

The background of the book cover is a surreal illustration. It depicts a woman from behind, with long, straight blonde hair, wearing a dark, form-fitting, long-sleeved top and a skirt with a green and yellow pattern. She stands with her hands on her hips, looking out over a landscape of white, rocky or icy terrain. In the distance, a large, green, scaly snake is coiled on the ground. A faint rainbow arches across the dark, overcast sky.

**Charles F. Thompson**

# **The Forbidden Book of Knowledge**

Introduction and editing  
**Günther Gold (ed.)**



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of Knowledge**

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**First Edition – 2021**

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The Black Hole – The Snake and the Golden Mermaid

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*This book is of an advanced nature, and it is recommended that one has knowledge in the subjects of Alchemy, Tarot, I Ching and Tantra before attempting to understand the contents.*

*The Forbidden Book of Knowledge is the integration of the ancient East and West Indian knowledge presented in a modern form. For the translation of the ancient Indian knowledge into English, Alchemy has been selected to represent the west, and Tantra has been selected to represent the east. The Tarot has been selected as the oracle of the west, and the I Ching is the oracle of the east. One will find very little resemblance of the material in this book to the actual Tarot or I Ching. The Tarot and I Ching are used for just basic structure and familiarity as subjects that have been well documented and expounded upon. Other than the basic structure one will find the material in this book quite original.*

Charles F. Thompson 1981;  
in the limited first edition of five hundred numbered copies.

**My special thanks to Sanda Thompson  
for her wholehearted support with this book project.**

Günther Gold

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## Introduction

Charles Thompson describes our human existence and the possibilities to experience ourselves in this life as seven levels of experience, as seven different arenas of being. First of all, he distinguishes physical, emotional and mental possibilities of experience, a reference to our everyday life; furthermore, there is a level of transition, a passage, a “mirroring” into and out of “higher” transpersonal levels of consciousness, which he calls magnetic. Next comes the dream level and then a sphere of imagination, which he calls inner vision. Finally, there is integration, a holistic, integrated experience of all levels.

He also calls these levels of consciousness *the levels of self-stimulation*. In this context we are more likely familiar with the term “self-development” and by this we usually mean to develop our personality with all its gifts, capabilities and potentials, up to and towards our highest possibility within this lifetime.

However, by *self-stimulation*, Thompson does not mean that we should develop something like a “personality” with a body, feelings and thoughts; instead, he speaks of a stimulation of the respective individual aspects and he totally denies the existence of a “person.” He challenges us to develop our “transpersonal being.” After recognizing our self as the Self of the Everything, and after this *sexual* (as he calls it) merging with the Everything on each of these various levels, we are to enact this “stimulated” self, with its enriched energy and heightened awareness into the seven different levels of experience within our lives. The stimulation of the self takes place within and through this circuitry. This means, from the descent into the physical through the birthing process, through the ascension beyond the physical, emotional, and mental, into the transpersonal spheres of the

dream, the imagination and the integration into the holistic Self – and all the way back again through these levels as a holistically integrated being.

As shown in the overview on page 19, the dragon/snake that is biting its tail, the “Ouroboros,” moves up and down through the levels of self-stimulation, through the seven arenas of human self-experience – the physical, the emotional, the mental, the magnetic, the dream, the inner vision (imagination) and the integration.

With his work Thompson takes us along on this journey, and he does this in his archaic, archetypal, mysterious, magical, metaphorical language much in the tradition of Aleister Crowley and his contemporaries, only – in my opinion – substantially more spiritual, visionary and inspirational.

Probably also inspired by Crowley, there is a set of cards that belongs to Thompsons *Forbidden Book of Knowledge* corresponding to the 22 chapters of the book (just like the 22 tarot-cards of the Great Arcana). These cards are pictorial collages, which were created by Sanda Thompson, his wife and partner. They each show a landscape or an element, a gateway into and out of a temple-like building, an animal and a female figure. I have included these image-collages in the book as prints, not as removable cards.

The reason why Thompson used explicitly female forms, names and symbols in his breakdown and explanation of human realms of being and potential possibilities (e.g., *the Woman of Approaching*, *the Woman in Green*, and so on) becomes clear right at the beginning of the first chapter. It is explained even more distinctly in the first two paragraphs of chapter 4, *The Woman of the Paradox*.

It is also understood in the findings of many wisdom-schools and traditions, that everything with potential for existence within spirit is considered male/masculine (e.g., *Shiva*) and when actually manifested as energy or mater, is considered female/feminine (e.g., *Shakti*).

It follows, that everything that explicitly exists appears in female manifestations (in energetic or material form). In nagual shamanism for

example the first “sacred law” states that *Everything is born of woman – Everything is born of feminine energy*.

The only continuous “male figure” in Thompson’s work is the *sorcerer*, who stands symbolically for the Self that has gone through and has integrated the whole way of becoming and being, all the states of immanence and transcendence. Therefore, the sorcerer is not to be understood as an external being, but rather as one’s own (androgynous) highest possibility and potential. However, not only the sorcerer, but all occurring female or animal forms are parts of our own multi-dimensional being.

The stories presented are therefore stories of development and analyses of the involution and the evolution, the unfolding and the enfolding of “All-encompassing-Consciousness.” All the expressions of consciousness that are accessible to us human beings and that constitute us as human beings are described as emanations of light and colors; (*the Woman in Orange, ... in Green, ... in Blue, ... in Violet*, etc.) and as attributes, qualities and possibilities of experiencing life as energy- and matter-bound, physical, emotional and mental beings; (*the Woman of Touching, ... of Knowledge, ... of Feeling, ... of Exploring*, etc.).

The author makes use of several different symbolisms that seem appropriate to him. For instance, he relates to the purifying and transformative processes of alchemy, the knowledge potentials of the Chinese I Ching, the expertise in the field of the subtle multidimensional layers of consciousness from Tibetan, Vedic and Tantric sources, as well as the levels and potentials of human consciousness as described by nagual shamanism (cf., Günther Gold; *Dimensions of Reality*, parts 1, 2 and 3).

Due to these – to some extent very individually interpreted – overlappings, some of the material cannot be perfectly assigned to already known and familiar “traditional” knowledge, and this results in some divergences and reinterpretations. Still, or actually exactly because of that,

the entire work ends up being a highly interesting, unique and coherent body of knowledge.

Probably the most important unique characteristic of Thompson's conception of the human being is that there is no such thing as an individualized person with its body, its thoughts, its feelings, its dreams and its visions. For him each of these individual aspects is by itself connected to the collective consciousness soul field of these respective aspects and furthermore, interactively connected to the Everything, to the all-encompassing spirit, which he calls *integrated universal subconscious mind*. All this results in a truly "shamanic" image of a collective, actually universal, interconnectedness that does not consist of "individual selves," with their bodies, feelings, thoughts, dreams and visions, but of bodies, feelings, thoughts, dreams and visions that are respectively interconnected.

Thompson:

*... The Woman in White must now face the truth. Who is she? Is she the little girl who was born that possesses a body that weighs so many pounds and a mind and emotions that feel sensitivity? She says to herself that Everything is Everything, yet as a person she has no control over anything. Everything moves the body, determines the depth of emotions, and stimulates the mind. The body exists as an independent free being that is influenced by Everything, just as the emotions, the mind and all seven bodies exist independent of each other and are brought together to experience growth. The truth is that there is no such thing as a person. Bodies learn from bodies, emotions learn from emotions, and minds learn from minds. The concept of a person comes from an undeveloped mind that tries to possess everything. Undeveloped minds have not yet accepted that they are just a mind, not the body, and not the emotions.*

*The mind creates the illusion of a person, so that it can think it's in control of the other levels. ... (The Woman in White, p. 46 - 47).*

With this, Thompson introduces a very interesting, unique concept of being. Bodies are born of bodies, interact with and learn from bodies and

return to a (greater) body. The same applies to the emotions and the mental. In addition to this, there exists a “magnetically” operating mirroring phenomenon through which influence can be applied on our development out of higher-dimensional dream- and imagination-spheres – and through this mirroring effect, we can accomplish our “personal contribution” to the evolution of consciousness, of spirit, of the Everything.

Thus, according to Thompson, we emerge out of some kind of primordial source – he calls it *universal subconscious mind*, and ultimately merge back into it again. Of course, we could call this “subconscious mind” also “super-conscious mind.” Because truth is, all these different forms of expression (the physical, the emotional, the mental, the magnetic, the dream, the inner vision and the integration) are merely an entire spectrum of different manifestations of the one absolute, non-dual, all-encompassing consciousness, in other words, spirit. During our “earthly” phase of life we can experience these manifestations of spirit and become consciously aware of being part of them – and before and after we are again part of this “subconscious,” or, as we could call it, the “super-conscious” soul-field, an all-encompassing consciousness.

**In chapters 1 to 5** the author describes the creation of Everything, a universe, the human-being as death and birthing out of and into a Black Hole. He relates the emergence of something out of nothing, of One out of Everything, the emergence of opposites and the beginning of the splitting up of the emanations of light- and consciousness into consciousness, energy and matter with the descent into “lower“ dimensions. In this description, he employs the symbolism of alchemy and leads us through its four main stages: *nigredo*, *albedo*, *citrinitas* and *rubedo*.

For Thompson, it is worthy of noting, the intended result of all alchemistic transformation processes – the *rubedo*, the philosopher’s stone, the immortal diamond body, the metamorphosis of the *materia prima* into gold – is equated with the emergence of the physical existence and corporeality. Therein one can recognize the high value he places on the

significance of our physical existence. More commonly, the alchemistic change procedure is understood as a purification of the physical, the immanent and the freeing of the spiritual, the transcendent. In the early chapters, Thompson describes this freeing and purifying as transformational processes in both directions, the birthing- as well as the dying-process of the physical, the first level of the “self-stimulation.”

Thus, these birth and death processes into and out of the physical can at the same time and in parallel also be understood in the usual sense of alchemical transformation. As the death of the Ego in the *nigredo*, as the seeing through the illusion of the Person and the experiencing of the higher Self and the splitting of the white light of the *albedo* into the appearance of the peacock’s tail, the rainbow of the components of our multidimensional being. This is followed by *citrinitas*, the union of the masculine and the feminine, sexual magic and the chymical marriage of spirit and matter – and finally the initiation into a multidimensional being and into the recognition and above all the experience of being one with the Everything in *rubedo*.

These first chapters can therefore also be read and understood as the last chapters – in the sense of the above-mentioned Ouroboros, according to the involution and the evolution. This understanding of “both directions” recurs continuously through all chapters, so they are consequently referred to as *doors*, *bridges* and possible *turning points*.

**With the chapters 5 to 11** the author describes the different dimensional components of consciousness, energy and matter of the human being that emerge through the splitting up of the all-encompassing consciousness. By that he uses the symbolism of the colors of the rainbow. He describes them in the – in this case rather unusual – sequence of the evolution, beginning with the physical (red) up to the imagination (indigo) and the integration (violet).

The rainbow of the emanations of light and consciousness – the “rainbow bridge” – stretches here according to the energetic in- and outgoing stations known as *chakras* in many traditions, from the physical



up to the higher dimensional, transpersonal components of consciousness of the Self, called *the dancers* in nagual shamanism, and *the koshas of atman* in the Vedic and Tibetan tradition.

**With the chapters 12 to 18** the higher-dimensional parts of consciousness mirror “back down” into our day-to-day dimensional reality. From the nagual into the tonal (shamanism) – from the implicit into the explicit realm (David Bohm) – out of the potential into realization – from the enriched, “stimulated” arenas of experience of the Self into the possibilities of the incarnated self, and the consensus-reality and hopefully beyond.

**With the chapters 19 to 22** Thompson describes the element-spirits as building blocks for any all realizations in any physical worlds and dimensions. He sees them as aggregation states of the elements, as states of matter.

Taking a closer look, one can discern the consciousness-energetic of the original creation, also known as “electro-magnetic” and “psycho-kinetic” energies, something that is called *element-dancers* in nagual shamanism.

Electric energy	Spirit of fire
Magnetic energy	Spirit of earth
Psychic energy	Spirit of water
Kinetic energy	Spirit of air/wind

It is through these Elemental Dancers or Thompson's Elemental Spirits that new intendings from the imagination level are accepted by physical matter and can come to fruition; in other words, – "sorcery" is made possible.

...

Particularly noticeable in Thompson's involution- and evolution-story is its complex interweaving. Not only does it outline the possibility of evolving into a mature and consciously aware individual that can incorporate its achieved "enlightenment" into the collective evolutionary field of advancement, into the soul of humans or even the world soul, – but this incorporation occurs in every single aspects of being – in all physical, emotional, mental, magnetic, dream, and inner-vision experiences – and it does so directly with every step of development in every single aspect and in every moment of life. So every level, every chapter can be read as evolving out of as well as merging into the previous or the next one.

And because of this, Thompson's work can be read in at least three different ways.

1. In the sequence that the author himself has chosen in his first edition, – i.e., the way it is consecutively numbered from 1 to 22 in the table of contents.
2. In a reversed sequence from 22 to 1.
3. The chapters can also be read "in parallel" according to the "levels of self-stimulation."

Furthermore, every single chapter is to be understood as a *door*, *bridge* or *turning point* in both directions and is also referred to as such by Thompson.

...

**In the appendix** there are a few footnotes and supplementary details that I found helpful for the understanding.

...

Each chapter begins with an illustration, all created by Sanda Thompson. Unfortunately, in the English version of this edition these illustrations are probably printed in black and white only.

However, in the translated German edition, these illustrations should be printed in full color. The German edition can be ordered under the title:

**Das Verbotene Buch des Wissens**

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The Everything has given us this particular Life – and the playground of life is made up of the “as above” and the “so below” – which offers us the

opportunity to live and create our lives in a holistic and integral way. And since always it is understood in **alchemy, shamanism, esoteric, mysticism** and **magic** that:

*as above – so below* and *as below – so above*.

If one develops ones life accordingly, it will be a circular flow, respectively a spiral. Out of the Everything we are born into the “below” and upon adequate development we are able to access the “above” again in order to fulfill the true human potential of both, the above and the below, and thereby possibly enrich both.

With his work, **Charles Fairfax Thompson** gives us a roadmap to do exactly this. Fascinating and very special in his approach, is that he does not content himself with describing “the way up,” but that he depicts the potentials and possibilities of an integrated life after “the jump off the edge.” It is all about the perspectives of an enlightened existence, of a “stimulated Self,” about life as a human being, who has integrated the immanent as well as the transcendent. And who, from this mature point of view sets out to imagine and create new realities for self and others.

The next page shows the underlying structure to Thompson’s work.

## **Overview of the underlying structure**



- 
- |                                |                  |                                |
|--------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 The <b>BLACK HOLE</b>        | electric         | <b>FIRE</b> - Spirit 22        |
| 2 Woman in <b>BLACK</b>        | magnetic         | <b>EARTH</b> - Spirit 21       |
| 3 Woman in <b>WHITE</b>        | psychic          | <b>WATER</b> - Spirit 20       |
| 4 Woman of the <b>PARADOX</b>  | kinetic          | <b>WIND</b> - Spirit 19        |
| <hr/>                          |                  |                                |
| 5 Woman of the <b>Red Mist</b> | the physical     | Woman of <b>Touching</b> 18    |
| 6 Woman in <b>Orange</b>       | the emotional    | Woman of <b>Feeling</b> 17     |
| 7 Woman in <b>Yellow</b>       | the mental       | Woman of <b>Knowledge</b> 16   |
| 8 Woman in <b>Green</b>        | the magnetic     | Woman of <b>Approaching</b> 15 |
| 9 Woman in <b>Blue</b>         | the dream        | Woman of <b>Exploring</b> 14   |
| 10 Woman in <b>Indigo</b>      | the inner vision | Woman of <b>Seeing</b> 13      |
| 11 Woman in <b>Violet</b>      | the integration  | Woman of <b>Obtaining</b> 12   |

# Content summary

## **1. The Black Hole** – *The Snake and The Golden Mermaid*

*The Creative (1) and The Receptive (2)*

The beginning of “The Great Work” in Alchemy

The ONE, the NOTHING, the EVERYTHING

## **2. The Woman in Black** – *The Black Panther*

*Difficulty at the Beginning (3)*

The 1<sup>st</sup> Phase of Alchemy – NIGREDO – the blackness

The Black Light

## **3. The Woman in White** – *The White Owl*

*Youthful Folly (4)*

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase of Alchemy – ALBEDO – the whiteness

and the Peacock’s Tail – the Rainbow-Bridge

The White Light – and – The 7 Doors of the Great Crystal

## **4. The Woman of the Paradox** – *The Elephant*

Waiting (5), the described lines – *Peace (11)*

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Phase of Alchemy – CITRINITAS – the yellowing

The Alchemical Marriage

## **5. The Woman of the Red Mist** – *The Salamander*

*Conflict (6) and Return (24)*

Integrated by Thompson into *Coming to meet (44)*

The 4<sup>th</sup> Phase of Alchemy – RUBEDO – the redness

First and last of the 7 Rainbow-Bridges

**6. The Woman in Orange** – *The Phoenix Bird*

*The Army (7)*

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Turning point of the Rainbow-Bridge

**7. The Woman in Yellow** – *The Cougar*

*Holding Together (8)*

3<sup>rd</sup> Turning point of the Rainbow-Bridge

**8. The Woman in Green** – *The Ruby Throat Hummingbird*

*The Taming Power of the Small (9)*

4<sup>th</sup> Turning point of the Rainbow-Bridge

**9. The Woman in Blue** – *The Siamese Cat*

*Conduct (Treading) (10) and Innocence (25)*

5<sup>th</sup> Turning point of the Rainbow-Bridge

**10. The Woman in Indigo** – *The Wild Duck*

*Peace (11)*

6<sup>th</sup> Turning point of the Rainbow-Bridge

**11. The Woman in Violet** – *The Crocodile*

*Standstill (12) and The Taming Power of the Great (26)*

7<sup>th</sup> Turning point of the Rainbow-Bridge – “The edge”

**12. The Woman of Obtaining** – *The Catfish*

*The Period of the Woman (Fellowship with men) (13)*

8<sup>th</sup> Turning point on the 7<sup>th</sup> Level of Self-Stimulation

**13. The Woman of Seeing** – *The Blue Bird*

*Possession in Great Measure (14)*

9<sup>th</sup> Turning point on the 6<sup>th</sup> Level of Self-Stimulation

**14. The Woman of Exploring** – *The Deer*

*Modesty (15)*

10<sup>th</sup> Turning point on the 5<sup>th</sup> Level of Self-Stimulation

**15. The Woman of Approaching** – *The Beaver*

*Enthusiasm (16)*

11<sup>th</sup> Turning point on the 4<sup>th</sup> Level of Self-Stimulation

**16. The Woman of Knowledge** – *The German Shepherd Dog*

*Following (17) and Nourishment (27)*

12<sup>th</sup> Turning point on the 3<sup>th</sup> Level of Self-Stimulation

**17. The Woman of Feeling** – *The Pharaoh Hound Dog*

*Work on what has been spoiled (18) and Preponderance of the Great(28) - the described lines - Pushing Upward (46)*

13<sup>th</sup> Turning point on the 2<sup>th</sup> Level of Self-Stimulation

**18. The Woman of Touching** – *The Pit Bull Dog*

*The Way (Approach) (19) and Peace (11)*

14<sup>th</sup> Turning point on the 1<sup>th</sup> Level of Self-Stimulation

**19. The Woman of the Wind Spirits** – *Doberman-Pinscher-Dog*

**20. The Woman of the Water Spirits** – *The Airedale-Dog*

**21. The Woman of the Earth Spirits** – *The Great Dane Dog*

**22. The Woman of the Fire Spirits** – *The Dalmatian Dog*