as a particular property or substance, such as the Philosopher's Stone, could have many symbolic representations, so likewise, each symbol could possess several references. There existed, however, general definitions of individual symbols that were repeatedly used. It is these common interpretations of alchemical images that the author provides, and in so doing he offers his readers a point of departure for their own research.

The author provides good definitions of each alchemical image, always explaining both its literal and its emblematic value. Conversely, he explains a material like antimony by its chemical makeup and its metaphorical associations. Additionally, nearly every entry is accompanied by a literary example of a symbol’s use. As mentioned above, the author focuses on English texts and translations, in particular of the seventeenth century. But he points out that many of his English sources were publications and translations of earlier manuscripts which therefore also draw on non-English resources. In fact, he also includes a substantial amount of information from non-English alchemists and scholars of alchemy.

This dictionary is an excellent and representative collection of major alchemical images and themes and will be a valuable addition to any collection of hermetic and alchemical texts.

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Generally speaking this new biography of Thomas Hobbes provides a full, accurate and useful introduction to Hobbes’s life and thought. Those seeking a quick means of locating Hobbes and his work in the intellectual milieu of seventeenth-century Europe could hardly find a better starting point. For one thing, it is enviably well-written in prose that is always crisp and clear. Unlike Stephen Gaukroger’s recent biography of Descartes (Descartes: An Intellectual Biography, Oxford, 1995), however, it is not a book for the specialist. As the author admits it lacks full scholarly apparatus, and the Bibliographical Essay is brief and sparse. Furthermore, excellent though it is in many respects, Martinich’s book is all too obviously written by a philosopher, rather than by a historian. The (inevitable?) result of this is that the historical contextualization is often superficial and unsatisfactory.

In some cases this is because Martinich is content to rest his historical conclusion on a philosophical argument. When pointing to Hobbes’s different attitude to religious authorities as expressed in De Cive and in Leviathan, for example, Martinich briefly mentions the poor state of the Anglican Church in 1651 and the fact that Hobbes had by that time been “abused by some of the clergies closest to Charles II”. Having drawn attention to these aspects of the historical context, however, he effectively dismisses them: “I do not want to say that Hobbes’s ill treatment by the clergies or the vegetative state of the Church of England caused Hobbes to change his mind—to do so could be an instance of post hoc, ergo propter hoc...” (p. 117). Certainly, it could be a case of fallacious reasoning, but it could
also be correct. The way to decide, or to come closer to being able to make an
informed decision, is to look more closely at the historical details. Martinich
seems to be invoking this fallacy here as a philosophical escape clause.

The lack of contextualization is particularly acute whenever Martinich dis-
cusses Hobbes's natural philosophy. Although Martinich provides the innocent
reader with useful simplified accounts of the background to Hobbes's political
and religious theorizing, there is very little on contemporary developments in
natural philosophy. Martinich's approach is particularly disappointing when deal-
ing with one of the current big debates in Hobbes scholarship, namely, the
authorship of the “Short Tract on First Principles” or, as it is often known, the
“Little Treatise”. Richard Tuck's recent controversial denial that Hobbes wrote
this treatise has received great incidental support from the fact that his view is
endorsed by Noel Malcolm in his edition of Hobbes's Correspondence (Oxford,
1994). The attempts of scholars like Perez Zagorin and Karl Schuhmann to rein-
state this work in the Hobbesian canon by means of philosophical and linguistic
analyses seem to this reader to need only a detailed investigation of the back-
ground to its writing within the Newcastle circle to clinch Hobbes’s authorship
once and for all. Martinich is simply content, however, to sit on the fence:
“Whether 'The Short Tract' is by Hobbes or Payne [the author according to Tuck
and Malcolm]”, he writes, “it nonetheless gives a good idea of the kind of think-
ing characteristic of the Newcastle circle” (p. 102). When Martinich subsequently
comes to discuss alternative views of Hobbes’s “scientific development”, the “stan-
dard view” and Tuck's, he tacitly adopts Tuck's view (at least for Hobbes’s early
development) by completely omitting the “Little Treatise” from his consideration
(p. 173-4).

I had the uneasy feeling as I read the book that Martinich's overly philosophi-
cal approach may also have detracted from the force of his important assessment
of Hobbes's religious position. Following on from his previous book, The Two
Gods of Leviathan: Thomas Hobbes on Religion and Politics (Cambridge, 1992),
Martinich vigorously and persuasively defends the line that Hobbes, far from
being an unbeliever, was a radically unorthodox Calvinist. I have to say that I am
totally sympathetic with this view of Hobbes, which seems to me to be com-
pletely consistent with all that Hobbes wrote. There is no denying, however, that
Hobbes was regarded by most of his English contemporaries as an atheist. These
conflicting views of Hobbes require careful reconciliation. Martinich is nearly
always content to show how the letter of what Hobbes wrote can be interpreted
Calvinistically, or to point to the way in which a contemporary critic can be shown
to have clearly misinterpreted what Hobbes actually wrote. There is, however, no
responding comparison of Hobbes’s views with contemporary atheist litera-
ture, and no consideration of the claims made by David Wooton and others about
the literary and rhetorical techniques used by early modern atheists, to say one
thing and mean another, which were supposedly well developed by Hobbes’s day.
Perhaps Martinich is too complacent to dismiss such claims on the grounds that
the atheist message would have been too easily missed. Again, it is hard to not to
conclude that the book would have benefited from a more serious attempt to
investigate the complexities of the historical background. In spite of the force of
Martinich's interpretations of Hobbes's writings, it remains puzzling that such a
supposedly devout religious believer should show absolutely no remorse that his