulphur and quicksilver, within the earth, in a long time, without requiring a ferment, most perfect gold and silver.

If from mercury alone thou canst draw out this medicine thou wilt be the investigator of a most precious work, which is done by the separation of humid from dry and by the iterated composition of the same parts one to another, until they become fit and disagree not.

Finis.