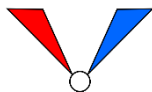


1069 H

bncdoc.id	H82
bncdoc.author	Clarke, Lindsay
bncdoc.year	1989
bncdoc.title	The chymical wedding.
bncdoc.info	The chymical wedding. Sample containing about 46693 words from a book (domain: imaginative)
Text availability	Worldwide rights cleared
Publication date	1985-1993
Text type	Written books and periodicals
David Lee's classification	W_fict_prose

<p><1069/c></p>  <p>Key:</p> <p><u>Footprint</u></p> <p><u>ConEn1</u></p> <p><u>Footprint</u></p> <p><u>ConEn2</u></p> <p><u>Footprint</u></p> <p><u>ConEn3</u></p>	<p>to pass through what a shrewd American has named the 'moronic inferno' into what I call 'the oxyinoronic paradiso', then responses from a deeper level are required. That's what these texts demand.' 'You do n't think it's more likely to put people off altogether?' 'That too is the point. The one-sided man who clings to rationality will dismiss it all as gibberish - a word, incidentally, derived from Jabir, one of the greatest of Arab adepts. If he goes hunting through the texts for a quick recipe for gold or earthly power he'll soon get lost, give up. But the man who desires to know himself more completely - however strange and confusing his discoveries may be - he is drawn further within until he finds in the texts a mirror of his own complexity. And - if he is lucky - of the simple secret at its heart.' 'So the language acts as a kind of filter?' 'On one level, yes. But as a poet you will appreciate that some experiences are communicable only through symbols - symbols which lose all virtue in any attempt at paraphrase or analysis. Symbols are the deep grammar of experience, and the alchemist inhabits a symbolic universe. He means precisely what he says -; but one must enter the language on its own terms or the meaning vanishes. However, without access to the transforming experience from which those symbols spring they remain impenetrable.' 'Like much of your own verse?' I hazarded. Caught on the hop, Edward frowned. For a moment I expected a knuckle-rapping response, but after a brief hesitation, he said, 'My verse was obscure because I was obscure to myself. I was a young man then ... a young fool. I heard the music but I had no inkling how serious these matters were. Or how dangerous.' He returned from a pained abstraction, and smiled at me a little ruefully. 'I was much like you - infatuated with my own talent, worshipping only my own intellect ... A crime for which, as Ficino points out, a capital punishment is appointed. And in the symbolic domain the punishment is entirely appropriate - dismemberment, beheading.' His thoughts shifted quickly away. 'Ficino. The Asclepian Dialogue of Hermes ... Now there's a text that speaks plainly enough.' He wandered to the shelves and came back thumbing through an old volume. 'Listen to this: No one shall look up to Heaven. <u>The religious man</u> shall be counted insane; <u>the irreligious</u> shall be thought wise; <u>the furious</u>, brave; and <u>the worst of men</u></p> <p>shall be considered good. for the soul, and all things about it, shall not only be the subjects of laughter, but shall be considered as vanity. Every divine voice shall, by a necessary silence, be dumb; the fruits of the earth shall be corrupted; and the air itself shall languish with a sorrowful stupor. The language may sound archaic,' he commented, 'but he got his facts right. Henry Agnew saw that time coming. Look here.' He showed me the page of the book - the passage had been furiously scored with a pen nib. 'Well, it's here now - and it's time that silence was broken.' Edward looked up again and stared into my frown. 'Stay with it. Eventually things will come clearer. Or better still - ignore the words for the moment. Concentrate on the pictures. I think you'll find they speak the language of your dreams.' From the densely stacked bookcases he took down some lavishly illustrated volumes and left</p>
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	<p>me alone to wonder at them. Those illustrations were like admission to someone else's dreams - at times glowing with visionary fire, at others the pitchblende hallucinations of a tormented mind. Set in rich Venetian palaces or wild surrealist landscapes, they might depict the slow death of a bearded king, or miners at work beneath an enchanted hill. There were chariots driven by demons, pulled by strange winged beasts. Sun-kings and Moon-queens stood in stately adoration of each other or, in other guises, warred. Childish lovers sported in a glass retort. A black three-headed hell-hound rent and devoured the pathetic human figures in its power. I was an innocent let loose in an exotic, heraldic kingdom of mythical beasts and grotesque hermaphroditic figures that rose from the copulations of the kings and their sister-queens. Yet in that fantastic cavalcade of monsters, freaks and angels, there were two moments in which I recognized something of myself. The first was when I came across a picture of a heavily armoured man jousting with a naked woman, like knights at a tournament. He had the sun for his head, she the moon. He was riding a lion, she side-saddle on a black gryphon, and they were fighting. But they both had shields against which the lances struck, and the beauty of it was that on her shield was the insignia of the sun, on his that of the moon; so they were each protected by the principle they opposed. The background against which they fought was arid red desert; they might have been fighting to make it green again; yet</p>
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