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## Foreword

*Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law*

The death of Kenneth Grant earlier this year marks a watershed for the development of Thelema. An innovatory occultist, over the course of several decades he developed a substantial body of work which will be reassessed and increasingly valued over the coming years and decades, providing a rich and fertile soil for further development. The major value of Grant's work to Thelema is to have demonstrated that it is wider and deeper than might at first be thought when viewed as a doctrine developed by Crowley alone, a museum-piece to be perpetuated as distinct from a living, going, growing tradition. Thelema is a broad church, and has affinities with many religions and spiritual traditions. It is these affinities which form the strength and richness of Thelema.

It is the task of an initiate to continue the work of his or her predecessor; this is the doctrine of *parampara*, or spiritual lineage. That does not mean the simple perpetuation of an existing body of work, but rather its continuing development. In the course of this development, some aspects of that body of work are considered redundant and sloughed off. Conversely, other avenues of approach are opened up; the work is diversified.

We often think of *parampara* as the succession of one illustrious person by another. However, there is another interpretation, whereby we are each successors to a magical tradition. We each of us take the work of others - Blavatsky, Crowley, Grant, Spare to name but a few - and transform it in the crucible of our own magical and mystical experience, reshaping the work in the process. Our work is in turn picked up by others, who similarly transform it. In this way a tradition is developed; we not only draw from it, but also contribute to it.

Grant's work is very eclectic, taking in a diverse range of influences such as Crowley, Blavatsky, Spare, surrealism, advaita vedanta, Buddhism, and horror fiction to name but a few. Through the mystical and magical work which he undertook, it was Grant's genius to

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synthesise his unique body of work from these disparate parts. This body of work was and will continue to be an inspiration to many, from which, similarly, they will distil their own body of work.

A fundamental insight which underpins the work of Kenneth Grant is that of the undivided nature of consciousness. Somewhere in his early writings, Grant quoted the physicist Niels Bohr who said that

consciousness was experienced in the singular, not the plural. This insight was not of course unique to Bohr, but is at the heart of many mystical and spiritual traditions throughout the ages. Coming more closely to home, this insight saturates Crowley's corpus, in particular works such as *The Book of the Heart Girt with the Serpent*, *The Book of Lies*, and *Liber Aleph*, and is at the heart of the Great Work itself with its alchemical formula of  $0 = 2$ .

*Starfire* came into being from a suggestion by Kenneth Grant. Though each issue has been a diverse collection of articles and artwork, it is grounded in Grant's work and will continue to be. Like him, we regard Thelema as a rich tradition with a diversity of influences and echoes, a rich distillation which has barely begun to take shape.

This present issue of *Starfire* continues the diversity of previous issues. Amongst the riches on offer here is *Scintillations in Mauve*, an introductory article which surveys Kenneth Grant's work and picks out a few key themes. Future issues of *Starfire* will continue this work of re-evaluation in more depth.

Crowley's drawing of Lam was an increasingly important component of Grant's work, and there are several articles of particular relevance here. *Images of the Mystery* by Gary Dickinson considers the drawing in the context of Crowley's deep interest in Taoism, which came to a head in the period around the Amalantrah Working. *The Emergence of Lam* by Michael Staley focuses on this period, and considers Lam as a florescence of *The Book of the Law*. Another article, *From Aiwass to Lam* by Richard Ward, looks at the connections between the two. Finally, *Echoes of Silence* by Alistair Coombs is a consideration of *Liber LXXI*, Crowley's Commentary to Blavatsky's *The Voice of the Silence*.

There are many other riches, including two articles bearing on the Toltec tradition; the first looks at some points in common with Thelema, whilst the second focuses on Toltec art. Amongst the wealth of diverse articles there are also two short stories. *Shades of Grey* by Richard Gavin and *Sleeping Buddha* by Hector Djoun.

As ever, *Starfire* is for the servants of the Star and the Snake.

*Love is the law, love under will*

# Scintillations in Mauve

Michael Staley  
**Scintillations in Mauve**  
An Introduction to the Work of Kenneth Grant

**K**enneth Grant was one of the most influential occultists of the 20th century. He leaves behind a substantial and formidable body of work which will be explored and developed over the years to come. What follows here is an introductory survey of his work — a basis for deeper, more substantial consideration of his work in the future.

Born in Essex in 1924, Kenneth Grant developed an intense interest in the occult from an early age, as well as a life-long devotion to Buddhism and other oriental religions. He remarked somewhere in his writings that Eastern mysticism was his first love — an indication not only of how well read he was, but more importantly perhaps his heightened sense of the immanent. Grant relates in *Outside the Circles of Time* how he had come across a copy of *Magick in Theory and Practice* — at Zwemmers, in the Charing Cross Road — in the late 1930s or early 1940s. At this period he had also discovered Austin Osman Spare's *The Book of Pleasure* at Michael Houghton's Atlantis Bookshop in Museum Street. After immersing himself in

the works of Crowley, he finally managed to make contact with him in 1944, writing to the address provided in *The Book of Thoth* which had just been published. Visiting him several times, Grant subsequently stayed with him at 'Netherwood' in Hastings in 1945, immersed in Magick. Many years later, Grant wrote a memoir of this period of his life, *Remembering Aleister Crowley*. It is clear from remarks in his diaries and elsewhere that Crowley developed a high estimation of Grant, seeing in him the potential to become a future leader of the O.T.O.

It was at this time that Grant first came across Crowley's drawing of Lam, or 'The Lama' as Crowley referred to it. Having offered Grant the

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pick of his portfolio, he was at first hesitant when Grant selected the drawing — or, as Kenneth put it, Lam chose him. Eventually he did pass on the drawing to Grant after an extremely bad asthma attack which Grant helped alleviate by rushing to Crowley's doctor for heroin. Crowley referred to this incident in his diary for 8th May 1945: "Aussik helped a whole lot; gave him 'The Lama' ..." The drawing was subsequently reproduced in *The Magical Revival* and *Outside the Circles of Time*, and came to occupy an increasingly prominent role in Grant's developing body of work.

After Crowley's death in December 1947, Kenneth and Steffi Grant were amongst the mourners at Crowley's funeral, and were subsequently members of the small circle who endeavoured to keep the memory of Crowley and his work alive. Crowley had appointed Karl Germer — then living in the USA — as his successor, and his Will stipulated that his papers be sent to Germer. Concerned that there should be copies of the most important documents in case anything happened to them whilst in transit, Grant and subsequently Gerald Yorke set about making typed copies of those they considered of particular importance. It is as well that they did, since Germer's collection of papers was stolen from his widow Sascha in 1967 by members of the Solar Lodge and subsequently destroyed in a fire. The typed copies made by Grant, Yorke and others formed the basis of the archive which Yorke later passed to the Warburg Institute of the University of London, and which continues to be accessible to researchers.

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, a small circle of occultists accumulated around the Grants, developing as the core of a working group. Germer had chartered Grant in 1951 to form a 'Chapter' of the O.T.O. Out of this developed New Isis Lodge as a dependent cell of the O.T.O., with a grade structure and programme of work which was influenced by Crowley's *Astrum Argentum*, as well as by the O.T.O. as it was in Crowley's day. The relationship with David Curwen was instrumental in Grant obtaining a copy of a commentary by a Kaula adept on a tantric text, the *Anandalahari*. This commentary gave important insights into tantric sexual magic, approaching sex magic from a very different direction to that of Crowley. The approach of Crowley is basically solar-phallic, not to say phallo-centric; there is great emphasis on the importance of the male sexual energies, but very little on the female energies. Often, the female partner is regarded as little more than a cup into which the male magician pours his *bindu*. The Kaula text approached the matter from a different perspective, accentuating the role of the *kalas* and how they vary throughout the menstrual cycle.

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On the formal launch of the Lodge in 1955, the Grants issued a *Manifesto of New Isis Lodge* in which they spoke of the discovery of a planet beyond Pluto, the transplutonic Isis, and what it might mean for the evolution of consciousness on this planet:

A new and compelling influence is enveloping the earth and as yet there are few individuals who are open to the influx of the subtle vibrations of this influence.

Its rays proceed from a source as yet unexplored by those who are not at one with it in essence and in spirit, and it finds its present focus in the outer universe in the transplutonic planet Isis.



In the inner being of man, also, this influence has a centre which will slowly begin to stir in mankind as a whole as the influence strengthens and flowers. As it is at the beginning of its course in relation to man, however, many ages will pass before he may avail himself fully of the great powers and energies which this influence is silently and continually bestowing on all who know how to identify the inner core of their being with its deep and inscrutable heart.

It is surely obvious that the Grants were not talking about the discovery of a physical planet; such a discovery would have been more relevant to an astronomical journal. If we bear in mind that the first sephirah, Kether, is attributed to Pluto, then a transplutonic planet would be ‘One Beyond Ten’, the Great Outside. Grant expressed it thus some years later, in *Aleister Crowley and the Hidden God*:

In *The Book of the Law*, the goddess Nuit exclaims: “My number is eleven, as all their numbers who are of us”, which is a direct allusion to the A.∴ A.∴, or Order of the Silver Star, and its system of Grades. Nuit is the Great Outside, represented physically as “Infinite Space and the Infinite Stars thereof” — that is, I s i s. Nuit and Isis are thus identified in *The Book of the Law*. Isis is terrestrial space, illuminated by the stars. Nuit is outer, or infinite space, the undying darkness that is the hidden source of Light; She is also, in a mystical sense, Inner Space and the Great Within.

Germer had at one time, like Crowley, regarded Grant as potentially a future leader of the O.T.O. (see in this connection the extracts from his letters to Grant published in the article ‘It’s an 111 Wind That Bloweth’ in *Starfire* Volume I No 5, London, 1994). However, he was essentially unhappy with anyone who deviated from the line that, following the death of Crowley, the only thing left to do was simply to preserve and to promote Crowley’s work. As well as this, he was also not happy that Grant declined to collect money from the members of his Lodge. He was, moreover, angered to learn that Grant had formed connections with Eugen Grosche, an old adversary of Germer’s from Germany in the 1920s. He demanded that Grant retract his Manifesto; when he refused, Germer issued a Notice of Expulsion. Grant simply ignored the expulsion and continued with New Isis Lodge as a dependent lodge of the O.T.O., confident that his

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magical work had enabled him to make direct connection with the magical current at the core of the O.T.O., thus superceding Germer’s authority and rendering the expulsion irrelevant. This confidence in his position as Crowley’s successor strengthened throughout the subsequent years as his magical and mystical work developed.

The New Isis Lodge had a programme of work which started in 1955 and was completed in 1962, although the Lodge continued to operate until the middle 1960s. Developing some interesting and innovative magical techniques, an account of some of their workings is given in *Hecate’s Fountain*, written in the early 1980s but not published until ten years later. Grant’s experiences in New Isis Lodge were the foundation for his subsequent work, more apparent perhaps in the later volumes of the Trilogies with the publication of two of the transmissions reified during the course of Lodge Workings. One of these transmissions was the exquisite and delicate *Wisdom of S’lba* which was incorporated into the seventh Trilogies volume, *Outer Gateways*, published in 1994. The other was *The Book of the Spider*, around which Grant wove his final Trilogies volume, *The Ninth Arch* (2002).

New Isis Lodge isn’t mentioned very much in Grant’s early books. I have the impression that although the work carried out in the Lodge was formative for Grant — the foundation of his subsequent body of work — by the same token it is the cumulative insight distilled over the succeeding years which enabled Grant to understand fully the accomplishments of those earlier years, and to take the work to another level. The potential of those years came to fruition many years after the Lodge had ceased its work. I recall him remarking to me in the early 1990s that he had recently come across archive material which had been stored away for many years, and that on going through it again a fresh current of initiation had been sparked.

Throughout the years 1959 to 1963, the Grants produced a series of monographs, the *Carfax Monographs*, each one on a different subject. Years later, in 1989, these were republished in one volume as *Hidden Lore*. More recently they were republished again, this time with additional material, as *Hidden Lore, Hermetic Glyphs* (Fulgur, 2006).

One of the most important influences on Kenneth Grant was Spare. In 1949 he and his wife Steffi met the occult artist and writer. They remained friends until Spare's death in 1956, supporting him with some essentials of life as well as materials for his artwork, and this contact triggered a renaissance in Spare's work. Grant had for some time taken a keen interest in Spare's magic and mysticism as well as his art, and in particular the systems of sigils which Spare had presented in *The Book*

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of *Pleasure*, first published in 1913. Notable exceptions such as the 1928 drawing 'Theurgy' notwithstanding, sigils were generally absent from Spare's work after the First World War, and he confessed to Grant that over the years he had largely forgotten the principles which underlay the systems. Stimulated by Grant's interest and enthusiasm, Spare applied himself to recovering those principles, and sigils resurged into many of his drawings and paintings of the late 1940s and the 1950s. The output of the last few years of his life was something of a renaissance for Spare, a late flowering.

This renaissance included written work, which Grant typed for him, in the process supplying criticism and commentary, and pressing for elucidation where it seemed beneficial. Much of this late work was subsequently published by the Grants in *Zos Speaks!* (Fulgur, 1998), together with letters and diary extracts documenting their time with Spare, as well as reproductions of Spare's artwork. On his death, Spare bequeathed to Kenneth his manuscripts, typescripts, and books. Tireless in promoting Spare's work over the subsequent years, in 1975 the Grants published the beautiful *Images & Oracles of Austin Osman Spare* (Muller, 1975; Fulgur, 2003), introducing his work — both written and artistic — to a new audience. The revival of interest in Spare in recent years owes a great deal to their efforts.

Like Spare, throughout his work Grant emphasised the primacy of the imagination. Far from being mere whim or fancy, this is in fact the principal means for encountering and exploring the universe and our relationship to it. Grant's work is primarily addressed to the imagination, sounding echoes in the consciousness of the reader of his work. As we have already seen, Grant described Eastern Mysticism as his first love, and during the 1950s he immersed himself in Advaita Vedanta — the realisation that consciousness is undivided — writing a series of articles for Asian journals, subsequently collected and published many years later as *At the Feet of the Guru* (Starfire Publishing, 2006). Though often thought of as a cult which glorifies individuality, Thelema is in fact rooted in this soil, having much in common with Taoism.

With John Symonds, Crowley's literary executor, Grant edited Crowley's sprawling and rumbustious autobiography, *The Confessions* (Cape, 1969). This played a large part in bringing the work of Crowley to popular attention. Symonds and Grant built on this, continuing to edit and publish further works by Crowley throughout the 1970s, notably *The Magical Record of the Beast 666* (Duckworth, 1972) — a selection of Crowley's diaries — and *Magical and Philosophical Commentaries on the Book of the Law* (93 Publishing, 1974).

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Over the years, Kenneth Grant had been creating his own body of work, and in an article on Crowley's work — 'Love Under Will', published in the *International Times* during 1969 — he referred to a study of his which was awaiting publication, entitled 'Aleister Crowley and the Hidden God'. His publisher, Muller, subsequently asked him to apportion the work into two volumes, the first of which was published in 1972 as *The Magical Revival*. The second, issued under the original title *Aleister Crowley and the Hidden God*, followed in 1973. This was the beginning of the Typhonian Trilogies, the ninth and final volume of which,

*The Ninth Arch*, was published in 2002 by Starfire Publishing. These volumes comprise a substantial body of work which, though eclectic and covering vast areas of magic and mysticism, is firmly rooted in Thelema. In the course of this work, Grant took Thelema into areas beyond what are often considered to be the confines of Crowley's work, in the process highlighting the universality of Thelema and its affinities with a wide range of traditions and disciplines. What follows is a brief summary of each of the Trilogies volumes; along the way, a few themes will be highlighted.

*The Magical Revival* (Muller, 1972; Starfire Publishing, 2009) was a study and analysis of a variety of occult traditions which have survived over many thousands of years, and which are now reviving in fresh forms and with renewed vigour. In particular, the genesis and development of the Draconian Cult throughout the Egyptian Dynasties was traced, and against this more ancient backdrop were examined the more modern manifestations such as Blavatsky, Crowley, the Golden Dawn, Dion Fortune, and Spare. It was demonstrated that though these are recent manifestations, they are rooted in the considerably older magical current which has nourished and sustained all subsequent efflorations. Included as a plate in the book was a reproduction of Crowley's drawing of Lam, the first time that it had been published since its original appearance in *The Blue Equinox* in 1919.

In the chapter 'Barbarous Names of Evocation', Grant advanced the notion of similarities between elements of the Cthulhu Mythos as elaborated in the fiction of Lovecraft, and aspects of Crowley's work. This was to suggest that they drew upon similar archetypes in the collective unconscious. In his subsequent work, Grant sometimes played around with the pantheon of deities, but this was never to suggest that the deities were real, or that they should be worshipped.

This was succeeded by the second volume, *Aleister Crowley and the Hidden God* (Muller, 1973). This was a study more specifically of Crowley's system of sex magick, amplified by a consideration of the Kaula commentary referred to above. Grant summarised the book as follows:

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This book contains a critical study of Aleister Crowley's system of sexual magick and its affinities with the ancient Tantric rites of Kali, the dark goddess of blood and dissolution represented in Crowley's Cult as the Scarlet Woman. It is an attempt to supply a key to the work of an Adept whose vast knowledge of occultism was unsurpassed by any previous Western authority. I have emphasized the similarity between Crowley's Cult of Thelema and Tantra because the present wave of interest in the Tantric System makes it probable that readers will be able to assess more fully the importance of Crowley's contribution to occultism in general and to the Magical Path in particular.

There was also a chapter on 'Nu-Isis and the Radiance Beyond Space', in which Grant referred to New Isis Lodge and its programme of work.

The third volume, *Cults of the Shadow* (Muller, 1975), explored obscure aspects of occultism that are frequently viewed negatively as 'black magic', the 'left hand path', etc. The thrust of this book is set out in the opening paragraphs of the Introduction:

This book explains aspects of occultism that are often confused with 'black magic'. Its aim is to restore the Left Hand Path and to re-interpret its phenomena in the light of some of its more recent manifestations. This cannot be achieved without a survey of primal cults and the symbolic formulae which they deposited. There exists no richer field for such a survey and no more perfect a skeleton whereon to found it than the Fetish systems of West Africa and their efflorescence in pre-monumental Egyptian cults. Such a survey is presented in the first three chapters, after which the symbols emerge into the light of historic times and appear in the form of the Tantric Current explained in Chapters Four and Five.

This Current appears to diverge into two major streams that reflect endlessly the original rift between the votaries of the feminine and the masculine creative principles known technically in Tantra as the Left and Right Hand Paths. They are of the Moon and the Sun, and their confluence awakes the Fire Snake

(*Kundalini*), the Great Magick Power which illumines the hidden path between them — the Middle Way — the path of Supreme Enlightenment.

It is the almost universal failure to understand the proper function of the Left Hand Path that has led to its denigration — principally on account of its unconventional practices — and to an imperfect realization of the ultimate Mysteries on the part of those who are unable to synthesize the two.

Of particular note is a chapter on the work of Frater Achad (Charles Stansfeld Jones) and the Aeon of Maat, in which Grant took a somewhat sceptical view of Frater Achad's claims of the dawning of the Aeon of Maat. Subsequently, as we shall see, Grant came to revise his views. The book also contained chapters on the work of Michael Bertiaux, introducing Bertiaux to a new readership and leading to an upsurge of interest in his work.

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The second Trilogy opened with *Nightside of Eden* (Muller, 1977). At the core of this is an exploration of the Tunnels of Set, which underlie the paths of the Tree of Life. Grant's work was based initially on a brief and obscure work by Crowley, *Liber 231*, first published in *The Equinox*. This Liber consists of sigils of the genii of the 22 scales of the Serpent, those of the 22 cells of the Qliphoth, and some obscure oracles; it evidently fascinated Grant, and the exploration of these cells of the Qliphoth formed an important element of the work of New Isis Lodge. Grant has been criticised in some quarters for working with what some regard as the evil and aversive aspects of magic. However, the darker aspects of experience are just as necessary to comprehend as the lighter aspects; an understanding of both is necessary. The following passage from the Introduction to *Nightside of Eden* addresses this matter:

This brings me to the final point: Unless occultism becomes creative in the sense of opening up new approaches, modifying and developing traditional concepts and generally revealing a little more of that Supreme Goddess whose identity is hidden behind the veil of Isis, Kali, Nuit, or Sothis, there will be stagnation in the swamp of beliefs rendered inert by the recent swift acceleration of humanity's consciousness, which is little short of miraculous. If the science of the unmanifest is not to remain grounded at a prepubescent stage, while the manifested sciences soar into space, the mature occultist must put aside the toys of superstition and face fearlessly the Trees of Eternity whose trunks and branches glow with solar fire, but whose roots are nourished in the dark.

Although this passage relates specifically to *Nightside of Eden*, the case here articulated for innovation and creativity applies to Grant's work as a whole.

Throughout the book there are several references to the Aeon of Maat, and it is clear that Grant had by now revised his previous, somewhat sceptical view of this aspect of Achad's work. In fact he had by this time been sent material by Margaret Ingalls (Soror Andahadna) which had led him to reassess Achad's work about the incoming in 1948 of another Aeon which runs alongside the Aeon of Horus, the two aeons constituting a double current.

In 1980 Grant published *Outside the Circles of Time* (Muller, 1980; Starfire Publishing, 2008), a work that covers an extremely wide area and exposes, to quote from the cover blurb: "a network more complex than was ever imagined: a network not unlike H.P. Lovecraft's dark vision of sinister forces lurking at the rim of the universe". There are many strands woven in a rich and dazzling fabric, a principal strand being non-duality:

The phenomenal world has no real existence apart from its noumenal source.

The world is not searching for anyone, the world knows nothing of anyone; but

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people are searching for the world and are failing to find it, because they are the world and they are really searching for themselves. But because they are not refined, are not subtle, are not silent; because they are gross and full of noise, the world appears to them also as gross and full of noise.

They are identified with these qualities, they are them, and therefore they cannot control them.

Only by refining the gross into the subtle, the world of the object into the world of the subject, the wake-world into the dream world, only thus can be found the key to 'occult' power. It may be found only in total silence, when the mind has ceased thinking, when the mouth has ceased speaking, when the eye has ceased projecting images. Only then can the formula of dream- control lead to total awakening from the delusion of living.

It is therefore necessary to become habituated to the idea, to live perpetually with the idea, that the whole of an individual's life — all that can be remembered of it — has been composed by the individual as a play is composed by a playwright. It is a fabrication, a *lila*, a *masque* or dance in which the individual is the sole actor; and even this actor is but a figure in the play. He is not real; no object can be real, for there is absolutely no *thing* at all.

No thing is Nuit, and she is no thing precisely in this particular sense of a play of power (*shakti*) evolving an endless drama of light and shadow that appears to entify as subject and object. But objectivity is a dream, *for there is no subject*, no dreamer; there is but a dreaming. It is only when this truth is profoundly apperceived that the dreaming is resolved into its source, which is the *bindu* known as Hadit, at the heart of Nuit ...

Hadit dissolves into Nuit, some thing into no thing, object into subject, and subject — finally — into that absolute subjectivity which, being free of both objectivity and subjectivity, remains indescribable.

The book is most famous, perhaps, for featuring the work of Soror Andahadna, a contemporary Priestess of Maat whose work had parallels with the work of Frater Achad several decades before. Many Thelemites have problems with the Aeon of Maat. As far as they are concerned, each Aeon lasts 2,000 years; we are at the beginnings of the Aeon of Horus, so Maat is a way off yet. They will echo Crowley's famous retort to the young Grant: "Maat can wait!". However, the following passage from *Outside the Circles of Time* puts the matter in a much more interesting light:

Myths and legends are of the past, but Maat should not be thought of in terms of past or future aeons. Maat is present now for those who, knowing the 'sacred alignments' and the 'Gateway of Inbetweenness', experience the Word ever coming, ever emaning, from the Mouth, in the ever new and ever present forms that are continually being generated from the mystical Atu or House of Maat, the Ma-atu ...

But the book is about much more. It is a potent weaving of a host of apparently diverse strands into a single, broad and powerful current.

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Though Grant's books are each different from their predecessors, *Outside the Circles of Time* seemed to herald a jump into a different dimension.

*Outside the Circles of Time* was the last of Grant's books published by Muller, and there was a break of 12 years until 1992, when Skoob Publishing released *Hecate's Fountain*. Grant had originally conceived this as an account of the rituals of *New Isis Lodge*. However, as is often the case, the work took on a momentum of its own and threw forth a quite different flower. The book was still woven around the work of the Lodge. However, this work was illustrated as anecdotal accounts of specific workings, demonstrating in particular what Grant referred to as 'tangential tantra', whereby a magical working has curious and sometimes alarming side-effects at odds with its apparent purpose. Grant traced these anomalies to a catalytic interface which he called 'the Mauve Zone', existing between the realms of dreaming and dreamless sleep. There are movements, whorlings and eddies in the Mauve Zone which give rise to tenuous wraiths, dreams, images which enter the awareness and are clothed by the imagination.

The third Trilogy opened with *Outer Gateways*, published by Skoob in 1994. This book continued and amplified some of the themes of *Hecate's Fountain*. It contained a lengthy account of the diverse strands of *The Book of the Law*, explored Crowley's work in relation to the *Sunyavada*, and had some remarkable

things to say about the creative potential of gematria:

A percept, a concept, or a number - any *object* in fact - has no real relationship with any other percept, concept or number. Relationship exists only in the consciousness of the perceiver, the consciousness which is the background upon which all objects appear as images on a screen. There can be no association of ideas, no correspondences of any kind, between numbers or the ideas which they represent, *except* in the consciousness of their subject, because no thing exists as an objective entity.

The implications of these considerations are not generally appreciated, although they are of tremendous importance. Numbers can mean to the qabalist precisely what he wishes them to mean within the framework of his magical universe. They have a relative existence but no objective reality. Numbers may therefore be used as a magical means of invoking specific energies latent in the consciousness of the magician. In other words, numbers may be viewed as entities which are apparent objective identities, or personalities, for they are one with the objective power of the magician.

The power of numbers lies not in the numbers themselves, but always and only in the magician. If his mind is well furnished with magical numbers (i.e. numbers meaningful to him) there is no limit, quantitatively speaking, to the worlds he may construct from their energies (*shaktis*). This is the basis of the science of numbers, and the rationale of numerology as a creative art distinct

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from a merely interpretative gauge of phenomenal probabilities. The magician aims not at predicting the future - which would imply that that it already existed - so much as creating it according to the laws of his magical universe. Creative gematria is therefore the science and the art of projecting other worlds or orders of being, in harmony with the vibrations symbolised by numbers, which render the vibrations directly amenable.

Gematria is used throughout Grant's work to underpin insight which already exists, rather than to deduce an insight from a perceived gematrical relationship.

However, the core of the book was undoubtedly *The Wisdom of S'lba* and the several chapters of analysis which were appended. *S'lba* is a beautiful, highly-charged and rich transmission received over many years by Kenneth Grant since the late 1930s, the bulk of it reified during the years of *New Isis Lodge*.

There is a good deal of misunderstanding about the nature of transmissions. It is not a case of simply taking dictation from a discarnate entity. Contact with what is referred to as the inner planes is a great deal more complex and more subtle than that. Take for instance the following introductory note by Grant:

The series of verses entitled collectively the *Wisdom of S'lba* ... were not written down at any particular time or place, although the state of consciousness in which they were received was invariably the same. The process was initiated as early as the year 1939 when the Vision of Aossic first manifested in the manner described in *Outside the Circles of Time* (chapter 8).

The vision unfolded sporadically throughout the time of Aossic's association with Aleister Crowley and Austin Osman Spare. But the dynamic aspect of the Working, that is to say the integration of the Vision into a coherent whole, occurred during the period of *New Isis Lodge*'s existence.

In an interview with Skoob published shortly before *Outer Gateways* was released, responding to a question about *S'lba*, Grant said: "It was 'distilled', by a protracted process extending over many years, from the intensive Rituals performed in New Isis Lodge between 1955-1962".

As mentioned above, Grant first set out in *The Magical Revival* his thesis that there were suggestive analogies between elements of the Lovecraft pantheon and aspects of Crowley's work. There is a passage in *Outer Gateways* which throws the function of these and similar 'deities' into a very different light:

... Like other accounts of unclassifiable phases of earth's history, the Cthulhu Cult epitomises the subconsciousness and the forces outside terrestrial awareness. It may be said in passing that true creativity can occur only when these forces are invoked to flood with their light the magical network of the mind. For purposes of explanation the mind may be envisaged as divided into

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three rooms, the edifice which contains them being the only real or permanent principle. These rooms are:

- 1) Subconsciousness, the dream state;
- 2) Mundane consciousness, the waking state;
- 3) Transcendental consciousness, veiled in the non-initiate by the state of sleep.

The compartments are further conceived as being connected with the house that contains them, by a series of conduits or tunnels. The house represents trans-terrestrial consciousness. The invoked forces — Cthulhu, Yog- Sothoth, Azathoth, etc — are then understood, not as malignant or destructive entities but as the dynamic energies of consciousness, the functions of which are to blast away the delusion of separate existence (the rooms in our illustration).

The next volume, *Beyond the Mauve Zone*, was released by Starfire Publishing in 1999. It is, as its name suggests, a deeper consideration of that region between dreamless sleep and dreaming which fecundates imagination, and in particular a consideration of various methods of accessing the Mauve Zone. There are three chapters on the Kaula Rite of the Fire Snake, giving much more material from the initiated Kaula commentary obtained from David Curwen. There is also a protracted analysis of *Liber Pennae Praenumbra* received by Soror Andahadna, and an account of the work of the Serbian author Zivorad Mihajlovic Slavinski.

The final Trilogies volume, *The Ninth Arch*, was released by Starfire Publishing in 2002. It consisted of a verse-by-verse commentary on a transmission received over the course of *New Isis Lodge* workings, *Liber OKBISH*, 'The Book of the Spider'. This transmission commenced during a magical working of Qulielfi, the 29th Tunnel of Set, around 1952. The principal medium for the transmissions was a priestess known as Soror Arim. She appears in Grant's novel *Against the Light* as Margaret Leasing. She was not the only medium for the transmissions, but she played the larger role and coordinated the work of several priestesses of the Lodge.

*The Book of the Spider* is essentially a collection of cryptic oracles which were received over a number of years, and were in retrospect arranged into 29 chapters, each of 29 verses; some of the verses were not heard, or were lost, but this is the basic pattern. A couple of years after the original transmission was received, the Current once again became active. This subsequent transmission yielded a smaller number of verses, and was arranged into 3 additional chapters, again of 29 verses each.

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Transmissions are not a matter of establishing some sort of radio contact with a discarnate entity and transcribing what it has to say. A transmission can be via any of the senses. Often it will be intuited or subtly apprehended, with the imagination as catalyst. Imagination is not mere whim or fancy, though this is the baggage that the word has accumulated in modern times. It is cosmic, though there are individual areas of awareness of imagination, and it is those areas around the individual of which he or she is more immediately aware, that we regard as 'our' imagination. The truth is, though, that it is not ours, but a common or cosmic area — a continuum, the local reaches of which we are more immediately aware.

Transmission takes many forms. It is an inspirational flow into the more personal areas of imagination, and will often become garbed in forms drawn from the personal subconscious. We see this in Lovecraft's work for instance, much of the inspiration occurring through dream, and expressed through imagery drawn from the extensive reading and daydreaming of Lovecraft's childhood. As light is refracted by its passage through a prism or a piece of coloured glass, or as the setting sun through atmospheric matter produces a pageant of glorious and stirring colours, so the transmission of a Current will be coloured by the personal areas of imagination through which it passes. The wind, for instance, only becomes manifest in the stirring

leaves of the tree through which it moves, the perfumes which it agitates, the skin against which it brushes, the shapes into which it swirls the desert sand.

At the time of the *New Isis Lodge* workings which attracted and then incubated this informing Current, the main Priestess, Margaret Leasing, and others were caught up in occult fiction, and in two books in particular — *Dope* by Sax Rohmer, and *The Beetle* by Richard Marsh. At this time, New Isis Lodge had evolved a magical ritual technique which involved the dramatization of fiction. As Kenneth Grant describes it in *The Ninth Arch*:

As already mentioned in the General Introduction to this book, the ritualists of *New Isis Lodge* utilized certain novels and stories as other magicians might use paintings or musical compositions to affect *perichoresis* and astral encounters. They entered into a tale as they might enter into a given picture, a scene, a desert, a crowded drawing-room, or other venue. Applied to the novel, the process develops dramatically as a vividly kinetic experience that becomes startlingly oracular. We used, principally, Richard Marsh's novel *The Beetle*, and Sax Rohmer's *A Tale of Chinatown* or *Dope*, for no other reason than because the chief Skryer had recently read these writings, and because other Lodge members also were acquainted with them. Marsh's tale, in particular, was chosen because it

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contained the only published account known to the present author of the *Children of Isis*, and therefore seemed *en rapport* with the *Wisdom of S'iba* and with the oracles of OKBISH.

These are the circumstances, the prism, the coloured glass, through which the verses of the *Book of the Spider* are expressed. There is reference, for instance, to such characters as Shoa, the Evil Woman; Sin Sin Wa, the Chinese villain and sage; Tling-a-Ling, his pet raven and familiar; Sam Tuk, his revered Ancestor; all these characters are drawn from Sax Rohmer's *Dope*. There are references to Limehouse, to Ho- Nan, to Chandu, to the Yellow River, to the poppy trails; these are locations drawn also from *Dope*. There is the languor of dream, of reverie; the images seem to drift, to shift, to coalesce — to emerge, to flicker, to fall back. There are also references to characters drawn from other stories, such as Helen Vaughan and Mrs Beaumont from Arthur Machen's story *The Great God Pan*. These are masks, clothing, and are not intended to point to profundities of meaning inherent in the stories from which these characters are drawn. There are references to scenes in novels, such as *The Brood of the Witch Queen* by Sax Rohmer; or characters from Lovecraft's stories, such as Joseph Curwen in *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*.

There is much in the verses of *The Book of the Spider* which bears on the life of Kenneth Grant, and it seems at times as if the informing Current is directed principally at him. We are all of us expressing an informing Current of magical energy. None of us can express an absolute truth, but we convey truth as we see it. The work of an adept is always in a sense intrinsic to him or her. The light is one but the lamps are many, and each lamp transmits that light in its own way.

Non-fictional characters are also woven into this Spider Web. In the course of *The Book of the Spider*, we become aware of a doctrine of avatars, whereby several persons living at the same time can each be embodiments of an entity. As anyone who has read *Against the Light* will know, it concerns a witch called Awryd, an ancestor of Grant's who was executed for witchcraft in the Sixteenth Century. Awryd returns, in the guise of Margaret Leasing, Soror Arim, the chief seer; and before her, Yelda Paterson, Spare's witch-mentor. However, the situation becomes more complex when several people living at the same time are each avatars of Awryd — for instance, Margaret Leasing and Clanda Fane, both contemporaries of Grant in *New Isis Lodge*. Some of the avatars are characters drawn from fiction, such as Helen Vaughan from Machen's *The Great God Pan*, or Besza Lorie from Grant's novel *The Stellar Lode*. There are references to David Curwen, a contemporary of Grant's in New Isis Lodge who had a strong interest in alchemy; in the Spider's

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Web he is cast as an avatar of Joseph Curwen, the alchemist whose dark presence looms large in one of



Lovecraft's best stories, *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*.

Following this brief consideration of the Typhonian Trilogies, what is it that constitutes the Typhonian Tradition which is central to Grant's work? 'Typhonian' is not a precise label, as is apparent from a consideration of the Glossary entries for Typhon, Draco, Ta-Urt and related topics across the Typhonian Trilogies; there is a great deal of diversity. Although the emphasis changed over the span of the thirty years between the publications of the first and the final volumes, none of these entries by themselves are definitions of the Typhonian Tradition. Instead they each articulate a facet of it, no matter how important those individual facets might at first sight seem. It is more fruitful therefore not to look for a hard-and-fast definition, but to allow intuition to detect an underlying consistency and continuity running throughout these passages.

If there is one thing which could be said to characterise the Typhonian Tradition then it is communing with what some have termed 'Outside', whether that be considered as the reaches of space beyond the terrestrial, or the sweeps of consciousness beyond the human. In this context, 'Outside' can only ever be a relative term, since from the perspective of the continuum of consciousness there is no inside or outside.

In *Beyond the Mauve Zone* Grant analyses the Maatian transmitted text *Liber Pennae Praenumbra* from a Typhonian perspective, and makes the following remark:

It is at this point that the divergence appears between the Way of Aiwass- Lam and that of N'Aton who prefigures a future embodiment of human consciousness - in other words, ourselves as we shall appear at some future time. As should by this time be evident, we refute this postulate in favour of the notion that consciousness in its human phase is an altogether transient phenomenon, a mere flash in the immensity of Space-Time (Nu- Isis). Transmissions such as the *Stanzas of Dzyan*, *Liber AL*, the *Necronomicon*, and, we maintain, *Liber Pennae Praenumbra* itself, give no support to the notion of an identifiably human mask to consciousness perpetuating itself indefinitely. But all whose will it is to make - as Nema phrases it - "the mutational leap into being a new species" should be prepared to relinquish the concept of 'human' consciousness with all its dualistic implicits.

These depths of consciousness are far deeper and wider than human consciousness, which as indicated in the above quote is transient and relatively superficial. The Typhonian Gnosis is concerned with

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encountering and exploring these depths. As Crowley remarked in a postscript to Chapter 30 of *Magick without Tears*:

I thought it a good plan to put my fundamental position all by itself in a postscript; to frame it. My observation of the Universe convinces me that there are beings of intelligence and power of a far higher quality than anything we can conceive of as human; that they are not necessarily based on the cerebral and nervous structures that we know, and that the one and only chance for mankind to advance as a whole is for individuals to make contact with such Beings.

It was Crowley's conviction that the Cairo Working of 1904, which led to the contact with Aiwaz and to the reception of *The Book of the Law*, was the first in a series of communications. After asserting his belief in *The Confessions* that there was no longer any *a priori* reason to doubt the existence of discarnate intelligence, he states:

The way is therefore clear for me to come forward and assert positively that I have opened up communication with one such intelligence; or, rather, that I have been selected by him to receive the first message from a new order of beings.

Indeed there have been further messages or communications. The Cairo Working of 1904 was followed seven years later by the Abuldiz Working, and seven years after that by the Amalantrah Working. All three workings were characterised by contact with praeter-human intelligences who imparted information. There were also a number of transmitted texts known as *The Holy Books*, such as for instance the sigils and gnostic

utterances which constitute *Liber 231*.

Nor has this contact been confined to Crowley. It has continued beyond his death with *Liber OKBISH* and *The Wisdom of S'Iba*, both reified — as delineated above — during the period of activity of New Isis Lodge. Doubtless there have been other transmissions, and there will be more in the future. These are upsurges from the deeper strata of consciousness into awareness.

As well as his Trilogies, Grant also published several volumes of poetry and a number of short stories and novellas. 1963 saw the publication of his first volume of poetry, *Black to Black and other poems*. An intense and moving collection of poems, this was followed in 1970 by *The Gull's Beak and other poems*. A third volume was released by Starfire Publishing in 2005, *Convolvulus and other poems*, this included the two previous volumes and added a third, previously unpublished collection, *Convolvulus: Poems of Love and the Other Darkness*. This collected volume included sketches by Austin Osman Spare, some of which had been specially drawn for Grant by Spare.

Grant had started writing short stories at a young age, and wrote his first novel in the early 1950s, *Grist to Whose Mill?* (soon to be

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published for the first time). Others followed, and were published from 1996 onwards. Most of these novels had been written during the period of New Isis Lodge, and revisited ahead of publication. They featured characters many of whom were based to a greater or lesser degree on members of the Lodge. Grant gave an insight into this in his dustjacket notes to the second volume in the series, *Snakewand & the Darker Strain*:

These stories, and other tales in this series, were written in the wake of rituals performed over a period of seven years in *New Isis Lodge*. Many were the magicians and mediums who passed through the Lodge, and some of them feature in the series of novellas. Their mundane personalities may not have appeared unusual to casual observation, but when elongated and siderealised by the unique perspectives which their magical roles created for them, they achieved an apotheosis, an epiphany. This extraordinary phenomenon demonstrated the heights and the depths which human nature is capable of scaling and of fathoming, in the delirious frenzy inspired by their art. These tales are likewise orientated to the other side of a reality rarely glimpsed outside a magically charged Circle.

Though retaining a devotion to Crowley, Spare, and many other mystics and occultists whose work had influenced him throughout his life, Grant was never a follower but, on the contrary, created his own way from a number of influences, transformed through the crucible of his mystical and magical experience. He was acutely aware of the principle of *parampara* or spiritual lineage, whereby it is the responsibility of an initiate to develop the work of his predecessor, the predecessor in this case being Crowley. In the course of such development, new avenues of approach are opened up, whilst others are found to be perhaps now redundant. In this way, a body of work is a living thing, developed by successive generations of initiates.

Kenneth Grant's work was rich, diverse and eclectic, woven from many strands and distilled from many sources. However, his principal influence was Crowley, and Thelema is at the heart of his work. In the wake of his death, the immediate task is to ensure that all his published work is once more in print and readily available, and to continue the explication of the principles which underlie that work. Beyond that, however, the body of work which he developed will, in its turn, be continued, worked upon and redeveloped by those coming after him. This is the greatest testament for which any of us can hope.

I'd like to close this preliminary survey with a passage from the Introduction to *Outside the Circles of Time*. Here, Grant gave an insight into the aims of his work; the passage in question is succinct and beautifully expressed:

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One final point is here relevant, and I state it without apology. It is not my purpose to try to prove anything; my aim is to construct a magical mirror capable of expressing some of the less elusive images seen as shadows of a

future aeon. This I do by means of suggestion, evocation, and by those oblique and ‘inbetweenness concepts’ that Austin Spare defined as ‘Neither- Neither’. When this is understood, the reader’s mind becomes receptive to the influx of certain concepts that can, if received undistortedly, fertilize the unknown dimensions of his consciousness. In order to achieve this aim a new manner of communication has to be evolved; language itself has to be reborn, revived, and given a new direction and a new momentum. The truly creative image is born of *creative imagining*, and this is — ultimately

— an irrational process that transcends the grasp of human logic.

It is well known that scientists and mathematicians have evolved a cryptic language, a language so elusive, so fugitive, and yet so essentially cosmic that it forms an almost qabalistic mode of communication, often misinterpreted by its own initiates! Our position is not quite as desperate, for we are dealing primarily with the body-mind complex in its relation to the universe, and the body-aspect is deeply rooted in the soil of sentience. Our minds may not understand, but in the deeper layers of subconsciousness where humanity shares a common bed, there is instant recognition. Similarly, a magician devises his ceremony in harmony with the forces he wills to invoke, so an author must pay considerable attention to the creation of an atmosphere that is suitable for his operations. Words are his magical instruments, and their vibrations must not produce a merely arbitrary noise, but an elaborate symphony of tonal reverberations that trigger a series of increasingly profound echoes in the consciousness of his readers. One cannot over-emphasize or over-estimate the importance of this subtle form of alchemy, for it is in the *nuances*, and not necessarily in the rational meanings of the words and numbers employed, that the magick resides. Furthermore, it is very often in the suggestion of certain words *not* used, yet indicated or employed by other words having no direct relation to them, that produce the most precise definitions. The edifice of a reality-construct may sometimes be reared only by an architecture of absence, whereby the real building is at one and the same time revealed and concealed by an alien structure haunted by probabilities. These are legion, and it is the creative faculty of the reader — awake and active — that can people the house with souls. So then, this book may mean many things to many readers, and different things to all; but to none can it mean nothing at all, for the house is constructed in such a manner that no echo can be lost.

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# Images of the Mystery

## Gary Dickinson

### Images of the Mystery

*Set up my image in the East: thou shalt buy thee an image which I will show thee, especial, not unlike the one thou knowest. And it shall be suddenly easy for thee to do this.*

*Liber AL vel Legis, III: 21*

*T*he *Book of the Law* describes the Stele of Revealing as a ‘Kiblah’ — the direction to which one should turn in prayer — and promised to “make easy” its “abstraction” from the “ill-ordered house” of the Cairo Museum. Crowley settled for having a replica of the original made. He was also instructed to buy another, “especial” but not unfamiliar image that would be shown to him by Ra-Hoor-Khuit and also made easy for him to obtain. In his earliest commentary, Crowley tells us that “this was remarkably fulfilled”, but without saying what the image was; however, in 1918, Crowley himself created a very unfamiliar image that would in time become second only to the Stele of Revealing itself as an icon of Thelema: a drawing entitled ‘The Way’, more popularly known today as a portrait of ‘Lam’.

The Stele of Revealing, like the crucifix, is an ancient object that represents an historical event central to

the belief system (i.e., the reception of *The Book of the Law*), and is the focus of orthodox Thelemic ritual. Some time after that historical event, Lam, like the Catholic Madonna, developed a devotional cult with a mythology of its own, drawing in part on pre-existing sources outside orthodoxy and becoming a focal point of an alternative vision.

The great American mythologist Joseph Campbell (1904-1987) once defined ‘myth’ as what we call other people’s religion, whereas we tend

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to interpret our own religion in terms of fact. One of the greatest lessons I have learnt as a sinologist is never to dismiss ‘myth’ as a story with no factual basis.

One of the ‘myths’ which now surround ‘Lam’ links it with the ‘abominable plateau of Leng’ from Lovecraftian fiction. In *The Dream- Quest of Unknown Kadath*, Lovecraft located Leng in an alternative dimension, in what Campbell called ‘dreamtime’:

*There, all alone in the hush and the dusk and the cold, rose the uncouth stones of a squat windowless building, around which a circle of crude monoliths stood.*

*In all this arrangement there was nothing human, and Carter surmised from old tales that he was indeed come to that most dreadful and legendary of all places, the remote and prehistoric monastery wherein dwells unaccompanied the high-priest not to be described, which wears a yellow silken mask over its face and prays to the Other Gods...*

*The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*

Kenneth Grant placed Leng specifically in Central Asia between Tibet and China, and accorded Lam the title of ‘Lama of Leng’. In *Hecate’s Fountain*<sup>1</sup> he claimed that some 12,000 years ago Lam established the *Drukpa* or ‘Cult of the Thunder Dragon’ on the Plateau of Leng. Grant believed that Tibetan, Mongolian and Chinese sources dating from the revival of the *Drukpa* in the 13th century were the most “valuable mine” for this pre-historic Draconian tradition.

What are the historical origins of Crowley’s drawing and does its association with the fictional Leng have any basis in fact?

### **Dead Souls**

August Derleth (1909-1971) thought that *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath* was probably first written by Lovecraft around 1919 and subsequently revised several times.<sup>2</sup> It is therefore contemporary with Crowley’s drawing ‘The Way’ which was first shown at the Liberal Club in New York’s Greenwich Village in February 1919 as part of the ‘Dead Souls’ exhibition.

‘The Way’ was almost certainly executed during this period. Crowley was making his first attempts to be recognised as an artist. In an interview with the *New York Evening World* he describes himself as a

1. Kenneth Grant, *Hecate’s Fountain*, Skoob Books Publishing Ltd, 1992, p.251.

2. Introduction, *The H. P. Lovecraft Omnibus I: At The Mountains of Madness*, HarperCollins, 1993, p.6.

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“subconscious impressionist”. He even told the press that “my pictures look more beautiful if you look at them with your eyes closed”.

Crowley admitted that he had never studied art and had no intention of doing so. He had started drawing whilst working at *The International*, and told William Seabrook that a “familiar spirit” had visited one night and commanded him to paint. Evidently that ‘familiar’ was no less than Aiwass himself who had dictated *The Book of the Law* in 1904. He confided to Seabrook that he was “certain that Aiwass has something important to express through paint, but he doesn’t know a thing about technique!”<sup>3</sup>

I’ve heard of a bad workman blaming his tools, but never his muse. Nevertheless, Crowley was better

with a pencil than ever he was with a brush and 'The Way', whilst an early work, is one of his finer drawings.

The major piece and inspiration of the 'Dead Souls' exhibition gives us a clue as to the date of the Lam drawing. When Crowley met Leah Hirsig (1883-1975) on 11 January 1919 he asked her how she wanted to be painted. She replied, "paint me as a dead soul". Working furiously overnight, Crowley produced a triptych with disembodied heads, including those of Oscar Wilde and Crowley's friend the artist Bob Chanler. Other works included 'The Burmese Lady' — featuring the 'dead spirit' of Eva Tanguay, 'Soror Darola' in the Amalantrah Working (see below) — and A Day Dream of Dead Hats'.

Interestingly, as 'Dead Souls' opened in Greenwich Village in February 1919, so did an exhibition of the work of another artist friend of Crowley's: Leon Engers Kennedy (1891-1970). He had developed a technique of painting the sitter's aura, which he called "psychochromes". They became popularly known as "soul paintings". Crowley had originally arranged for the young artist to show his work at *The International* in November 1917. Now he was showing at Paint Box Galleries around the corner in Washington Square.<sup>4</sup> The proximity of Crowley's 'Dead Souls' and Engers' 'soul paintings' seems more than a coincidence.

Crowley is reported to have said that 'Lam' was "drawn from life". Whilst in New York he certainly advertised for "dwarfs, hunchbacks, tattooed women, Harrison fisher girls" and "freaks of all sorts" to model for him. But somehow it is doubtful that the face that peers out from 'The Way' was one of those who accepted the invitation to submit

3. Richard Kaczynski, *Perdurabo*, Revised and Expanded Edition, North Atlantic Books, 2010, pp.331-332.

4. Kaczynski, *Perdurabo*, p.314.

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a photograph of themselves. It seems more probable that its curiously exaggerated, almost disembodied head was a type of "psychochrome" of a 'Dead Soul'.

### **The Babe of the Abyss**

Engers Kennedy's portrait of Crowley, and Crowley's drawing of 'The Way', were first published in the so-called 'Blue Equinox' in the Spring of 1919. A photograph survives of 'The Way', taken at the time of the 1919 exhibition, wherein the domed head of 'Lam' is crowned with what appears to be either a curious triple-tiered diadem or some form of emanation decorated with heart-shaped symbols. This was removed for the drawing's publication; a faint shadow of it can be clearly seen on recent images published by Grant. The 'tiara' was originally heavily drawn and its erasure, almost certainly by Crowley himself, has left the paper stained with its faint umbra.

The publication of the Blue Equinox itself needs to be seen in a wider magical context. In October 1915, Crowley had advanced Charles Stansfeld Jones (1886-1950) to the grade of *Babe of the Abyss*, effectively the beginning of his 'rite of passage' to becoming a *Magister Templi* or 'Master of the Temple'.

In the structure of Crowley's magical order, the *Argentium Astrum*, it was a necessary precondition for Crowley to appoint a successor to himself as *Magister Templi* before assuming the even more exalted grade of *Magus*. That, he hoped, would finally allow him to enunciate the 'Word' of the Aeon that he had initiated in 1904.

Although Jones would maintain that he remained a *Babe of the Abyss* until 1926, in August 1916 Crowley formally recognised him as a *Magister Templi* and claimed him as the 'magical child' prophesied in *The Book of the Law*.

In evidence of this Crowley included an account of Jones' early attainments as *Liber CLXV, A Master of the Temple* in the Blue Equinox. Jones had joined Crowley in New York in March 1918, taking part in the 'Amalantrah Working', afterwards joining him for the 'Great Magical Retirement' on Esopus Island in the summer. In fact, Crowley was writing *Liber Aleph* as an 'epistle' to his 'magical son' when Amalantrah had

made his first contact in January 1918.

Jones also actively helped in the preparation of the Blue Equinox before taking-up a post in Detroit in February 1919 as an accountant with the Universal Book Store which had agreed to market it.

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### *Images of the Mystery*

The inclusion of Crowley's commentary on Madame Blavatsky's *The Voice of the Silence* as a 'supplement' also appears to have been influenced by these magical considerations. In his commentary, Crowley says that, assuming the first 'fragment' of the *Golden Precepts* (see below) explained the Path as far as the grade Master of the Temple, the second, 'The Two Paths', should be regarded as 'further instruction'.

## LAM

'The Way' appears as the frontispiece to *The Voice of the Silence* with the following caption:

*LAM is the Tibetan word for Way or Path, and LAMA is He who Goeth, the specific title of the Gods of Egypt, the Treader of the Path, in Buddhistic phraseology. Its numerical value is 71, the number of this book.*

This is Crowley's only published written description of the drawing and the only contemporary reference to 'Lam', in this case used as a term rather than as a name. Its importance, however, is underlined by a letter to his young acolyte Kenneth Grant in March 1945. Crowley writes of "the drawing which you covet":

*This drawing has a title. I do not mean an apt fancy, but a description accurate & recognisable by any person familiar with the subject, like "The Tower Bridge by Moonlight" or "Portrait of Mr. Ernest Bevan" or "Barnham Beeches"...*

Grant was given three days and three guesses to win the piece. If unsuccessful, the 'test' would be repeated at the Autumn Equinox. Grant was eventually successful. Crowley's dedication to him, "a very present help in time of trouble", on the reverse of the drawing, is dated *Sol 17 degrees in Taurus, Anno Ixix*, i.e. early May 1945.<sup>5</sup> There is a further reference to this in Crowley's diary entry for 8th May: "Aussik helped a whole lot; gave him 'The Lama'."

The answer to the question that Crowley had posed, as he indicates in his letter, is actually on the drawing itself. In the lower, left-hand corner are two curious characters that, at first glance, look like the symbol for Jupiter and a letter from an old magical alphabet. Alan Chapman notes that these are "usually ignored" and appeared to him "to be number 49, written in a pseudo-oriental script".<sup>6</sup>

5. See plates between pp.26-27, Kenneth Grant, *Remembering Aleister Crowley*, Skoob Books Publishing Ltd, 1991.

6. Alan Chapman, 'Chinese Whispers: The Origins of LAM', available at [www.thebaptistshead.co.uk](http://www.thebaptistshead.co.uk); originally published as 'Who Let the Greys In?' *Fortean Times*, December 2007.

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I agree with Chapman that they have been largely ignored and often cropped off reproductions of the drawing. They are not, however, "pseudo-oriental script"; these characters are in fact the Tibetan letters *la* and *ma*. Admittedly, the characters are rather strangely drawn, and only by over-laying them do we see that the forms of the characters follow the outlines of the correct Tibetan letters (see Figures 1 and 2). Either badly transcribed, or possibly even deliberately written to suggest the number 49, together *la* and *ma* spell the Tibetan word *lam* or 'path'.

Figure 1 *La*

Figure 2 *Ma*

Crowley's translation of the term *lama* as 'He who Goeth' isn't as accurate as his letter to Grant would suggest. Whilst in English the terms *lam* and *lama* may appear to be etymologically related, in classical Tibetan *lama* is 'spelt' differently. Although consisting of the two letters *la* and *ma*, the letter *la* is written with a silent prefix. A standard Romanization of the Tibetan is *b'la ma*.

The term *lama* literally means 'none above' or the 'highest'. Crowley may be forgiven for his Tibetan

grammatical error, as the term *lama* was widely misunderstood by early scholars and erroneously used to designate any Tibetan Buddhist monk. Originally, *lama* was an honorific only applied to venerated teachers and heads of monasteries. Tibetan writers also use the term *lama* to translate the Sanskrit *guru*. Crowley is reported to have once described the mysterious figure in the drawing as a portrait of his “guru”.

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The source of Crowley’s Tibetan letters is unknown. Dorothy Troxell (1896-1986), one of the “three scorpions” of the Amalantrah Working, later visited China and Mongolia, compiling maps for the US Army; she eventually produced the first Mongolian-English dictionary in 1953.<sup>7</sup> Mongolia, of course, followed the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, so she may have already had an interest and been familiar with some Tibetan terminology even in 1919.

### **Voices in the Silence**

Whatever the source of Crowley’s Tibetan letters, their presence on the drawing itself, and the reference to Tibetan lamas in its published title, establishes a definite Tibetan connection. The publication of ‘The Way’ in the Blue Equinox as a frontispiece to *The Voice of the Silence* gives us another, if unexpected, connection: Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-91).

*The Voice of the Silence* is Crowley’s commentary on Madame Blavatsky’s 1886 work of the same title, which comprised three fragments from the *Book of the Golden Precepts*. Blavatsky claimed that this and the mysterious *Stanzas of Dzyan* formed part of a group of Tibetan writings collectively called the seven secret “Books of Kiu-Te”. According to Blavatsky, these ancient texts were originally inscribed in an archaic ideographic script called Senzar on thin, narrow metal plates that were once fixed onto cylinders. It has been claimed that the two Tibetan letters on ‘The Way’ are ‘Senzar’ characters. During the research for this article, a respected Tibetist also suggested that the curiously- written letters might be in a Tibetan derivative script called *shangchun* or *zhang-zhung*.

*Zhang-zhung* was the now-extinct language of an ancient Himalayan kingdom conquered by the Tibetans in the seventh century C.E. The *Zhang-zhung* culture had its origins on the great Changtang Plateau that extends from China in the north across western Tibet through to Ladakh in the south. Archaeological excavations have shown both Palaeolithic and Iron Age settlement, with evidence of stone temples and pictographs.

The Changtang Plateau has as harsh and unforgiving a climate as Lovecraft’s Leng, with arctic-cold winters. However, the phytogeographic record shows that in pre-historic times conditions were much more favourable until a major change in the climate *circa* 1500-1000 B.C.E.

Kaczynski, *Perdurabo*, p.634, fn.33.

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Today the Plateau is inhabited by a hardy race of nomads descended from the *Zhang-zhung* called the Drukpa. *Druk* is Tibetan for ‘dragon’.

Western Tibet is also the origin of the Drukpa lineage mentioned by Grant. Founded in the late 12th century the Drukpa is indeed a tantric sect of the old, unreformed Kargyu school of Tibetan Buddhism. In Verse 24 of the ‘Seven Portals’ section, the author of *The Golden Precepts* calls them the dreaded “Brothers of the Shadow - the murderers of their Souls”. In her notes on this verse, Blavatsky groups the “Dugpas” (i.e. Drukpa) with the “Bhons”. Bon is the indigenous, pre-Buddhist tradition of Tibet. ‘Versed in sorcery’, she accuses them of appropriating the symbols of Buddhism in their “disgusting rites” for the purposes of “black magic”.

Like Blavatsky’s ‘Senzar’, *Zhang-zhung* boasted several different scripts which now survive only as the sacred alphabet of the Bon religion. The great Bon scholar Shenche Luga (996-1035 C.E.) claimed to have discovered a cache of ancient Bon scriptures hidden in the ‘Cavern of Treasures’, including the only ones in

both *Zhang-zhung* and Tibetan scripts. Most scholars believe that the *Zhang-zhung* letters used by Bonpa today, like much of Bon iconography, are in fact derived from Tibetan sources. *Zhang-zhung* does, however, give us a possible origin for Blavatsky's 'Senzar'.

Blavatsky tells us that Tibetan copies of the ancient 'Senzar' texts were made on discs, and kept by the Tashi Lama at Shigatze. The Tashi Lama is better known today as the Panchen Lama, Tibet's penultimate Buddhist leader, and his seat remains at the great Tashi Lhunpo monastery near the city of Shigatze.

In an article unpublished during her lifetime, Blavatsky makes a specific link between the esoteric 'Senzar' texts of Kui-te, including the *Book of Dzyan*, and the exoteric Lam-rim teachings of Tibetan Buddhism.<sup>8</sup> *Lam-rim* means literally the 'Stages of the Path' and is the title of work written in 1402 by Je Tsong khapa (1357-1419), the founder of the Gelugpa, the reformed 'yellow hat' sect of Tibetan Buddhism to which both the Dalai and Panchen Lamas belong.

Blavatsky claimed to have lived in Tibet for some seven years (*circa* 1870) where she was given these secret teachings by Tibetan initiates. These claims have always been hotly disputed. Crowley himself expressly states that he didn't believe that she had ever been to Tibet. In the 19th century, Tibet was a 'closed' kingdom that very,

8. Published as 'The Secret Books of "Lam-Rim" and Dzyan' in H. P. Blavatsky, *Collected Writings*, Vol. 14, pp.422-424, Theosophical Publishing House, 1985.

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very few Westerners had ever visited. However, in 1854, British forces stationed on the Nepalese border reported detaining Blavatsky and preventing her entry into Tibet itself. In 1927, tales of a "white woman" travelling in northern Tibet around 1867 were recounted by elderly Tibetans to Major Cross, a British official serving on the staff of the Dalai Lama. He concluded from their descriptions that the woman was indeed Blavatsky.

Her claims to have travelled extensively in Tibet are not unique. Another woman, the writer Alexandria David-Neel (1898-1969), travelled through the Himalayan kingdom of Sikkim in 1911 and — having met Ekai Kawaguchi (1866-1945), a Japanese who had visited Lhasa in 1901 disguised as a Chinese doctor — made her first entry into Tibet in 1916.

Blavatsky's claim is therefore not as inconceivable as it first seems, especially as she was Russian. During the 19th century, the Russian Empire was expanding eastwards, leading, in part, to conflicts in Afghanistan during the mid-century. By the late 19th century, Russia had gained such a sphere of influence in Mongolia that many Mongolians began adopting Russian names. Encroachment into Tibet raised serious concerns in London that the Russian 'Bear' might pose a significant threat to British interests in India. Finally, in 1903, reports that Dorjiyev — a Mongolian agent of the Czar — had infiltrated the court of the Dalai Lama, launched the Younghusband Expedition to forcibly establish relations with Lhasa, resulting in the Dalai Lama fleeing into Mongolia and spending a period of exile in China.

We can see why a Russian woman's presence on the Tibetan border might have raised suspicion among British officers; having failed to gain entry from British India, Blavatsky could have found easier access to northern Tibet via Mongolia.

Crowley dismisses *The Book of the Golden Precepts* as a forgery that Blavatsky "humorously pretended" was "an ancient Tibetan writing". "The style of the whole treatise is characteristically occidental"<sup>9</sup> with Verse 18 even borrowing from Eliphaz Levi, "who was not (I believe) a Tibetan of antiquity."<sup>10</sup> Yet 'Frater O.M.' chose to publish 'The Way' with its "ancient Tibetan writing" as the frontispiece to his commentary on it.

9. Crowley, *The Voice of the Silence, The Equinox*, Vol. III. No.I. Samuel Weiser, 1995, p.34.

10. Crowley, *The Voice of the Silence*, p.15.



Crowley gives the drawing's numerical value as 71; indeed, the commentary is published as *Liber LXXI*. The value of the Hebrew letters *Lamed* (30), *Aleph* (1) and *Mem* (40) add up to 71. As Michael Staley has pointed out, the same Hebrew letters also spell ALM, 'silence'. Grant notes that ALIL, 'Image of Silence', also enumerates as 71.

Does the curious configuration of the Tibetan letters on the drawing, suggesting the form of the number 49, offer us another important key? Chapman believes it does.<sup>11</sup> He suggests that the number 49, together with the title 'The Way', connects the drawing specifically to Verse 49 of the first section of *The Voice of the Silence*:

*Thou canst not travel on the path before thou hast become that Path itself.* Crowley believed that this

verse implied the doctrine of the Dao:

*Only one who is an accomplished Taoist can hope to understand this verse, (see "The Hermit of Esopus Island," part of the Magical Record of 666, to be published in THE EQUINOX, Vol. III.)*

The concept of Dao, literally the 'Way', is very different from that of the Tibetan *lam*, for which 'path' is a better translation. As in *lam-rim* (i.e., the 'Stages of the Path' to Enlightenment), the Tibetan word implies a set of dogmatic beliefs and practices that lead ultimately towards a state of transcendence; it does not have any metaphysical 'reality'.

The Chinese character *dao* is a compound ideogram that combines the pictograph for 'head' (*shou*) and the glyph 'to go' (*chuo*). Originally the character may have been intended to indicate the course of a star, and early usages include 'direction' and 'to lead'. *Dao* as a noun for a 'path', 'road' or 'way' is a later development. The philosophical use of the term *Dao* emerged in the 4th century B.C.E. The most important text of philosophical Daoism is, of course, the *Daodejing*, the 'Classic of the Way and its Virtue' attributed to Laozi.

Chapman is, I think, correct in pointing out that the Tibetan letters LAM are configured on the drawing to suggest the number 49, linking the title of 'The Way' specifically with the 'Daoist' verse 49 of *The Voice of the Silence*.

According to Crowley in *Thien Tao*, his earliest published attempt to explore Daoist philosophy (February 1909), the 'great Tao' was "The result of subtracting the universe from itself".<sup>12</sup> However, the number

11. See Alan Chapman, *Chinese Whispers: The Origins of LAM*.

12. Crowley, 'Thien Tao', *Konx Om Pax*, The Teitan Press, 1990, p.58.



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49 is not significant because of a subtraction, but because it is the product of the multiplication of the number seven by itself.

Seven reverberates throughout Blavatsky's work well beyond the traditional seven planets. From the 7 Books of Kui-Te and the 7 *Stanzas of Dzyan* (see below) with its 7 sublime lords, 7 truths, 7 eternities and seven-fold division of 'radiant essence' in the world-egg through to the 7 Portals of *The Voice of the Silence*, the number seven recurs.

### **A 'Walk Across China'**

If the Tibetan *lam* is 'the path' of verse 49, then the Dao is 'the Path' that the traveller must become, and the Way leads us out of a Tibetan landscape into a Chinese one.

Crowley was familiar with this Chinese landscape. From late 1905 to early 1906 he had travelled

through the remote, south-western province of Yunnan — the famous ‘Walk Across China’. Writing many years later he recalled that:

*During my solitary wanderings among the mountainous wastes of Yunnan, the spiritual atmosphere of China penetrated my consciousness.*

Crowley, Introduction, *Tao Te Ching*, p.4

In his *Confessions*, he wrote that “the atmosphere of China had by this time begun to soak into my soul. Chinese art explained itself as inspired by Chinese nature”.<sup>13</sup> The scale of the physical geography seemed even vaster than that of the Himalayas, man and his diminutive ‘ant-heaps’ visibly determined by small vivid patches of colour in the vast expanse of landscape.

Yunnan borders Tibet in the north-west and had a well-established Tibetan population. During his visit, Crowley even heard stories of incursions into China by ‘the lamas’:

*The general weakening of imperial authority led to the outbreak of raids on the part of the Buddhist lamas who lived in remote serais perched upon the inaccessible crags of the mountains bordering Tibet. Bands of these monks swept down from their fastnesses to indulge in orgies of rapine, rape, murder and cannibalism.*

Crowley, *Confessions*, pp.474-475

13. Crowley, *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986, pp.486-487.

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He notes that it was the custom of these lamas to “devour the hearts and livers of their enemies to acquire their vitality and courage”. However, this wasn’t Crowley’s only encounter with cannibalism in Yunnan:

*The course of the Salween had not at that time been completely explored. There is not only fever but massacre in that romantic ravine. Part of it is inhabited by the Lolos (they are not vaudeville artists but tribes) reported to be exceedingly primitive and addicted to head hunting, kidney chasing, phallus fishing and testicle trapping, so that their cooks are famous for stewed spleen, pancreas puddings and appendix on toast.*

Crowley, *Confessions*, p. 481

Here we have yet another curious link with Madame Blavatsky. She believed that the Lolo, of “very high stature”, were in fact the descendants of an early race of giants that had once inhabited China.

*The last of a lost race of giants? The celebrated Chang Wu Gow (circa. 1870).*

*At 7ft 9ins, Chang was born in Fujian province, according to Blavatsky the location of a repository of ancient Lolo manuscripts.*

A very long way down the Yangtze River from its headwaters on the Tibetan-Chinese frontier, Blavatsky claimed that a ‘sacred library’

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-ted in coastal ‘Fo-kien’ (Fujian) province housing ancient manuscripts in the Lolo language. She believed that:

*... had these be got at and translated correctly, many a priceless piece of science would be found. But they are as rare as their language unintelligible.*

*... ~ar. one or two European archaeologists only have been able to procure such  
... :eless works.*

Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. II p.280, note

Crowley rightly pointed out, the Lolo are actually one of the many

■ ethnically distinct minorities that inhabit Yunnan. A tribe of the Yi people, the Lolo do have an ancient Tibeto-Burman language with its own distinctive written script. Superficially its numerous letters

resemble archaic Chinese characters, but Yi is actually a syllabic script which dates back at least to the seventh century C.E. In the days of Blavatsky and Crowley, its use was still restricted to the *bimaw*, shamanic ritual specialists.

Crowley's travels in the Yunnanese homeland of the Lolo are unlikely to have been prompted by Blavatsky's claim that they were the descendants of some early race possessing ancient knowledge. However, just over a year after his departure from China, Crowley wrote a 'Holy Book of Thelema' which was inspired by one of Blavatsky's 'secret books'.

### The Stanzas of Dzyan

*Liber Trigrammaton sub figure XXVII* was 'received' by Crowley on 14 October 1907. Although not dictated by a disembodied entity as was *The Book of the Law*, Crowley states that he "was not wholly conscious

— at the time of writing" and felt that he didn't have the right to "change much as the style of a letter".

*Liber Trigrammaton* is the only Class 'A' Holy Book of Thelema to use specifically Daoist symbols. Subtitled "a book of Trigrams of the mutations of the Tao with the Yin and Yang", *Liber Trigrammaton* consists of 27 three-line figures or trigrams composed of the various combinations of a single dot, representing the Dao; a solid line; and a broken line which, as in the *Yijing*, represented respectively the bright, active Yang and dark, quiescent Yin 'poles' of the Chinese Dyad. Each

— trigram has a short verse attached that describes the cosmogenic 'Fall' from the universe from the original purity of the Dao.

In his short commentary on *Liber Trigrammaton*, Crowley attempts to assign the letters of the English alphabet to the first 26 of its

— trigrams. For the purposes of illustration, we will look at the trigrams 2,  
— which are attributed respectively to the letters L, A and M.

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L

2. Now cometh the glory of the Single One, as an imperfection and stain.

Liber XXVII

This trigram represents the departure from the absolute 'Nothingness' of the Dao. The Yang line that emerges at the bottom symbolises light and movement, the first stirrings in the primordial chaos, but even its 'glory' is an 'imperfection' or 'stain on the original purity of the Dao.'

A

9. And the Master of the Temple balancing all things arose; his stature was above the Heaven and below Earth and Hell.

Liber XXVII

All three symbols occur in this trigram, but in an arrangement that reflects the Qabalistic Supernal Triad. The Dao retains its position at the top, guiding the light, active Yang line in the centre above the dark, quiescent Yin line below. In the *Yijing*, Yang represents Heaven whilst Yin symbolises Earth. 'Master of the Temple' is, of course, the first of the Supernal grades.

M

18. And the Black Brothers raised their heads; yea, they unveiled themselves without shame or fear.

Liber XXVII

Structurally the reverse of the 'Master of the Temple' trigram, the purity of the Dao is reduced to the lowest place and the 'light' of Yang concealed

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beneath the 'darkness' of Yin. The 'Black Brothers' are those who failed to annihilate their egos and complete their crossing of the Abyss. As noted above, verse 24 of 'The Seven Portals' section of *The Voice of the Silence* calls them the dreaded "Brothers of the Shadow - the murderers of their Souls".

Crowley calls *Liber Trigrammaton* a "highly theoretical work", full knowledge of which was "concealed from all". However, he freely acknowledged that *Liber Trigrammaton* was "an account of the cosmic process corresponding to the Stanzas of Dzyan in another system".

The *Stanzas of Dzyan* and that "other system" came via Madame Blavatsky. The seven *Stanzas of Dzyan* were part of the secret 'Books of Kui-te' she claimed to have received in Tibet. *Dzyan* may be a corruption of the *Gryud-sbe*, the Tibetan term for 'Tantra', but this is highly speculative.

The *Stanzas of Dzyan* does not employ lineal figures like *Liber Trigrammaton*, or the ancient Chinese oracle, the *Yijing*. However, in *The Secret Doctrine*, Blavatsky herself made a specific link between the *Stanzas of Dzyan* and the symbols of the *Yijing*. Attacking prevalent Western missionary attitudes toward the *Yijing*, she said that the:

*"divining straws" and the "tortoise", the "symbolic sets of lines" ...are laughed to scorn... so the author and his colleagues will scoff no doubt at the Stanzas given in our text, for they represent precisely the same idea.*

*[Confucius] is laughed at for speaking of the "Sacred Tortoise". No unprejudiced person can see any great difference between a tortoise and a lamb as candidates for sacredness.*

Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol I, p.441

The emphases in this quote are Blavatsky's. The 'straws' are the yarrow stalks used in *Yijing* divination, and the 'tortoise' refers to the legend that the mythical Sage-Emperor Fuxi discovered the eight trigrams on the shell of a tortoise.

Crowley appears to have had his first contact with the *Yijing* in Shanghai at the very end of his travels in China. On 17 April 1906 he records in his diary "Yi King from Club, puzzling". This is the earliest reference I have found to the *Yi* in Crowley's works. He had certainly become very familiar with it by the time he drew 'The Way': the Amalantrah Working contains over 60 requests for a 'Chinese symbol'

i.e., a *Yijing* hexagram). *Liber Trigrammaton*, written less than two years after Shanghai, may reflect his initial attempts to solve this particular Chinese 'puzzle'.

The *Stanzas of Dzyan* describe the formation of a cosmic egg in the "Eternal parent" slumbering in the darkness of the "Boundless All"

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(Stanza I). As the last "vibration of the seventh eternity thrills" and the mother "swells like a bud of the lotus", a solitary ray of light emanates to divide the virgin world egg (Stanza II). From the egg emerges the "radiant child of the two", the "unparalleled refulgent glory" who shines forth as the "blazing divine dragon of wisdom" (Stanza III).

It is interesting to note that, in addition to Crowley, H. P. Lovecraft also took inspiration from Blavatsky's work and included references to 'The Book of Dzyan' in several of his stories, the earliest in *The Hunter of the Dark* (1935).

### **"It's all in the Egg"**

A Chinese creation myth attributed to the fourth century Daoist adept Ge Hong (283-343 C.E.) tells of Pan Gu (literally the 'ancient vessel',

i.e., cosmogonic egg) who separates light and dark like a chick *in ova* and chisels the universe out of the 'uncarved block' of the Dao. It has also been noted that the numerous creation myths found in the Bon religion of Tibet have two constant factors: a cosmic egg and the dualistic nature of creation.<sup>14</sup>

The egg emerges as an important symbol in the Amalantrah Working. The Working began in New York on 14 January 1918 with an opium-pipe vision by Crowley's latest 'Scarlet Woman', Roddie Minor (1884-1979). Crowley was finally distracted from writing *Liber Aleph* by her rambling something about an egg. The egg had also been an important symbol in an earlier series of communications known as the Abuldiz Working of 1911.

The entity with which they were now in contact called himself Amalantrah. Sessions continued over the next few weeks, with Crowley asking questions through Minor, who had been given the name 'Achitha' by Amalantrah. In February they were joined by cabaret artiste Elsa Linke, Soror Barzedon; vaudeville star Eva Tanguay (1878-1947), Soror Darola; and Dorothy Troxel, Soror Wesrun, then a musician from Ohio. Charles Stansfeld Jones, Frater Arcteon, arrived in March.

The first vision of the egg was described by Soror Achitha:

*I asked, again for a message and saw an egg in which were many many tiny convolutions of some flesh-like substance which would form something. The egg was placed in an oblong as in a picture. Around it were clouds, trees,*

14. Philippe Cornu, *Tibetan Astrology*, Shambhala Publication Inc., 1997, p.20.

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*mountains and water, called the 'four elements'. A camel appeared in front of the whole picture.*

*The wizard was very happy and satisfied looking. He sat down and reached out his hand and had me sit down beside him. As we watched the boy he put his left arm around me tenderly and placed my head on the left side of his chest near the shoulder.*

*He said, "It's all in the egg."*

The Amalantrah Working, 14 January 1918

On 3 February, Achitha saw the egg on a pylon and said "we are to go to Egypt" for the small golden key which might be at the centre of the egg. On 12 February Crowley asked whether he was going to do any "great work at the altar we are going to set up in Egypt whence we are going to find that egg?" Amalantrah replied:

*The egg is a work which must be done - the great work. By doing the work we get to the key.*

One of the most surreal visions of the entire Amalantrah Working : occurred on 20 April 1918. Soror Achitha had a vision of a beautiful bell that changed into a foetus. The head of the foetus turned into an egg which rose upwards and then rested on a lotus flower. When asked what this meant, she was given an image of a winged ladder "which rises to heaven".

The following week, on 27 April, the egg made its final appearance. It was now seen resting on the point of a mountain, surrounded by water with lotus flowers on it. Crowley interjected that the "Egg is symbol of some new knowledge, isn't it?" and asked "How are we to break open the egg?" The answer was:

*In plain language it means Thou art to go this Way.*

A frustrated Crowley objected that it wasn't "plain language" and, after intervention by Arcteon, the connection with Amalantrah was lost. Returning to the vision, Achitha said:

*Going into the Mother to be born again, you get a New Life and then the Earth is covered with wonderful flowers, and bees come to the flowers to get honey to store, and the honey is stored elixir.*

Arcteon asked again, "How does this apply to breaking open the egg?", but his question was met only with an

abrupt “No...” and a further vision of the egg resting in a lotus flower.

The shape of the head of ‘Lam’, with its enlarged cranium and arrowing face leading down to a pointed chin, does appear to link  
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Crowley’s drawing with the egg symbol in the Amalantrah Working. However, the high, domed head is not unknown in East Asian iconography.

The so-called ‘Three Stars’ of Wealth, Happiness and Longevity are very popular in Chinatowns and restaurants throughout the world, even today. Among the three, Shouxing, the God of Longevity, is usually depicted as a venerable old man, often with a wizened face, a long white beard, wearing a yellow robe and carrying a staff. His distinguishing

*Calligraphic image of Shouxing with stylised phallic head and body outline composed of seven characters in a cursive, talismanic script reading ‘Dao penetrates Heaven & Earth and has qualities beyond form’. After an undated composition by ‘Yuan Shen’ (i.e. ‘Original Spirit’).*

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attribute, however, is his exaggeratedly large, bald head. In Japan, where he is known as Fukurokuju, his head is further elongated to at least a third of his body height and, in folk art, even extended into a phallus.

According to legend, Shouxing was a Daoist adept who was born with an unusually large head after a nine-year gestation period and was believed to have achieved immortality. His cult is probably much older than the popular myths and legends that surround him. *Shouxing* literally means ‘star of long life’ and he is identified with *Canopus*, the star that in Chinese astrology was believed to govern the life-span of mortals.

Whilst tradition tells us about Shouxing’s enlarged head, it offers no explanation as to why it was so large. It almost certainly symbolises the accumulation of *Qi* energy as a result of his Daoist alchemical practices. In certain forms of Daoist internal alchemy, refined *Qi* energy is gathered in the head to form the ‘immortal foetus’.

Chapter 55 of the *Daodejing*, in which a newly-born infant is described as having soft bones, weak tendons but tightly clenched fists, is often cited as the *locus classicus* by Daoist writers for the practice of ‘Embryonic Breathing’. The adept will even adopt the foetal position whilst practising breathing exercises designed to generate the ‘immortal foetus’.

According to the 19th century Daoist Master Zhao Bi Chen, the ‘immortal foetus’ is gestated for 10 months by concentrating the mind on it. To give it birth, however, the practitioner must, at the right moment, detach his thoughts completely from the foetus itself:

*When the practiser sees flying snow and falling flowers, he should, in order to leave the immortal foetus, hasten to give rise to the thought of leaping into the great emptiness, which will open the heavenly gate of the sun and the moon (i.e. the two eyes) which he now, free from feelings and passions, and in accord with (essential nature), should roll so that the two lights meet.*

*Taoist Yoga*, Lu K’uan Yu, p. 162

The foetus emerges from the ‘Heavenly Gate’ at top of the head as the immortal body of the practitioner.

Crowley was very probably familiar with images of Shouxing in New York’s Chinatown. In an unpublished piece written whilst in America, entitled ‘Chance?’, Crowley says of himself:

*On my honour, I don’t know if he is a Chinaman or not...*

*He is entirely bald, although still young. His face reminded me a little of the great Napoleon, but more of Ho Tai, that smiling god with the huge abdomen whose image one sees in all the Chinese shops ...*

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Ho Tai, Japanese Hotei, was a popular representation of a jovial tenth century Chinese Buddhist monk

who was identified with the Maitreya, the future or Laughing Buddha. A statue of Ho Tai can be seen behind Jones in a photograph of him in the 'dragon' asana, published as the frontispiece to 'A Master of the Temple' in the Blue Equinox.

Crowley was, therefore, obviously aware of the popular Chinese iconography with which he came into contact. It is less likely that in 1918 he would have had access to arcane sources of Daoist alchemical practices, at least by conventional means. *The Voice of the Silence* does, however, make reference to spiritualised bodies.

Verse 38 of 'The Two Paths' section refers to the *Nirmanakaya*, *Sambhogakaya*, and the *Dharmakaya*. The *Trikaya* taught that a Buddha had three progressively rarefied bodies: the *Nirmanakaya* was the physical vehicle; the *Sambhogakaya* was encountered in dreams, visions and meditation; and the *Dharmakaya*, literally the 'truth body', was the essential embodiment of an enlightened being.

'The Two Paths' refer to these bodies as robes or "vestures of the Path". Crowley's commentary focuses on the *Dharmakaya*:

*The Dharmakaya body is what may be described as the final sublimation of an individual. It is a bodiless flame on the point of mingling with the infinite flame. A description of the state of one who is in this body is given in "The Hermit of Aesopus Island."*

Crowley, *The Voice of the Silence*, pp.54-55

Sadly, *The Hermit of Aesopus Island* was never published. Crowley feared that the diary containing it had been "irretrievably lost", probably destroyed by Jones after his disassociation from Crowley.<sup>15</sup> We therefore do not know to whom or what Crowley is referring. However, it is clear that he had some form of experience of a "traveller on the path who had become the Path itself", to paraphrase Verse 49 of *The Voice of the Silence*.

The vision of the foetus in the Amalantrah Working; the appearance of the foetus; the transformation of its head into the egg; its ascent to rest on a lotus flower; the winged ladder "which goes to heaven"; the return to a primordial womb, to be re-born to a new life; the carpet of beautiful flowers, and the bees collecting and storing honey: these images are all highly evocative of Daoist alchemical symbolism.

15. Crowley, *Magick Without Tears*, New Falcon Publications, 1994, Chapter XXXVII, p.243.

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If, as Crowley suspected, the egg represented "some new knowledge", then access to it, according to Amalantrah "in plain language", was to "go this Way" — the very title Crowley gives to his mysterious foetus-like drawing. Could the portrait of 'Lam' then actually be a representation of an Immortal Foetus?

### **The Hermit of Esopus Island**

Early in the Working, on 20 January, Soror Achitha had asked Amalantrah who she was. He had replied that she was "Part of the Tao". Evidently, the entity was familiar with the Way and, although the record of the Working ends on 16 June 1918, it was not to be the last communication from Amalantrah.

In the summer of 1918, Crowley made his way up the Hudson River for a 'magical retirement' on the uninhabited Esopus Island. Having spent the money given to him for provisions on red paint, he daubed the cliffs with "Do What Thou Wilt". Here he would undergo a transformation: his Chinese persona, 'Kwaw Li-ya', would be reborn as the Immortal 'Ko Hsuan'.

Crowley had assumed the persona of 'Kwaw' on arrival in New York in 1915. 'Kwaw Li-ya' is in fact the Chinese phonetic transliteration of his surname. From the characters he uses on the title page of *Thien Tao*, it can be rendered as he of 'elegant ritual fortifications'.<sup>16</sup> In August 1915, Kwaw had appeared in *Vanity Fair* dressed in full mandarin regalia. The editor's note, probably written by Crowley himself, describes Professor Kwaw "of the university of Pekin" as:

*The most famous of the small group of Chinese poets known as the Yung Chang school. Of the Shen Si - or landed gentry class - he has devoted his great wealth to travelling and to studying the literatures of other nations. A fanatical adherent of the fallen Emperor, his latter years have been spent in exile from his native valleys. He is now passing a few months in New York. In religion he is a strict Taoist, and is the author of the politico-mystical romance entitled "Thien Tao" or "The Way of Heaven". He is perhaps best known because of his five volumes of aphorisms.*

16. 'Kwaw' makes his first appearance only three months after Crowley's return from China, in the introductory notes to the *Scented Garden of Abdullah the Satirist of Shiraz*. The notes, written in July 1906, make passing references to the spurious "Chinese Aphorisms of Kwaw" which contained "obscene" and "nameless bestialities". See Crowley, *Scented Garden of Abdullah the Satirist of Shiraz*, Introduction, pp. 10, 11 and 14.

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Crowley's interest in Chinese philosophy appears to have reached its height on Esopus Island. In his commentary to verse 49 of *The Voice of the Silence*, he promised to publish his record of the magical retirement in a future issue of *The Equinox*. As seen above, he never did. Crowley's remarks in the Introduction to his 'translation' of the *Tao Te Ching*, and his recollection of the events in *Confessions*, form an incomplete account.

Crowley tells us that it was during the 'Walk Across China' that the "philosophy of Lao-tzu communicated itself" to him, and that the *Daodejing* "revealed its simplicity and sublimity to my soul". Despite his attempts to encourage others to study Laozi's classic, he felt that the available translations, although technically accurate, failed to convey the spirit of the text.

It is interesting to note that Richard Wilhelm (1873-1930), who translated the *Daodejing* in 1910, remarked:

*It has to be said that more than one uninhibited rendering of the ancient sage's work has been published that is based not on the Chinese text, but on an intuitive interpretation of what others — less inspired — had failed to grasp in terms of philosophical depth.*

Wilhelm, *Tao Te Ching*, Preface, p.vii

Crowley resolved to remedy the situation by paraphrasing the Legge translation. However, even he seems to have found interpretation of the central concept, the *Dao*, almost an "insoluble problem". Therefore:

*I appealed to an Adept named Amalantrah, with whom I was at that time in almost daily communion. He came readily to my aid, and exhibited to me a codex of the original.*

Crowley, Introduction, *Tao Te Ching*, p. 10

The title page of *Liber CLVII, Tao Te Ching*, confirms that it is "translated from the Code manifested in the Akasha by 729 the Wizard Amalantrah." This suggests that Crowley himself 'saw' the work in the astral. By contrast, from the surviving record of the Amalantrah Working, visions of that Working were seen by Soror Achitha and others; Crowley was unable to communicate directly with Amalantrah.

It is difficult, from a purely scholarly perspective, to identify exactly what Crowley claims to have seen. Internal evidence, the vocabulary used, and meter, indicate that it was, like many Chinese classics, a composite work formed during the late 3rd to early 4th centuries B.C.E.

Three slightly different versions of the *Daodejing* were in circulation during antiquity. The *Heshang Gong* version thought to date from the

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3rd century B.C.E., had a preface written by Ge Xuan (see below). A later manuscript of this text, dated 270 C.E., was discovered in the Dunhuang caves in the 1920s. Since then, two complete silk manuscripts have been recovered from a tomb sealed in 168 B.C.E. These, however, have the 'De' section before the 'Dao' section, reversing the traditional arrangement of the text. The oldest recovered version, excavated at



Guodian, is dated to the early 4th century B.C.E. and includes 14 previously unknown verses, but omits altogether the famous first verse: “The Dao that can be told is not the eternal Dao”.

I suppose that I also have to take into account Crowley’s own prefatory comment that:

*If any sinologist object to anything in this translation, let him go absorb his  
Yang in his own Yin, as the Americans say; and give me credit for an original  
Masterpiece. Whatever Lao Tze said or meant, this is what I say and mean.*

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Crowley is correct, of course, when he says “whatever Lao Tze said or meant, this is what I say and mean”. We can give him credit for his Masterpiece; not of Daoism, though, but for a subtle Thelemic interpretation of Daoism.

Whatever Crowley actually saw on Esopus Island, the effect on him was remarkable. On 5 September he recorded that in “a single instant I had the Key to the whole of the Chinese wisdom”.<sup>17</sup>

He completed his “translation” in three days and also made a paraphrase of the *Qingjing jing*’ (*King Khang King, Liber XXI*). Literally ‘the Classic of Purity and Quiescence’, it is now thought to have been a syncretic text dating from the Tang period (618-907 B.C.E.), presenting Daoist philosophical ideas in the literary form of a Buddhist sutra.

The *Qingjing jing* is traditionally attributed to the great Daoist philosopher and adept Ge Xuan (164-244 C.E), and it was during his magical retirement on Esopus Island that Crowley recovered his magical memory of a previous incarnation as Ge Xuan. Using an old form of transliterations, Crowley gives him variously as Ko Hsuan or Ko Yuen: *Xuan* (hsuan) as in ‘dark’, ‘deep’, ‘profound’, ‘mysterious’; and *yuan* (yuen) as in ‘first’, ‘head’, ‘primal’, are both epithets of the Dao.

Ge Xuan’s great-nephew, Ge Hong (283-343 C.E.), attributes part of his own seminal work on Daoist internal alchemy, *Baopuzi*, to Ge Xuan.

17. Crowley, *Confessions*, p.871.

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Ge Chaofu (fl. late 4th century C.E.), another distant relative and founder of the Lingbao or ‘Numinous Treasure’ school of Daoism claimed that the Lingbao scriptures were originally obtained by Ge Xuan. Renowned for his magical powers, Ge Xuan was believed to have been able to remain underwater for long periods using ‘foetal breathing techniques and to have finally achieved immortality.

Had ‘Ko Hsuan’, the ‘mysterious’, reincarnated as the mandarin ‘Kwaw Li-ya’ and, as it is told in *Thien Tao*, “reduced the Universe to the Yang and the Yin and their permutations in the trigrams of Fo-hi [Fuxi] and hexagrams of King Wu” before swimming across the Yellow Sea with the aid of an Abramelin square to save the Japanese nobility from degradation by “cheesemongers”? Or had ‘Kwaw’, the Hermit of Esopus Island, as *Thien Tao* has it, “abolished the Yin and the Yang” and, becoming “united with the great Tao”, given birth to the Immortal ‘K: Yuen’, the ‘primordial’?<sup>18</sup>

When the fourth century B.C.E. Daoist philosopher Zhuangzi once awoke from a dream, he couldn’t remember whether he had been dreaming that he was a butterfly or whether he was actually a butterfly dreaming that he was a man.

## Conclusion

*At the farther end was a high stone dais reached by five steps; and there on a golden throne sat a lumpish figure robed in yellow silk figured with red and having a yellow silken mask over its face.*

*The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*

Crowley’s intriguing drawing ‘The Way’ might have lain forgotten except for the interest taken in it by the

young Kenneth Grant. At the Spring Equinox of 1987 e.v. he issued the 'Lam Statement' founding the Cult of the *Dikpala* of the Way of Silence.<sup>19</sup> This was a foundational document of the myth that we have been examining, and upon which Grant elaborated in his later works to encompass Lovecraft's fictional Leng.

We have found factual, historical evidence of some elements of the myth. The strange symbols on the drawing connect it with Tibet. We have a remote, forbidding plateau in western Tibet with pre-historic

18. Crowley, 'Thien Tao', *Konx Om Pax*, p.58.

19. *Dikpala* is a Sanskrit term for guardians of the directions in Hindu and Buddhist Vajrayana traditions.

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stone temples, secret books written in the lost languages of long- vanished races, as well as tantric sects (the Drukpa) and an even older magical tradition (Bon) both accused of "blasphemous" rites.

All of the various threads from which the myth is woven lead back to the context in which Crowley first published 'The Way'. However, at the heart of the myth we have found a 'mystery of mysteries': Blavatsky and the Beast.

On his title page of *The Voice of the Silence*, Crowley gives Blavatsky the degree of a *Magister Templi*, a tacit acknowledgement perhaps of the debt that he owed to her as a predecessor as 'Master of the Temple'. In *The Heart of the Master* (1938), he admitted openly that she had been his immediate predecessor in the 'Temple of Truth'; and, in 'The Three Schools of Magick' written towards the end of his life, Crowley describes Blavatsky as a messenger "sent forth into the Western world" by the Yellow Adepts. That School possessed one "perfect classic", the *Daodejing*, 'The Way and Its Power'.<sup>20</sup>

If we lift the yellow veil that conceals the identity of the mysterious high priest of Leng, do we find an inscrutable face with strange, long, narrow eyes, high cheekbones and large, domed head? Crowley purposely titled his drawing 'The Way'. I believe that it is a "psychochrome" of an 'Adept of the Yellow School', an 'Immortal Foetus', truly a 'babe of the abyss'. In his diary, Crowley called it 'The Lama'. His interpretation of that term was 'He who Goeth'. To use the terminology of *The Voice of the Silence*, the portrait is a "vesture" of one who has "become the Path itself".

Can we now name the high-priest of Leng who is 'not-to-be- described'? Evidently 'Lam' is not a name but a term, a convenient label. As Crowley has it Chapter XXV, 'Images of the Mystery' of his *Tao Te Ching*, "I do not know its name. I call it Tao ..." <sup>21</sup>

*This article was in preparation at the time of the announcement of the death of the late Kenneth Grant. It is respectfully dedicated to his memory.*

GWD

20. Crowley, 'The Three Schools of Magick', *Magick Without Tears*, Chaps. 6, 7 and 8.

21. Crowley, *Tao Te Ching*, Samuel Weiser Inc., 1995, p.40.

# The Unity of Toltec and Thelema

Eric N. Peterson

## The Unity of Toltec and Thelema

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o those who do not penetrate the surface of things, the Toltec and Thelemic ways of attainment comprise two different beasts.

Historically, the two traditions emerge on different continents. They use different languages. They organize the transmission of the *dharma* differently. They train initiates differently Yet these apparent differences are only so many maze patterns and maze materials in the particular Labyrinth in which one finds oneself now. To claim that these external wrappings constitute the traditions is in a sense to ill-use them, to confuse the Moon for the Sun. In each case, the Minotaur *Asterion*, the sometime river god of Argos, lies at the centre of its particular labyrinth. The Beast and the Scarlet Woman are identical with the Nagual and the Nagual Woman, and each pair mates by a mysterious and chthonic kinship.

The unity of the Toltec and Thelemic lines also now flowers historically. Mysterious possibilities open in the Dreaming. Alien games bubble through the hot lava and magma of the American Continents and undulate the water of the global deep — earthy and chaotic passages of the Leviathan seed slithering the 93 current into the sacred womb of Mother Earth. Note well: the urgent confusion of traditions in this emerging universe is not a relaxation of effort and attention but a true alchemical fusion, powerful and precise — willful.

A study of contemporary Toltec artistic practice illuminates the essential unity of the Toltec and Thelemic lines in this historical moment and, within correctly aligned Toltec productions, presents a doorway into chambers flowering with 93 lightning. Toltec art is not characterized by the repetition or evolution of cultural forms such as pottery styles,

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traditional dances, or story lines. Indeed, Toltec art is not characterized by its external form at all, but by a particular inner alignment of the artist that in this moment may be called *love under will*.<sup>1</sup> Toltec art is nothing less than, or other than, magick enacted communally.

Amongst Thelemites who read this claim, suspicions may arise. Art is necessarily a public activity in that it involves an audience. Why would a true magician do his or her magick before a gathering of people — particularly if many are uninitiated — rather than in his or her private temple? Two cultural biases tend to distort the Thelemic reception of Toltec practices. First, Thelemites who have been reared in modern society may think of art as a fundamentally horizontal activity, as one whose intent and effect is to produce changes on the worldly, Malkuthian plane. Perhaps art is intended to change society. Perhaps it is to change the psyche of an individual. Perhaps it is nothing more than the aesthetic exploration of the artist. In all of those cases, the artistic act would be purely horizontal. The artist would intend to change the manifested world but not to evolve the being, which is the true purpose of magick. From this perspective, how could Toltec art further love under will?

The historical development of Thelemic institutions forms yet another cultural factor tending to obscure the magickal significance of Toltec art. Historically, the most well-known public Thelemic gatherings involve fraternal and horizontal organizations such as the O.T.O. — that is to say, organizations whose primary intent is to change what is manifested, to change society, rather than to foster the magickal transformation of its members. Even when such organizations provide public rituals, give private initiations, and teach magick, they do so as part of their mission of seeding a society capable of sustaining the 93 current, not as essentially initiatory bodies. Of course nothing is stopping O.T.O. members from advancing magickally, and many do. The point is that within the Thelemic tradition, public group workings have been associated (accidentally and historically) with horizontal, external work.

In Thelema, the vertical work — that of evolving, of ascending the great Chain of Being, of inner alchemy — has been exemplified historically by Crowley's A.\A.\, with its one-to-one structure of transmission and supervision, and thus has been conceived of as happening in private, usually alone and away from the eyes of society. As a consequence of prevailing cultural conceptions of art and of magickal work, many Thelemites will be inclined to overlook the magickal significance of Toltec art.

1. *The Book of the Law* 1:57.

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In order to relax this cultural bias, two aspects of artistic production must be distinguished at the outset. Necessarily, the external manifestation of artistic production is horizontal, acting upon Malkuth. However, as will be seen, the internal movement of the Thelemo-Toltec magician in producing art is essentially vertical; it is only through transforming him- or herself that the artist may allow the current to flow through the art.

Toltec artistic production may be more easily seen as vertical magick once it is understood that Toltecs adopt communalism, not for social purposes, but as a technical strategy for spiritual attainment, externalizing the various planetary representatives just as Golden Dawn magicians do through the use of officers in their temple rituals. Toltec apprentices and magicians occupy posts within the temple, even on occasions of public performance. They take up and embody particular aspects of consciousness and act in concert with the lead invocant. It will be seen that magickal art flourishes within the Toltec community precisely because it is a vertical organization. Toltec art is an act of love under will within a communal context. It emerges in the exchange between Master and students. It exists to benefit the magical community, the *sangha*. At the centre of this arrangement stands the Toltec artist, whose work is to produce an inner arrangement, albeit with outward effects. His work is to become formless with intent.

#### **Toltec Art: Formlessness and Pure Will**

In a talk on Toltec art of 24 June, 2010, Koyote the Blind illuminated the quality that makes a work of art distinctly Toltec. Just as Zen art work can be recognized as such, Toltec art has a recognizable essence. Unlike Zen art, however, Toltec art is not characterized by its external form. It is not limited to any particular style. It is not even limited by particular stylistic principles. It could, in principle, look or sound like anything at all. Toltec art could take the external form of the Blues. It could take the form of cooking for the family. It could take the form of *sumi-e* painting. It is formless: there is no limit to its potential external form. Toltec artistic style as such is void.

Toltec art nevertheless has a particular smell, an alien earthiness that is lava from the deepest crevices of the sea — volcanic emissions it once of fire and gas and water and the darkest magma of Mother Earth. There is a Panic freedom and wildness that may or may not be filed. The artist creates from a place of pure potential. In Silence and <sup>T</sup>h unbending intent, he unifies continually with the womb of his

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artistic materials. In every moment of that artistic act, Beastly Chaos merges with Babalon, the Woman infinitely desirable. Within the space of that artistic creation, formlessness and exacting form, horror and ecstasy — all opposites — unify in a deafening, cataclysmic silence of no-time. All of this according to the will of the Master.

The Toltec artist bears a particular intent for each act of creation and pursues it ruthlessly. *Intent* is a key Toltec concept that may be defined as single-pointedness of action. The Toltec artist, however, views action internally, as a unified ray of being-moving-feeling that moves inexorably from nothingness and transforms the manifested. The Toltec artist's intent is *sui generis*, arising from itself. His <sup>2</sup> intent is simple; it is nothing but itself. It is *sui mortis*, dying into itself. The Toltec artist bears his intent through creation. In doing so, he brooks no considerations of any kind. He does not care if anyone likes what he does. He does not care if it educates or if it entertains. He does not fear punishment. He does not desire praise.

According to Koyote, Toltec art takes as its ultimate intent *transformation*. That is to say, whatever the particular intent of the moment, in every moment he renews his commitment to “liberation from the chains of ordinary existence, or the attainment of objective consciousness”<sup>3</sup> — always, it should be remembered, in a mode of passing the knowledge on to the community that forms the ever-present background of the Toltec mode of working. A rather lengthy excerpt of Koyote’s own words will be helpful at this point:

*In the Tree of Life, you have the bottom sphere, Malkuth, the material world, your physical body in its grossest form. This is connected to three aspects of yourself. It is connected on the one hand to your intellect, your mind; and on the other hand it is connected to your heart, your feelings, your emotions, your love.*

*They all are felt through the body. Your feelings and emotions have an effect on the body, as do your thoughts. They happen to you because you have this body.*

*There is another sphere right above the physical, and we can call that the Moon ... That sphere is connected to your sexuality, to your sensuality ... All of this forms the most immediate aspects of your Tonal. It is how you are made up ...*

*It is what is manifested in this incarnation. It is what you can perceive as being part of yourself. These are the elements, the basic building blocks you’ll be working with as an artist ... You have to work with that to create, to make a work of art.*

2. I use the masculine pronoun to emphasize that the Toltec artist of any gender is masculine in respect to intent. The artist is necessarily the initiator of intent, by definition. Intent does not “happen”.
3. See the article *infra* ‘On Toltec Art’ by Koyote the Blind, p.67.

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*... For someone to create art, then, was not just a thing that you did, not a painting, sculpture, poem. It was the arrangement of this thing that you are in all its facets, all the ones that you can perceive.*

*... When an artistic piece was then created for the Toltec, they were not just looking at the outward manifestation, but for this act of creation to align things in a specific way to produce that ‘on’ effect in you; a mixture of mind, emotion, feeling, and body. The combination of those gave rise to the art.*

*... The creative process involves all of these centres for the Toltec, and gives rise to another element that moves in a different direction that is none of these three. This triggers, gives rise to, the alchemical process. It is the basis for the process of transformation, the actual inner path of evolution.<sup>4</sup>*

Koyote tells of a harmonization between mind, emotions, and movements within artistic production, a horizontal arrangement that allows a vertical movement. In Koyote’s own art of the Telling, improvised story, intentionally-produced mood, and precise gestures (*mudra*) form the outward expression of the artist’s inner alignment around a single intent. The harmonization is achieved through the dedication of each of these centres to a single end, to a precise knowledge (gnosis) that is then locked within the production. Particularly in the case of Toltec visual arts, in which an artifact remains to be interacted with after production, the gnosis locked within may be unlocked by those who have the ability to arrange their own minds, hearts, and bodies so as to form a key:

*The Toltecs believed that the state of being of the artist impregnated whatever it was they were doing. The resulting work of art was then an artifact — something made, something created, but which was at the same time vibrant and alive, full of knowledge, full of the mood created by the exact arrangement of these three inner constituents. If the artist had been able to go beyond the face of the Tonal, beyond the face of ordinary existence, and through the art had been able to connect to higher forces, to higher knowledge, to higher consciousness, then that too would be present in the work of art ... That vibration of consciousness, that intelligence, could then be accessed by someone else if they simply applied the keys in the right way. If that other person aligned her thoughts, her emotions, her posture, and her energy in a certain way, that alignment would activate the vibration that existed in this work of art; and in doing so, the art would communicate to that other in a direct way the knowledge, the experience, and the mood of the artist when he created it.<sup>5</sup>*

What we have in Koyote’s account is an elucidation of the inner workings of Will as expressed

through art. In *The Book of the Law* 1:44, we read, “For pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result, is every way perfect.” The will of the Toltec artist is pure in that

4. Ibid, pp. 72-74

5. Ibid, p.74

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the ego exerts no influence. He has mastered his mind so that habitual thoughts do not arise. Rather, his mind moves in the disciplined, continuous, and intentional way that will be familiar to practitioners of the Qabalah.

The Toltec artist has also mastered his heart so that he is not subject to automatic reactions. Rather, he is able to produce emotions at will. These emotions are objective, able to be felt by any who are present and certainly by those who unlock the artifact.

The Toltec artist has also mastered his movements. Far from the unconscious twitching of the ordinary person, his movements are intentional, serving the invocation. This subjugation of his demons constitutes the purity of his will. No unconscious manifestations of his lower soul mar the purity. His instrument is clean so that his will may be pure.

The Toltec artistic act of creation is also unassuaged of purpose. It is an end in itself: exacting to be sure, precise in its invocational intent, but arising from itself and aiming at nothing beyond itself. Koyote states, “... for the Toltec, art was not something to be done to earn praise or to make money or to show off ... It was not about feeling creative ... It was not about a social message. It was not about representing a spiritual truth ... It was not about describing the divine.”<sup>6</sup> Elsewhere, Koyote comments that artistic creation is an “act [that] is its own project, is its own cause”.<sup>7</sup> Thus, not only does nothing inside the artist distort the creative act, but nothing outside pulls it one way or another. The act is done in complete freedom relative to intent, responsible only to itself. It arises from, abides in, and returns to the Void.

Toltec creation is delivered from the lust of result. Simply put, no anxiety about the act can arise to interfere because no space of duality necessary for reflection opens during the creation; all resources of mind, heart, and body are channeled toward that single intent. Thus Koyote states, “Before that [act] is done, the person can measure, calculate, debate within himself all he wants. Once you have decided to take action, once you take the first step, go through with it. Do it. And own the consequences. That simplicity of action. The doing, the thinking, the feeling: they are all one. Not two.”<sup>8</sup> This utter unity or, really, voidness that is the culmination of pure will is described precisely in the very

6. Ibid, p.75.

7. Ibid, p.82.

8. Ibid, p.82.

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next verse in *The Book of the Law*: “The Perfect and the Perfect are one Perfect and not two; nay, are none!”<sup>9</sup>

The discussion illustrates the distinction between intent and purpose. Purpose is a movement outward toward some desired end, by one who conceives of himself as separate from that end and from the object of that end. Or at least that is how we normally talk about purpose. Toltec intent, by contrast, unifies the inward and the outward, accessing the space of the void. The Toltec master artist is one who exercises a capacity for perfect simplicity of action. As Koyote comments, “[Before the training of the initiate] ... body, *emotion*, mind, subconscious, desire, dreams, sex ... is divided ... When the duality has been eliminated through silence, which is the

2=0 formula, then you ■ Ave a vehicle capable of reflecting the light of your inner star.” Intent .  
5 the engagement of such a vehicle in a single act. Intent that reflects the light of one’s inner star  
is a unit of True Will.

The Toltec artist, then, is, like his art, formless in this sense: although he takes a particular form during any given moment of creation, he rests in none of those postures. No form is “his.” His body, mind, emotions, and sexuality are as much tools to him as a paintbrush might be, and are subject to his chosen intent. The Artist himself is not part of the *Tonal* — the knowable world — although he expresses his intent through it; he is the *Nahual*. The idea that he would use artistic expression in order to find relief from his loneliness, or to spread a moral, or to enjoy the sensations of that act, is anathema to Toltec art. Such effects might chance to occur, but they must be side effects. Tendencies to seek such outcomes — accretions upon the bare centre of consciousness — must be purified and dissolved before a single act of creation — of invocation — can take place. In order for true creation to occur, something additional to the mere rearrangement of elements must occur. That something else is an influx of higher forces, higher intelligence. That influx of pure creative energy can only happen when egocentric desire-forces have been eliminated from the equation.

For the Toltec artist, then, the false centre of consciousness called “me” has no place except perhaps as another tool in fulfilling the intent, which fact necessitates that the ego has been tamed. In creating, the Toltec artist dedicates his resources fully to his intent, limited only by the laws to which he has consciously bound himself and by the limits of those materials. Here one may find echoes of “The

- *The Book of the Law* 1:45.

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word of Sin is Restriction.”<sup>10</sup> The true Toltec artist creates with utter freedom, in love under will.

### **The Tequihua Artist as The Thelemic Magician: Temple Formation**

Nothing I have said so far implies that every Toltec is a Thelemite or *vice versa*. Indeed, many a Toltec operates in an old Aeonic mode, for example in caring nothing for the magical development of party members who might otherwise have come to shine the light of their individual stars. Likewise, of course, very few Thelemites are Toltecs. Rather I speak of a particular two-fold development. First is the present possibility of perfecting Toltec art in a Thelemic context. Second is the actual manifestation of a Toltec-Thelemic line that is moving along just such a trajectory. The former development constitutes an accident of history: the Toltec mystery school has for the last thousand years constituted itself in hiding, using the available cultural materials and conditions. The present conditions now include the prevailing Law of Thelema. The latter development constitutes, now, a magickal necessity created through will: the foundation for a Toltec volcanic temple has in fact been laid according to Thelemic principles.

The Law of Thelema is the master magickal code of this Aeon, transitory relative to the Supernals; yet transcendent relative to everything below the Abyss, and certainly relative to Malkuth. Thus, the Law of Thelema is distinct from its cultural expressions — even from the inspired and pellucid writings of its Prophet, who reveals it. Even as the Sun shines on all, the Law of Thelema simply operates everywhere, whether anyone knows it or not. Conversely, the Law of Thelema may be accessed through any spiritual system or practice that has been made compatible with it, whether or not Crowley ever heard of it while he was alive. Just as Ohm’s

Law does not discriminate between different technologies built using ohmic materials, the Law of Thelema does not care in which spiritual systems it is put to use, so long as they are compatible. Hence its present ascendancy offers Toltec lineage holders the possibility of aligning with the deepest universal principles.

I have spoken of the formlessness of the Toltec artist. Formlessness is the quintessential feature of the *Nahual*, the Unknown, the Toltec path of liberation, the community of saints that comes to reside in the

10. *The Book of the Law* 1:41.

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*The Unity of Toltec and Thelema*

properly-built temple of the Toltec warrior. The *Nahual* is the unification of all opposites. Although the term refers to the Mystery, some Toltec masters are referred to as *Nahuales*. This term indicates that they have embodied in their own being all opposites and can manifest at will any mode of processing energy. Indeed no distinction exists between the individual *Nahual* and the Great Mystery: although the ego survives, it has become passive, such that the extra-terrestrial (Solar) consciousness may flow freely through the vehicle.

In embodying formlessness, any Toltec *Nahual* occupies a vehicle — a body and a lifetime — that embodies the Love to which Thelemic writings refer. As Crowley has styled it, Love is the yearning of the Godhead to unite with the Universe, “the force that uniteth things diverse.”<sup>11</sup> Note that this force comes from above, so to speak, and does not obtain among the elements; only mechanical forces operate on the Malkuthian plane *per se*. Love might also be described as the force that unifies the opposites. The *Nahual* balances and resolves the antinomies as those forces impinge upon a particular centre of consciousness, a particular spark of the Godhead.

I have also spoken of the Toltec mastery of intent, the acquisition and application of single-pointedness in the direction of a chosen end. It is possible, of course, to exercise intent after intent toward the accumulation of power, knowledge, or any other worldly aim. However, were a *Nahual* to acknowledge the existence of his or her own Will and to dedicate all to the knowledge and fulfillment of that Will, then the mastery of intent would be seen and practiced as the accomplishment of Will. In such a case, Toltec mastery and Thelemic adepthood would be one.

Koyote the Blind is a *Nahual* who has in fact dedicated himself to the fulfillment of his True Will. He does so as a Toltec lineage holder who has taken upon himself a portion of his benefactor’s work. Thus, he discovers and fulfills his will through addressing the task of re-establishing the volcanic temple. This task is undertaken as one and the same movement as establishing the Ox and None Kaaba Clerkhouse in the A/.A. line of Frater Achad Osher. Conceptually, the two tasks can be distinguished, but in practice and intent they are one. The nascent Ox and None Clerkhouse is an extant Thelemic vehicle that fundamentally incorporates group work. Group work is, of course, virtually un-heard of in the A..A/. Further, almost none of the group work as does occur in a wider Thelemic context

— public rituals, private group workings, and so on — conforms to the Toltec / Fourth Way type instantiated in Ox and None. Though, again, any

11. *De Lege Libellum*.

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Thelemic ‘Golden Dawn’ style temple ritual using officers is arguably of a similar type.

In Ox and None, the group work is of a vertical, rather than a horizontal, type. This means that the various participants each take up a particular function and position as within a single, larger body. In order for this to occur, practitioners must disengage the ego for that time period.



Each practitioner operates as one of nine stones that in their proper placement form keys that allow the solar-sexual force to flow vertically through the group being.

*The temple functions with nine stones floating on top of the crater that gives access to the fires of the center of the earth. This is at once a description of the esoteric understanding of the sweat lodge as well as a description of the body once it is transformed, and of the sangha as well.*<sup>12</sup>

This same esoteric configuration is portrayed in the film *The Holy Mountain* by Alejandro Jodorowsky. Nine adventurers (seven of whom represent planets) travel together and ascend the holy mountain to gain immortality. As preparation for the journey, each one of the planetary travellers burns his or her money and self-concept. They set out together under the guidance of an alchemical master who claims to know the location and secret of the nine who have exchanged their worldly treasures for immortality. They meet various indigenous men and women of knowledge who initiate them through encounters with plants. Upon undergoing a death ritual, the band of travellers are finally able to move as a single being. The alchemist declares, "Now you are a group."

In the Toltec tradition, the *Nagual* (alchemical master) must assemble the right configuration of Warriors, Stalkers, and Dreamers of the four directions in order to create a being of higher-order consciousness. In Ox and None, each member is expected to fulfill their own Will even as he or she participates in a higher-order organization that manifests the will of the Adept/Nagual. Toltec and Thelemic esotericism are unified in this particular School.

The existent unity of Toltec and Thelema is not an amalgam, for each constitutes the whole of the School in which they are unified, only viewed from two different angles. To the extent that this thought seems ill-conceived, it is due to the habituation of old Aeon paradigms concerning the nature of truth. In the New Aeon, however, univocity no longer serves well for truth-telling, at least not for long. And in that the external manifestations of Toltec and Thelema have ever been eclectic and syncretic, nothing in that sense has changed.

12. Koyote the Blind, A Brief Account of the Toltec Tradition.' Unpublished draft. Used with permission.

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# On Toltec Art

## Koyote the Blind

### On Toltec Art

**T**his event, this occurrence we have called at some times alchemy, transformation, initiation, evolution, magick, liberation — they're not the same thing, but we've used those terms to refer to aspects of this particular happening. When it has been misunderstood, it has been taken to be a mechanical process: you do one thing and another and another, and a fourth thing will happen. So a lot of recipes and prescriptions come out. Of course, each one of those recipes and prescriptions obeys particular cultural biases. For example, they recommend being vegetarian or being celibate, or bathing or praying in a certain way, meditating in a certain way. They're all prescriptions, and usually prescription itself leads to nothing at all.

Some have prescribed intense learning processes, memorization, understanding, debates, study. And that doesn't do it. Others have, when seeing the futility of mental engagement, recommended something that comes purely from the heart. And they do away with scholarship, with erudition, and they act from the heart alone. And that in itself does not do it. Because the thing that happens, this magical element, this magnificent X factor that comes into play, seems somehow to come of its own accord. It cannot be forced. It cannot be manipulated. It cannot be invented. And it cannot be substituted. It seems to be there when it happens. It seems as if it is coming on its own. It seems like it is coming after everything else has been exhausted.

Nonetheless, even though the efforts, the trials, the tribulations and all the work that one does cannot in any way bring about this transformation, this transformation does not occur if all those previous efforts haven't already taken place. It is like sitting by the window one

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afternoon, watching the sunset, in a stuffy room. You open the window and all of a sudden a light breeze comes in and brings the smell of the pine trees and the coolness and freshness. When the breeze comes in, a tiny bird perches on the window sill and sings you a song. You cannot make the breeze come in. All you can do is open the window. And you cannot force the bird to perch on the window sill and sing you a song. All you can do is open the window and sit still.

This transformation is like the breeze and the song that comes. You cannot make it happen, but it won't happen if the window is closed. The bird won't come if you are in turmoil. And even if the breeze comes through, if you were not there, you would not feel it. You would not see the bird. It would not happen for you. The process by which the stage is prepared for the breeze and the song to come is a combination of an art and a science. It is called a science because it involves very old knowledge about self, knowledge about our body, knowledge about how it functions, knowledge about how you operate. This knowledge is one that you can attain from a living source; and, once obtained, must be applied to yourself, through your own means, through your own ingenuity, by exploring, by experimenting, by taking notes, by making mistakes, by correcting, applying, correcting again, until you gained necessary knowledge about yourself in order to be able to open the window and sit.

It is also called an art because to apply only the mind to it is insufficient. You need to make something else happen, something that is the result of creative, artistic expression. When you have all the elements born of knowledge and observation, then you put them together. The way you put them together is uniquely yours. And in putting them together in that unique, creative way, something is born out of that. In this endeavour, art becomes important.

Now, for the Toltecs, the creation of art had a very specific intent. The way of making art had a particular flavour, a particular way of doing things that made it Toltec. It had nothing to do with the cultural expressions of that era. It had nothing to do with Indians. It had nothing to do with natives of the land. It had nothing to do with religious beliefs. There was something else that made a particular art form Toltec.

When the Spanish came to Mexico, when they encountered the Aztecs, the word *Toltec* was all over the place. Yet Toltecs as a race were nowhere to be found. The royalty, the ruling families of the Aztecs, claim to be descendents from Toltecs. This somehow gave them the divine right or the prestige to be able to rule. If they were descended from the Toltecs, they had something in them that was of superior knowledge, of

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superior intellect, and of superior sensibilities. That, in the minds of the people of pre-Colombian Meso-America, gave them enough reason for leadership. Most of the stuff that we

hear about the Toltecs was simply propaganda created by the Aztecs. It is the Aztecs who said things like, "The Toltecs were great artists. They were all perfect. They were always correct. They were always of impeccable intent. Their works were the best works. Their works were the most beautiful works. They were people of perfect knowledge. They were people of perfect integrity. They always spoke the truth. They were beautiful people. They were strong people. They had the greatest power, and they did the greatest works." These were words of the Aztecs, and they wanted to justify their rulership through Toltec ascendancy. Therefore their statements should be taken with a grain of salt. The words were only meant to give the impression that the Toltecs were perfect, superior, evolved, and therefore that any peoples descended from them were also superior.

Later, this word Toltec became something else. It was watered down so much that it simply meant, roughly speaking, 'urban'. They used the word Toltec to contrast the city dwellers from the people living in the outskirts. In other words, someone who was civilized, someone who lived in a city was said to be Toltec. That in itself had no real meaning beyond ordinary conventions. But etymologically speaking, the word Toltec can be traced back from meaning simply a city dweller, someone with culture and civilized education, to someone who is the ruler of an elite family. And that can be traced back to the actual inhabitants of Tula (also called Tollan). Tula was a small city founded by a strange group. The events of its founding are hard to deduce because the writings that have been left behind, the stories told about them, are a weird combination of mythology, historical accounts, and eyewitness accounts. It's hard to distinguish one from the other.

One thing that comes out of all the multiple stories is that the city of Tula was created consciously, to be able to reflect a map of the universe and a map of the human being; this original being who is a representation both of a human being and of the universe: the being that we call the Adam Kadmon. The city is a representation of the psychic power centres of the human body and the pathways that connect them. This city then was considered to be alive, and going through it was supposed to awaken those centres in you, as a tuning fork would vibrate a note once the note is struck in another instrument. In order to awaken those centres, they engaged in different kinds of activities. These activities were overwhelmingly artistic in nature.

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So the Toltecs came to be known in all that region as being very dedicated artists. The art they produced had a specific vibration to it. It felt a certain way. It carried a specific type of knowledge. The differences between Toltec art and other forms of art were few but simple. What exactly is Toltec art? What made, in those times, a form of artistic expression "Toltec"?

We have to understand that the purpose of transformation was intrinsic to all Toltec art. Freedom, personal power, the attainment of one's spiritual aim, liberation from the chains of ordinary existence, or the attainment of objective consciousness: they all were part of this artistic endeavour. It was not a separate thing. For the Toltec, to be told that you're going to go to an art class in the morning and to a yoga class in the evening and on Sunday to worship, and then the rest of the week you're going to do your ordinary job, would have been very strange for them. To compartmentalize your life, to separate the spiritual from the artistic and from the work that you do would have been very odd, because all of it was one thing to them. All of it had to do with building, with creating, with making.

Art had a definite purpose. I could say that the purpose of art was that of evolution or transformation. But saying those things actually leaves us short of the actual way they understood the creation of art. I hope to be able to explain what this creative vision, this making

happen, actually was. I hear my words, and the words are not sufficient. That is quite a problem. Maybe the problem is that when I say the word *art*, the word is loaded with a certain meaning. Or maybe it is the word *transformation* or *evolution* that is loaded with incorrect meaning.

Allow me then to try something different. In the Tree of Life, you have the bottom sphere, Malkuth, the material world, your physical body in its grossest form. This is connected to three aspects of yourself. It is connected on the one hand to your intellect, your mind; and on the other hand it is connected to your heart, your feelings, your emotions, your love. They are all felt through the body. Your feelings and emotions have an effect on the body, as do your thoughts. They happen to you because you have this body.

There is another sphere right above the physical, and we can call that the Moon. It's the subconscious, those things that are under the surface, of which you are somewhat aware but don't have the clarity of the mental or the strong, clear feelings of the emotional centre. They are an undercurrent. That Moon appears to you in your dreams. That sphere is connected to your sexuality, to your sensuality. And so the physical body is connected to these three other spheres: the intellect, the

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emotions, and the subconscious, which is your sexuality and your archetypal world, your dreams. All of this forms the most immediate aspects of your *Tonal*. It is how you are made up. And the specific flavours and combinations of all of them have a lot to do with when and where you were born and how you grew up. Your astrological signs are defining this sphere, all these spheres, of your being. It is the lower aspect of your soul. It is what is manifested in this incarnation. It is what you can perceive as being part of yourself. These are the elements, the basic building blocks you'll be working with as an artist. Put them all together. You can't leave anything out. You cannot bring anything in. You have to work with that to create, to make a work of art.

The artistic expression was therefore not just something you created outwardly, but something that put together these elements in a specific way. You created a certain movement and harmony with all those spheres that involved the mind, the heart, the sex, the dreams, the archetypes, the personal history and your body. For someone to create art then, was not just a thing that you did; not a painting, sculpture, poem. It was the arrangement of this thing that you are in all its facets, all the ones that you can perceive. You channel all of that and arrange it in a precise way to create an epiphenomenon, to create the emergence of a quality that did not seem to be present until you put everything together. Think of a transistor radio. You have all these bulbs, wires, diodes. If they are lying around they do nothing. Once you connect the components together in the right order, you get a functioning radio. This radio can detect signals and music; it can reproduce sound

When an artistic piece was then created for the Toltec, they were not just looking at the outward manifestation, but for this act of creation to align things in a specific way to produce that 'on' effect in you: a mixture of mind, emotion, feeling, and body. The combination of those gave rise to the art. The Hindus call this combination Sat-Chit- Ananda. Sat is pure being. It is the most elemental manifestation of being. When you take away the body, when you take away the thoughts, when you take away the specific culturally-produced emotions, you have Sat, the base of being.

You also have Chit, or Chitas, which are the vibrations — the reverberations — of the mind, the basic disturbances of the mind that give rise to thoughts, to ideas, to map making, to memories. Sat-Chit are two basic elements of our inner world. Ananda is Bliss, which is the

most basic aspect of feeling, of perception. So Sat-Chit-Ananda is the triad that contains all the basic manifestations of the three centres of your body: the moving centrum, the emotional centrum, and the thinking centrum. All together they give life to this body.

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The creative process involves all of these centres for the Toltec, and gives rise to another element that moves in a different direction that is none of these three. This triggers, gives rise to, the alchemical process. It is the basis for the process of transformation, the actual inner path of evolution. To the Toltecs, it would have been a mistake for someone to think that the path of liberation was dependent on knowledge, on ideas, on having the right thoughts, on having the right books. It would have been equally odd to think that the path to liberation was all in the heart, in how you felt, on your emotions, of your likes or dislikes — much less that it would be simply on your intuitions, your dreams, or your sexuality (which tells you which things you like or don't like). Yet, if we look around, most spiritual journeys right now are based on an unbalanced take on one of these three or four elements.

To the Toltec, the creation of art implied the harmonization of all these basic elements, to the point where art could not be created without a full integration of all of these, and the creation of art itself would activate or necessitate the integration of all these elements. The creation of art and the alignment of the constituents of your being were equivalent. They were one and the same. Now, just the harmonization of inner elements would not in itself be considered an art. You had to do something with that. And just to create something beautiful and striking, without this harmonization, would not have been enough either.

The Toltecs believed that the state of being of the artist impregnated whatever it was they were doing. The resulting work of art was then an artifact — something made, something created, but which was at the same time vibrant and alive, full of knowledge, full of the mood created by the exact arrangement of these three inner constituents. If the artist had been able to go beyond the face of the *Tonal*, beyond the face of ordinary existence, and through the art had been able to connect to higher forces, to higher knowledge, to higher consciousness, then that too would be present in the work of art. The work of art would hold the consciousness, the mood, the vibration that was present inside the artist at the moment of creation, a resonant feature whose life was independent of the artist. That vibration of consciousness, that intelligence, could then be accessed by someone else if they simply applied the keys in the right way. If that other person aligned her thoughts, her emotions, her posture, and her energy in a certain way, that alignment would activate the vibration that existed in this work of art; and in doing so, the art would communicate to that other in a direct way the knowledge, the experience, and the mood of the artist when he created it.

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Usually the artifact would contain clues on what posture to take and what mentation to take. Sometimes it wouldn't tell you everything. Sometimes it would give you the general mood. And you start from there. Then you begin to move the posture this way or that, or to increase your emotion this way or that, until you hit resonance. Some artifacts are harder to open than others. When it is opening, it is clear. This lock clicks, then it comes to life.

Now, it should be clear with all of this that for the Toltec, art was not something to be done to earn praise or to make money or to show off. It was not about abilities. It was not to see who could paint better, who draws better, who wins the poetry contest. It was not about results for the ego. It was not about being famous. It was not about getting laid. It was not about feeling creative. It was not about having something to say about people who don't understand art. It was

not about learning the lingo. It was not about a social message. It was not about representing a spiritual truth. Art was not about representing something. It was not about describing the divine. It was not about representing the chakras or the astral body, the dream body. It was not about giving a pretty picture of your dreams, because all of that was to them to be residing in the Moon, in this aspect of the self. It was not representational. Representational art would all be in the intellectual arena.

And art was not just about how it made you feel. The intent was not to make you feel sad, happy, hopeful, angry, depressed, pumped up, inspired. It was not about making you feel peaceful or making you devout. It was not about any of that. Any of those emotions was purely coincidental, or was simply part of the landscape that the artist wanted to work with. But it was never the objective. In fact, Toltec art was not about making you feel anything at all. It didn't matter how you felt, whether you liked it or not, whether you understood or not. It had nothing to do with communicating any idea or thought into you. It was about aligning these inner aspects, putting the greatest possible degree of mastery in the art itself — and that was it. If you had the right keys, you could open that resonance and it would benefit you, but it was not about the contents of the mind. It was about the harmonization of those contents.

There were other forms too. They did codices, which was a strange form of poetic storytelling. The writing coincided with drawing, and the arrangement of it created a poetic storytelling that could be fractalled down to the specific letters used. There was storytelling, there was dancing, there was a fighting style that was an art.

There is a feature of modernity that says, “My inner world is private, is my own. I can hold whatever beliefs I want, and I can appreciate

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whatever I want, and all that matters is what I like. So I when I do art, I do it for myself.” That is an attitude that the Toltec would not recognize.

If the Toltec artist is using his centres — his emotions, his sexuality, his intellect — to create something, he's not doing it to get praise from the viewer. This is not to say, however, that the viewer is unimportant. When the Toltec creates something he's responsible for that. He accepts and owns that responsibility. There is karma created for that. The creation of that includes the reverberations that go out. The Telling is, in a way, a manifestation of the Teachings. A teaching cannot be just my opinions on things. It produces an effect. It touches other lives. And the Toltecs were very conscious of the community, especially of the esoteric circle that was created. Whatever I put out has a consequence, and this consequence is part of my universe. So in that sense there was tremendous care over what was produced, but the care was not about “I want a lot of people to like this. I want people to appreciate me. I want people to love me. I want a thousand fans on Facebook.” That does not mean they didn't care about what they were producing. The words they said were willed and intended. The effects produced were accepted and therefore intended. Once it was out, they owned the consequences of that.

The Toltecs were a community. They were not isolated renunciants who went to the mountains to have their own experiences. They had come together to create an escape route, to open a window in the fabric of the universe. They were responsible for each other, fellow voyagers. That's why they worked in groups. Even though some travelled solo, most of the Toltec community was composed of smaller communities in a pretty much social anarchist formation. As a group they were responsible for one another. They came together, they put out what they created for the exploration, the use, of those small circles and sometimes of the larger

community, the city itself. They saw themselves as descendants of an older, stronger civilization that had failed: Atlantis.

Some of the descendants of the Atlanteans went to the mountains in isolation. Others took on the problem of recreating the old world through empire-building. So the Greeks, the Minoans, the Romans, the Europeans, and now even the Americans — they all have somehow the idea that part of their work and responsibility is to create a society, a world that we lost at some point, one that was more enlightened, that is more conducive to our proper place in this planet.

Other descendants of the Atlanteans sought to isolate themselves and had nothing to do with empire-building. The Toltecs were one of those that chose the desert and the jungle, the small community. As a whole, they were not bent on world domination. Some of them were. In

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this group of philosophers and artistic anarchists, you would rarely find everyone thinking in the same way.

Art for the Toltecs had to do with the harmonization with body, heart, mind, dreams, sex, subconscious creative force in a way that creates a unified expression with intent. Those would be necessary elements for art. Without harmonization, there is no art for the Toltec. Or, if part of that action obscures all the other parts — if it is for the ego, for instance — it would not be art, no matter how saleable it was. Art had the purpose of creating a new body.

What, the philosopher might ask, is the purpose in creating that new body? To what end? There is no “for what” according to Intent. The seed of Will has no *because*. It is an impulse in itself. It is a creative force.

The key to understanding intent and will is in the mechanism of the system itself. When a system is divided and has multiple components, one thing produces the other mechanically. This event gives rise to this other event, this event to another. All of that is karma, the world of causality. And so the Hindus sometimes used the following image to describe karma. They say there is a fly in the market place. It gets stuck on a spider’s web. The spider eats the fly. The lizard sees the spider and eats it. A cat jumps and eats the lizard. A Chinese cook captures the cat and eats it. Then he’s hungry half an hour later.

That is a world of *because*, simply because this ecosystem is made up of different pieces, each one with its own intent. But there’s a way to see all that as connected. The saddhu is sitting and watches it all and knows all that movement to be the movement of his own mind. As such, there is wholeness in that system. There is nothing happening in there. Nothing is created. The system of the mind, the body, all the contents of the mind, are at war with themselves. Each piece has its own agenda. Your heart wants one thing, your mind another, your peepee another. And they are in battle. Whatever is created from this is not an act of unified intent. This is the pit of *Because*. Intent or will in the higher sense would require an emptiness of all these contents. It would require a harmonization of all so there is no inner division, only unification. In that unification, a higher will can be spawned and effected.

The nature of wants and will are very similar in one sense. Each piece of a want, each will, is like the goat. They’re often represented by the mountain goat, which has the strong horns, and it jumps from one rock to another. Each jump is a unified movement. The goat is unstoppable. It jumps. Will, therefore, has been represented by that force, that single-minded force, that force that is not responding to a

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reason, to another desire, not even to a better result. It wants what it wants, and that's the only reason. In that sense want and will, when taken by themselves, are similar. They are the same. Want becomes a want only in terms of a larger scheme. Then it's justified with a because. You want this because you want that, because you want that. That division is the death of will, for will is unified.

All the pieces come together to create a single unified act of will. All the pieces come together to do that. In a way, in the history and mythology of American history, you see examples of that. For instance, in the American Revolution, different colonies argue among themselves, but with the single intent of freedom. Later, the United States accomplishes the intent of putting a man on the moon. And so all the knowledge, all drive, all sentiment within individual people all together produce a single result. Those are images that come to mind. Or in the creation of a symphony, each instrument, each note, each silence is all coming together to make this work of art. All of those elements create a single unified intent.

In this harmony of intent they saw art. If a piece that we would call art was created from aberration or disharmony, they would not call it art.

The Toltec artifact becomes a living thing that can be used to transform the viewer. It was seen as a living thing only because it contained the state of mind and the state of being of the creator. There is here a transmission and preservation of knowledge as well. If you seek to describe the vista in the higher dimension, you create a partial view. You kill it. It would be as if you want to demonstrate what a human being is, and you begin by showing the fingers, then the nose, then the ears, chopping off every part of it. In the end you don't have a human being. To provide a glimpse of the higher realms, you have to pass on the knowledge. You have to show it alive. To show it alive, you turn it into art; and through that art, others are exposed to it. They can use it as a marker, as a map, as a doorway, or as a source of knowledge, of data that would not be passed on by simply explaining it.

This is what happens for instance with my art of the Telling. You see part of it. You hear the words, you see the movements, and you perceive different things in accordance with your own radio, your own body. If your heart (Anahata, your heart chakra) is awakened, then you will perceive those vibrations through it. You would perceive other vibrations through your womb, through your gonads, through the back of your head, through your spinal cord. You would receive still other vibrations through your third eye. You would only get those vibrations that you are capable of getting. If your ears do not work, you would not hear the

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words. You would still receive the other vibrations. Now, if you have a body that is working in perfect alignment with itself — a perfect harmony, with all your chakras aligned, and your mind is not interfering

— you're not running your own movie in your head, so that you receive with more clarity. If there is nothing in you that is rejecting, measuring, projecting — in other words if you are a clean, harmonious receiver — you would get everything that is being transmitted. So the more refined, sensitive, and clean you are, the more you get.

However, you are not getting something that I am receiving, something that is not part of the phenomenal world. You are only getting the results of that interaction. I am having an encounter. In that encounter, there is a friction. In that friction is an outburst of light and life and love. This outburst comes out in accordance to the art, to the Telling. That, you perceive. The other half is secret, is silent. It cannot be perceived. It cannot be communicated. Now, there is a recording device; there is a camera that is recording things. Some things it records more faithfully than you



record them because that camera is not thinking. When the performance is over, you have that piece, that video. You might have a drawing that an artist did during the Telling. You might have something written down. All of those are like corpses in a sense. As corpses, you have elements of this act of creation.

In creating your art, you put something in a static form. You're painting; and the movement, the breath, the emotion, the mood, the thoughts that were going through your head are not in the final product; only the effect of all that is there in the canvas. If the observer then gets into a similar posture, if he begins to breathe in a similar way, if the temperature is similar, and whatever other elements are in harmony with the state of the artist at the moment of creation, then the viewer begins to get a lot of data — a lot of those impressions, a lot of that knowledge that the artist had upon creation.

When this happens, it is said that the piece of art becomes alive. It is first a corpse; then it comes to life by the act of the magician who is the viewer. The act of observing is itself an act of creation.

With performance art and other live art productions, you gain the immediacy of that. So when you're sitting listening to a Telling, you get something you would not be getting from a sculpture or painting. What you lose from the live arts that you can get into the visual arts, the sculptures, is the possible permanency of the artifact. It travels longer. It can be accessed more. In either case, you don't get the full picture. Even if you see it live, you might not get even one percent of what somebody who watches the DVD with an awakened machine can get.

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The key is to have an instrument capable of receiving what is being produced. That instrument would be a delicate, sensitive intelligence. It would be the intelligence, not of the box of thoughts, but the intelligence of the entire nervous system. The endocrinal system, the body itself, is this highly evolved receiver and transmitter of vibrations of energy, of intelligence. We do many things to interfere with this intelligence. The ego, thoughts, all the gunk that we have accumulated through karma, the obsessions that we have, all the fears, and everything that takes us away from the present — all that, the result of thought, is the blunting of the sharpness of this body, this brain, this intelligence. Even what you consider to be sacred or religious thought is just as blundering, just as obstructing, just as interfering of this intelligence. If you pray with fear, that fear blocks your intelligence. If you meditate without heart, without love, that becomes an interference. All the habits that you have accumulated obscure and obstruct the mechanism of perception. The senses need to be cleansed, harmonized. The mind needs to be open without dogma, without being burdened by the past, without projecting into future. The entire perceptual mechanism must be working without the concerns of the ego who keeps taking you away from the present. Only then you begin to have a body, a mind, senses that can receive the effects of objective art. And in this case, we call it objective art because it is not an art produced by ego concerns, by a state of disharmony between the centres of the body. A state of disharmony between the centres of the body is a mechanism at work that has no single intent. But when they are working together, they are empty, they are a clean, clear passage for intent; and intent would come from above, from within and above, from what the Fourth Way would consider the higher emotional centrum or the higher mentation centrum. As will, it comes as a single impulse, manifested through this perfectly harmonized body, this instrument. It impregnates the artifact, the work of art, and when you receive it then with a clean instrument, you receive that which was the product of will and intent.

Impulse, desire, will, and intent, all have single-minded and unified direction. The many

wants, subjective desires that come from ego, from a fragmented being, do not produce will. They produce more wants. They pull you here and there. That same movement from a unified being, which is above, which is the Holy Guardian Angel or the higher intent, is unified. That is the only difference. Other than that, each one is in itself a single impulse. When the mind is looking below itself, it sees a chaotic maelstrom of demons, each one fighting for its own supremacy. When the mind looks above, it sees unified harmony, intent, such that your True Will, that impulse of your heart that you carried when you were born, is harmonious with the will of the Holy Guardian Angel. That will is in

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harmony with yours, and mine, and each one, because they are all in harmony with the Central Sun, the source of will and intent. There can be no disharmony when the laws become one. It is only in the descent that they separate and create disharmony and chaos.

Disharmony is a function of looking down, and harmony is a function of looking up. There is no other difference than that.

All that which we call training happens in the lower spheres of consciousness, which is body, emotion, mind, subconscious, desire, dreams, sex. All of that is divided. And we work to get them into harmony. When the duality has been eliminated through silence, which is the  $2 = 0$  formula, then you have a vehicle capable of reflecting the light of your inner star.

The nature of will and wants are similar in that they all have this force of desire. It wants to be. It wants to move in the way it is programmed to move. It can't do anything other than that. The difference is that, in the perspective, wants are in conflict with one another, in you, in your system. Part of you wants to do this; part of you wants to do that. So that division, that divisiveness, indicates ego, wants. It indicates an inner conflict. Another signal to that is the pit of Because. "I want to do this because I want this, because I want this ..." That *because* never ends. Will has no *because*. It is its own cause. It is undivisible.

Like an erect penis.

The erect penis is you. It's you, forged with will. You, as a being of intent, have a clear channel, and the severe discipline allows for only one direction of movement. Only then can the creative word, the art, which is the semen, flow and become manifest. That is why the semen is called in magick the Word of the magician. So, Will is just that erection. Wants take you all different directions.

Such is the nature of desire. The passion of the body, when it is awakened, is single-minded. That is the fuel for will. That is the fuel for the creative process. The energy of the body, the passion of the body, the passion of the heart is brought up and it is used as the fuel that would give rise to the creative act, to the transformative act, to the change, the transformation, of this human machine. It is the fuel that triggers, that feeds the transformation.

What happens is that, throughout history, throughout society, school, movies, all the entertainment that you see, and everything that religions and teachers tell you, the sexual force has to be grounded, directed

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downward, misused. We all learn in the process of life, of indoctrination, that the sexual energy has to be channeled down, always down. And it doesn't matter if you're hearing that sex is good or sex is bad; they both have the same teaching. Notice that! The teaching is that sex has to go down, down, and out through the genitals. They may say that it is done only for procreation. It

doesn't matter what the taboo is or what the violation of that taboo is. Both the taboo and the anti-taboo are geared towards sending energy down and out. That, believe it or not, is not its only and proper channel. That has been taught. That has been created in us in such a way we know of no other possibility. To change that, you have to change the channels. You have to reverse the polarities so that the energy does not go out through the genitals; instead, it rises up. It creates this force that erupts like a volcano, up the spine, out the head, so your whole body becomes a penis.

In this way, the creation of art has that juice in it. You can only create that juice if everything in you is moving in that direction. Awake and alive, not sleeping and dead. In other words, you are an erect penis.

A being of intent then, in the Toltec mind, was a being that generates this act, and this act is its own project, is its own cause; and whatever happens with that, it is owned and accepted. Before that is done, the person can measure, calculate, debate within himself all he wants. Once you have decided to take action, once you take the first step, go through with it. Do it. And own the consequences. That simplicity of action. The doing, the thinking, the feeling: they are all one. Not two. There is no conflict in that moment between the mind, the heart, and the moving. It's all one, and in that there is great harmony, great beauty, great connection.

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# Grid Sigil Magick

## Robert Parsons

### **Grid Sigil Magick**

**A**t the onset of considering the composition of this essay I kept returning to the declaration of William Butler Yeats: "Where there is nothing, there is God." Written in 1902, *Where There is Nothing* is one of Yeats' early literary plays that broaches a variety of issues that many aspirants are forced to wrestle with, including the dissolution of the ego, paradoxical truths, and the shortcomings of pre-established systems of attainment. Crowley himself, had he not been at such odds with Yeats, would have undoubtedly found this drama's overall thelemic message appealing, with its vivid portrayal of the neophyte striving to overturn and subvert the very system into which he was initiated. Yeats' message of less is more — or rather, least is most — conveys a very pertinent implication for contemporary occultists. This minimalist approach was foisted upon me as I received glimpses of a system of magick that would form the core of my tome, *The Sacred Alignments and Dark Side of Sigils* (forthcoming from Mandrake Press Limited). A magickal tool, hereafter referred to as the Grid Sigil, was revealed to me that has served as a multi-valent implement, linking high-magick with more fundamental forms of folk shamanism as well as thelemic, and even chthonic currents. This interlocking keystone mechanism is a magickal engine: not of my own fabrication, but one that I was granted access to while in a heightened state of awareness following a series of psychical purges and initiations.

According to the *Zohar*, on the fourth day of creation when the sun and the moon were fashioned: “The letters were arrayed and formed ... in their wheels by the expanding scribal matrix of the nexus.”<sup>1</sup> The

1. Page 155, Daniel C. Matt trans, *The Zohar*.

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letters referred to in this passage are those that comprise the Tetragrammaton. The notion of a “scribal matrix” is what concerns us most here. In the *Zohar* and the *Sepher Yetzirah* there are several references to the letters of creation forming a weave or web. This concept of a reticulated text of creation bears directly upon the significance of the Grid Sigil that was originally sighted by me on July 17, 1979. Through a very rigorous magickal regimen of daily ritual, meditation and yoga, I was able to recall this sigil from lucid explorations in *sushupti* or delta-wave deep-sleep. This sigil was presented to me under the aegis of “Uriel”. Through the archangel’s guidance I sensed that the sigil’s origins were of a pre-human and stellar nature. So while it is safe to assume that this device has an Enochian underpinning, its potential and ramifications extends far beyond any one specific system of magick extant. Initially I intuited that this sigil was related to the root forces of creation as they intertwine to form the fabric of the *prima materia*.

I believe it noteworthy that the redactors of the *Zohar* did not specify exactly what type of letters they were considering. The *Zohar*, after all, is considered a didactic work, meant to stimulate thought and meditation upon not just *halakah* and *aggadah* or various legal and moral aspects of Judaism, but also the more mystical aspects of the Cabala. This ‘array’ of letters we can assume alludes to Hebrew as an onto-theological script, in that it is the original and originating generative set of letters administered by the divine according to Judaic Lore. However, one need not look far to discover a whole range of Adamic tongues or alphabets that were espoused and disseminated during the Middle Ages. Cornelius Agrippa, Guillaume Postell and others wrote at length on the topic, and they in part inspired John Dee’s quest to discover and explore what he believed to be the first language God delivered to Adam. Dee was interested in manipulating and commanding the forces of nature through the intonation of magical verse as initially espoused by Cornelius Agrippa. In Book III, chapter xxx of his *De Occulta Philosophia*, Agrippa provides an example of a celestial alphabet. And to a degree, the Grid Sigil marks a progression in the exploration of the celestial code.

In its most sublimated aspect, the Grid deals with the root forces of the elements, or the precursor energies of the four elements before they have come into existence. The Grid in this aspect poses an interface between the *ain soph* and the formative world. At the outset I viewed the Grid as a

sigilized version of the Tetragrammaton. Spare himself stated that sigils are grasped by the subconscious, whereas symbols are understood by the conscious mind. But then I became aware that there is a gray area that begins to dissolve the boundary between sigil and symbol. How many times have people found a certain piece of verse or song hypnotic or highly evocative of something not quite conveyed by its literal meaning? Seen in this 'in-between' light, I am compelled to look at the Grid Sigil as occupying the flexible space or *brissure*, hinge, between the symbolic and the sigilic so-to-speak.

Acknowledged as a pattern of divine light forming a sigil, or as an analogue of the four elements held in union by spirit, the Grid Sigil lends itself to a wide variety of interpretations and uses. The *omicron*-shaped character pertains to the root forces of air, the *alpha* to water, the *omega* to fire, and the *tau* to earth. The central cross is that of spirit; and the three rays that comprise the expanding space wherein the Grid resides, represent the space-time continuum. The characters in each quadrant closely resemble Greek letters, but the array viewed as a whole conveys a more mechanoid and alien embodiment. I was initially compelled to view the Grid Sigil as an instrument of the most rarified nature, linking it exclusively with the *ain soph*, etc. But then it became clear that this approach was a meiotic one, placing an exclusive tag on the Grid Sigil, thereby delimiting its uses. All tools of high-magick, in the hands of the truly innovative practitioner, invariably convey a wide range of utilities and cross-applications.

Sigils, we may ascertain, act as mimetic tools, as opposed to letters comprising modern alphabets that may be understood through a diagetic approach. At one point, I had toyed with the idea of simply putting forth the Grid Sigil and corresponding sigils in graphic form without an expository text, assuming that its use would reveal itself to the serious student. For those of us who have adopted Dion Fortune's philosophy of spending an exponential amount of time engaged in meditation for each hour spent reading an occult manual, any worthwhile revelations should become self-evident given time and sufficient attention. The demonstrative or 'showing' aspects of a grimoire are initiated by the revelatory light within the magician. The diagetic or instructional part of the same magical text, it follows, informs us as to whether or not we wish to proceed with implementing that described form of magick — or does it? Thought distracts; non-thought or non-doing draws us closer to where we need to be. Subsequently, there is one very basic practice in which I invite the reader to engage: simply 'gazing' on the Grid Sigil. The graphic flow and hypnogogic nature of the sigil becomes clear with this simple practice.

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The rays of time and space, that intersect the four quadrants and the central cross, seem to extend beyond the boundaries of the page, thus dissolving the frame. These rays actively portray space as ever-expanding. And it is by virtue of this extraordinary visual quality of the Grid Sigil that I would argue that it was a transmission, due to the fact that I possess very little in the way of skills as a graphic artist that would enable me to render this depiction unassisted. In any event, the results of gazing on this design, while preferably in a vacuous state, can be very telling. I hesitate to elaborate further on this visual aspect, so as not to influence any results, visions, etc., the reader may encounter. Now, to better acquire a grasp of the multivalent utilities of the Grid Sigil, let us look at some of its most basic applications, and then consider them as gateways to more rarified functions.

Dowsing is an age-old tradition, still practiced in Appalachia and other remote areas of the world, that harnesses geo-magnetism akin to the Grid's fundamental manifestation. Dowsing has been adopted and popularized more recently by healers and modern new-age practitioners, for

detecting maladies, bodily energy flows, etc. Through the use of a forked willow branch or copper rod, the traditional dowser has been able to detect water sources such as hidden springs for the purpose of well-digging, etc. Willow has often been the wood of choice for ‘water-finders’, in keeping with the tenets of sympathetic magic since the willow tree grows close to bodies of water; as well as the fact that its roots often detect and infiltrate water pipes, sewer lines, etc. The dowser essentially uses a secondary tool, the dowsing branch or rod, to serve as a receptive medium between the seeker and the sought object or energy. In the same manner, the Grid Sigil may be employed to detect power zones, *temenos* or gates, etc.

After interacting with the Grid Sigil internally, the magician may then project it outside of the circle, utilizing it in conjunction with the earth’s grid or ley-lines. To do this one must have developed a certain amount of spiritual vision by having awakened the *ajna cakra*. It is also helpful to perform this type of geomagnetic operation out of doors. For those able to perceive the earth’s grid, this part should prove relatively easy. Once an intersection of the cords of power has been located, the magician may project the Grid Sigil into that point, superimposing the central cross of the Grid Sigil over the intersecting cords. This act of projection may be achieved simply through directing the will. However, if the student has not developed their astral skills accordingly, then the Grid Sigil may also be traced in a manner similar to the way in which the pentagram is drawn in the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram, using a wand or the hands to draw the Sigil with the astral light. Nonetheless, if the practitioner is

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still having difficulty perceiving the cords of power, the Grid Sigil itself may be used to help locate them. This exercise requires a good mastery of *dharana*. After tracing the sigil in the aethyr, the magician should then move it and project it about until its vibration rate increases. This may be perceived as an increase in brightness, warmth, etc. When the Sigil, like a dowsing rod, begins to exhibit an increase in energy or vibration rate, one has located a nexus. Moreover, if attempting to position the Grid sigil astrally proves problematic, it may be inscribed on a piece of parchment and then physically repositioned while paying attention to the energy it gives off, as previously described in the astral method.

In Carlos Casteneda’s *The Eagle’s Gift*, Don Tuma described a fixed web of intersecting cords of power that surround the earth. The Grid Sigil is a tool for locking into and harnessing this grid. As we have seen, formulating the Grid Sigil and projecting it into the intersecting cords of power form the first phase of its implementation. Then, upon activating the Grid Sigil at that nexus, the practitioner can establish it as a transmission point for a variety of magical uses. It is important to take this function of the Grid Sigil into consideration, as it affords some insight into the logic behind the construction of ancient temples and pyramids. Theoretically, a magical device such as the Grid Sigil could be utilized as a catalyst or magical battery of sorts, to increase the vibration rate within a temple or to charge it with a given energy sympathetic to a specific rite. Subsequently, we will explore how the Grid Sigil may be utilized with such an astral structure.

‘The Ritual of the Rose Cross’ as outlined in *The Golden Dawn* (pp.46-50), is a particularly useful practice in preparing the Grid Magician for creating and energizing their own astral pyramid. In short, the Rose Cross ritual enables a practitioner to construct an astral cube around their being. The rite is concluded with an invocation of INRI, the LVX signs, and vibration of the names of the four Enochian angels of the Tablet of Union. It is typically a ritual very much focused on Tiphareth and attendant rebirthing energies parting the Veil of Paroketh. Regardie’s suggestion is that “when much distracted,” one should “use the Pentagrams to banish and the

Rose-cross to maintain peace” (*Golden Dawn*, p.49). Like an orgone accumulator, as prescribed by Wilhelm Reich, this ritual does in fact establish an energy containment field that helps to isolate and regenerate the subtle vibrations of the magician inward, thus preventing their unfocused release.

Similar to the Rose Cross ritual, the Grid Magician may obtain additional benefits from being able to formulate an astral pyramid. In practice this operation may be modified, given the particular degree of

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attainment and proclivities of the practitioner. This ritual basically invokes energies paralleling Tiphareth in Kether. After engaging in pranayama and blessing oneself, either with a wand or by the hands, the magician should draw an astral square on the ground. The ideal format, although not essential, is to have one's square lined up with magnetic north (this varies from area to area, and it is best to do a little research to find the coordinates for magnetic north given the geographical region where you are performing your magick). Then, beginning in the northern quadrant, draw the light up from the northeast corner to a point above one's head and then down to the southeast corner, thus completing one triangular side of the pyramid. Vibrate *Sothis* or *Sopdet* (the Egyptian for Sirius, literally 'Serpent's Tooth'), drawing the stellar light from above and filling that side of the pyramid with the light. Moving clockwise, repeat this invocation in each of the following quadrants. Lastly, make sure to perform the invocation while filling the base of the pyramid with the same light.

This ritual of forming the astral pyramid should be performed on a somewhat regular basis in the same spot. After a while, the pyramid's astral impression will be reified in that area, and soon the need to physically perform the gestures will be obviated; the magical imagination will be able to materialize the astral pyramid in a flash. It is also a good idea to spend some time in the pyramid, just experiencing how it makes one feel on all levels. Once this ritual can be performed easily and comfortably, the practitioner is ready to apply the Grid Sigil to the process.

With the Grid Sigil prepared on a piece of parchment, position it in the northeast corner of

the pyramid. The magician may now project the Grid Sigil outside his or her sphere, aligning it with the cords of power : r ley-lines as they are perceived. Drawing the light down through the :  
uter Grid Sigil into the pyramid to activate the earthed Grid Sigil, the

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magus basically completes the magical circuit. At this point there should be a marked change in the energy generated within the astral pyramid. The rate of vibration within the astral pyramid should increase substantially. Through this process, the practitioner has begun manifesting their own magical, autonomous universe. Subsequently, this application of the astral pyramid forms the next step in actualizing the potential energy of the Grid Sigil as a nexus or liminal bridge between within and without, above and below, in the magician's overall sphere of awareness.

In Enochian Magick, especially when used in conjunction with the 1st Call to creation, the Grid Sigil acts as a powerful catalyst. Working from a yogic perspective, the magical act of evocation is reified through the combined use of the senses. The *y antra*, or magical diagram, sigil, etc., embodies visually the magical intent; the *mantra*, auditory reinforcement; and *tantra*, the combined holistic method of manifesting intent within the magician's sphere. The medieval magician and neoplatonist, Marsilio Ficino, understood the synaesthetic nature of magic and how incense, smell, colour, etc could all be magnifying agents of the magician's intent for reinforcing the willful act. Crowley's 777 essentially takes up the torch that Ficino initiated, by setting up various tables of correspondences to elaborate upon these elements given a cabalistic framework. In accordance with the synaesthetic approach, it is clear that the visual and auditory aspects of ritual may enhance the overall magical experience.

In addition, there are sigils that correspond to the remaining 16 calls to creation which I have outlined in *The Sacred Alignments and Dark Side of Sigils*. However, due to the constraints of the breadth of this article we are focusing on the Grid Sigil alone. As I discussed earlier, the use of the Enochian call along with the corresponding sigil serves to magnify the overall effect. When I began to record the sigils in black ink on white boards, I was compelled to do the same with the initial 18 calls, but to put them down in Enochian characters instead of Roman script. I was able to feel the effect of this combination immediately. It became glaringly obvious that the Enochian calls written in Enochian created the powerful visual effect of a flashing tablet. The eyes are able to feel the energy emanating, and consequently the calls in Enochian presented themselves as powerful theurgical tools in their visual aspect. Just by gazing on the Grid Sigil and the first call, I was able to detect an electrifying field emanating from the paired combination. Furthermore, the combined sigil and call in Enochian is useful as a magical aid for tapping into the Enochian current when environmental constraints prohibit the intonation of the calls out-loud.

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When viewing the Enochian system via the implementation of sigil magick, I believe that it provides access and appeal for a wider range of practitioners than possibly it had in the past. Typically — and I am sure most experienced occultists would agree — Enochian magick has been the system of choice for the more aggressive, systematic, and analytic practitioners of the occult arts. But by sheer virtue of adding sigil magick techniques to the Enochian foundation, the system begins to open up to practitioners who rely on spontaneity as a means of actively energizing their workings. The use of such sigils can further enable a practitioner to recall and project on-the-spot the energy evoked from a prior ritual performance of a specific Enochian call. Having earthed the Grid on a piece of parchment, or astrally for those who are able, the magician may infuse it with the energies evoked during a specific ritual and then carry it with



them throughout the day, to assist with reproducing these energies or building upon them at will. After all, what method of magick is worth

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its salt if it can't be conducted at will *sans* lengthy orations, protracted rites, etc.

Apparently, crossovers exist between the traditional use of sigils as tools of evocation and their more current Sparean assignments. Agrippa- based angel magic, with its roots in sabine rites from the Middle East as they made their segue into the west via texts such as the *Picatrix*, utilized sigils as a means of evoking spiritual entities. The term *evoke* itself signifies 'to call forth from without'. In Austin Spare's system, sigils are used to reify one's true desires by projecting a self-made sigil inwards. Yet, Spare was able to demonstrate the evocational potential of these inwardly-projected sigils by literally calling forth denizens that empower these sigils, through the gateways of the subconscious to visible and palpable appearance (see *The Magical Revival*, 2010 edition., pp. 180-181). Subsequently, the Grid Sigil embodies a variety of contemporary as well as traditional principles of sigils, synthesized into a flexible and dynamic magical tool relevant to modern applications.

For further developments in Grid Sigil Magick and *The Sacred Alignments and Dark Side of Sigils* visit: [www.gridmagick.com](http://www.gridmagick.com).

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# Shades of Grey

## Richard Gavin

### **Shades of Grey**

**E**very death evokes its own distinct mourning. The pain we experience when a parent dies is very different to the kind we feel when a spouse or a pet or our favourite actress passes on. But of all the funerals I've attended, whether to sit in polite solemnity for a casual acquaintance or to weep openly over one I held dear, only one had an air of strangeness rather than grief: Desmond Greer's.

Though we'd been virtually inseparable throughout high school, I'd neither seen nor spoken to Desmond since my graduation. (Desmond had dropped out just before our senior year, whereas I'd come away armed with an Honour Roll diploma and a partial scholarship.) Ours was an unusual friendship; hardly surprising as Desmond and I had both been unusual young men.

We'd spent our 'teens hungering after keys to whatever worlds lay hidden within and beyond this one. We faked our way through the cryptic books of Levi, 'Alhazred', and Crowley. At sixteen we proclaimed ourselves Thelemites and were never without our Scarlet-bound copies of *Liber AL*. We rented every Lovecraft film, pantomimed the Rites of Eleusis, smoked a great deal of cannabis.

Paradoxically, Desmond and I were not misfits *per se* (both of us had girlfriends, and I at least was well-liked by most of my teachers), but our private obsessions unquestionably jilted us several degrees off from our peers. I still remember the one wonderful summer where Desmond and I kept radical hours and played outrageous mind games. For eight weeks we practically lived in hooded ritual robes, breathing in myrrh smoke, seeing the sun only as it died at dusk.

But as we staggered out of adolescence and toward adulthood, I somehow managed to slip (or be sucked) into the conventional world. I eventually outgrew a lot of my uncanny interests and replaced them with tamer (but more remunerative) ones. By senior year I'd cut off my dreadlocks and, through my father, had landed a part-time job in a frozen foods plant. I eventually moved away from Orchard Park to study economics at Browns University.

Desmond apparently never left his suburban vacuum. It's still hard for me to believe that two decades had elapsed since I last saw the closest and most fascinating friend I'll likely ever know in this life.

It's shameful, but in all honesty my thoughts had rarely, if ever, strayed to him. The last rumour I'd heard was that a Rochester tattoo artist had taken him on as an apprentice, but even that tidbit was fifteen years out of date.

It was Ella, Desmond's twin sister, who'd informed me of his death. When I asked how he'd died, the only detail I received was that he'd done it himself.

He'd died alone, in the upper bedroom of the house he'd lived in all his life.

Ella's email stunned me, not only because of the sad news, but also by the idea that she had gone through the trouble of typing my name into an internet search engine in order to reach me, of locating my direct email address through the website of the Ottawa-based brokerage firm I work for.

Twenty years ago I would have taken such a gesture to be a sign of Ella harbouring romantic feelings for me, and twenty years ago I would've been so overjoyed at the prospect of her reciprocating that I likely would've cared little about Desmond dying. But I am no longer a self-centered young man. Every death reduces me by virtue of the fact that they remind me of being that much closer to the grave myself.

I tapped out a brief reply to Ella, stating that I would buy an airline ticket back to Buffalo, confident that I could find a flight in time for the funeral. She quickly replied, thanking me and asking if I would serve as one of Desmond's pall bearers. On a knee-jerk reaction I said yes.

The night before my trip I suffered horrific dreams of pall bearing where I could feel something stirring inside my friend's casket. Despite my shouted protests, Desmond was lowered into the pit. When I refused to shovel him in, something pushed *me* down into the grave. I tried to

scrabble free, but my frantic clawing only managed to pull the damp clay down until both Desmond and I were buried alive.

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Buffalo International Airport seemed to have undergone a facelift since I'd last been there. Unfortunately, as I discovered after my cab ride to the suburb of Orchard Park, my hometown had not been graced with any such overhauls.

I checked in at a Holiday Inn and puzzled over how I should fill the four hours before the funeral service at Woodlawn Cemetery. In the end I decided to walk to my old neighbourhood to see how drastically my childhood home had been altered since my parents sold it during the real

estate slump of the “nasty nineties.”

The only alteration to the neighbourhood was that its blight was now achingly apparent. Some of the houses had been kept up, but fresh paint and manicured lawns can only mask erosion so much.

My boyhood home didn't look tremendously different from when I'd lived there; just enough to remind me that I was no longer a part of this world. Since it was only six blocks away, I thought I'd see how the Greer's home had fared.

When I reached it, I discovered that although the house had undergone drastic renovations, its occupants had not changed. I spied Ella walking down the driveway. She'd aged well, *extremely* well. She was dressed in a black cocktail dress and heeled leather sandals. Her hair was cropped in a 1940s-style bob that made her face look even more angular and striking.

A sleek limousine sat in the driveway, its engine softly rumbling. A bright orange placard that read FUNERAL poked up from its hood. More well-dressed mourners began to emerge from the front door of the Greer house. I glanced down at the sweat patches on my golf shirt, at my rumpled khakis, my canvas runners. I didn't want Ella to see me like this. I childishly ducked behind some shrubs and waited until the limo had glided out of sight before I began the walk back to my room.

I was ten minutes late for the funeral. I propped myself on the last draconian pew and sat watching the veins in my hands balloon up from the chapel's swelter. The service was sparsely attended. I recognized none of the bereaved, save for Ella, who sat in the front pew, flanked by two elderly relatives. By the time I finally met up with her afterwards I

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was just as sweaty and unkempt as I'd been earlier in the day only now I was a slob in a suit instead of one in casual wear.

“I'm so sorry, Ella,” I muttered, not really wanting to lean in for a hug in my condition. Nonetheless, I was thrilled when Ella reached her thin arms out and pulled me near. I could smell the talc that paled her cool, inviting neck.

“It's good to see you, Robin,” she cooed.

“And you. I wish it was under better circumstances.”

Ella pulled away and asked me if I was coming to the reception at what she called “the old house.” I told her yes and she looked genuinely pleased.

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At the reception there was cold fried chicken and potato salad, bottles of white wine and lager, and spears of chilled mango with homemade chocolates for dessert. There were also many, many tedious attempts at conversation between the strangers in attendance. I ate most of my food without really tasting it and tried to be discreet in my abuse of the open bar.

I didn't see Ella until the elderly guests, or those with rambunctious children, began making early departures. I was sitting on the stone steps of the back porch (which was actually more comfortable than the funeral home's pews) when I spotted Ella emerging from the thinned crowd.

“You should be in the shade,” she said, “you'll bake out here.” I was happy when she

immediately went against her own advice and joined me on the stoop. For a little while the only words that passed between us came from the mouths of the reception's other guests as we both sat and listened to much laughter and banal chatter. After some time had passed I was struck by the fact that no one had made a single mention of the departed since the funeral. Out of sight, out of mind. Desmond hadn't even been cremated yet.

"I think this whole thing is hitting me a bit harder than I thought it would," I confessed when the lull between Ella and I began verging into awkwardness.

"You're not the only one," she replied. I eyed the wine glass that was dangling between her tapered fingers. Condensation bubbled upon the

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glass. A rivulet ran down the stem and dribbled down onto her naked calf. I was nearly overcome with the compulsion to hunch down and lap the water from her flesh. Shame roared through me. I was *pathetic*, a middle-aged bachelor so desperate to reclaim his youth that he nearly mounted his dead friend's sister during the wake.

Just then, Ella, as if she'd heard my thoughts, uttered a magical spell; a simple enchantment that all women know on some primal level, a phrase they can employ when they wish to have a man, *any* man, at their beck and call. Ella said, "Come with me. I want to show you something".

It didn't matter where Ella was planning to lead me or what she wished to show; our journey through the back door and into that dim, empty house was narcotic enough. She drained the last of her white wine and set the empty glass on a table in the hall. When Ella's foot hit the first stair leading to the upper storey I was almost dizzy with anticipation. I could hear the blood rushing in my ears. I prayed that the bulge in my trousers was not too visible. My brain struggled to focus on the respectable notion that Ella and I were here to mourn Desmond, nothing more. But when I saw Ella open the door to what had once been Desmond's bedroom, I forgot all about my friend.

The window was curtained, which washed-out the interior in a dull beige. The atmosphere was musty; a scent that would've undoubtedly been overwhelming had the ceiling fans not been swirling air about. Ella switched on a desk lamp, illuminating the time-warp that was her late brother's chamber. The room's appearance was a shock to me, for it that hadn't been altered one iota in the long span between those high school afternoons I'd spent with Desmond and now, where I stood as an adult, draped in the formal attire of mourning. The same boyish antique map wallpaper clung to the flaking plaster, the same shelves bowed under the weight of the same books, even the same narrow bed sat beneath the draped window.

I spied a misshapen carton that was resting upon the mattress. Ella must've noticed my scrutinizing, because she said "That's actually what I wanted to show you", and then began tugging at the carton's flaps.

Stepping closer, I noted that the carton had been poorly stored, for the papers it held were browned and swollen from water damage.

"Desmond wanted you to have these papers," Ella explained.

"Why?"

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"I don't know exactly. I'm not even really sure what's in them. All I know is that Desmond set this box out on the bed before ... before he did it. He mentioned in the letter he'd pinned to

his shirt that he wanted you to have it. He said that you were the only person who might understand why he did what he did.”

The pages were a mishmash of handwritten notes, photocopied articles bound with rusted staples, and a few chapbooks. A pencil drawing of what would contemporarily be called a cliché of an extraterrestrial — blankly clinical expression, narrow-set almond-shaped eyes, a balloon-like cranium — stared coldly up at me. I hadn’t seen that particular image since Desmond and I clomped our adolescent feet through the sacred halls of Thelemic thought. The sight of it seemed to escalate the temperature, as well as pulling the walls of Desmond’s room in closer, closer.

It was the Lam entity, the extraterrestrial consciousness with which Aleister Crowley had made contact.

I slapped the cardboard flaps back into place and took the box up under my arm.

“Will you ...” Ella’s voice dissipated.

“If I find anything,” I assured her, “any clue at all, I’ll call you right away.”

When I went out to the driveway to meet the taxi that Ella had called for me, she squeezed my arm, kissed my cheek and insisted that I phone her in the morning, even if I found nothing. She handed me a sticky note with her number already written on it.

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I took the box up to my hotel room, changed out of my funerary formals, and poured the documents out onto the bed. I couldn’t even estimate how many pages there were, but their theme was all uniform: the occult. It appeared that Desmond had never shed the uncanny cocoon we’d spun as foolish teenagers. Even though I hadn’t bound the extension cord around his neck nor pushed him off the stool, I still felt partly culpable in my old friend’s demise. Right there and then, sitting cross-legged amidst a mound of obsessive litter, I broke down and wept. For the first time since Ella broke the news to me, I remembered who Desmond was and what he’d meant to me. I cried like a lost child.

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When I finally regained my composure, I began sorting through the madness Desmond had bequeathed me.

I think my friend must have amassed every existing bit of text on the Lam entity, and had even written a few of his own. The papers drew me in, allowed me to realize just how much I’d forgotten about an area of study that had once been central to my life.

The core facts came back swiftly: that the strange saga of Lam began around 1918 when Aleister Crowley, his brain hazed with opium smoke, received a transmission during the Amalantrah Working wherein an old wizard advised him to “find the egg.” Sometime later, in an act that was seemingly unrelated to the Amalantrah Working, Crowley sketched a ‘portrait’ of an entity he claimed to have observed in his chamber one night. Crowley christened the subject in his portrait “Lam,” later relating it to the Tibetan word for ‘way’ or ‘path’. With its slit mouth, coldly staring almond-like eyes, and egg-shaped head, Lam looked like the prototype for the ‘greys’ or ‘little green men’, and thus became forever entwined with the UFO consciousness craze that was spawned in the late ’forties.

Much had been written of Lam in the years since Crowley’s death, especially after Crowley had given the portrait to his protege Kenneth Grant, who’d developed a series of rituals to

‘commune’ with the alien consciousness of which the Lam portrait was a glyph.

Included in the papers was the thin dossier that Desmond and I had compiled at the tender age of seventeen; the official Magical Diary of our own experiments with The Lam Rite. Perilous, the Lam Rite was; it involved using Crowley’s drawing of Lam as a gateway. You imagined yourself squirming like a grub through Lam’s mouth or eyes, your form being sucked into Its form as your consciousness merges with Its consciousness. If done correctly, you’ll find yourself looking out through Lam’s eyes, seeing the universe according to Its detached, egoless Being.

I say that this dossier was “our” record, but this is rather misleading. I performed the Lam Rite a grand total of twice, both in Desmond’s basement. The first attempt yielded absolutely nothing (though I sealed it with the L.B.R.P. just in case), but the second marked my divorce from the occult. It was very late on one of the nights of Desmond’s and my ‘haunted summer.’ The air inside the gloomy candlelit basement was smeared by a pungent fog of cannabis. We’d agreed to take turns performing the solitary Lam Rite and I’d volunteered to go first.

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My attempt had been successful, depending of course on what you would deem success; but in this case I went from staring at the drab, shadow-stained basement walls to gazing omnisciently over a desert of mauve sand. The sky above me was a metallic silver, like a membrane of polished chrome lighted by dense black stars. Far in the distance there stood a watchtower of bricks and mortar. The space between myself and this edifice was daunting at first, but I was instantly possessed by a desire to see it full-on, to run my pale hands over the textured redbrick, to smell the cold restful air within.

As it is willed, so it is done.

A beat later I found myself crawling up the face of a cylindrical structure whose dimensions were so vast they verged on farcical. After scaling several hundred feet of the tower’s face with all the innate savvy of a seasoned mountaineer, I discovered an aperture that had been bored into the tower. If the mounds of smashed brick and clouds of grit were any indication, this renovation had been very recent and very crude.

Piled upon the fuming debris were eggs. Robust and shimmering, their shells the colour of lethal toadstool, the eggs sat incubating in the ruins. I crawled up to one and discovered that the shells were not grey but in fact translucent. It was whatever squirmed and pulsed *inside* them that was grey.

Was grey and had eyes: as blackly empty as the stars in the shimmering sky above me.

I backed away and countless pairs of alien eyes stared at me from the numberless eggs. I then heard a wet tearing sound. It grew louder. They were hatching.

What wrenched me back to the wonderfully dull basement setting was Desmond shaking me by the shoulders. He helped me regulate my *prana*. We closed the rite, executed the L.B.R.P. and then went to sleep.

I never performed the Lam Rite again.

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Contained in Desmond’s dossier was a batch of Lam drawings. Or rather roughly two-dozen copies of the one drawing of Lam that Crowley had fashioned nearly a century ago. Some were

Xeroxed, others pulled savagely from the book they'd appeared in. At the top of each portrait, just above Lam's swollen, soft-looking cranium (sometimes stuffed with Ankhs or orbs or sephiroth) were scribbled names and dates,

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presumably to distinguish the identical pictures: *Crowley - Original '18; Reprint: Frontispiece, 'The Voice of the Silence,' Equinox 3:1; Grant: 'Desmodus' - Outer Gateways '94; Zivo-Aivaz - lecture booklet, '97; Staley: 'Lam Serpent Sadhana' paper, '08.*

The topmost paper was presumably why Ella thought all of these documents were intended for me. Upon this Lam drawing had been written: "For Robin Gallagher." The Xerox copy that bore this inscription was blurrier, darker. Details such as Lam's piercing eyes were hazily dim.

"I'm sorry, Des," I said regretfully and began repacking my inheritance. As I was plunking the last bundle of papers into the box, a thin white spindle slipped out and rolled onto the bedspread. I picked it off the quilt where it had landed. It was a marijuana cigarette, wound as snugly as a mummy. I could only guess as to how long the cannabis had been mouldering amongst Desmond's notes, but a quick sniff triggered a perverse nostalgia for those carefree nights of my youth. I resolved that perhaps a puff or two would help loosen the tight-wire I'd been bound in since I first learned of Desmond's passing.

Being a non-smoker left me with no means to light it. I ducked out to the hotel bar on a quest for matches. By the time the elevator doors parted I was as giddy a child in the throes of mischief-making.

When I discovered Ella waiting outside my door I felt as though I was experiencing the drug's effects prematurely. But her voice convinced me that she was not a dope mirage.

"I couldn't sleep," she said, almost guiltily, adding "and I didn't want to be alone."

I slipped the matchbook in my back pocket and asked if she wanted to go for a drink downstairs. Ella nodded.

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I nursed a pint of bitter. Ella drained a glass of white wine, then another. The hotel bar was crowded and noisy. I was exuberant when Ella suggested we vacate for quieter quarters.

By then Ella was tipsy, so much so that she actually giggled at my awful one-liners. She was almost like her old self; the young woman I'd once desperately yearned for.

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When we returned to my room the box of papers seemed to lure Ella's gaze away from me. Before I could intervene, her eyes moved from the box to the joint I'd left sitting on the pillow.

"Apparently the maid service at this hotel leaves you complimentary pot instead of mints?" Ella said. Panicked that she'd gotten the wrong idea, I began yammering some excuse that was so singularly stupid I cannot even remember what it was. But Ella never lost her composure. Instead she tweezed the hand-rolled relic between her fingers and asked if I had a light.

I'm not sure what Desmond had spun up inside that paper cocoon, but it wasn't marijuana. At first I thought the peculiar scent and taste were due either to my not having smoked drugs in two decades, or to the staleness of the plant itself. But once those stinging, mouldy-smelling

fumes crept into my grey matter, I wished I'd tossed the drug away when I'd found it.

My heart began to race and my imagination bloomed with images of a mauve desert and a tower and shiny metal sky. The fundamental act of breathing had grown hopelessly complicated to my frying synapses. Ironically, the way I managed to keep myself in check was to hark back to the night Desmond walked me through the fundamentals of Eastern *prana* technology. I could almost hear his voice in my ear; tremulous with his horrible lack of self-confidence.

The drug was either affecting Ella differently, or she simply didn't care, for she was lying back on the mattress with her arms framing her head. Her eyes were undirected, her mouth curled into a lazy grin.

I stretched out beside her like a loyal pet. A long time passed where the only motion in the room was the swimming feeling inside my skull. But then Ella slowly drew one arm down from her head, to her neck, and then just below it. By now her expression wasn't quite so foolishly giddy. Her lips were slightly parted and her eyes were closed. I watched breathlessly as she undid one of the buttons of her blouse, then another.

She reached down with both hands and dragged her pencil skirt up higher, higher. She was bare beneath it. I touched her thigh, all the while staring at her mound. Now in a state of near delirium, I lowered my head to an area I'd fantasized about since I was a teenager.

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"The eyes are all different. Did you notice that?"

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I was so dazed from our exertions that I hadn't even realized that Ella was reaching down to pluck some papers from Desmond's carton, which in our passion we'd kicked to the floor.

When I failed to answer her, Ella shoved the Lam portraits onto my chest. I bent the corner of one picture up feebly, compared it to the one beneath it.

She was right. Each of the Lam portraits was *different*. Or rather, the person *inside* the Lam head was unique.

The eyes are the window to the soul; or in the case of Lam, the window to the souls. There were different sets of eyes looking out in each picture.

Crowley's original drawing showed a pair of eyes with near-vertical pupils, almost feline. Grant's reprint featured a set of eyes with pupils like saucers, the eyes of someone viewing something frightening. Staley's appeared to have irises like a lemniscate.

I sat up and Ella slipped off me.

"What's the big deal?" she asked. Her annoyance with me was palpable.

"I'm not sure yet. But I think this is what your brother was trying to tell me."

"And what's that exactly?"

"I don't know. Maybe that this alien, this entity, whatever you want to call it, is changing ... evolving."

Ella didn't stay with me that night. Shortly after I'd uttered my theory, I threw myself into studying every scrap of paper that Desmond had left to me. I know I said goodbye to Ella before



she exited my room, but I remember nothing of the false promises I whispered to her.

I caught a plane back home the next day. Ella had phoned my cellular three times that morning, probably to arrange a warm farewell at the airport, but I never took her call. I carefully placed those papers I'd studied in my suitcase and brought the others with me to read during the flight.

Desmond's research seemed at turns to flow with founts of hope and to be dammed by dead-ends. But one thread he pursued has convinced me that my friend was on to something more profound than mad:

Lam is not a single being *per se*. He is the Way; he is being itself. What we see printed in books — that grey expressionless Lam portrait

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with eyes suggestive of windows and a portal-like mouth — is the approximation of this way, the very human reflex to conceptualize the All. From the outside looking in, Lam is an alien, more akin to flying saucers than to the *terra firma*.

But from the *inside* looking *out*, we ourselves become the Way. The portraits changed because the Lam in one portrait is not the Lam in any other. Lam is ever-Becoming.

I began writing up some notes of my own on the subject. It did not take long for this pursuit to escalate from pastime to obsession, and it was only after I'd felt that my academic pursuits had gone as far as they could go that I decided to attempt the Lam Rite for the first time in twenty years.

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The Lam drawing I chose for my focal point was the one that Desmond had left to me, the one with the words "For Robin Gallagher" scribbled above the portrait. The reason I chose this one was not purely sentimental; this Lam was actually drawn by Desmond. I could only tell this after I'd given it a thorough examination. The eyes in this Lam were vacant pits, vacancies waiting for my eyes to occupy them.

On a rainy and otherwise drab Friday night I secured my apartment door, drew every blind, and erected a sacred space on my living room floor. I lighted a white candle and meditated before the Lam portrait for a long, long while. Nothing happened.

I struggled to keep my thoughts anchored on the picture, or on the fleeting imagery of eggs or mauve plains, but it was fruitless. I was about to puff out the candle and retire when my telephone rang. Ordinarily such an intrusion would have shattered the mood of the ritual, but something impelled me to rise, to walk to my unlit kitchen and answer it.

"Robin?" The female voice was quaky. I didn't recognize it until she said "It's Ella." She paused. I could almost see her trembling on the other end. "I've been putting off calling you for weeks now, but I think you have a right to know ... I ... I'm pregnant."

At first Ella didn't know what to make of my outburst of elation. We talked for a long time that night. I flew out to visit her the following weekend, just to discuss what should be done. She was a wreck, but I had no concerns whatsoever. I knew precisely what was unfurling.

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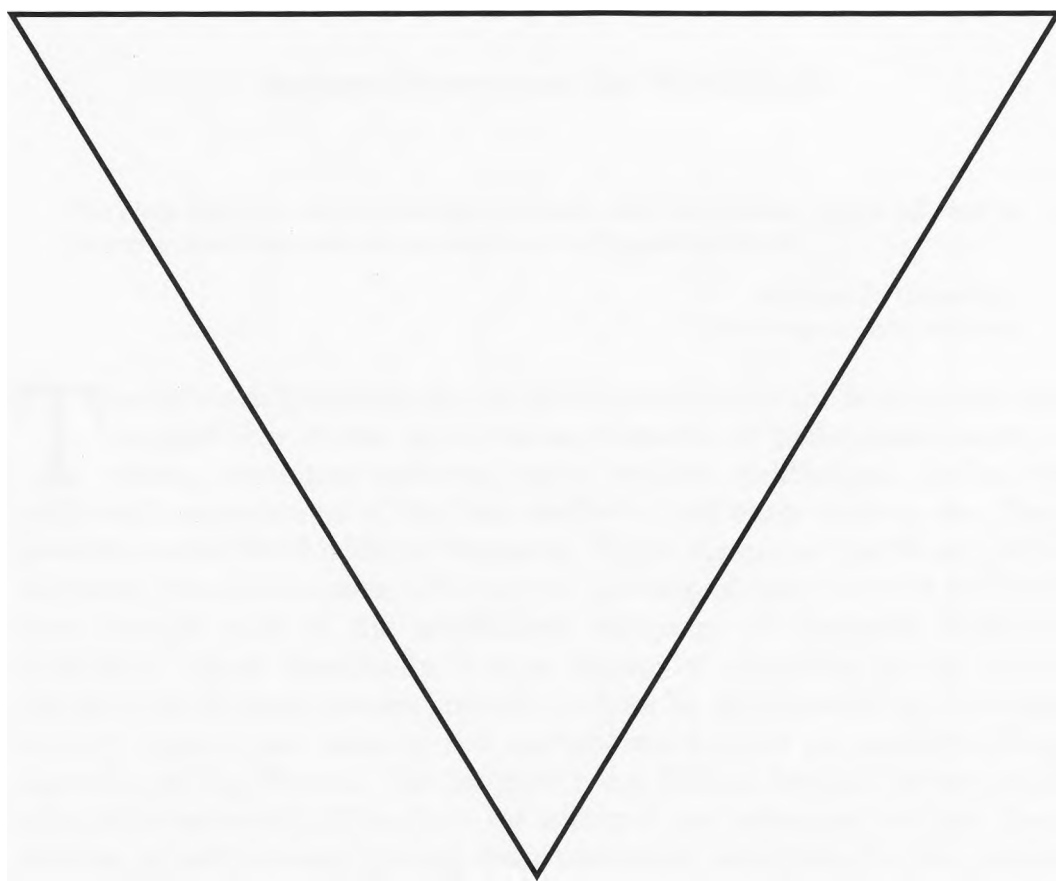
I moved back to Orchard Park three months before the baby was born. Ella and I cemented a

relationship that, for her, is based on love, but for me is based on Faith.

My son Desmond was born five months ago. He is the guiding force in my life and I fanatically record every detail of his development. Ella teases me about this sometimes, but that is only because she is unaware of who the child truly is. I alone absorb the wisdom he whispers in the dead of night. I alone know what swims inside his dark, doe-like eyes. I alone know what he's Becoming.

But many will know soon.

# The Ophidian Sabbat



Daniel Schulke

# The Ophidian Sabbat

## Serpent-Power and the Witch-Cult

*The Holy Spirit of the Serpent-god pervades and lies hidden within all that is.  
Its many heads betoken the perception of all possible worlds.*

Andrew D. Chumbley  
*The Dragon-Book of Essex*

The Sabbatic Tradition may be broadly defined as the body of rites and magical lore of the witch-cultus, material or phantasmal, some of whose attributes achieved early written codification during the witchcraft persecutions of the late medieval and early modern era. Such concepts as the Witch's Mark, Nocturnal Flight, Agapae of the Wise<sup>1</sup>, poison unguents, the consumption of the corpse, and sexual congress with the Devil have become part of the established reliquary of European Sabbath-symbolism. More specifically, it is a stream of sorcerous gnosis, orally-transmitted through precise initiatic vectors to the present day, wending through history and bearing the spectral markers of the medieval High Assembly of the Witches. The magical order *Cultus Sabbati* serves as the actuated cross-roads of the Cult, for within it are subsumed various lineal streams of witch-power tracing their sorcerous patterning to this ancient liminal reverie. Within its atavistic coffers, a retinue of bestial totemic forms is also co-located: half-human theriomorphs and creatures typically nocturnal in nature, such as the owl or bat; or the Host of the Venomous, such as the spider and toad. Amongst the grand retinue of gods, beasts, shades, and astral emanations which haunt the circle of the Witches' revels, the Serpent-Power or Ophidian Genius assumes an exalted role.

1. The Sabbatic *orgia*.

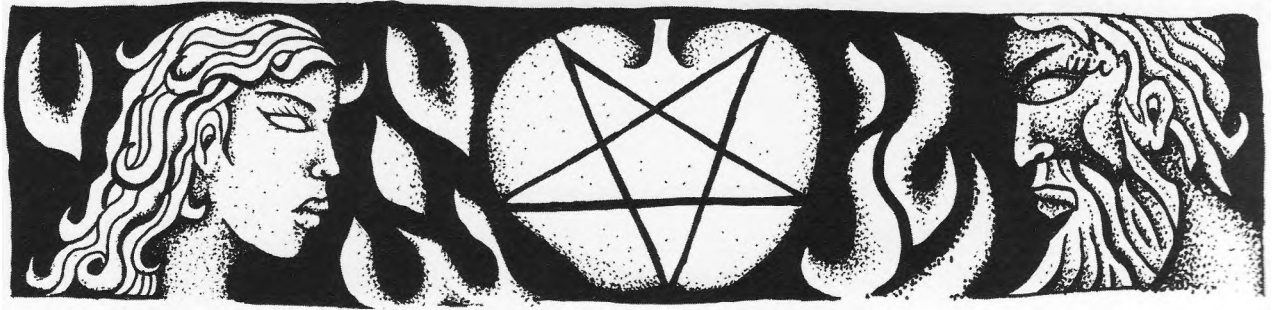
One such power is the atavistic transvocation of the Snake within the flesh of man. In the *Cultus Sabbati*, one witchcraft-lineage from the south-west of England has historically held the Serpent in high veneration. In this magical stream, whose known history dates to at least 1880, a sovereign spell is taught whereby witches go forth by night to 'borrow the power' of the Great and Holy Serpent. The use of the term *borrow* is curious, as it implies a peculiar view of the Formulae of Atavistic Assumption. Implicit as well in the term is the phantasmal power of the Fetch and Famulus, unto whose totemic reservoir the 'borrowed' power must be returned. In North America, this English practice finds a magical corollary with the dreaded witchcraft of the Navajo Skin Walker or *yee naaldlooshii*, whose rites in some cases resemble the features of the Sabbath. Using a totemic animal hide, often a magical heirloom passed down from initiator to initiate, the Skin Walker assumes the astral or physical form of the animal and goes forth by night, usually to prey upon the weak or wreak havoc upon enemies. The power and efficacy of these witches is legendary, and still dreaded in Navajo communities.<sup>2</sup> Though the present-day activities of this cult are for the most part considered malefic — and thus, in Native terms, witchcraft — elders relay that there was a time when these powers were mainly used for hunting and not maleficia. These sorcerous contacts make use of possessive atavistic formulae, a feature common to serpent-power, and one characterized by obsession to the exclusion of all else. As Kenneth Grant, who has described a number of magical formulae and atmospheres of the Sabbatic Current, writes:

*The Sabbath is a form of mass hysteria which releases almost unlimited quantities of preconceptual energy ... The magical formulae implied in Sabbatic symbolism involve the invocation and redirection of preconceptual energy downwards and backwards to the required atavism.*<sup>3</sup>

The frenzies which often obtain under such circumstances will test the mettle of even the most experienced medium, and a foundational practice for regular strengthening of the aethyric vessel must needs be in place. Prior to initiation into the lineages of Sabbatic Witchcraft, I had encountered ophidian spirit-forms in the *mange loa* and *bembe* of the spiritist cults of Umbanda and Macumba. The presence which regularly manifested for me in these rites was Simbi, serpent-loa associated with waters, and sometimes sorcery. In my own work,

2. Teller, J. *The Navaho Skinwalker, Witchcraft, & Related Spiritual Phenomena: Orientation to the Evolution of the Circle*.

3. Aleister Crowley and the Hidden God, Skoob Books, 1992 (1973), p.134.



descent of trance-possession by the spirit consisted of a sublime and undulating ecstasy wherein cognitive awareness became kinesthetic. I have since noted that a number of entities of the Sabbatic Spirit-retinue bear similar contours in the dominion of Ingress. More germane than the revelatory power these spirits provided was the experience gained as the Steed of the Great Rider, which was later invaluable for the work of the Nocturnal Assembly.

An additional ophidian power germane unto the Witch's Art is the lore of venoms and poisons — the dominion of the *veneficus* or magical poisoner, an area of long-time study and personal practice. In certain Welsh forms of Craft, the exteriorised snake-atavism is the *gwiber* — the font of venom — and may refer to either the Dragon or the personage of the European Adder (*Vipera berus*). As a formulaic spell its usage is primarily for attack, but also “to know”. This dual aspect of gnosis and poisoning recalls the Pentecostal snake-handling cults of Appalachia, who, in concert with the teachings of Christ, “take up Serpents” in their religious frenzies, suffer the bites of vipers, and drink strychnine.

When Ophidian Gnosis is expressed in venefic praxes, certain rites of Witch-power make use of ‘The Serpent's Graal’ — a draught of the *Vinum Sabbati* prepared according to various formulations. Where its making is Lunar-vibratory in nature, its composition is the sexual emission of Eve and the Serpent. Where Solar, it frequently employs the prepared root of *mandragora*, the Mandrake or ‘Man-Dragon’. Other formulations are known; the Arcanum may manifest along differing trajectories but all are united in the Admonition of the Snake: *Take, Eat, and Be Wise*.

Within the Sabbatic Tradition, a potent body of lore and sorcerous praxis has emerged in the past two decades in the form of the Rites Draconian. This secret corpus of magical practices, rightly exacted, remains among the most rigorous magical work of all the Western Esoteric Tradition, and has come to greatly empower the Cultus, both as individual practitioners and as a whole. Various empowered by traditional lineages of Petro Voudon, Sufism, and varied Tantrik streams, as well as precise astronomical arcanæ, the emergent body of work sought a harmonic reification of the witch-mysteries of Essex Craft, with the goal of resonating Ophidian power within the body of the Initiate.

This cycle of sorcerous foci was the emergent work of the *Column of the Crooked Path*, an inner cell of the *Cultus Sabbati* consisting of four

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initiates under the leadership of Andrew Chumbley.<sup>4</sup> The personnel of the group changed over time, and others also practiced these rites in solitude. The collective reification of the work was set forth in Chumbley's *Dragon-Book of Essex*, begun in 1992 concurrent with the exaction of the rites, and completed in 1997; copies were distributed only to those initiates practicing the work.<sup>5</sup> The *Dragon Book* was described in its own pages as "A Book of Witchskin, with pages beyond mortal count or scope of Mind, bound in the shifting pelt of the Serpent and written in the blood of all whom have walked the Circle's round."

The work was conceived as the second volume of Chumbley's 'Trimagisterion' grimoiria, the first being *Azoetia: A Grimoire of the Sabbatic Craft* (1992) and the third *Auraeon* (unpublished). From this period of work, Chumbley formulated 'Crooked Path Sorcery' as a trans-historical magical model, operant in a number of systems of sorcery, most notably in the witchcraft of his native Essex. The Crooked Path may be seen to mirror the zootype of the snake, wending between such magical antipodes as blessing and cursing, honour and treachery, Tabu and its breaking.<sup>6</sup> Its quintessential nature is transgressive, and through this apostasy, the illuminant fire of the Serpent descends. As Chumbley wrote:

*The Magical Quintessence is realised in the moment of gnosis. The Crooked Path is realised in the deeds which reveal the Quintessence; it is the ever-deviating way which connects moment to moment in a continuum of initiatory consciousness.*<sup>7</sup>

The work of the Draconian corpus is primarily votive-gnostic-theurgic, however, the arduous nature of the rites incepts a magical crucible wherein the Initiate himself is tested, tried and refined by the most severe means possible. Thus, when rightly exacted, all applications of the practitioner's Art are improved. The rites from this Corpus also have thaumaturgic applications, specifically for the

4. Chumbley, Andrew D. 'The Golden Chain and the Lonely Road', *The Cauldron* no. 94, November 1999. Some details were also discussed briefly in Chumbley's unpublished 2002 essay 'A History of Crooked Path Teachings', recently published in *Opuscula Magica* Volume 2, Three Hands Press, 2011.

5. Further additions were made by Chumbley to the work in 1999, 2000, and 2002. Publication of *The Dragon-Book of Essex* is planned by Xoanon Limited.

6. Often artificially-described by Western practitioners as "Left and Right Hand Paths".

7. *A Spark From the Forge*, privately published. We may also consider the Crooked Path in light of the convolutions of the surface of the brain: coiled and recursive structures create greater surface area, thus greater capacity for chemical interactivity.



accumulation of select Ophidian powers within the body of the sorcerer and their exteriorisation at will: for example, the enshrinement of astral venom within allied corporeal zones, which may then be projected outward. As one of the goals of the work is aligning the Draconian powers to the flesh of the sorcerer himself, this is not surprising.

The Enfleshment of the Snake also takes the form of the Serpent-fire of Kundalini. A considerable portion of the Rites Draconick are sexual in nature; and within the Ophidian Sabbat, the male and female generative potencies are classed as Black and Red Serpent-Fire, respectively allied with Shaitan and Lilith (Ob and Od, the Serpents Twain). Their connubial unity is enfleshed in the Stang of the Magister, the Staff of the Two-horned or *Dhul'Qarnen* - the Infernal Caduceus and emblem of Witch-authority. This mirrors the witchcraft-teaching that the manifestation and authority of the Black Man (or Devil) of the Sabbat is derived from the orgiastic *congressus* of the Assembled Host. Beyond this, the transcendental extrapolation of the Arcanum conceals within it a potent teaching for any Seeker, regardless of gender.

The modern renewal of Sabbatic arcanæ was also greatly nurtured by Austin Osman Spare, whose formulae of the Witch's Art relied heavily on both sexual and atavistic formulae — two of the chief characteristics of Serpent Power. Amidst his magico-artistic reveries he observes:

*The Sabbath is neither black nor white but a highly colourful affair. Sex is used as the medium for a magical act, and for a divertive conation on a mass scale. It is the death posture formula applied en masse, but instead of being rehearsed astrally it is enacted physically for the generation of great power.*<sup>8</sup>

The Draconian Corpus was formally incepted in the United States in 1998 and has been on-going since that time; today the Column's activities continue within the *Cultus Sabbati* under my own direction. Many of these rites have been exacted in monuments of remote antiquity, being remnants of the ancient Ophidian cultus or bearing atavistic resonance with the Serpent-Atavism, there to seed telluric resonances in harmony with stellar ones. In 2003, rites from this Draconian corpus were performed by myself and a fellow initiate at the Serpent Mound in Ohio, and at other ancient earthworks among the Amerindian complex known

8. As quoted in Grant, Kenneth. *Images and Oracles of Austin Osman Spare*, Fulgur, 2003 (1975), p. 24. For further reading of Spare's Sabbatic exegesis see also *The Witches' Sabbath* (Fulgur Limited, 1992).



collectively as the Effigy Mounds. The rites have also been performed by brethren in other far-flung locations world-wide, including, most recently, sites of the ancient Shinto Dragon-shrines in Japan.<sup>9</sup>

Beyond these historical trajectories, there is a more personal and obscure current which has come to inform the Sabbatic-Ophidian corpus. Traditional British witch-lore carries a number of teachings directly related to Serpent-Power, primarily the bequest of (i) sorcerous power; (ii) gnosis; and (iii) tutelage, from Samael, the luminous sentience and celestial emanant of Forbidden Wisdom, often glossed as a 'Fallen Angel'.<sup>10</sup> The *Cultus Sabbati* is founded upon an ophiolatrous lineage taking a Serpent as its bestial totem; in at least two other streams of power operant within the Cultus and dating to the late 19th century, the Snake plays a prominent role as a force of deadly poison and atavistic revelator.<sup>11</sup>

Of preërrerence amongst these is the reverence for Cain as first sorcerer or the Father of 'Witch-blood'; the Ophidian Lore of the Sabbath has come to embody an important sphere of Cainite Gnosis. The paternity of Cain originating with the Serpent-angel Samael, through demonic intercourse with Eve, is attested in Rabbinic and Kabbalistic lore, for example the Babylonian Talmud known as *Abodah Zarah* or 'strange worship'.<sup>12</sup> Thus, in Sabbatic lore, initiates are sometimes known as the 'Brood of the Serpent'.

Aside from esoteric Judaism, the notion of Serpent-heredity is also familiar among the Khmer of Cambodia, the offspring of the *Nagas* or holy serpents, and from the ancient Scythian peoples, who claimed descent from a *drakhaina* or half-snake, half-woman genetrix.<sup>13</sup> However, unlike the apocryphal lore of the Serpent of Eden, these Asian

9. The *Cultus* is indebted to Fra. A. of *The Companie of the Serpent-Cross*, for this work and permission of reference.

10. The subject of the Great Serpent as Illuminator is among the concerns of my recent book *Lux Haeresis*, treating the Sabbatic Mysteries of Light-Emanation, Vision, and Image (Xoanon Limited, 2011).

11. In America, mention must also be made of *Our Lady of Endor Coven of the Gnostic-Ophite Cultus*, which operated in Ohio in the 1940s by Herbert Sloane. Though this obscure group has been adopted as a patron spiritual ancestor by some modern Satanists, its work appears to have a greater commonality with the work of Michael Bertiaux and the dual-faith observance of certain lineages of the *Cultus Sabbati*.

12. *BT Abodah Zarah* 22b; *Zohar* I 148a-148b.

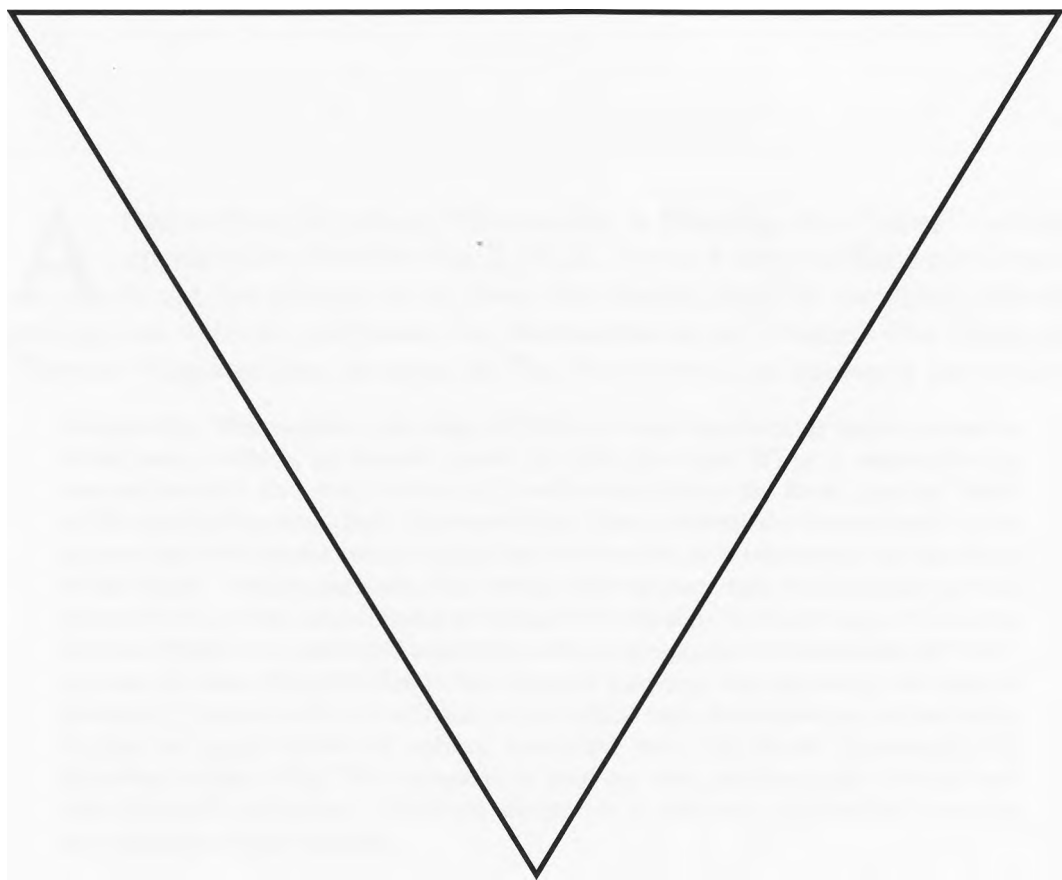
13. Herodotus, *The Histories*, 4.9.1. Also notable is the Scythian races' horsemanship and equestrian culture, linked to Cain, regarded by the Romanies and the Society of the Horseman's Word as the First Horseman.

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sources hold snake-ancestry in veneration, wherein serpents may take deific forms and are given *Naga Puja*. In the few British witchcraft-lineages I am familiar with having both the presence of the Serpent and the ritual patterning of the Sabbat, devotional-propitiatory rites to the god are also present, for its power both as a bringer of gnosis and as the Master of Poison.

But what of the Circle of Midnight itself, the Tradition wherein the Snake makes its home, and about which it is coiled? The Eternal Rite of the Sabbath may rightly assume the ophidian glyph as the embodiment of its affective power. Wending through aeons, religions, and the temporal vessels of flesh which bear its hidden power, it devours and transmutes *numen* wherever encountered. It is this hidden stream, more than that which is carried along by its current, that endures as its defining power, the invisible yet radiant body of Samael.

# Maranatha and Beyond



Stephen Dziklewicz

## Maranatha and Beyond

**A**fter writing my essay ‘Maranatha: a Blessing or a Curse?’ (which appeared in *Starfire Vol.II No.3*), I sent a copy to Kenneth Grant to get his opinion of it. I was also hoping that he would be able to provide me with the reference for Maranatha in A.E Waite’s *The Works of Thomas Vaughan* that he cited in *The Ninth Arch*. In his reply, he wrote:

Concerning ‘Maranatha’, my copy of Waite’s tome mentioning same seems to have gone walkies, so cannot quote at this juncture. What I remember in connection with the word is that A.C. had a kink about the Book. [i.e. his ‘Book of Abramelin Squares’. S.D.] As you will no doubt remember, I mentioned it\* in connection with books remaining in his possession at ‘Netherwood’ at the time of his death. I might mention that when alive he kept this book locked up in a cabinet in his room and refused to discuss it with me. However, upon his death all his effects were gathered together and a large portion of them sent off to K. Germer in New York. Whilst in the stage of packing, and knowing the people involved, I took a look at that book in particular and discovered, attached to its fly-leaf a square piece of vellum inscribed with the word Maranatha in Enochian script. Why? Your guess is as good as mine. At the time - which was one of ‘speed’ and stress - I did not wonder at it, but your mention of it recalls my memory of the occasion.

(\* ‘Remembering A.C.’ p.55 — handwritten in the margin).<sup>1</sup>

Grady McMurtry also had his own experience of the ‘kink’ which Crowley had about this particular book. When he was serving in the U.S. Army and stationed in England during the Second World War, he visited Crowley at 93 Jermyn Street on several occasions during late 1943 to early 1944 e.v. He described how, on one of these, when Crowley went to

1. Letter from Kenneth Grant dated 7 Jun ’04 e.v.

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make tea in the kitchen, he could not resist examining the book shelves and taking out a certain volume which drew his attention. He was puzzled by its contents which consisted of matted squares containing large Enochian letters: very black and very perfect, yet evidently painted on. He was about to touch and test, when Crowley returned, saw what he was about to do and yelled at him not to do it. He concludes the incident by saying:

I looked up in considerable surprise, closed the book rather gently and handed it back to him. He said, quietly, "You have no idea what forces you could have set in motion!" It was the only explanation he ever offered, and the incident was never mentioned again.<sup>2</sup>

Before considering the implications of these two reminiscences, it might be better to get a more complete idea of the book that we are dealing with here. The most detailed description of Aleister Crowley's 'Book of Abramelin Squares' has been given by Frater Shiva in 2007 e.v. He had access to it for some considerable time and made practical use of its contents. As the current whereabouts of the book, or indeed its continued survival, are not known, Frater Shiva's account is probably the best that we are liable to get and I can do no better than to quote his description of its contents:

Inside it was really more of a photograph album than a "book". The pages were made up from very heavy paper, like "card-stock", that had sixteen, forty-five degree slits in each page, so cut as to hold the four corners of the "photographs", which were, in this case, Abramelin talismans. There were four talismans to a page. There was neither a Table of Contents, an Index, nor any other labelling that identified the talismans. One had to actually know what they were doing, as well as possess access to the Enochian alphabet designations, in order to figure out which one was which. However, to make matters easier, they were arranged in the same order as found in their original sourcebook, *The Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*.

The talismans had been constructed in the traditional manner, that is, they were square pieces of vellum (fine parchment), approximately three inches to one side, upon which the Enochian letters had been inscribed in (presumably) Indian ink.<sup>3</sup>

These magic squares are evidently the very same ones that Crowley describes as copying out in the breakfast room at Boleskine House where, despite the light and cheerful aspect of the room: "The sun could not penetrate the murk that gathered about those talismans". Regarding their source, *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*, he

2. *O.T.O. Newsletter* Vol.II No.5, June 1978 e.v.

3. *Inside Solar Lodge - Outside the Law*, The Teitan Press, 2007; p. 163.

### *Maranatha and Beyond*

states that “It is the best and the most dangerous book ever written ... by far the most convincing medieval magical document in existence” and goes on to add: “The talismans work automatically They are as easy to explode as Iodide of Nitrogen, and a sight more dangerous”. These brief citations are taken from his essay ‘The Revival of Magick’ published in *The International* in 1917 e.v. and written with a certain amount of hyperbole to suitably impress the American public, but they do reflect his very sincere opinion on the matter. And it certainly explains the ‘kink’ or reaction that he demonstrated when his young disciples showed what he regarded as a dangerously casual curiosity about the book.

So far, so good; but what is the significance of ‘Maranatha’ in all of this? Eventually, I tracked down that reference from *The Works of Thomas Vaughan* on the internet. Vaughan mentions the word in his treatise entitled *Magia Adamica, or The Antiquitie of Magic*, published under his pseudonym of Eugenius Philalethes in 1650. In this he declares:

Now, that the learning of the Jewes, I mean their Cabala, was chemicall, and ended in true physical performances, cannot be better proved than by the Booke of Abraham the Jew, wherein he layd down the secrets of this Art in indifferent plaine termes and figures, and that for the benefit of his unhappy country-men, when by the wrath of God they were scattered all over the world.

This book was accidentally found by Nicholas Flammel, a French-man, and with the help of it he attained at last to that miraculous Medecine which men call the Philosopher’s Stone. But let us hear the *Monsieur* himself describe it.

There fell into my hands (saith he), for the sum of two florins, a gilded Book, very old and large. It was not of paper nor parchment, as other books be, but it was made of delicate rindes (as it seemed to me) of tender young trees, The cover of it was of brasse, well bound, all ingraven with letters of strange figures, and for my part, I think they might well be Greek characters, or some such ancient language. Sure I am, I could not read them, and I know well they were not notes, nor letters of Latine, nor of the Gaule, for of them I understood a little.... Upon the first of the leaves was written in great capitall letters of gold: *Abraham the Jew, Prince, Priest Levite, Astrologer, and Philosopher, to the nation of the Jewes, by the wrath of God dispersed among the Gaules, sendeth health.*

After this it was filled with great execrations and curses (with this word Maranatha, which was often repeated there) against every person that should cast his eyes upon it, if he were not sacrificer or scribe. He that sold me this booke knew not what it was worth, no more than I when I bought it. I believe it had been stolen, or taken by violence, from the miserable Jewes, or found hid in some part of the ancient place of their habitation.<sup>4</sup>

4. *The Works of Thomas Vaughan* (ed. A.E. Waite), Theosophical Publishing House, London 1919; pp.170-172.



Here, Vaughan is quoting in large part from another work, *Nicholas Flammel - His Exposition of the Hieroglyphicall Figures*, translated and published by Eiranaeus Orandus in London in 1624, and previously published in Paris in 1612. Essentially, for our purposes, it is describing an ancient, mystical book, attributed to Abraham the Jew, which is protected from the uninitiated reader by “execrations and curses” of which the most notable is the word MARANATHA.

In his introduction to his translation of *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*, “Bequeathed by Abraham unto Lamech his son”, S.L. MacGregor Mathers asks “Who then was this Abraham the Jew?” and goes on to speculate that he may have been a descendant of that very same Abraham the Jew who wrote “the celebrated Alchemical work” acquired by Nicholas Flamel almost a century earlier than the translation from Hebrew and publication of the *Sacred Magic* in 1458. He notes that his author, sometimes referred to as Abraham of Worms, was supposed to have been born in 1362, and would therefore have been, to some extent, a contemporary of Flamel, whose traditional dates are given as circa 1330-1418. In this duplication of actual or apocryphal Abrahams, among a profusion of individuals bearing the epithet of Abraham the Jew’ in all probability, it is not surprising that they become identified as being one and the same.

Crowley, familiar as he was with Thomas Vaughan’s works and the infamous biblical curse of *Anathema Maranatha*, could not have chosen a more suitable curse to place inside the fly-leaf of his own particular recension of the ‘Sacred Magic of Abramelin’. Was it truly intended as an effective guard against prying eyes, or was it merely an affectation to emulate an historical predecessor? There is not really any way of knowing; perhaps to some extent, it depends on when he placed it there.

Finally, this brings us back to Kenneth Grant’s *The Ninth Arch* and his comments on the word ‘Maranatha’, forming as it does the text of ‘The Book of the Spider’, verse 859-22 (page 495):

“Maranatha” is the great curse set to guard against profane delvers into the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage. It applies in this instance, and cogently, to the *Grimoire* of Clan Grant.

While there is no doubt that the word ‘Maranatha’ embodies a magical formula of some significance, it becomes increasingly clear that it actually constitutes a memory. *Liber 29 (OKBISh)* is replete with verses that are memories: remembrances of things past, of magical names and artefacts, of books and images, of places and encounters, of sounds and sensations, and of stray, half-forgotten lines of poetry. For this reason it is a much more diffuse and subjective text than the *Wisdom of S’lba*,

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that exceedingly intense and cogent Typhonian transmission. In many ways 'The Book of the Spider' can be regarded as a magickal autobiography, a history of inner plane contacts and focal triggers. "Book 29 is concerned primarily with opening the Gateways", Grant states in his introduction. There are certainly gateways of the imagination to be found in those dreaming spaces that exist between experiences in the past and our selective remembering of them; but Kenneth Grant held the firm conviction that the text concealed a fully functional grimoire, a workable magickal praxis. Indeed, there are many densely cryptical passages and unusual sigils in the book that have yet to yield their secrets. He stated in his letter:

I always find your expressions extremely interesting and am always glad of any insights you may care to air - especially concerning OKBISH, which is proving a very hard nut to crack, although I have received several interesting letters on the subject, which, rather sadly, only raise more questions than they answer. However ... fire away ...!<sup>5</sup>

While taking account of those curses and blessings that may guard Grant's grimoire, therefore, let us go beyond them and examine its opening words.

*Phulkamezameza Phulk aliz.*

'The Book of the Spider' opens with a response in an unknown tongue to an invocation of Qulielfi, Guardian of the Twenty-ninth Tunnel of Set in which this *Book OKBISH* was, in the greater part, revealed.

*(The Ninth Arch, page 53)*

If this is transliterated into Hebrew/Aramaic it gives the following results:

PhVLKAMHZAMHZA = 243 = GMR, to complete; complete, perfect.

243 = GRM, bone; strength, substance.

PhVLK ALIZ = 136 + 48 = QVL IVBL, a voice of protracted sound.

136 + 48 = OIVN KVKB, contemplation of a star.

136 + 48 = OIVN KDKD, contemplation of a sparkling gem.

PhVLKAMHZAMHZA PhVLK ALIZ = 427 = HVIVTh, Havayoth: essences, or existences.

5. Letter from Kenneth Grant dated 7 June '04 e.v.

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The key to the interpretation of this gematria is that the word PhVLKAMHZAMHZA has thirteen Hebrew letters. There is the strong suggestion of a formula relating to the Thirteen-rayed Star of Manifestation, by means of the thirteen letters of the word MANIFESTATION, represented as the thirteen-angled Star Sapphire and Star of Perfection (which are discussed at length in the commentaries of *The Ninth Arch*).

I cannot supply a translation of this opening statement. The phrase is a phonetic rendition of the words heard by the skryer. Is it in a magical language? Verse 23 complicates matters by breaking the long word into three segments:

*Phul Kameza meza*

The phrase has all the appearance - and the vibratory sound - of a magical incantation. The Greek Magical Papyri are a rich source of similar, long 'barbarous names' and magical formulae. They derive not only from Greek and Egyptian, but also from the Hebrew, Chaldean and Assyrian; it is not always possible, or very useful, to seek out their original meanings, but in the papyri they are always written in Greek characters. A careful search through available sources has not identified anything closely resembling the phrase, but the following transliterations have produced significant results.

*Phoulkamezameza* = 1133

1133 = *anaspao* = I pull out, I draw up - the precise method by which a spider spins the thread to weave its web.

1133 = *episkiazo* = I overshadow - the way in which the informing Intelligence of Akavaysh the Spider (OKBISH) influenced the mind of the seer.

*Phoulk aliz* = 1068. Nothing for this, but 1069 = *esothern*, within, inwardly - giving emphasis to the preceding.

*Phoulkamezameza Phoulk aliz* = 2201. With such a large number it is justifiable to make use of what Grant termed the 'umbrella effect' in the interpretation of the correspondences. By this he meant that "a number preceding or succeeding a given number partakes of its influences, as an echo partakes of its source":

2200 = *typhonikon* = whirlwind-like, and presumably, typhonian.

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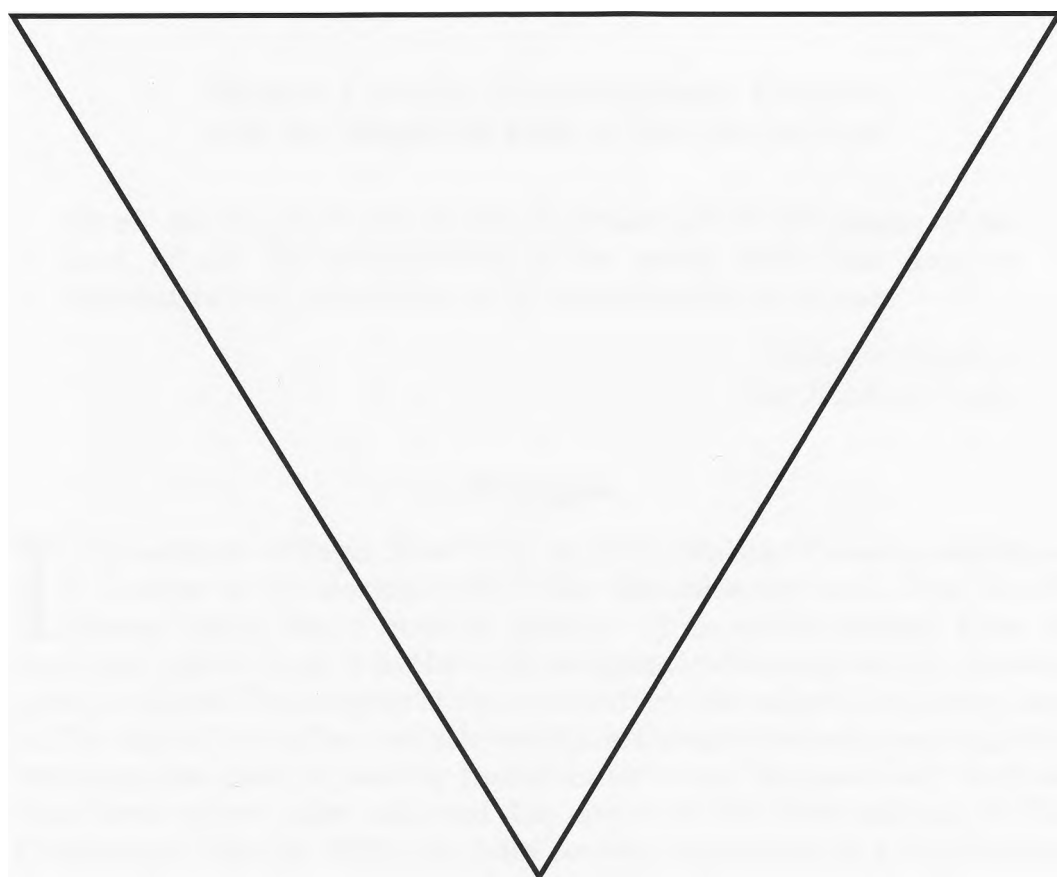
2201 = *phryasso* = I rage, I am furious.

2202 = *tas methodeias tou diabolou* = “the trickery of the devil” as the Epistle to the Ephesians, 6.11 would have us believe. But note that *methodos* more generally means ‘pursuit of knowledge’.

These correspondences confirm the inception of a potent current of Typhonian energy in the communication. It is almost as though the words said: “Welcome to the Typhonian vortex at the centre of the Spider’s Web”.



# From Aiwass to Lam



Richard Ward

## From Aiwass To Lam

**Aleister Crowley, Praeterhuman Contact,  
and the Magickal Path of the Divine Fool**

*Of all the magical and mystical virtues, of all the graces of the soul, of all the attainments of the spirit, none has been so misunderstood, even when at all apprehended, as silence.*

Aleister Crowley,  
*The Book of Thoth.*

### Prologue

In Greenwich Village, New York, in 1919, Aleister Crowley exhibited a number of his works of art under the collective title *Dead Souls*. Among them was a curious portrait of an entity named Lam. It could be argued that it is the most enigmatic drawing which Crowley ever produced. The origins of the portrait are shrouded in mystery and unlike any of his other artistic works, although the enlarged egg-like cranium does bear a passing resemblance to an idealised self portrait that some years later adorned the cover of the first edition of *The Confessions*. Also in 1919, the Lam portrait appeared as a frontispiece to Crowley's *Liber LXXI*, entitled *The Voice of the Silence*, a Commentary upon a purportedly ancient work of Buddhist mysticism first published by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky in 1889. Crowley omitted Blavatsky's notes, which he viewed as "diffuse, full of inaccuracies, and intended to mislead the presumptuous", replacing them with a commentary of his own intended to enlighten the text. The frontispiece portrait of Lam is accompanied with the following words: "Lam is the Tibetan word for Way or Path, and Lama is He who Goeth, the specific title of the Gods of Egypt, the Treader of the Path, in Buddhistic

phraseology. Its numerical value is 71 [by Hebrew Gematria], the number of this book.” No further clues to the origin of the portrait are given, although as noted by Michael Staley, it is fairly certain that the drawing arose from the *Amalantrah Working* one year earlier (see Foreword to ‘The Lam Statement’ in *Starfire* Volume I Number 3, 1989). Crowley remarked many years later that the portrait was drawn from life (*ibid*), invoking thoughts of a potential full blown extra-terrestrial contact with what would later come to be viewed as a classic extra-terrestrial archetype within U.F.O circles, and long before the experiences of Whitley Strieber *et al*.

As Staley also notes (*ibid*), the *Amalantrah Working* can be seen in many ways as a continuation of the *Abuldiz Working* in 1911. Prior to that, Crowley’s previous Working of great magnitude from a similar viewpoint had been the reception of *Liber AL* as dictated by Aiwass in 1904. Certainly, there are common threads connecting all three Workings. Each was obtained through the mediumship of a ‘Scarlet Woman’, Crowley’s perceived living embodiment of Babalon; each Working included the performing of Crowley’s favourite invocation, that of the Bornless One; each communication through the mediumship of the Scarlet woman had been imparted by some sort of discarnate entity, extra-terrestrial or not, depending on your viewpoint. There is also the matter of some sort of potential cycle taking place, in that each Working occurs in a year seven years after the previous one. I am not suggesting that there is any kind of exact seven-year gap (either in solar or lunar years) between each Working, as the period between each varies, being a little over six years in each case, but the chronology is worthy of note nonetheless. Each Working is also similar in that all give various Qabalistic keys, references to Crowley’s writings (extant, projected, or, in the case of *Liber AL vel Legis*, a direct dictation), and other information pertinent to the cause and development of Thelema. To further understand the threads linking each, and in particular the role of the Path of the Magickal Fool as a commonality, each Working must be looked at in turn. This will not be in minute detail, however, but merely a recapitulation to highlight certain points that illustrate the journey from Aiwass to Lam.

#### **The Cairo Working, the current of the Divine Fool and the reception of Liber AL**

The *Book of the Law*, the cornerstone of Crowley’s cult of Thelema, was received in early April 1904, dictated by the intelligence known as Aiwass through the mediumship of the seer Ouarda (his then wife, Rose



Edith Kelly). This occurred over a three-day period in Cairo in early April, although the couple had arrived there in early February, and the period of invocation had begun on March 16th with the ritual of the Bornless One. The full account of the reception of *Liber AL* remained unpublished until 1936, when it appeared under the title *The Equinox of the Gods*. As far as the precise dating of the three-day period pertaining to the reception of *Liber AL* is concerned, this account contained certain irregularities. It doesn't help that the record is rather fragmentary, with some sections lost in entirety. On pages 1 and 108-109, the dates given are the 8th to the 10th April inclusive; but on page 87, Crowley wrote that "it must have been on the first of April that W. commanded P. (now somewhat cowed) to enter the "temple" exactly at 12 o'clock noon on three successive days, and to write down what he should hear, rising exactly at 1 o'clock." (*The Equinox of the Gods*, first edition, 1936). More recent reprints of the work have been edited to reflect the former dates in all cases and thus standardise the text. Whether the date of April 1st was merely an error on Crowley's part relating to the magical record, will no doubt always be a point of conjecture. Kenneth Grant argues in favour of the date of April 1st as the true starting-point for the reception of *Liber AL*, citing a suggestion by Frater Achad "that Crowley was not slow to foresee the inevitable jibes arising from an April Fool joke perpetrated on him by his wife Rose whilst on their honeymoon." (*Beyond the Mauve Zone*, p.34).

Crowley's own words in *The Equinox of the Gods* would seem to lend some credence to Achad's view: "I write this therefore with a sense of responsibility so acute that for the first time in my life I regret my sense of humour and the literary practical jokes which it has caused me to perpetrate." (p. 105) This is in a paragraph not long after enthusing about *Liber AL* thus: "I, Aleister Crowley, declare upon my honour as a gentleman that I hold this revelation a million times more important than the discovery of the Wheel, or even of the Laws of Physics or Mathematics." (p. 104). Certainly, it is obvious that Crowley himself regarded this communication as no joke, and was anxious to be sure it wasn't regarded as such. There has been talk of a shipping log showing that Crowley couldn't have still been in Cairo as late as the 8th of April, although no proof of this has been forthcoming. Whatever the truth, the controversy surrounding April 1st as a potential date for the genesis of *Liber AL* is certainly an interesting starting-point to study the place of the Fool in relation to Aleister Crowley and praeter-human contact.

The magickal current of the Fool is one that pervades many of Crowley's writings, coming to its most obvious manifestation within *Liber CXI, The Book of Wisdom or Folly*, which Crowley described as "an

extended and elaborate commentary on *The Book of the Law*, in the form of a letter from the Master Therion to his magical son.” (*The Book of Wisdom or Folly*, p.xiv). That it should be so is pertinent, as *Liber Legis* can arguably be viewed as the first obvious manifestation of the magickal current of the Divine Fool within the magickal life of Aleister Crowley. The son in question here is Charles Stansfeld Jones (Frater Achad), who pursued his own magickal path with particular reference to Parsifal, the Divine Fool and pure knight of the German grail cycles.

#### **Aiwass, the Divine Fool and Liber AL**

Aiwass gives a clue to identity within the first verse of *Liber AL* by stating: “it is revealed by Aiwass the minister of Hoor-paar-kraat” (AL 1.7). Hoor-paar-kraat, or Harpocrates (the Lord of Silence), is one of the archetypes associated with the Fool in *The Book of Thoth* (see pp.60-64), and therefore regarded by Crowley as a manifestation of the Divine Fool’s magickal current. That ‘old devil’, Pan, Crowley regarded as a fuller development of the Fool current manifested as the Beast and shown in Atu XV of the tarot. That the manifestation of *Liber AL* came through the combination of the forces of Crowley himself (self-styled as the Beast) and the mediumship of the Scarlet woman (i.e., a manifestation of Babalon) is pertinent, as Aiwass had dictated “Now ye shall know that the chosen priest & apostle of infinite space is the prince-priest the Beast; and in his woman called the Scarlet Woman is all power given.” (AL 1.15). This combination is also reflected thus in the personages of Nuit and Hadit: “I, Hadit, am the complement of Nu” (AL 2.2). Aiwass instructs that Crowley should align himself with the latter: “Be thou Hadit, my secret centre, my heart & my tongue!” (AL 1.6). That secret centre — analogous to the magician becoming the centre of his own universe, its Qutub, or Pole — is hinted at as serpentine in nature, analogous to the sexual current inherent between the Fool/Beast and Babalon: “I am the secret Serpent coiled about to spring: in my coiling there is joy.” (AL 2.26) This also relates to the Kundalini and the mysteries of sexual magick contained therein, a key point in Crowley’s magickal philosophy, and one to the further importance of which, in reference to the current examination, we shall later return.

Aiwass reveals that “Nothing is a secret key of this law. Sixty-one the Jews call it; I call it eight, eighty, four hundred & eighteen” (AL 1.46). Each statement may be seen as relating to the path of the Divine Fool and its allied sexual current, as nothing, Zero, is the number of the Fool in the tarot; sixty-one, the number of *Ain*, or ‘nothing’ by Hebrew Qabalah; the number eight by Hebrew Qabalah adumbrates the

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pleasures of love (see *The Qabalah of Aleister Crowley*, p.1 of *Sepher Sephiroth*); eighty adumbrates Union (ibid, p. 12); four hundred and eighteen adumbrates Parzifal — again the Divine Fool — and one of the enumerations of Aiwass. (see ‘The Comment’, in *Equinox of the Gods*.)

Before proceeding to examine both the Ab-ul-Diz and Amalantrah communications, it is necessary to investigate the nature of Aiwass and the key role of the rite of the Bornless One, as this forms the very genesis of Crowley’s praeterhuman contact with relevance to the path of the Divine Fool.

### **Aiwass, Seth, the Divine Fool, and Liber Samekh**

The precise nature and identity of the entity Aiwass seemed to fascinate Crowley, who believed Aiwass was a God, Demon, or Devil with origins in ancient Sumer, and also a manifestation of his own Higher Guardian Angel (see *Equinox of the Gods*, p. 118). The latter is a logical assumption, given that the preliminary invocation of the Bornless One, undertaken prior to the reception of *Liber AL*, was intended to bring about contact with that part of the Higher Self; this is the primary purpose of Crowley’s later expansion of the text, entitled *Liber Samekh*. To further examine that aspect of the Divine Fool current, it is necessary to examine the text of the Bornless One itself; or rather the original text from which it was drawn, a fragment of Graeco-Egyptian magic that became known as *The Stele of Jeu the Heiroglyphist*. (See Betz, for example.)

In 1852, Charles Wycliffe Goodwin published a translation of *A Fragment of Graeco-Egyptian Magic* taken from a papyrus in the British Museum. The text is split into eight parts, the fourth of which was later added separately as a preliminary invocation to Mathers’ translation of *The Goetia*. This translation of the Goetia was published in 1904 by Aleister Crowley, who gave Mathers scant recognition for his efforts, citing the text as being “translated by a dead hand.” Given the antagonism between Crowley and Mathers at the time, Crowley was at least magnanimous enough to acknowledge that the translation was done very efficiently (see *The Goetia*, p.vi). By Crowley’s own admission, albeit some years later, he acknowledged that his contribution consisted of the following: “I added a translation of the conjurations into the Enochian or Angelic language; edited and annotated the text, prefixed a ‘Preliminary Invocation’, added a prefatory note, a magical square (intended to prevent improper use of the book) and ultimately an Invocation of Typhon when the First Magical War of the Aeon of Horus was declared.” (*Confessions*, p. 362). It cannot be said with any certainty

whether Crowley had access to Goodwin's work, separately translating the Greek text given by him; had access to another unpublished translation or transliteration, or managed to translate the original fragment itself. All these explanations are possible. Crowley described the text of the Bornless One as the most potent ritual extant and adopted it as his favourite invocation, later elaborately restoring the barbarous names and certain magical formulae that he saw as lacking from what remained of the original papyrus, and eventually evolving the work into *Liber Samekh*, a rite for the attainment of conversation with one's Holy Guardian Angel.

Within Goodwin's text, the magician first calls upon the "Headless One" to help drive away evil, before later in the text identifying him/herself with the headless spirit. The term *headless one* is a translation of the Greek *Akephalos*. Crowley kept the translation 'Bornless One', derived from the alternative meaning 'One without beginning'. In his definitive work on the subject, Karl Preisendanz clearly identifies *Akephalos* as the Egyptian god Seth, a line followed by many scholars including Jean Dorresee (see *The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics*, p. 104.) This lends weight to Kenneth Grant's hypothesis that Crowley's Holy Guardian Angel is analogous with Seth. In the invaluable notes to *A Fragment of Graeco-Egyptian Magic*, Goodwin points out that similarly written magical texts, particularly within the *Leyden Papyrus*, are "addressed to the evil principle of the Egyptians." i.e, Seth (Goodwin, p. 40).

Grant sees the personification of Seth-Aiwass as a reflection of the original Draconian current of Ancient Egypt (see *The Magical Revival*). It is true that the constellation of Draco among the Egyptians was associated with Seth; but as Lockyer points out, the whole group of Northern circumpolar constellations was symbolised by Seth (*The Dawn of Astronomy*, pp. 149, 302), whereas Draco became the most obvious focus due to its central position as the first representation of the celestial Pole itself (see Massey, p.580). Massey lists the six still-identifiable stations of the celestial pole as Draco, the Lesser Bear, Kepheus, Cygnus, Lyra, and Herakles. Given Lockyer's argument, all six of these Northern constellations may well have an association with Seth. The stars at the point of the celestial pole, as we view them, change over time due to the phenomenon known as precession, marking a particular period of time, and analogous to the passing of the aeons within Thelemic tradition. According to Massey, Seth was the first-born of the Genetrix, the primal Great Mother (see Massey, both works, *passim*), and therefore associated with primal creation itself, the chaos from which came order. In the symbolism of the tarot, Draco is associated with Atu XIII, Death. Crowley

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sees this card as a culmination of the symbolism of the dying god begun in the previous two cards, and the subsequent demonisation of Seth (see *The Book of Thoth*, p. 100). This reflects the death of the old, and the subsequent birth of the new Aeon.

Grant also shows a connection between Aiwass and Bes (*The Magical Revival*, p.59). Lockyer has shown that Seth and Bes were synonymous in representing the powers of darkness, i.e. the stellar as opposed to solar powers, and includes a representation of Bes as “a buffoon”, obviously tying the deity once more to the current of the Fool, albeit in the mundane sense.

That Seth personifies the Fool in Ancient Egypt is a premise that many scholars of Egyptology have accepted, although some have viewed Seth as a Fool only in the mundane sense, citing the contending of Horus and Seth as the main example, in which the latter is continually outwitted by the former (see Goedicke, *Seth as a Fool*). The path of the magickal Fool is delineated by chaos, or rather the order *of* chaos, and pertaining to the order *in* chaos. Velde, in his seminal work *Seth: God of Confusion*, follows this higher premise and cites the work of P. Van Baaren in identifying Seth as the Divine Joker and the originator of confusion who sets order (Velde, p. 25). Van Baaren also sees a parallel between Seth and the voodoo *Iwa Ghede*, a connection I have previously explored with relation to the Divine Fool current (see *The Magic of Folly*). Like Ghede, Seth also embodies great virility and sexual power, another common trait of the archetypes of the Divine Fool (see Velde, p.54ff.)

In certain parts of Egypt, Seth and Horus were reconciled and worshipped as one single divinity with two heads, known in the *Book of Gates* as “he with two faces” (see Velde, p.69, and also Lockyer, p. 149). This Janus-like divinity, featuring a being with the falcon head of Horus and that of the classic Seth animal facing in opposite directions, is a typical form of the Divine Fool that later became reflected in the image of the Fool and his/her mirrored self (see *The Magic of Folly* for example). Like Horus, Seth was originally seen as a solar deity. This is shown in continuity within the appearance of Seth in later Roman curse tablets (*defixiones*), in which the god holds a solar disc. In his *Iconographical Notes Towards a definition of the Medieval Fool*, Gifford provides a valuable link between Seth, shown as an ass-headed deity, and the development of the image of the Divine Fool. The ass head, as one of the animal forms associated with Seth, appears as the ass-eared hat of the medieval fool. Gifford further sees the flail carried as developing into the wand or fool-stick of the jester, and the loose attire approximating to the typical dress of the thirteenth century fool (see *The Fool and the Trickster*, p.33 and figure 10). The solar orb can also be seen

in terms of an iconographical step in the development of the mirror of the Divine Fool that appeared in certain early tarot depictions (Willeford, plate 12, for example).

Despite the most prolific depiction of Seth's head as the long-snouted deity, variously identified as an Anteater, Giraffe or Okapi, he is also associated with a plethora of other animals (see Velde, p.7ff) including the snake. Certainly, the character of Aiwass is very serpentine in nature; and although the snake was more often seen in ancient Egypt as an ill omen, Velde sees that the animal may represent fate in general, encompassing both good and bad in the one deity. This is certainly the domain of the Divine Fool.

By nature, the Divine Fool is a Mercurial figure. This is ably demonstrated by Carl Jung in his treatment of Mercurius as a trickster figure (see Jung, p.255ff). Within the tarot, the Magus or Juggler personifies the stage on the Fool's journey relating to the mastering of the elements. In ancient Egypt, the planet Mercury was attributed to Seth (see Sellers, p.313). The Egyptian word for Mercury (*Sbg*) simply means 'unknown' (*ibid*), a suitable epithet in connection with the Bornless One, or 'one without beginning.'

Returning to Seth as an ass-headed divinity, there is a continuity through the divine names Iao and Sabaoth, other deities that are referred to within the *Stele of Jeu the Heiroglyphist*. The Gnostic Sabaoth is often shown as an ass-headed deity, and appearing very similar to the image of Seth as the Divine Fool within the *defixiones* (see King, p.230). Iao, often Iao-Sabaoth to the Jews, is also seen as ass-headed (see Massey, p.506 and also King). Massey also shows that Iao and Jeou are related spellings (*ibid*). Given that Jeou is an alternative spelling for Jeu (see Doresse, p. 105), and that within Hebrew, *Yod* is equivalent to both I and J in English, we return full circle and under new light to the now-accepted title of the papyrus that morphed into *Liber Samekh*. As Doresse points out, there is no quandary caused by the fusion of Jewish and Egyptian elements when looking at the papyrus, showing that Demotic manuscripts did indeed contain elements of both that make total sense from a Gnostic viewpoint (see Doresse, p. 105-6). In Egyptian, the related word for ass is *hiw*. This term is particularly associated with Seth as both ass and serpent, as it means both 'braying ass' and 'lie down, slither away.' (See Ward, W). Seth is therefore referred to as both the *HIW*-Ass and the *HIW*-Serpent. It would be too much of a stretch to link the former term with the name of Crowley's Holy Guardian Angel, as the interplay between Egyptian and English is vastly different to that of Egyptian and Hebrew; but, as always when dealing with the path of the Magickal Fool, purely phonetic word-plays are interesting and worthy of note none the less.

### **The Gnostic Seth**

It was following the demise of the Hyksos, the so-called ‘Shepherd Kings’ who ruled Egypt from 2000-1500 B.C, that Seth lost his status as a supreme and favoured god amongst the Egyptians (see Mead, pp.58-9). Seth was, however, still highly regarded amongst certain Gnostic sects as a prime creative force of the universe, although the god is seldom named within extant texts. Within the so-called *Books of Jeou*, for example, he is referred to merely as the Jeou, ‘Invisible God’. The links between Jeou and Seth have already been explained. That this epithet may well refer to Seth is strengthened by the fact that a related text, the untitled *Bruce Codex*, refers to the supreme God as “the alone born” (see Mead, p.553), i.e, the Bornless One, or one without beginning. Furthermore, the Bruce Codex names the supreme god as Sethius, the logos creator (Mead, p.554). Mead is of the opinion that Sethius is synonymous with the Egyptian Seth, and that his worship survived amongst the so-called Sethian Gnostics (see Mead, p.213). Central to their belief system was the concept of the world egg fertilised by the first principal in the form of a strong wind. This wind was serpentine in form (one of the known zootypes of Seth), and characterised by its hiss (see Hippolytus, p.374). The account bears some similarity in nature to that of the sacred swan referred to within *The Voice of the Silence*, treated later in this essay.

### **The Wizard Ab-ul-Diz**

In the Autumn of 1911, Crowley travelled to St Moritz in the company of Soror Virakam (Mary d’Este Sturges), his new Scarlet woman. Virakam had told Crowley of a vision concerning a man calling himself Ab-ul-Diz, who they were told to contact one week later.

The first direct connection between this new Working and the Cairo Working was by way of strange synchronicity, the very essence of manifestation of the current of the Divine Fool through fate and destiny. This involved the fact that Crowley had brought with him only the magical weapons suitable for the proposed work, along with his magical robe used during the Cairo Working. To Crowley’s surprise, Vikaram had brought a robe, virtually identical to that worn by Ouarda in 1904, which helped convince Crowley of the validity of the enterprise (*The Ab-ul-Diz Working*, p.291). The proposed purpose of the Working was to help Crowley write what was to become *Book 4*. This was another similarity with the Cairo Working, which gave rise to *The Book of the Law*. After following a set of psychic clues, the pair finally arrived at the correct

location in which the Working would take place, the Villa Caldarazzo. This was confirmed by its Qabalistic value of 418, the number of the magical formula of the Aeon.

The Working at the villa proceeded through late November and much of December and, as instructed by Ab-ul-Diz, began with the invocation of the Bornless One. A similarity in current revealed by Ab-ul-Diz to that of Aiwass had been shown qabalistically, in that Ab-ul-Diz revealed himself as 78 (*The Ab-ul-Diz Working*, p.301), the number Crowley had at that time attributed to Aiwass. Later, he revised the self-confessed error to enumerate the total 418, which also enumerates Parzifal, the Divine Fool of the Grail cycles.

On November 28th, Ab-ul-Diz mentioned the Key of 31 (*The Ab-ul-Diz Working*, p.307). This would come to fruition only much later through the work of Frater Achad around the time of the *Amalantrah Working*. Later that day, an allusion was made to *The Book of Wisdom or Folly*, the work dedicated to Achad. Shortly after this, Ab-ul-Diz revealed the supreme importance of Zero (*The Ab-ul-Diz Working*, p.314), one of the main numbers of the Divine Fool. The shape of Zero is oval, approximating to the shape of an egg. The final instruction revealed to Crowley by Ab-ul-Diz was concerning an egg under a palm tree, the importance of which would be revealed much later in the *Amalantrah Working*.

### **The Wizard Amalantrah**

On January 14th 1918, Aleister Crowley began the *Amalantrah Working* with the mediumship of the Camel (Roddie Minor). The most obvious symbol of continuity immediately apparent is that of the egg, the first session of the Working ending with the enigmatic words "It's all in the egg" as the Wizard stands with a child, a representative of Horus or Harpocrates, an archetype of the Divine Fool. On January 20th, the Wizard revealed to Crowley the true number of Baphomet, 729 by Hebrew Gematria, the equivalent value of Amalantrah. Crowley later noted in *The Book of Thoth* (p.67) that Baphomet had been seen as an ass-headed god by the Templars, and thereby associated with Set. As Baphomet was most often said to be an idol represented by a head of some form, with hindsight the picture of the egg and the head start to come together.

On January 25th, Crowley asked the Wizard when he could expect to see the fulfilment of *Liber AL vel Legis* chapter 3, verse 31. This verse relates to a rich man from the West who would bestow wealth on



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Crowley. The time-frame suggested by the answer, September 1918, was regarded by Crowley as doubtful. Certainly, a nugget of spiritual gold was revealed to Frater Achad in early October 1918, in the form of AL as the great key 31, though he did not transmit this to Crowley until the following year, despite various meetings of the two men in the interim (see *Liber Aleph*, p.xxii). *Liber Aleph* itself was completed in March 1918, during the process of the Amalantrah Working.

On March 31st, Crowley yet again employed the rite of the Bornless One as a preliminary invocation to the work. The Working continued until at least the end of the surviving record on June 16th 1918, resplendent with strange qabalistic keys and imagery, though the serpent symbolism so prevalent within *Liber AL* had given way to the symbolism of the egg laid by a bird, referred to by the Wizard as a “hen”.

**Lam, the Divine Fool, Celestial Swan,  
and the Voice of the Silence**

As already noted, the portrait of Lam appears as the frontispiece to Crowley’s publication of Blavatsky’s *The Voice of the Silence*, with his commentary replacing her own. The symbolism of the bird, as referred to by Amalantrah, appears here as the divine swan. It carries the divine word *Aum* upon its body (see Blavatsky, p.81), which is *logos*, the divine sound of creation and analogous to the voice of the silence itself. She regarded the bird as *Kala Hamsa* (see Blavatsky, p.82), the great swan of time and space of the Sanskrit mystics. Crowley recognised this, and further identified the voice of the silence with the silent babe Harpocrates (see *Liber LXXI*, p.763), already, as we have seen, a form of the Divine Fool. King shows a connection between the ineffable god-name Iao and that of the Hindu *Aum*, the latter giving rise to the former, and once again taking us back on the path of the Divine Fool (King, p.320).

In the introduction to *Liber LXXI*, Crowley refers to Blavatsky and the day of judgement, pointing out that that day had already come with the birth of the new Aeon of Horus in 1904 (see *Liber LXXI*, p.736). The traditional title of Crowley’s Tarot card *The Aeon* was *The Last Judgement*, which by Kabbalists has been associated with the constellation of Cygnus the Swan (see for example Robson, p.34). On the Tree of Life, the card is positioned on path 31, the number of AL and the key revealed by Frater Achad as that unlocking *The Book of the Law*. One of the divinatory meanings of the card is inspiration from communion with the Divine (see Wirth, p. 148, for example). Following in the footsteps of Papus, both Harlette and F. Homer Curtiss attribute the

Hebrew letter *Resh* to the card, rather than the letter *Shin* attributed by Crowley. This is interesting from the point that it is therefore associated with the pineal gland or third eye, and also with the Auric egg as a point of communication with the higher planes (see Curtiss, p. 284). Papus simply gives the hieroglyphic meaning of *Resh* as “head of man” (see Papus, p. 182). The portrait of Lam seemingly connects these two attributions, being both an egg-shaped head, and containing the fiery flames of *Shin*.

In *The Cygnus Mystery*, Andrew Collins has demonstrated that the constellation of Cygnus as a celestial swan or closely related bird has been an object of veneration amongst many ancient cultures. Furthermore, he demonstrates that Cygnus X-3, a binary star system within that constellation, has been bombarding the earth with cosmic rays periodically through the millennia, and may well have had a significant impact on human evolution. Cygnus X-3 operates on a 71-day cycle, the number of Lam, and the constellation of Cygnus was certainly prominent in the heavens at the time of each of the three Workings undergone by Crowley that have been treated here (private communication with A. Collins). As already shown, Cygnus was another of the Northern constellations that at one time sat at the point of the celestial Pole, and therefore also potentially associated with Seth. Gerald Massey shows the constellation of the swan to the Greeks as analogous to the *Bennu* bird or phoenix of the Egyptians (see *The Natural Genesis*, volume 1, p.43), and therefore a powerful symbol of birth, death, and rebirth, containing the full cycle of creation. One of the most obvious archetypes of the Divine Fool symbolizing rebirth, as demonstrated within *The Book of Thoth*, is that of the Green Man, dying in winter only to be reborn in Spring. As Willeford notes of the Fool in folk tradition: “The outstanding characteristic of the folk fool is his power magically to revive himself and to propagate. He represents the most elementary biological wisdom, shared by men and animals alike.” (Willeford, p.85; cf Swain, *Fools and Folly during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*.)

Seth, albeit rather obliquely, has also been associated with the symbolism of the egg. Frances Rolleston, in *Mizraim; or, Astronomy of Egypt*, links Set with a female figure within the planisphere of Dendarah that we know today as Cassiopeia. Although Seth is traditionally shown as a male deity, he is integrally linked to the divine feminine as one half of the primary duad with his Mother, Apt (*Ancient Egypt*, p.590). Following the hieroglyphic renderings of Mr Birch of the British Museum, Rolleston shows the signs of an oval or egg and a half-circle or hill connected with Set (see Rolleston, *Mizraim*, p.5) The hill

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may well represent the primal hill of creation, that which emerged from the waters at *Zep-Tepi*, the 'first time', or original point of creation itself. The egg symbolises that point of new birth. This is typified by Set, or Seth's role as the order of / in chaos, from which life was born. Seth was most commonly associated within the planisphere at Dendarah with the constellations of the Great Bear, Draco, and Little Bear; known respectively as the wife of Set, thigh of Set, and Jackal of Set (see Lockyer, p. 146). Don Webb sees the seven stars of the Big Dipper (Ursa Major, the Great Bear) behind the constellation of the Thigh as a manifestation of Set in the objective universe. He further notes that with the introduction of Babylonian astrological ideas to Egypt, these seven stars came to represent symbols of fate (Webb, p.28), another key connection between Set or Seth, and the way of the Divine Fool.

On the ceiling of the tomb of Senmut in Egypt, the constellation known as the 'ox thigh' (Ursa Major) is being speared by a falcon-headed god. Collins has shown this god to be represented by the stars of Cygnus, and furthermore most probably representing the god Horus (see Collins, pp. 133-5.) This makes sense as a stellar representation of the typical contendings of Horus and Seth, a view supported by Jack Lindsay, along with the identification of Horus and the Cygnus connection. Lindsay has also shown that in times before Ramesses, the spear was in fact a cord extending from the arms of the falcon-headed figure (see Lindsay, p. 150) This could be seen as connecting the two figures and recalling the joint nature of Seth-Horus shown in the figure of 'he with two faces', rather than two warring gods.

Just as Aleister Crowley had announced the advent of the Aeon of Horus as revealed by Aiwass in early April 1904, Frater Achad spoke of the inauguration of the Aeon of Maat on April 2nd 1948, a time when the earth was in the grip of the first global U.F.O. flap, which brought the concept of extra-terrestrial intelligence to the masses as a distinct possibility. As Grant notes, "man in the mass became aware of the existence of Intelligence and Energies not of this earth alone" at this time (see *Beyond the Mauve Zone*, p.35). Kenneth Grant and Nema (Margaret Ingalls) have since spoken of the future aeon of Silence, the wordless aeon of *Zain* — rather pertinent in relation to the Voice of the Silence, Lam, and the Divine swan. The connection between Lam and Seth, and in particular the relevance of Lam to the twin deity of Seth-Horus, has been ably demonstrated within Kenneth Grant's third *Typhonian Trilogy*. It seems very possible that Lam is a personification of cosmic interaction, of a current into which Crowley tuned through the use of magick whilst walking the path of the Divine Fool, understood in terms of praeterhuman contact through his Higher Guardian Angel, and

revealed to him as a Sethian gnosis born within the Draconian or Typhonian current.

The egg as so graphically depicted within the Lam portrait *is* one of the most primal symbols of creation, both as heralding the birth of the new aeon, and as representing the very point when the world came into being, as depicted by the egg-shaped mound of first creation so prevalent within the mythology of the ancient Egyptians and many other cultures. It is rather pertinent that Crowley himself links Lam with the Gods of Egypt within the accompanying words to the portrait at the beginning of *Liber LXXI*.

As already noted, each of the Workings here briefly examined exemplify the importance of the interaction between Crowley and his then Scarlet woman, that of the union of Babalon and the Beast. Crowley's use of sexual acts as a magickal tool is legendary. The sexual act is, at its most basic understanding, an act of creation, whether material, spiritual, or both. Creation is the fundamental action of beginning: a link with creation itself, its source. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the name of Crowley's egg-head shaped messenger is the same as the Sanskrit root letter pertaining to the Muladhara Chakra, the point from which the Kundalini serpent arises, a key factor within the rites of sexual magick.

Each aeon is born and later dies as it completes its passing. The mysteries of creation typified by the sexual act are therefore intrinsically allied to those of death. This is particularly evident within the current of the Divine Fool, most obviously personified by the Ghede spirits within the voodoo tradition in Haiti. The creative process of birth, death, and rebirth itself is perhaps best exemplified within alchemy. As previously noted in *The Magic of Folly*, the Divine Fool is represented as the *prima materia*, the totality of chaos from which the spiritual gold or wisdom is then obtained. The symbol of the swan in alchemy is that of rebirth, as the resurrected Hermetic Androgyne attains the wings of a swan to carry the *rebis* to new heights during the next stage of the *Great Work*, due to heavenly flight and divine sound (see Fabricius, p. 137). One of the illustrations given by Fabricius clearly shows stars depicted on the body of the flying swan (Fabricius, fig.255), and therefore further associating the alchemical swan of the philosophers with the constellation of Cygnus. That alchemy is very much a sexual creative process is well known, and one noted by Fabricius with particular reference to the swan (see Fabricius, p. 137).

Michael Staley has noted the image of the *ankh*, the Egyptian symbol of life, within the head of Lam (see Foreword, A Statement on

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Lam', *Starfire* Volume I Number 3). Lam can therefore be seen as a symbol of the creation of life, or rather a living image and manifestation of a cosmic gnosis stellar-born, connecting us to our very origins. This is something that has fascinated humankind since its earliest dawn, a time when our distant ancestors first lifted eyes towards the heavens in search of answers to life, the universe, and everything.

From the primal chaos of Seth-Aiwass, all was born from the silence. Every man and every woman is a star; and each is able, if they so choose, to tread that path, to embrace the cosmic gnosis transmitted from the stellar realm, to be reborn through a change in higher consciousness. For Lam is the Way, and Love is the Law, Love under Will.

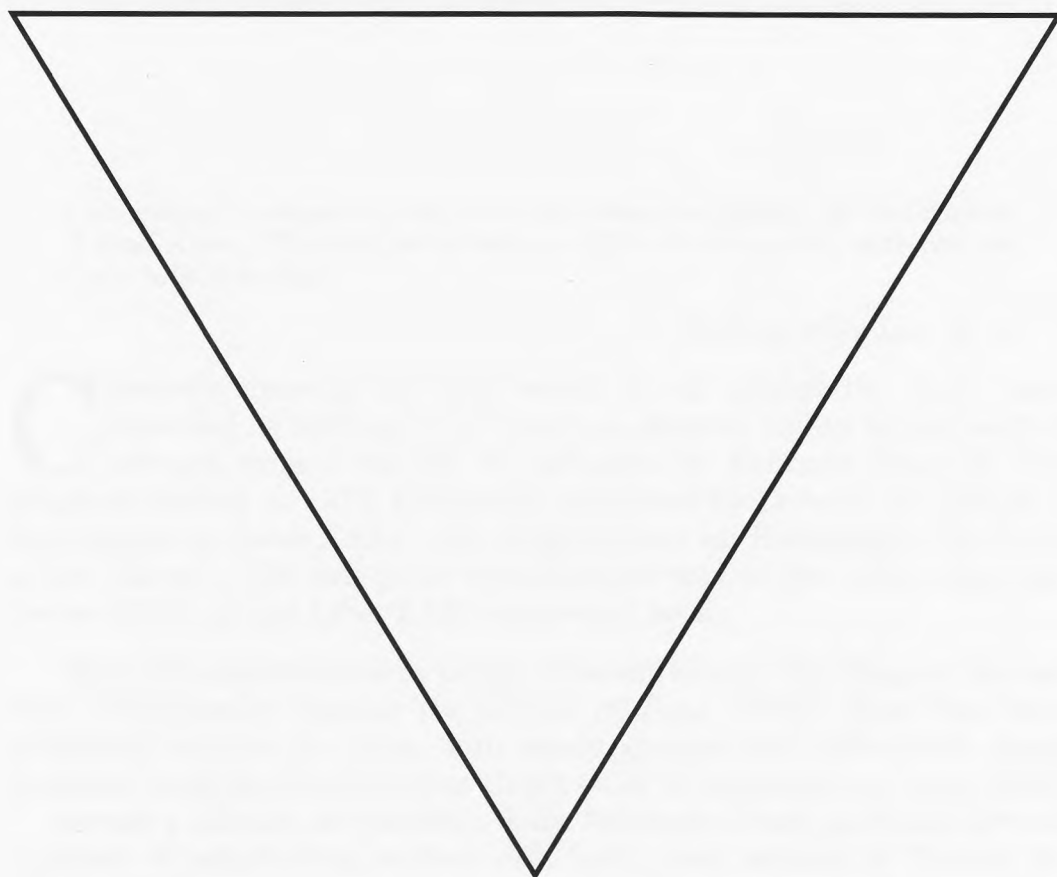
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# The Emergence of Lam



Michael Staley

## The Emergence of Lam

*I am unique & conqueror. I am not of the slaves that perish. Be they damned & dead. Amen. (This is of the 4: there is a fifth who is invisible, & therein am I as a babe in an egg.)*

*The Book of the Law, II, 49.*

Crowley's drawing of Lam would in all probability have been regarded as nothing more than an obscure oddity in his body of artwork were it not for its inclusion by Kenneth Grant in *The Magical Revival* in 1972. Originally published by Crowley in 1919 as a frontispiece to *Liber LXXI* - his Commentary on Blavatsky's *The Voice of the Silence* - the only prior republication was in the 1960s when the Swiss O.T.O. issued *Liber LXXI* as a small book.

Since the republication by Grant of the drawing in *The Magical Revival* and subsequently *Outside the Circles of Time* (1980), there has been gathering interest in Lam, with many groups and individuals doing practical work focusing on what Grant — in 'A Statement on Lam' (1989) — termed a *dikpala*, or guardian deity. Although Grant published several methods of establishing contact with Lam, most notably in *Outside the Circles of Time* and subsequently in 'A Statement on Lam,' in all probability these groups and individuals are developing their own methods of contact through mystical and magical working. This is because Lam, far from being a singular entity, is the portal to a state of awareness which lies at the root of individualised consciousness where it emerges from collective consciousness; because of this there is an intimacy to the experience.

The portrait of Lam is undated, and Crowley commented neither on its origins nor when it was drawn. However, its origins almost certainly



lie in the Amalantrah Working, a series of communications with a praeter-human entity called Amalantrah which started in January 1918, in New York. Crowley had been living in America since the outbreak of the First World War. At the time the Working commenced he was employed as a contributor for a periodical called *The International*. In a wider context, Crowley saw the latter years of his stay in America as constituting his Magus initiation, the period of the initiation divided into a number of 'Chokmah Days,' each of 73 days duration.

Crowley was writing *Liber Aleph (The Book of Wisdom or Folly)* at this time, and was living with his mistress Roddie Minor. One night in January 1918 she was lying on the floor, having smoked opium. She began to have visions, and related them to Crowley, who suggested she take a more active part in her visions. They continued:

I began by asking for a vision containing a message. I first heard gurgling water and saw a dark farmhouse in among trees and green fields. The house and other things disappeared and a dark yoni appeared just where the house had stood. I then asked where will a message come from? Immediately soldiers with guns appeared lounging about the place, and a king on a throne where the house had stood. I then asked again for a message, and saw an egg in which were many many tiny convolutions of some flesh-like substance which would form something. The egg was placed in an oblong, as in a picture. Around it were clouds, trees, mountains and water, called the 'four elements'. A camel appeared in front of the whole picture. I next tried to find out who the king was. He looked more like Prof. Shotwell than any one else. That is, he was 'simple, democratic' and very learned and fine. He was certainly not a king belonging to any kingdom limited by a country's borders, but was a king of men, or a king of the world. I asked his name and the word 'Ham' appeared between the egg in the oblong and the soldiers around the king.

The king went out to one side and a wizard linked his arm in the king's as they disappeared. The wizard looked at me significantly as they left. It was a sort of look as if one would almost wink. He was an old man, with gray beard, dressed in a long black gown. He was infinitely wise. They seemed to go to a cave in the base of a low mountain on the shore of a large body of water. A spring of sparkling cool water bubbled up through a barrel near the mouth of the cave. I went into the cave and saw them doing something mysterious with a revolver. The wizard had the revolver. What they were going to do was a joke of some kind, but the wizard looked grim about it. At T.'s suggestion I went up to them and said, "I am Eve." This seemed to stop everything. They both disappeared with the cave. Very soon I saw the king sitting in a niche covered with a canopy, cut in the side of the mountain. In quite another place the wizard was sitting under a tree fanning himself. At T.'s suggestion I went up to him and asked him his name. I became very frightened and had the same sensation as when I spoke to him in the cave. It was a kind of shyness and awe. He only smiled at me and would not speak. It seemed that I did not know enough for him to speak with me. In order for him to say anything to me I should have to build a fire of sticks, which he showed me how to do. There was a baby in some way connected with the act of my building the fire which was

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like a ritual. Then a most beautiful lion was standing by the fire. The wizard was standing and still held one or two sticks in his hand. He smiled and said, "Child." I then saw a most beautiful naked boy 5 or 6 years old dancing and playing in the woods in front of us. T. asked how he would look dressed and when I saw him in conventional clothes he looked very uncomfortable and repressed. He looked as if he should be dressed in skins such as tigers'. To one side near the place where I made the fire was a large turtle, standing up as a penguin stands.

The wizard was very happy and satisfied looking. He sat down and reached out his hand to me and had me sit down beside him. As we watched the boy he put his left arm around me tenderly and placed my head on the left side of his chest near the shoulder.

He said, "It's all in the egg."

This passage from the initial vision has been quoted at length because it contains echoes of the drawing of Lam. For instance, the reference to "an egg in which were many many tiny convolutions of some flesh-like substance" suggests the surface of the head of Lam, whilst "The egg was placed in an oblong, as in a picture" suggests a portrait. The name 'Ham' may have sown the seeds for the subsequent name 'LAM' in Crowley's brief gloss accompanying the portrait when published in *The Blue Equinox*. The passage also contains elements which are echoed in subsequent visions in the Working.

Whilst Roddie Minor was relating her initial visions, Crowley's attention was caught by the mention of the egg, since the Abuldiz Working of some seven years previously had concluded with an instruction to go to the desert in search of an egg that was under a palm tree. Unfortunately the record of the Abuldiz Working that Crowley left behind is incomplete; we know this because the surviving typescript makes reference to an appointment for a subsequent seance, the record of which is missing. Because of this, the reference which Crowley here makes to an earlier Working cannot be seen in context. However, the recurrence here of the egg made him realise that the current which initiated the Abuldiz Working was now at work again. The significance of the egg will be considered later, following an account of the recurrence of the symbol throughout the Amalantrah Working.

These opening visions of Roddie Minor's led to a series of Workings in Crowley's apartment, the participants often being just Crowley and Roddie Minor. There was however a specific astral location for these Workings, which was described as a woodland scene. In Crowley's words:

We began a series of interviews with him [Amalantrah]. There was what I may call a permanent background to the vision. He lived in a place as definite

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as an address in New York, and in this place were a number of symbolic images representing myself and several other adepts associated with me in my work. The character of the vision served as a guide to my relations with these people. More specifically there were three women, symbolized as three scorpions of the symbolic desert which I was crossing in my mystic journey.

It is not yet clear that I dealt with these women as I should have done. One was Eva Tanguay, the supreme artist, whom I hymned in the April *International*, one, a married woman, a Russian aristocrat in exile; and one, a maiden, to whom the Wizard gave the mystic name of Wesrun. This name can be spelt in two ways: one adding to 333, the number of Choronzon, Dispersion, Impotence, and Death; the other to 888, the number of Redemption. It seemed that it was my task to save her as Parzival saved Kundry. But as I say, I am not clear whether I did not fail completely in my dealings with all three women. I doubt whether I trusted the Wizard as I should have done. It may be that I made “a great miss”, the result of which has been to ruin my work temporarily.

Various figures and images in the woodland scene symbolised Crowley and his colleagues — for instance, the head of the O.T.O. in South Africa, Thomas Windram, was symbolised as a turtle. Most seances were conducted under the effects of drugs, usually hashish, opium or ether. The seer would attempt to get *en rapport* with Amalantrah, and then find herself in the woodland scene with Amalantrah and his *entourage*.

In his *Confessions*, Crowley described this method as Amalantrah “throwing visions” at the seer. Only the seer was able to see this woodland scene; Crowley and others were dependent on her description of what was transpiring. Crowley would ask questions. Usually these would be spoken aloud; on occasions he would simply think the question; sometimes only the initial or final letters of each word would be uttered. In whatever way the question was posed, the answer came through the seer relating what she saw. This might be a vision of events; or she might be shown a number, a Hebrew word, or a tarot card. The answer would be analysed by Crowley, usually on the basis of gematria. Although Crowley got a lot of what he regarded as accurate and useful information, there were occasions when he could make nothing of the answers, and grew exasperated, sometimes to the extent of becoming enraged and breaking off the seance.

Throughout the series of visions which constitute the Amalantrah Working, it is striking just how often the image of the egg recurs. The conclusion is inescapable that the intelligence seeking to communicate through these Workings was using this symbolism as a mask through which to work.

In a long sequence of visions on 3rd February, there was the appearance of a man called Arcteon, who was described as caveman-like. There was another reference to the egg:

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Wizard looks away from me spiritually. On shelf where egg is, flaming lamp appears. Over the lamp is a peculiar light. In the light there is a peculiar large-headed, particularly large-eyed small bird. Also there is some strange kind of material, like drapery in folds. It is somewhat like metal made into decorative objects like ornamental mirrors, etc., and finally like convolutions in the egg.

In a number of seances over the period 9th - 11th February, again the image of an egg appeared: "I see all the usual ones at the Wizard's woodland place ... It's the same funny bird I often see ... I see a robin's egg in a nest or hole in the ground."

There were sometimes participants other than Crowley and Roddie Minor, and at a Working of 12th February a Mrs Elsie Lincke was present.

I see the Wizard standing up. The egg is there. The child is sitting under a tree with the roots showing where the rain has washed the dirt away. The lion, the turtle and the mountain path are all there. Also the remains of the charred fire sticks where I built the first fire with the Wizard. I greet the Wizard with *Salam Aleikum*.

Later, a toad appeared in the vision as a symbol of Mrs Lincke, who was given the magical name *Bazedon* by Amalantrah. Subsequently there were more references to the egg:

The egg is a work which must be done - the Great Work. By doing the work, we get to the key ... T. knows his work, his special work, and this is only the means of doing it, like speaking of the cosmos, but the egg is the special work ... I see growing grain and a fox among it. There are baskets of corn, an eagle, and an egg on the ground near the corn. The eagle watches the egg ... I see the path and something forming out of indefinite material, as in the egg of the first vision.

Roddie Minor is here linking elements of the present vision to her initial visions, quoted at the outset of this article.

There was another Working on 24th February, including a vision of Bazedon holding a parcel which turned out to be a baby boy. "All of these questions about the numbers and whether the baby is a boy or a girl were asked without the words being said. That is, the answer was for the question that was in T's mind." Later in the same Working: "I ask Amalantrah if he has a message for T. We come down from the mountain to the woods. I see a fruit packing house, a bin for tomatoes, some straw in the bin and an egg in the straw. T. must work for the egg'."

One of the most striking incidents in the Amalantrah Working had little or nothing to do with the egg; it is however worth considering in this account, since it delineates the deep and far-reaching forces which threw

up the Amalantrah Working. Crowley had for some time been trying to find a spelling of the Greek word *Therion* in Hebrew which would enumerate as 666. He had in fact written an article on the subject which he published in *The International* in November 1917. In the course of the Working of 24th February, therefore, Crowley asked Amalantrah how *Therion* was spelt in Hebrew: should he use all three words - TO MEGA THERION - or just the final word. Amalantrah indicated that it should be just the final word, and went on to offer a spelling in Hebrew which Crowley found wanting, largely because he could not enumerate it as 666. Shortly after, Crowley again received some answers of which he could make no sense, and terminated the session: "T is very enraged and expresses his anger which completely destroys all communications. Later we try to ask more questions, but it all seems to be of no use."

On the following Tuesday, Crowley went to his offices at *The International*. He found on his desk a letter left for him by the editor, Viereck. It was a letter to Viereck from a reader called Nahon Elias Palak, giving a Hebrew spelling of THERION that enumerated as 666. The letter was written on 24th February — the same day as the seance — and read as follows:

My dear Viereck!

I miss your plays in the Magazine: I mean those written by yourself, and yet no other publication furnishes anything half as good to feed my soul with — and I am not capricious a bit — or an idiot either — as there will be many others who will agree with me along these points as true: (1) That The Philistine, The Fra and The Phoenix were the only magazines that furnished food for brain until recently when can be found in The International hardly better stuff than the Pearson's does except Frank Harris' own stuff.

Please inform your readers that I, Shmuel bar Aiwaz bie Yackou de Shirabad, have counted the number of a man *Tau* = 400, *Resh* = 200, *Yod* = 10, *Vau* = 6, *Nun* = 50. Read from right to left.

666

Not only did this letter set out the Hebrew spelling for THERION for which Crowley had been searching; as if the date of the letter was not remarkable enough, Crowley was stunned by the name — Shmuel bar Aiwaz bie Yackou de Shirabad. Until then, he had not come across the name *Aiwaz* other than in the context of the Cairo Working. Subsequently he corresponded with the writer of the letter, and found that the name was quite common as a family name. This whole episode stunned Crowley; in his *Confessions*, he wrote: "This incident with its many ramifications is perhaps the most remarkable thing that has ever happened to anybody."

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On the 30th March, another participant was introduced to the Workings: Crowley's colleague and Magical Son, Charles Stansfeld Jones, Frater Achad. He was presented to Amalantrah, who gave him the name *Arcteon*, the name of a character who had appeared in the Working of 7th February. From now on, Frater Achad was a frequent participant at the Workings.

Despite what he regarded as some excellent sessions, Crowley sometimes became exasperated at the inconsistency of the Workings. In the Working of 13th April, for instance, he mused: "How far are we right about things? We always want a little more than we get. I wonder if we are foolishly impatient." Unfortunately, Crowley's impatience for what he regarded as meaningful communications would frequently over-ride such insight.

The egg reappeared in a Working on 14th April, when an element of a vision was described by the Seer as "Nest with eggs." This is reminiscent of a phrase which Achad had used when informing Crowley of his assumption of the *Magister Templi* grade: "One made a beautiful nest." Later in this seance, Crowley asked: "Give me a single pure number to symbolise the whole vision" and received the answer: "83." Still later in the same session we get the number 74 occurring. The significance of these numbers was to emerge forcefully in subsequent seances, as we shall see later in this account.

On the 20th April: "Vision of beautiful bell - wedding-bell - changes to foetus. Crown. Head of foetus turns into an egg and rises upwards, and then rests on a lotus flower." This is of significance to the portrait of Lam, which can be seen as fusing the head of a foetus with the shape of an egg; the reference to a lotus flower brings to mind Harpocrates, the child, Dwarf-Self or Silent Self. To judge by what seems a surviving photograph from the 1919 'Dead Souls' exhibition, Crowley originally drew Lam with a crown, but subsequently lightened this to a faint shadow or umbra.

In the course of the Working of 27th April there was a vision which is particularly important, and which is worth quoting at length. In the following exchange, A is for Amalantrah as articulated by Roddie Minor; T is again for Crowley as Therion; *Arcteon* is C.S. Jones, Frater Achad.

Wizard very serious and looks at Achitha in a very contemplative mood.  
Seems to approve. Turtle is most prominent thing in Temple. Child is there, lion and Bazedon. Arcteon has a very prominent place, he is a tall man that always appeared in the Temple.

T: "What is the work of this week end?"

A: "Geburah."

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T: “Geburah applied to what?”

A: “The egg. The egg is resting on the point of mountain tops, very sharp. Water around, lotus flowers on it.”

T: “Egg is symbol of some new knowledge, isn’t it?”

A: “Gimel. Lamed.” (= spring, fountain.)

T: “What does that mean?”

A: “I don’t know; followed symbol of mountain and lotus flower.”

T: “How are we to break open the egg?”

A: “In plain language it means Thou art to go this Way.”

T: “That isn’t plain language. How are we to get this new knowledge?”

A: “Don’t ask questions too fast. Sow the wild oats; go into the ... into the Mother ... to be born again.”

T: “What about the Mass of the Holy Ghost?”

A: “That hasn’t anything to do with it. You’ve shattered everything. I’ll have to establish connection all over again. Going into the Mother to be born again, you get a New Life and then the Earth is covered with wonderful flowers, and bees come to the flowers to get honey to store, and the honey is stored elixir. I see a hill very steep ... Mother standing ... down washing child. I don’t know if she’s to save it or go after it or what. Lotus flower on water again.”

Arcteon: “How does this apply to breaking open the egg?”

A: “No ... the egg is in the lotus flower.”

This last exchange is perhaps indicative of how Crowley and Jones were attempting to force the pace. After all, the egg does not need to be broken open, but is best left to hatch of its own accord.

From the surviving record of the Amalantrah Working, subsequent seances seem to have become more fragmentary and disconnected. Crowley’s continuing frustration with the Workings is apparent from the seance of 7th May, when he remarked: “Has he [Amalantrah] got any advice? Is it worth bothering with?” Given some of the notable successes within the series of Workings — such as for instance the letter from Palak giving the Hebrew spelling for the Greek word *Therion* — his cynical and dismissive tone is surprising.

The link of the Amalantrah Working with the earlier Abuldiz sessions was again referred to on 12th May: “We wish to consult you, Amalantrah, on the sudden return of Soror Virakam in the Temple.” There are no further references to the nature and context of this return. However, we can probably assume that the “return” was that of an astral simulacra in





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the woodland scene, rather than a physical participation by Mary D'Este in one or more sessions of the Amalantrah Working.

From the Working on 18th May: "I see an egg with one broken end and a hand inside." There was a Working on 16th June which had a very interesting exchange:

"Symbol for next week?"

"245"

"Explain, please"

"83 explains one side of it. 74 explains rest"

In his notes to this session, Crowley observed that 245 = ADM QDMVN, 'perfect man.' It also enumerates RVCh AL, 'Spirit of God.' We can take these ideas together as Perfection. This links up with the passage from the session of 27th April quoted above, which featured an egg; the question "Egg is a symbol of new knowledge, isn't it?" was answered by the Hebrew letters *Gimel* and *Lamed*, which enumerate as 83 and 74 respectively, now suggested as the two sides of Perfection. As if to underline this insight, Crowley subtitled his reworking of Legge's translation of the *Tao Teh Ching*, which he accomplished with the assistance of Amalantrah during his magical retirement at Aesopus Island, as *Liber 157* - the addition of 83 and 74.

This is the last session of the Amalantrah Working for which a record is known. In August, Crowley and Roddie Minor decided to part as lovers, and later that month Crowley sailed to Aesopus Island along the Hudson River for a retreat. The combination of drugs and intensive yoga triggered deep trances, in the course of which he remembered past lives. One of these was as Ko Hsuen, a disciple of Lao Tsu; the memories inspired him to rework Legge's translation of the *Tao Teh Ching*, helped by Amalantrah. Crowley gave an account of this in his Introduction:

During my Great Magical Retirement on Aesopus Island in the Hudson River during the summer of 1918, I set myself to this work, but I discovered immediately that I was totally incompetent. I therefore appealed to an Adept named Amalantrah, with whom I was at that time in almost daily communion. He came readily to my aid and exhibited to me a codex of the original, which conveyed to me with absolute certitude the exact significance of the text.

Crowley's intense work during his retreat at Aesopus Island triggered a deep and shattering insight into the nature of existence, an insight which Crowley described as the "supreme secret of a Magus".

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5.00 p.m. The meditation of this afternoon resulted in an initiation so stupendous that I dare not hint at its Word. It is the supreme secret of a Magus, and it is so awful that I tremble even now - two hours later and more - 2.20 p.m. was the time - as I write concerning it. In a single instant I had the Key to the whole of the Chinese wisdom. In the light - momentary glimpse though it was - of this truth, all systems of religion and philosophy became absolutely puerile. Even the Law appears no more than a curious incident. I remain absolutely bewildered, blinded, knowing what blasting image lies in this shrine. It baffles me to understand how my brother Magi, knowing this, ever went on.

I had only one foreshadowing of this Vision of Jupiter - for so I may call it! — and that was a Samadhi which momentarily interrupted my concentration of Sammasati. This can only be described vaguely by saying that I obtained a reconciliation of two contraries of which “There is a discrimination between good and evil” is one.

This experience has shaken me utterly: it has been a terrible struggle to force myself to this record. The secret comes along the Path of Aleph to Chokmah.

I could write it plainly in a few words of one syllable, and most people would not even notice it. But it has might to hurl every Master of the Temple into the Abyss, and to fling every adept of the Rose Cross down to the Qliphoth.

No wonder One said that the Book T was as ashes in the Urn of a Magus! I can't see at all how it will affect me at present. Even the Way of the Tao looks idiotic - but then of course that's what it is! So I suppose that's it, all right.

And its freedom, in an utterly fascinating and appalling sense, is beyond my fiercest conception.

Several days later, he returned to New York, his stupendous insight leaving him disconnected:

The next period is strangely confused. It is as if I were left in the Desert with no idea of direction and surrounded by a series of mirages. Innumerable people came into my life and passed out again, without leaving any trace.

The fact was that none of the people appointed by Amalantrah to various tasks were willing to undertake them. It may well be that this was due to a lack of real faith on my part. The communications from the Wizard had become confused and even contradictory. I had failed to understand his plan and to acquiesce unreservedly in it. This weakness of mine naturally reacted on the other people concerned.

The second paragraph of this passage suggests perhaps that although no records survive of further seances, Crowley continued with the Amalantrah Working after his return from Aesopus Island. It is striking that whilst during the reworking of Legge's translation of the *Tao Teh Ching* Crowley was by his own account in almost daily contact with Amalantrah, subsequent Workings were at best fitful, and Crowley regarded the failure as his.

‘The Way’ was the title under which the drawing was included in Crowley's 1919 ‘Dead Souls’ exhibition. It was also published the

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same year in *The Equinox* Vol III No 1, 'The Blue Equinox,' as a frontispiece to *Liber LXXI*, Crowley's commentary to Blavatsky's *The Voice of the Silence*. Here the reproduction of the portrait is accompanied by a brief gloss:

LAM is the Tibetan word for Way or Path, and LAMA is He who Goeth, the specific title of the Gods of Egypt, the Treader of the Path, in Buddhistic phraseology. Its numerical value is 71, the number of this book.

Blavatsky's treatise is concerned with the need for the aspirant to become aware of the roots of the self in the deeper levels of consciousness which underlie the phenomenal world. Commenting on the term "Silent Speaker" in verse 11 of *The Voice of the Silence*, Crowley remarked that it

... may be considered as a hieroglyph of the same character as LOGOS, ADNI, or the Ineffable Name.

In the course of his Commentary on verse 70 of *The Voice of the Silence*, which speaks of the need for the aspirant to regain "the child-state he has lost," Crowley further remarked:

Here is written also the Mystery of Harpocrates. One must become the 'Unconscious' (of Jung), the Phallic or Divine Child or Dwarf-Self.

Subsequently, whilst commenting on verse 83:

The 'sixth sense' is the race-instinct, whose common manifestation is in sex; this sense is then the birth of the Individual or Conscious Self with the 'Dwarf-Self,' the Silent Babe, Harpocrates.

The portrait of Lam suggests both an egg and the head of a foetus. It is then an encapsulation of the Dwarf-Self, Silent Babe, or Harpocrates to which Crowley is referring, the quintessence of the Voice of the Silence.

The Silence is the noumenon which underlies and infuses phenomena, the continuum of which all things soever are simultaneously facets and the whole. The Silence is the quietness at the heart of noise, the stillness at the heart of activity, the being at the heart of going, and the emptiness at the heart of matter. These juxtapositions may seem merely revelling in paradox; the fact is, though, that reason is a tool of limited application, and paradox is a means of pointing beyond apparent contraries. The 'Way' or 'Path' is clearly a reference to the Tao. The "Treader of the Path" is the Initiate, treading the path of initiation. This brings to mind the concluding lines from 'Pilgrim-Talk,' section 13 in Crowley's *The Book of Lies*:

O thou that drawest toward the End of The Path, effort is no more. Faster and faster dost thou fall; thy weariness is changed into Ineffable Rest.

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For there is no Thou upon That Path: thou hast become The Way.

Interestingly, this echoes verse 49 of *The Voice of the Silence*, which says “Thou canst not travel on the path before thou hast become that Path itself.”

Crowley had a very high opinion of *The Voice of the Silence*, and considered that his Commentary shed light for the first time on the true, initiated value of the work. As he remarked to the publisher E.P. Dutton, who he was hoping would publish *Liber LXXI* in a cheaper, more readily available format:

*The Voice of the Silence* is the only Theosophical publication of the slightest literary distinction or even of occult merit. This new edition is far more valuable to students than any previously published because the meaning of the treatise is for the first time made plain by the commentary of Frater O.M. No Theosophist can afford to miss buying a copy.

Crowley considered his work to be a continuation of that of Blavatsky, and it was his expectation that publication of his Commentary would create a major upheaval within the Theosophical movement, the outcome being that he would finally be recognised as Blavatsky’s successor. This can be seen from letters to his colleague Charles Stansfeld Jones. Writing to Jones on February 19, 1919, and referring to the imminent publication two days later of *The Equinox* Vol III No 1 and with it the Commentary, Crowley wrote:

I have entirely forgotten the horoscope for 11 A.M. March 21, and I do not know what the Word is. But speaking as a mere Exempt Adept, I will bet you a dollar that the publication of *The Voice of the Silence* will have the San Francisco earthquake looking like 30\$. I am just reading through the proofs, and it shocks even me. What will happen to the ordinary, gentle-Jesus-meek-and-mild theosophist I cannot say, but I suggest your arranging with the United Undertakers Association for a fat commission.

And again, from a subsequent letter to Jones dated March 14, 1919:

If you should think it advisable for me to pass through Detroit, in a month or so, as suggested in my last, it must be carefully stage-managed. The Fourth Power of the Sphinx must be the great asset. It might be a good thing to have me address a selected group; if so, make them fight for invitations. It is just possible that I ought to make a public statement; this only in case of a really big row starting over LXXI, as I hope fondly. Remember that I, as E.L.Z., was H.P.B.’s Guru. Much more so than K.H., or even Morya.

It is clear then that for Crowley the publication of his Comment was a momentous affair, and it is equally clear that the frontispiece for a book

of such significance would be not only profound, but of direct relevance to the book.

There is a wider context within Crowley's work to the symbolism of the Egg. There is mention of "a babe in an egg" in verse 49, chapter II of *The Book of the Law*.

I am unique & conqueror. I am not of the slaves that perish. Be they damned  
& dead. Amen. (This is of the 4: there is a fifth who is invisible, & therein am  
I as a babe in an egg.)

Crowley's drawing appears to be a representation of "a babe in an egg". It is surely of interest that the letters at the bottom left of the portrait can also be seen as a stylized "49", thus linking it via the verse above to the Cairo Working of 1904. The egg also made an appearance in the Abuldiz Working of seven years later, in 1911, since Crowley stated that the Working had terminated with an instruction for him to go to the desert (which he interpreted as meaning Egypt) and search for an egg under a palm tree. Roddie Minor's opening Vision of the Amalantrah Working thus drew a direct link with the Abuldiz Working, and through that with the Cairo Working. Thus we have three Workings separated by intervals of approximately seven years, but linked by the intrusive archetype of the egg.

The link is surely to Aiwass. Kenneth Grant told me that when in 1945 he was browsing through Crowley's portfolio, and exposed to view the drawing of Lam, Crowley uttered the name *Aiwass* sibilantly. The suggestion here is that Crowley regarded Lam as a mask of Aiwass, described as the messenger of Hoor-paar-kraat. As Harpocrates, Hoor-paar-kraat is the dwarf god, the god of silence, commonly represented as the babe in the egg and surely referenced in the verse above quoted.

As we have seen earlier in this essay, the egg is clearly the dominant feature of the Amalantrah Working. The climax of this motif is the Working of 27th April, which is dominated by the egg but also has references to a child and to lotus flower — both references to Harpocrates which, as we have seen in our brief analysis of *The Voice of the Silence*, is synonymous with the Dwarf-Self.

Thus, Crowley's placement of the portrait of Lam as the frontispiece to his commentary on Blavatsky's *The Voice of the Silence* underlines the connection between Lam and Aiwass, a connection which Grant sometimes refers to as Lam-Aiwass or Aiwass-Lam.

It is surely of great interest that another participant in the Amalantrah Working, Crowley's Magical Son, Frater Achad, went on to follow an

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increasingly divergent path after the Amalantrah Working. It may be that he took more from “The egg is a work that must be done” than did Crowley. In *Outside the Circles of Time*, Grant argues — very persuasively in my opinion — that what was contained in the egg was the state of awareness glyphed as the Aeon of Maat, which Achad foreshadowed in his subsequent writings. Subsequently, in April 1948, Achad detected the inception of the Ma-Ion, the initial incoming of the Aeon of Maat. This did not usurp the Aeon of Horus, but runs concurrently, just as for example Hoor-paar-kraat complements Ra-Hoor-Khuit.

We might wonder why Crowley does not appear to have taken the Amalantrah Working and the portrait of Lam further. The work of an adept is more often a collection of loose ends, not a finished body of work which follows a smooth line of development to a rounded conclusion. We have successive bursts of inspiration which are developed for a while, perhaps leading somewhere, perhaps not. On the other hand, perhaps the initiations and insights initiated by and developed within the Working were diffused throughout his subsequent work. There are several references to the Working and to the Wizard Amalantrah throughout *Magick without Tears*. I have the feeling, though, that Crowley did not understand the Amalantrah Working, or subsequently lost sight of the initiations which it sparked, and turned away from it. Clearly he retained a respect for it, shown perhaps by his initial reluctance to give the portrait of Lam to Kenneth Grant. Perhaps he felt he was passing on something of importance.

In 1945 Crowley remarked to Grant that the portrait was “drawn from life.” It was, he said, a drawing of an entity which several times intruded upon the Working, and which came close to wrecking it. It is likely that the initial occurrences of egg symbolism in the Workings were early manifestations of an informing intelligence. It gathered substance in the course of these Workings, until perhaps it was able to manifest in the form which Crowley drew.

The autobiography by the American journalist William Holt — *I Still Haven't Unpacked Yet*, published by Harrap, London, 1953 — includes an interesting account of a visit during the Second World War to Crowley's flat in Jermyn Street. Holt mentions seeing a number of “hideous pictures”, continuing that a “particularly unpleasant one was of an oriental with a grotesquely misshapen head — a product of Crowley's imagination, for Nature could not have produced such a freak to live”. “That?”, said Crowley, when he became aware of Holt's uncomfortable curiosity, “He is my guru”.

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Although this could have been the drawing of Lam, it might also have been the drawing of Kwaw which Symonds used on the dust-jacket of *The Great Beast*. What is interesting, of course, is comparing both Lam and Kwaw with Crowley's self-portrait which appeared on the front boards of the original publication of *The Confessions*, they have a great deal in common, to say the least, and are representations of a common source.

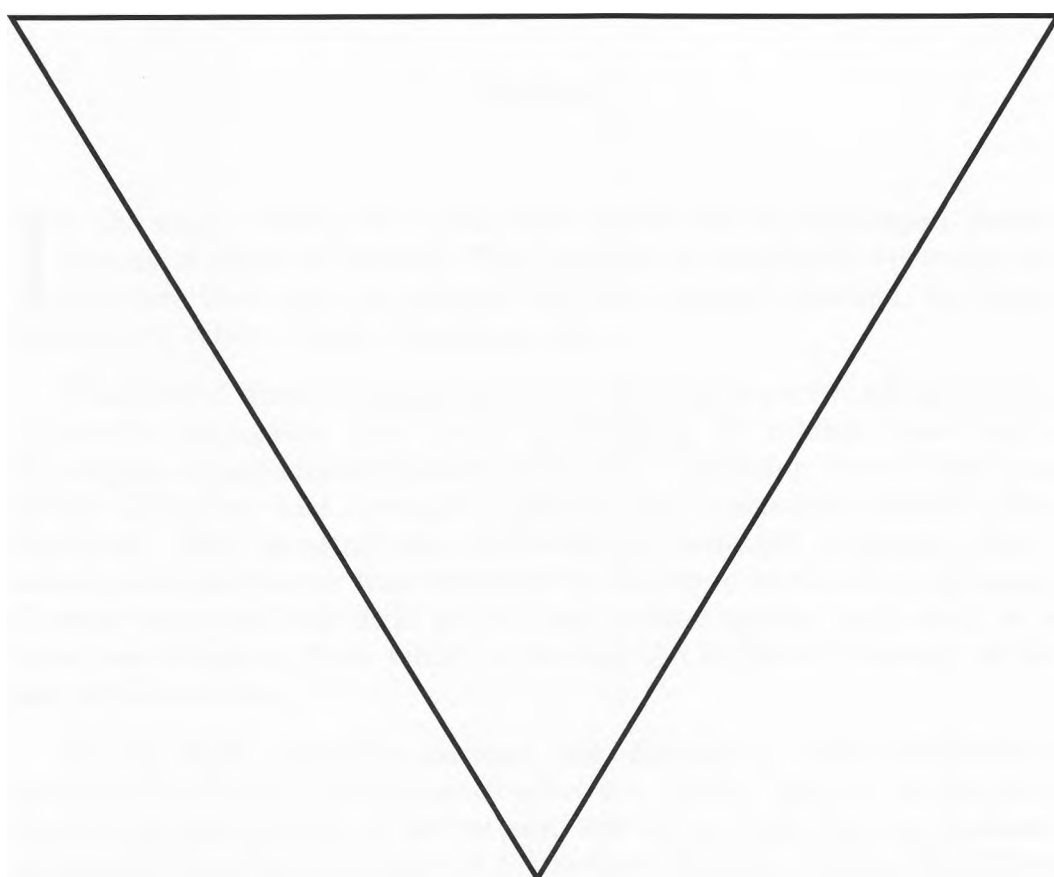
The inclusion of the portrait of Lam in *The Magical Revival*, and subsequently *Outside the Circles of Time*, has created an interest in Lam which has grown steadily over the years. Grant's understanding of what is comported by Lam has clearly deepened over the course of writing the Typhonian Trilogies, and he provides some very useful insights and opens up some interesting avenues of approach. The fact remains, however, that each initiate drawn to work with Lam must plumb these depths for himself or herself, to realise the Silent Self which is the key to initiation.

There is no specific meaning of or significance to Lam which can be communicated other than by direct experience. The title of the portrait — 'The Way' — is of great significance here. To quote once more from Crowley's 'Pilgrim Talk':

O thou that drawest toward the End of The Path, effort is no more. Faster and faster dost thou fall; thy weariness is changed into Ineffable Rest.

For there is no Thou upon That Path: thou hast become The Way.

# Two Fragments on Ataturk



Ithel Colquhoun



# Two Fragments on Ataturk

## Preface

**I**n the early 1970s, the artist and writer Ithell Colquhoun started writing a study of Crowley. This was never completed. However, two chapters that survive concern his son, Aleister Ataturk, by Deidre MacAlpine, whom Ithell Colquhoun knew.

The first of these is concerned with the events surrounding Aleister Ataturk's conception and early upbringing. It relates how Deidre MacAlpine approached Crowley after the 'Laughing Torso' libel case which Crowley had brought against his erstwhile friend, Nina Hamnett. This meeting was followed by conjugal relations, and a subsequent pregnancy was asserted by Deidre to be Crowley's progeny. Crowley accepted the child as his, and visited mother and child on at least one occasion, from which a photograph exists of Crowley by the sea with Ataturk.

In his Will, Crowley charged his Executors with contributing towards the child's maintenance after his death: "Assure, so far as in their lives, the welfare of the natural son of my body, Aleister Ataturk, at present residing in charge of his mother Patricia Deidre MacAlpine, at Wheal Betsy, Newlyn, Cornwall".

Although not an Executor, Gerald Yorke maintained occasional contact with Aleister Ataturk, and some of the letters between the two have survived which give rare glimpses of Ataturk's life.

From a letter to Yorke of August 1955, written from Wheal Betsy, we learn that Ataturk had just registered for National Service but had also applied for an American Visa. "I don't mind doing my National Service

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at all but I am very anxious to get to America as soon as I can, so that I can start earning enough money to help my mother. Without me to look after she has only £16 a month on which to keep and feed 8 people. This comes from the family allowance and what my grandmother is able to give her from her own small income". In a subsequent letter of September 1955, Ataturk mentioned that he had not been passed for National Service due to mastoids, and whilst awaiting his American Visa he was looking for a temporary job.

By April 1962 Ataturk was back from America and living in Colchester, Essex. A letter from Ataturk to Yorke dated 2<sup>n</sup> April 1962 mentions a recent visit from Yorke. Shortly after, Yorke wrote a terse letter to Ataturk in April 1962, asking for a response to reports he had heard that Ataturk had been spreading "unsubstantiated gossip" about Kenneth Anger; Yorke had asked Anger to help Ataturk secure a job whilst in America. Ataturk replied admitting that he had done so, largely on the basis it seems of what he thought Karl Germer's attitude to be: "Karl is a wise man, and if he does not want to have anything to do with someone, he has a darned good reason". We also get a glimpse of Ataturk's ambivalence about his paternity:

It has taken me seven years to clean up this mess and since Kenneth Anger arrived in the U.S.A. I have had nothing but London Reporters from the People's News trying to get his story on the son of A.C. which I have had to deny.

With this letter he sent Yorke a copy of a prospectus he had drawn up for a project he called the "National Universal Center" to be located at Barstow, California. Loosely inserted is a clipping from the *Colchester Express* dated 19/4/62:

**Bishop Backs Desert Peace Plan**

The Bishop of Colchester, the Rt. Rev. F.D.V. Narborough, has given his blessing to the efforts of 24-year-old Aleister Ataturk to gain converts to help with the building of a hundred million dollar International Peace Centre in the Californian Desert.

When Mr Ataturk, who lives in Roman Road, Colchester, visited him on Tuesday, the Bishop told him that he was fully behind the concept of the centre presented to him. Like television, he thought it would help the people of the world to get to know one another but in a more concentrated manner.

The centre, which Mr Ataturk says is to be built on a 200-acre area of the desert — with an observatory, airport and university — would be open to scientists from all over the world. All this is described in the dozens of foolscap sheets he carries describing the project.

This "blueprint" also lays down certain cardinal principles for the running of the centre. For instance, people in need would have their circumstances

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recognised by others able to help them and receive assistance — they should never ask or need to ask for help.

In another press clipping, it was reported that Ataturk hoped to raise £40,000 in England by the end of the year. This might have seemed like a lot of money, but was a veritable drop in the ocean when compared to the estimated “hundred million dollar” cost.

Yorke’s view on the project is scribbled in biro on the back of the booklet: “The mad scheme of Aleister Ataturk, A.C.’s natural son. The property is the same as, or close to, that of which A.C. used to try to raise money and on which the Leffingwells tried to raise turkeys to sell for A.C. They died”.

A letter survives from Ataturk to Yorke in February 1965, on notepaper headed “International Universal Center”. This was the first letter to Yorke for some time, and Ataturk mentions that he is now working as an engineering draughtsman. He also says that in the meantime he had been to Canada, “but the trip was unsuccessful”. He has, he continues, written a book which he would like to send to Yorke for his opinion on possible publication. By way of reply Yorke offered copious critical remarks on the novel, which he clearly considered a hopeless cause.

The second fragment by Ithell Colquhoun gives us a snapshot of Ataturk a few years later, in the mid 1970s. By this time, Ataturk had doubts that he was in fact the child of Crowley, and was attempting some sort of political career as a would-be representative of an ancient and dispossessed aristocracy of Britain. There is also the suggestion here that he was disadvantaged educationally, a suggestion borne out by the handwriting as well as the content of his letters to Yorke. Interestingly, we also learn that by this time he had a child — also named Aleister, and aged about nine — from a earlier marriage which, apparently, he had kept secret in the early years from his family.

By this time Ataturk was calling himself Charles Edward, Count dArquires, on the basis it seems of an assumed connection with Bonnie Prince Charlie.

Taken at face value, documents sent to Gerald Yorke allege that Ataturk died in 1978. Pasted into one of the scrapbooks of the Yorke Collection at the Warburg Institute is a telegram stamped 29/3/78. It is headed “Count Darquirs, 17 Adelaide Gardens, Llanfa[?]s, Brecon”. The message is handwritten, and states: “MESSAGE FROM LHASA [?] —ATATURK HAS MET WITH TRAGIC DEATH. KISSLA”. Someone has written across the telegram: “Ataturk died on the morning of the 16<sup>th</sup> of March 1978”.

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A few weeks later, Yorke received a letter:

Count d'Arquires (Charles Edward)  
Ambassador House  
Trois Rue le Goldney  
London W9 2AP

Dear Sir,

I have been instructed to inform you that I am acting on behalf of the affairs of the late son of ALEISTER CROWLEY. I have submitted the only two letters ever written to ATATURK from his father for sale at CHRISTIE'S. The money will be put into trust. If you would be interested in these letters, please drop me a line or telephone 01 286-7526.

Although Yorke pasted the telegram and subsequent letter into one of his scrapbooks without comment, Richard Kaczynski reports in his biography of Crowley, *Perdurabo*, that Ataturk in fact died in 2002.

Little has been reported so far of Aleister Ataturk's history, and the two fragments here presented will hopefully go some way towards plugging this gap.

Michael Staley

## The Torso Laughs

*The Great Beast* by John Symonds reports that a young girl waylaid Crowley as, defeated but not deflated, he left the Law Courts after the ‘Laughing Torso’ case. It was on a Friday the Thirteenth, a date which some professional diviners prefer as lucky. Was it lucky this time, and if so, for whom? And who was the girl? Who but Deirdre Patricia Maureen Doherty, grand-daughter of Thomas C. Gotch who was one of the founders of the Newlyn School of Painting in Cornwall.

He came first to Newlyn in 1879 while he was still a student, having begun his art-training only after four years of grind in an office. He then studied at various schools — Heatherley’s, London; the Beaux Arts, Antwerp; the Slade; the Academie Jean-Paul Laurena, Paris — during a period of about nine years. The last three of these years were passed in Paris (for the winter) and Newlyn (for the summer). He married Caroline B. Yates who came from a prosperous family living in Cornwall and was to become a distinguished painter herself. In an interview with the magazine ‘Black-and-White’ (Sept. 21, 1895) Thomas Gotch is quoted as saying “ —how fine a thing it is to have a critic — a friendly critic — on the hearth”. Notice that her place is on the hearth, not in the studio, though her work was in some ways stronger than his own. Yet his grand-daughter says that he idealised women and children almost as angels, being indifferent to men and male beauty

He and his wife lived first at La Houle, a studio overhanging Newlyn harbour opposite the Red Lion Inn; then at the Malt House (now divided into flats) half-way up Newlyn Hill. Despite the wholesome *plein-airisme* typical of the Newlyn School, there is an other-worldly

undertone in the work of some of its members. A long visit to Florence in 1891 gave Gotch's style a flavour of the original pre-Raphaelite painters of Italy. The interview quoted above is headed 'Realist as Mystic' and in his work the influence of an Isis-current, not less potent for being unconscious, can be detected. His 'Death the Bride' depicts a single figure, with floating poppy-crowned hair like Swinburne's Proserpine, who pushes her way through long grass and dusky vegetation. Another picture whose title I cannot yet discover shows what seems to be the hall of a North African *Medresah* or school of philosophy. A man resembling the artist himself, but clothed in eastern garb, stands highlighted in the centre of a polished floor; the other figures who sit enthroned on a dais round the walls are all women, thus belying Islamic tradition. The man looks towards three of them who have sceptres or wands of office beside their thrones: it might almost be a scene in a Golden Dawn temple.

His successful career as a painter enabled Gotch to build a house at the top of Newlyn Hill; he called it Wheal Betsy after a disused mine which once occupied the site. His only child, Phyllis, born about 1880, became a singer to be known as Phyllis April, the Cornish Nightingale. She married a man named Patrick Doherty who was invalided from the Army early in the 1914-18 war. He took a position with a mining enterprise in South Africa; Phyllis was on a professional tour in the same country when he died suddenly from the effects of war-wounds. She returned, pregnant, to her parents at Wheal Betsy where her daughter was born in March, 1915.

The little girl was soon known locally as Pat Gotch, following a Cornish custom still in course by which children are called by their mother's maiden name. (A stray survival of matriarchy?) Most of her childhood was spent with her grandparents, Phyllis being often away on concert engagements. There was, however, a period in the 1920s when Pat lived with her mother at the Court House, Bosigran (now the Cliff Climbers' Club House). She remembers the celebrated climber Mallory coming there; also D.H. Lawrence — returning briefly, I suppose, to the area where he had spent part of the late war. Phyllis had no taste for domesticity and found the care of a small child an embarrassment; she remarried, her second husband being the Belgian Marquis de Verdrieres whom she believed to be wealthy. She soon discovered her mistake and he soon departed in disillusionment. She was back again at Wheal Betsy when she heard the news of his death.

Meanwhile Pat was growing up; at the age of sixteen or seventeen she met a Major Robin Thynne who was connected in some way with the Marquess of Bath's family. At this time he was living modestly in a

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converted barn, consisting of a ground-floor and a room above reached by a ladder, in the hamlet of Trevithal not far from her home. Robin was a tall haggard man of middle age and indifferent health who seems to have been a genuine occult student. He was the centre of a small group who met in the barn to study the Qabalah with him. His esoteric background consisted in a link — how close, Pat was unsure — with a branch of the Golden Dawn; he had also been concerned with PR. Stephensen and one or two others in establishing the Mandrake Press to publish Crowley's writings. Later he came to disapprove of The Beast's methods and to study those of Dr. Rudolph Steiner instead. (Strangely enough the barn is now occupied by a potter who is a student of Steiner's system.)

Pat claims that Robin taught her Hebrew for a period of about two years — the alphabet, probably, and such proper names and simple invocations as were learnt in the elementary grades of the Golden Dawn. I have no evidence that she knew more of the language than this. Her fellow-students were two sisters, Marcia and Sheila Hirst; a business-man called Jacob Weinberg; a painter, Ruth Adams, and a sculptor, Phyllis Yglesias, both from the neighbouring village of Mousehole; a Mr. and Mrs. R. Ling — she was a psychologist who later married Jacob, much to Sheila's chagrin — J. B. Jameson, and an American painter called Robert Anderson. I do not know how serious any of these were as students of the occult, but Pat was certainly enthusiastic.

She soon moved out of her comfortable home at Wheal Betsy and into the barn with Robin; her mother, 'the Marquise', and the neighbours were scandalised, though her grandmother, Caroline Gotch, was always understanding. (Her grandfather had died in 1931.) Robin's wife Dorothy — another psychologist — and their two daughters were not in evidence, though they must sometimes have visited him since Pat met them briefly. I do not have the impression that she was a 'home-wrecker'; the marriage was probably disintegrating before her arrival. It must have been through Robin that she first heard of Crowley, and thereupon determined to contact him.

The opportunity soon occurred: she had a cousin in the legal profession who used to tell her when an interesting case was due to come up for hearing, and it was on his suggestion that she managed to be in London during the course of the 'Laughing Torso' trial. Her sympathies were stirred by the isolation of the plaintiff: she felt that Mr. Justice Swift's summing-up was biased and the jury's verdict unjust. She was also, no doubt, intrigued by the revelations concerning the Abbey of Thelema and was curious to know more of the strange

rituals enacted there. She tried to express these emotions and aspirations as she ran up to Crowley on the broad pavement of the Strand as he left the Law Courts after the case.

According to Pat, Symonds's account of this meeting is inexact in some details; she did not fling herself at Crowley's head in the manner described. In response to her approach, Crowley at once suggested a date for her to have drinks at his flat. Flattered by a lively and attractive girl, he could scarcely do less! At the same time he made no secret of his association with Pearl Brooksmith, his current Scarlet Woman with whom (and probably on whom) he was then living.

It is interesting that Pat felt no physical attraction towards Crowley, who was then a man of almost sixty. Nor was he a romantic wooer: he made no protestations of love or pretensions to fidelity. When he intended to sleep with someone else he stated the fact openly. Though she admits to feeling a twinge of jealousy on these occasions, she preferred his attitude to one of sexual hypocrisy and deceit. She says he was the most honest-minded person she ever met and he encouraged intellectual honesty in others. His attraction for her was less physical than mental, and I surmise that this was usually the case with the women in his later life: it was his magickal talk that seduced them. Pat was longing, in the most starry-eyed fashion, to become the mother of a 'magickal child' and, convinced of Crowley's praeternatural powers, she felt he was the man most likely to give her one.

Inevitably, some tension developed between Pat and the Scarlet Woman. To Mrs. Brooksmith, whose face had never launched a thousand ships, the presence of a recklessly-vital woman decades her junior must have been irksome. Pat's relationship with Crowley was intermittent, but she was with him whenever she could steal a few days or weeks in London. On one of these occasions the sign of Leo — the Mansion of the Sun, in zodiacal parlance — was in course and together they planned to produce a 'Sun Child'. Since Crowley at this epoch had no properly furnished *temenos* for the performance of his rites, he improvised with Pat's help a Sun-temple in his room, disposing round it the signs and other symbols likely to call into manifestation the influences of Sol and Leo. Their child was to be the result of a deliberate conception and Crowley worked out astrologically the most favourable moment. They planned to draw down a solar entity to ensoul the embryo, much as a 'Moonchild' was netted in Crowley's eponymous novel. (Madeline Montalban used to claim to have been, as a young girl, a Moonchild in a different sense in that, after many hours of ritual with herself entranced in the 'death-posture', she was resurrected as a new being by Crowley.)



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Back in Cornwall, Robin was much concerned at the realisation that Pat was directly under The Beast's influence, and it would be understandable if he were also jealous in a quite usual way. His other students took alarm at the mention of the ogre's name, and when it became obvious that the Sun-Child experiment had succeeded to the point of producing a pregnancy, there was general consternation. Pat named Robin as the father, thus giving less scandal in her home-environment than the truth would have done; for the 'Laughing Torso' case had re-awakened the sinister image of Crowley, which had slumbered uneasily in the public consciousness ever since the last major attack on him by the Press. This had happened some fourteen years previously when Betty May told all (or rather more than all) about her husband's death at the Abbey of Thelema, thus re-establishing Crowley in the popular mind as "the Wickedest Man in the World". Whether Robin knew the actual situation I cannot say; perhaps he accepted the fact that the child might (chronologically) have been his own. In any case he 'behaved like a gentleman' and said nothing which might further embarrass Pat. Her position was at that date much more awkward socially than it would be today.

Robin foresaw a great future for the world's women who, he believed, had never realised their full potential as human beings. Especially he cherished a devotion to Joan of Arc, whom he had depicted on his personal book-plate. Maybe he derived some of these ideas from Anna Kingsford, who was admired by many of Steiner's English adherents — either directly or through MacGregor Mathers, a co-worker with Anna in the Feminist cause. Even Crowley, who often made uncomplimentary remarks about women, prophesied that the Aeon of Ma or Thmaist (Themis, Maat), a feminine divinity, would succeed that of Horus, which the dictation of his *Liber AL vel Legis* had ushered in.

Pat and Robin sometimes took long trips about the countryside in his ramshackle car. On one of these he suffered a stroke; Pat drove him at once to the nearest big hospital which was at Exeter, but nothing could be done to save him. At the news of his death Jacob Weinberg panicked and, forcing an entry into the barn at Trevithal, made a holocaust of all Robin's papers. Questioned indignantly by Pat on her return, he maintained that Robin would have wished this to be done.

What was Jacob afraid of? Evidence concerning his own past? The result was that rumours proliferated even more wildly than before; locally it was said, among much else (and with what truth I do not know), that Jacob had been connected with the recent Stavisky scandals in Paris. Incredible as it may seem, I have read in diaries kept by the late Mrs. Thornley of Carbis Bay an account of Robin's group which is

blown up as a ghastly 'black magic' coven, with hints of human sacrifices: "the Penwith Horror" was her phrase. She might almost have been the Rev. Montagu Summers on the theme of the Vampire or the Were-wolf! In such descriptions there is more of gloating than of sincere distaste. Even years later there were flesh-creeping stories told, despite the fact that Robin's harmless little study-group did not survive its leader's death. It is possible, though, that he and his associates were indirectly responsible for rumours about Crowley performing 'black' rituals at various sites in Penwith.

If Crowley ever did this, it was not during his brief stay at Mousehole in 1938. As I established in my book on Cornwall, *The Living Stones*, he did not then have time to do so. I based my statements on an excerpt from a then-unpublished diary of Crowley's made available to me by Gerald Yorke. The main motive for this visit was to see Pat and the little boy, and Pat avers that it was his first and only visit to Cornwall. I suppose it is possible that he came here before she met him, sometime in the 1920s after the Cefalu episode. (Or alternatively, he might have come here after the outbreak of the 1939 war, when he fled the London blitz and stayed at various places in the country.) I would not bother to speculate about this were it not for the fact that the late Frederick A.R. Tonge, who for many years made the area around Gurnard's Head his second home, told me that Crowley sometimes stayed in the cottage at Zennor which was rented by D.H. Lawrence for a time during the 1914-18 war; that Crowley knew the Arnold Forsters who lived at Eagle's Nest, the house on the hill above; and that rituals, both indoor and outdoor, took place. It was on the strength of these reminiscences that I included the name of W. Arnold Forster in a list of Crowley's adherents which appeared in my book, *Sword of Wisdom*. If Mr. Tonge misinformed me I can only retract. Yet I do not feel that the matter is entirely clear: it is at least intriguing that the novelist Mary Butts, who stayed at Crowley's Abbey in Sicily, lived at near-by Sonnen until her death in the late 1930s. It would not have been impossible to rustle up from the Penwith environs a dozen or half a dozen people of similar calibre to hers, even if the Arnold Forsters were not involved.

In due course Pat produced a boy, born under the sign of Taurus. She gave him the name of Giair, but Crowley called him Aleister Ataturk, seeing a likeness between the child's natal map, which he cast at once, and that of the Turkish dictator Kemal. (I suppose that Kemal Ataturk was also a Taurean at least.) In Pat's copy of the deluxe edition of *Olla* (1946) presented to her by Crowley and inscribed with an affectionate headed "To You Two", he uses the name of Ataturk and makes it clear that he acknowledged the boy as his son.

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It seems that he is Crowley's only known son; the two small boys who formed part of the household at Cefalu, Hermes and Dionysus, were not his children. Though their mothers (Ninette Shumway and Leah Hirsig respectively) were his mistresses, their children were fathered by other men. Ninette was a widow with a young son when Crowley met her, and Leah had a son a year old when their affair began, which was before they went to Sicily. In Pat's view, today's claimant, 'Amado 777', is a pretender; I do not know him myself but I am told he appears too young to have been born in 1948, the very latest he could be, unless 'Old Crow' is capable of copulation even from the Beyond!

Pat finally broke with Crowley's *menage* because, as she puts it, "there was too much violence and vomiting among his disciples" — due, presumably, to his over-lavish advocacy of drink and drugs. But as long as he lived she kept in touch with him — in friendship after their sexual relationship was over. She claims to be the only woman with whom Crowley had such a relationship without quarrelling.

Her real 'magickal child', however, was born some years after Young Aleister. This was Michael, a remarkable boy whom Crowley identified as a reincarnation of Michel De Nostradamus. For some reason Pat dressed him as a girl and allowed his hair to grow long, which was not then the mode for boys. Besides a sweet nature and personal charm, he possessed a bright intelligence; his insight and perception were noticeable to all, and his death in an accident at the age of sixteen was a tragedy.

Pat says that Crowley was fond of children and animals — as, indeed, he says himself in *The Confessions*. He was on affectionate terms with Giair and Pat's two children by Jim MacAlpine, Michael and Caroline. She brought the three of them with her on one occasion when she visited Crowley after he was installed at his last abode, Netherwood, near Hastings. I have seen snapshots of him in his shirtsleeves lying on the lawn there at games with the toddlers. My guess is that like many male homosexuals he enjoyed *playing* with children, but when it came to working for them or otherwise taking responsibility he made himself scarce. He never supported Pat or Giair financially, nor even contributed to their support; Pat did not expect him to do so, even though her increasing family entailed the spinning-out of her resources dangerously thin. Jim had been reported missing while serving in Intelligence during the 1939 war and was never heard of again. Crowley developed, after his second marriage if not before, a sixth sense in picking women who would not make practical demands on him, however reasonable or necessary these might be. In this way he always showed a basic disregard for the well-being of his children,

deprived as they were not only of adequate means but also of a father's sustained help and interest.

Pat denies that Crowley was cruel to animals; she does not believe that he performed animal sacrifices, not even on the notorious occasion at Cefalu. By the exchanges on this subject during the Laughing Torso case, it became plain that either Crowley or Betty May was lying — he said he didn't sacrifice the cat, she said he did. Unfortunately for Pat and all tender-hearted people, the publication of Crowley's magical diaries in 1972 confirms that he did and, when challenged in court on the matter, perjured himself. Even without this evidence I would have guessed from the series of catastrophes which followed on the Cefalu phase that a Blood-Ritual had Gone Wrong, with consequent seeping-away of vitality.

Pat will have none of this. One day, as they were walking together along a London street, they came upon a kitten with a broken leg. They carried it to Crowley's lodgings and he set the fracture with the most delicate skill. He also tended, and cured, a puppy of hers that was sick. She says he was gentle by nature, with both animals and human beings.

He was also an incorrigible funster, as everyone knows; his pronouncements were by no means always to be taken at face value. You had to know him well before you could be sure when he was serious. He enjoyed puncturing the pompous and misleading the over-earnest. He could not resist letting any kind of pretension down with a bump, and had no scruples about doing so. Perhaps the title of Frieda Harris's memoirs, *Bump into Heaven*, is significant in this connection? Yet Pat's faith in his magickal powers never wavered. One day, when they were in a London bus, they found that neither had any money. "Don't worry", Crowley whispered to her, "The conductor won't see us." In fact the official did not demand their fare and Pat believed that Crowley had enveloped them in a cloak of invisibility, as he claimed to be able to do.

Taking one thing with another, the impression that emerges from his affair with Pat brings out a side of his character more agreeable than many of his critics would concede possible — a result, perhaps, of the mellowing process of age. He even offered to marry her when first told of the Sun-Child pregnancy, but was refused. It was a fairly safe proposal on his part as his second wife, Maria de Miramaro, was still living — in a mental hospital. A divorce from anyone so placed was then difficult to obtain; but even if money had been available for prolonged litigation, it is doubtful whether he would have gone to the trouble involved. Ever anxious to save humanity and reform the world, he seldom expressed practical concern for the welfare of an individual. Pat

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was probably right to decline: marriage to him would scarcely have improved her financial or social status.

On one of her visits to Netherwood she asked how and what she should study for self-development. His reply was, "Study nothing; learn from life. Live fully — and that will teach you more than all the books and the 'Masters'!" This was advice which she had been putting into practice ever since she met him, if not before, and now continued to do. Whether or not it was sound advice is debatable; what is certain is that it was not given to everyone who consulted him with a similar query. To some he prescribed an extended course of reading and esoteric praxis.

Pat claims it was she (with Giair) and not Lady Harris who stayed with Crowley to the end when he was dying. She telephoned to Frieda Harris telling her that he could not last long, but Frieda made the excuse that she and Gerald Yorke were too busy to come just then. In Pat's view, they felt nervous of being left with 'Old Crow' at the moment of death. She also says that Symonds's description of this event is inexact, her own account being that having sent Giair, then aged about ten, out of the room, she remained alone with the Master Therion for the final scene. He died with as much serenity as any saint; there were no tears and his last words were not "I am perplexed". As he slipped into a coma he looked up at her, saying, "So you're here — and not afraid ...", and as he drew his last breath there was a loud clap of thunder. This, she alleges, is always heard at the death of a great man; she heard it too when her first occult teacher, Robin Thynne, died.

When Crowley had gone, she telephoned to Frieda with the news and the latter re-appeared almost at once to sketch the Master on his death-bed.

His last words may not have been "I am totally bewildered" (as another version relates), but in his final photographs he certainly looks perplexed. He aged rapidly in the last few years of his life: from the snapshots of 1938, and even of 1941, the same 'Old Crow' looks out, but by 1946 he had become frail and shrunken, his *panache* all but evaporated, leaving the mere shell of his former self. His last likenesses show stains (of food, drink, medicine or tobacco-juice?) on the lapels of his tweed jacket — once a 'good' tweed, no doubt — and in the sleeve, what looks like a hole made by a cigarette-stub. On his face is an expression of questioning pathos.

## A Visit to Tally Ho!

**O**n the cusp of Aquarius, 1976 (Jan. 22), Peter Bishop called to take me to visit the Count's flat at Madron. Two of Pat's grandchildren were in the car with him: Caroline's daughter Helga Simpson, aged eleven; and Allie' — Young Aleister MacAlpine, the Count's son, aged about nine.

We drove first to Wheal Betsy where we found Pat drunk as a bee and disinclined to come with us to Tally Ho! There was some desultory conversation during which she claimed for her family a descent from Charlemagne. Peter suggested that she find the family tree which she said she possessed, but in the chaotic state of the household she could not lay hands on it at a moment's notice.

She stated quite openly that the Count was Crowley's son — as she had frequently done before to me. The Count himself denied this hotly; she persisted, and he fell back on the excuse that it could not be proved. (As I have pointed out already, it can be proved that Crowley believed him to be his son; Karl Germer and other followers of the Master Therion in America certainly accepted him as such. There is much internal corroboration besides.) The Count maintained that his grandmother — the Marquise de Verdrieres, afterwards wife of Jocelyn Bodilly — had told him that his father was Robin Thynne. (This was, of course, the story put about by Pat at the time of his birth to mitigate the scandal). Peter Bishop obviously felt that any connection with Crowley should be soft-pedalled as unhelpful to their present political enterprise.

The Count had changed Allie's name to "Charles Edward II"; I asked him why, and he replied that it was his own name. I inquired whether it

was connected with 'Bonnie Prince Charlie' and in answer he claimed the Prince as his ancestor.

Allie is an oval-faced child, quiet in manner and rather shy. His fresh complexion, hazel eyes and the reddish tinge in his hair come from his mother. He is not as nimble as a child of his age should be — he goes down steps crab-fashion and I suspect the same indefinable leg-weakness which can be noticed in the Count. 'Old Crow' remarked on this weakness in his son as early as 1938 when he came to Cornwall to see Pat and the little boy, then about eighteen months old — 'Aleister Atatürk', as he called him. Crowley's diary records some attempts to teach him rock-climbing which proved unsuccessful because of the child's maladroit movements.

Finally four of us set out for Madron; with the Count, Peter and myself was Rachel, Allie's half-sister, aged eleven, who refers to him as "the little 'un". Tally Ho! is situated in what was once the Isolation Hospital for the Penzance area, a granite building such as are now becoming scarce, which dates from 1836. A small chapel stands at the rear and the main structure is divided into four flats, the Count's being the only one now inhabited.

The apartment is furnished and decorated with a peculiar taste, the only colours being white, blue, gold and the near-black of antiques. This scheme is embodied in white walls and paintwork, deep-blue drapes, mirrors and gilt statuettes in the Mannerist style; there are also polished brass wall-ornaments and many silver- and gold-coloured cups and tankards ranged on shelves. Everything is clean and tidy but the atmosphere is rather that of a museum than a home. For the home of two children, it has a strangely un-lived-in air, containing as it does little that is not directly useful or — by the Count's notions — directly beautiful. There is an absence of books, papers, toys and all the miscellaneous impedimenta of ordinary living; and the only source of heat is a single electric fire which is moved from room to room.

A refectory-table occupies the centre of the 'Council Chamber' with a throne-like chair at the head of it. Near the blue-painted ceiling and above a huge mirror hangs a replica in relief of the grand seal of the 'Adjudicator' of the Council of Great Britain. This consists of an outsize fifty-pence coin, showing the figure of Britannia and flanked by gilded wing-like forms, recalling the ancient Egyptian solar disk with the wings of the vulture-goddess Nekhebet. The design is repeated on the Adjudicator's pennants, gold on blue satin with a gold edging. (I believe his patriotism to be perfectly sincere.) A drawn curtain hides a painting by the Count himself of the red-haired Barbara who left him two months ago.

### *Two Fragments on Ataturk*

In the main bedroom a pedestal supports a charcoal-black bust of the Count, recent work of the Penzance sculptor Teresa Murley. At the head of the double divan, a wall-bracket supports a gilded St. George-like figure wielding a sword and standing on an eagle's back. The eagle-motif recurs several times in the general decor of the flat.

A gilt frame, elaborately carved with the figure of a man on the left and a woman on the right, encases a portrait in oils by a distant cousin of the Gotch family, Agnes Hepburn. Lettered on the frame above and below is the inscription "Charles Edward, Count D'Arquies". This painting, which hangs in another bedroom, dates from about 1966 but the frame may be later — I don't think the Adjudicator knew he was the Count before about 1974. On the landing is a picture, 'Conflict of Good and Evil', by Martin Rees, the man with whom Barbara is now living. I cannot help wondering how the Count can afford on his miniscule income to buy or commission such *objets d'art*. According to what Peter Bishop told me, he has nothing except a disability pension resulting from an accident while working in a factory. Presumably this happened during his years at Bristol before he returned to Cornwall about 1972. Peter also says that the Count cannot write, only print, and can only just sign his name. He can scarcely read: this is borne out by the absence of books or magazines in the flat. Altogether it looks as though he is a mental defective of some grade, high or low — I am not qualified even to guess which — and this in spite of his undoubted talent in certain directions.

A journalist named East arrived with his photographer to interview the Count for *The Sunday People*. He had discussed the eviction-order with the local authority, and when we were alone for a few minutes he told me that there was no hope of a reprieve for the Count's tenancy. When Peter reappeared he assured Mr. East that he would pay any arrears of rent or other debts, which I gathered might amount to some £300.

After the press-men had left I asked to see the decoration visible in the background of the photograph which *The Cornishman* had published with its first report. I had not been able to make out what it represented — a Byzantine-type mosaic, a carpet design, an architectural plan? (Pat had even told me she thought it was an ecclesiastical cope from some Eastern church!) It proved to be a large tinted plan of a proposed city; in fact the Count showed us a series of about thirty similar perspective drawings of aspects of this project. These showed evidence of some inventive sweep, and as far as I could judge their ideas were competently displayed; a booklet containing photographs of these drawings with explanatory captions was also well



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presented. The basic idea as regards making the city or cities a practical proposition was the adequate harnessing of natural energies such as solar radiation and power from water and wind. It was my impression that the workable aspects of the project were mainly Peter's concern. The Count mentioned, in reply to a query of mine about his training in architecture, that he had studied at the architectural faculty of Los Angeles.

It is easy to trace the Crowley influence in all this, whether conveyed by genes or by exterior influence: the rickety *grandezza* of the life-style, with claims to noble descent and the assumption of exotic titles; the personal vanity and addiction to elaborate costume; the vast schemes for social reform, coupled with indifference to the wellbeing of individuals; indifference also to money, whether one's own or other people's (though not to what it can obtain). But there is also the artistic sense, the idealism and the capacity for hard work, given an aim that seems worth while. Pat has a theory that the Count resembles Crowley's father in character rather than Crowley himself; all three were imbued with a missionary spirit, even to fanaticism, and with progressively less adaption to accepted norms.

Rachel collected some clothes from her bedroom, as she was coming to stay at Wheal Betsy while the Adjudicator and his Acting Private Secretary made their first sally on London. It is difficult to assess the effect on the children of their disturbed background, but it cannot have been helpful. Rachel was in the middle of taking the Eleven-plus exam for entry to the Grammar School, and if she did not do herself justice in it this would hardly be surprising.

When we arrived back at Pat's we found that Miranda's two little daughters had been left there while their parents went away. Allie was there already as he had not come with us to Tally Ho! The complement of youngsters included Helga and her brother Bruce, as well as two Nigerian boys whom Pat was bringing up. The dogs, three Alsations and a blind spaniel, added their quota to the general melee.

If this is the Wheal Betsy version of Thelema, it has positive side in that it encourages a sense of drama. Whenever I have visited there the youngsters improvised some sort of performance: this time they started 'dressing-up'. While Pat, who had grown sober while we were out, provided us with a picnic meal in the living-room — once the Gotch's drawing-room — the kids bounced in and out, trailing yards of lace and other rags, and saying they were kings and queens. And then apart from drama as embryonic art-form, there is always the unsought 'drama' of daily living in such a household.

## *Two Fragments on Ataturk*

### **Further Publicity**

Parallel with the local press-coverage, the other media, Radio and Television, also featured the saga of the Count.

In its review of the local weeklies on January 5, the BBC's *Morning Sou'west* programme from Plymouth referred to *The Cornishman's* interview of January 1.

Then the Count appeared on January 9 for about five minutes in the BBC TV 'bit' programme which then immediately preceded the 6 pm News. I did not see this myself but was told that he was by no means a 'natural', his delivery being slurred and hesitant.

On January 16 the local Radio News at 5.50pm carried an announcement that Harold Wilson, then Prime Minister, had declined an invitation to become a member of the Supreme Council of Great Britain. The Count required twelve members with himself as thirteenth — a perhaps significant arrangement. In a previous TV interview he had told the world that he would invite the leaders of all the political parties, including Mrs. Thatcher. If he did so, I suspect that their replies echoed Mr. Wilson's.

On January 23 BBC TV put on a brief item showing the Count arrayed in his full regalia with his Acting Private Secretary, both in a limousine which flew the Count's pennants. They seemed about to set off from Madron for Downing Street where they hoped to see the Prime Minister and the Archbishop of Canterbury. In fact, this was a rehearsal for the event planned to take place on January 26.

On the latter date *Morning Sou'west* reported their plan for this journey, referring to the Count as "the self-styled Adjudicator", and stating that the pair would present an address of loyalty to the Monarch and the Government. The same evening BBC Television covered similar ground.

During the next few weeks the Count occupied himself with attempts to stave off his eviction from Tally Ho! and canvassing for his twelve signatories. On Sunday, March 14, there was a knock at my door about 10pm and as I tumbled out of bed to answer it I called:

"Who is there?"

"Charles".

"Charles who?"

"Charles Edward".

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The Bonnie Prince rides again, I thought. I did not let him in but arranged with him to call the following afternoon which he did. His purpose was to persuade me to “sign a document, as a member of the public”, as he said.

In fact, I soon discovered that, by signing, I should have agreed to be named one of the required members of his Supreme Council. I explained that I could not take part in political activities and he at once denied that his activities were political. A glance at the document revealed that its diction was involved, so I asked for a copy in order to consider it. The Count replied that he had no copy; moreover, it must be posted (to the Queen? or the Prime Minister?) at once so as to arrive on March 17. This is, perhaps significantly, his mother’s birthday; the document was dated March 16. I said I must have an opportunity to study the text before signing, but the Count grew impatient and required me to sign immediately. I declined, and he left in crossness, reviling his mother. I gathered she had discouraged his scheme to buy Wheal Betsy which he wanted to keep in the family. He objected to the policy she had pursued now since many years, of selling off the Gotch art and antique furniture until the place was almost bare. I could not help sympathising with his aim, though I felt sure his rescue-scheme was financially unsound.

I was able to see that the Count had obtained eight of the twelve signatures he required. Among them were those of Barbara and her new boy-friend, Martin Rees; S.L. Cooke, the maker of wooden toys; and Donnelly, editor of the now-defunct *Penzance Advertiser*. There was also a “Jackson” but I did not gather exactly who this was.

On April 12 *Morning Sou’west* again carried an item about the Count who the day before had failed to get the nation-wide media-coverage he had expected for his latest “state-visit” to London on April 11. He had been accorded no more recognition for this than for the previous visit on January 26 for his Supreme Council, and the immediate result of his second *Hejira* was a quarrel with his Acting Secretary over a hotel bill.

On the strength of his title the Count had also applied to the French Embassy for assistance, but he fared no better in that quarter. This is scarcely surprising since his title must be Belgian, not French, derived as it is, though questionably, from the husband of his grandmother, the Marquise de Verdrieres. Pat had already told me that he was in London again, this time with the two children, planning to appeal to the French Premier, Valéry Giscard d’Estaing: she spoke admiringly of “Aleister’s guts”. Pat is a ‘big’ person and whatever anxiety, even heartbreak, her children cause her, she always praises and defends them.

### *Two Fragments on Ataturk*

On April 15 *Morning Sou'west* once more featured the Count, just before the National News Bulletin at 7am, and announced the end of the Supreme Council of Great Britain. It spoke of a family tragedy. Following their eviction from Tally Ho!, the Count's party had gone first to Marazion where the local parson tried to reason with them. Barbara was present at this interview but did not accompany them when they left later for Exeter. After spending the night there they departed for London in the limousines with pennants flying.

A few days later I heard in the 'Kings Arms', Paul, that the children were 'in care' with the Local Authority at Penzance and the Count in a mental hospital near Epsom. Later I was told that he had been transferred to St. Lawrence's, Bodmin; Pat's theory was that the Penzance Local Authority was responsible for this, resenting his protests about Tally Ho! and wanting him out of the way. The children went to foster-homes, first at Pendeen and later at Falmouth.

May 6 was Polling Day for the Local Government elections and the Count was standing for the Central Ward of Penzance. Next morning the news reported that he had come bottom of the poll with 65 votes.

Everything had come to an end, temporarily at least, for the Count: his home, his common-law marriage which had lasted some twelve years, his link with the children he had brought up, his schemes for public service — even, it seemed, his friendship with Peter Bishop. His plan to get possession of Wheal Betsy had also miscarried since Pat had agreed to sell it to Peter Hildreth, common-law husband of her daughter Miranda. A diver on oil-rigs in Scotland, he earns a good salary and the Count detests him: one more ingredient in the general frustration.

Any whirl of Thelemic enthusiasm may be offset by the thought that, had Pat been able to give her eldest son the special education which he no doubt needed, and the assured background which was equally necessary, he might have channelled his talents into some socially acceptable and even prosperous activity. As things were, his education had been brief and scrappy; by the age of sixteen, he was doing a labouring job on the roads of Invernesshire, as Karl Germer told me.

By the end of May 1976 Pat had concluded the sale of Wheal Betsy, which had become to her more a burden than a home, and arranged to give vacant possession early in July. The household seemed to continue much as before, though she made abortive attempts to find somewhere within her means to live in the neighbourhood. I took it that she would not move until she had done so. Angus, her younger son, who had decided not to return to Bangor University to finish his degree-course,

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was living in a caravan at Newlyn and working at a manual job found for him by a boy-friend of his sister Caroline.

About the middle of June I heard a rumour that Peter Bishop had obtained the post of Conservative agent to a constituency in Surrey and his experiments in political 'Independence' seemed to be over. Not so, as the announcement of results in the Rotherham bye-election reported on *Morning Sou'west* (June 25) made clear. These were

- 1) Labour
- 2) Conservative
- 3) Liberal
- 4) National Front

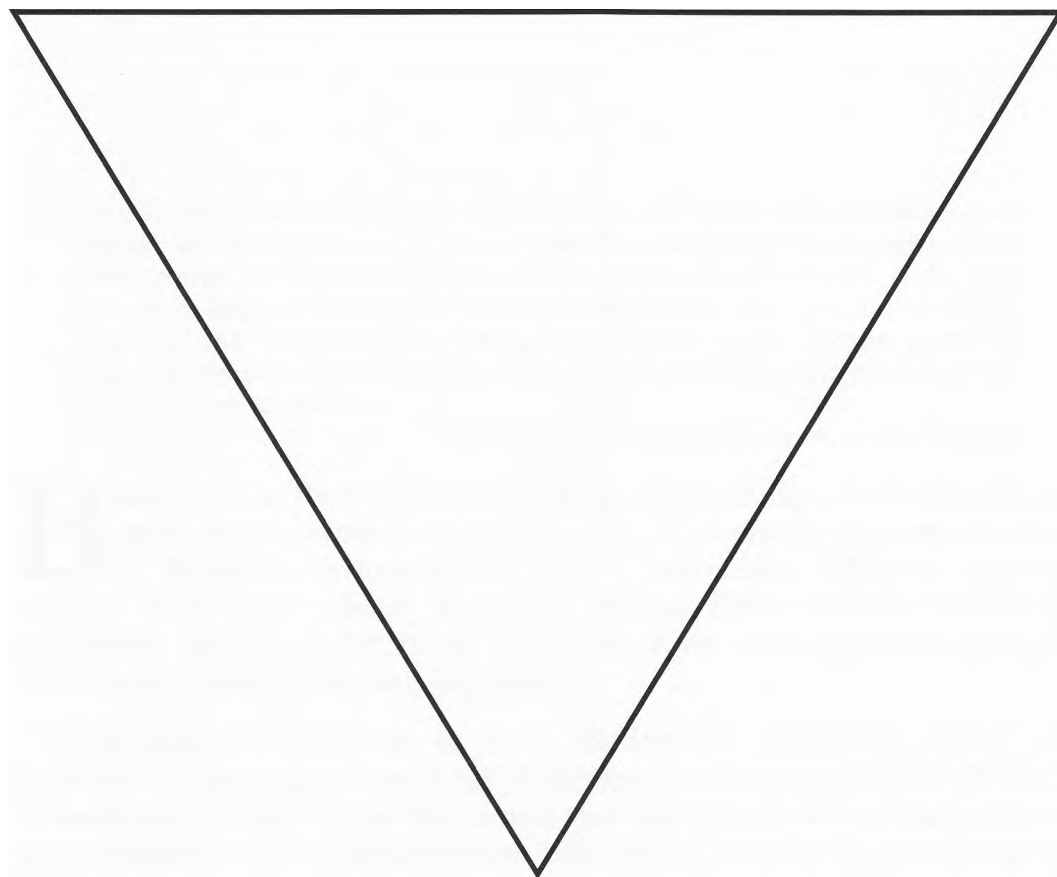
Among the one or two smaller contestants the Sunshine Room Party, in the person of Peter Bishop, polled 129 votes — his highest score so far? He lost his deposit, as did all candidates except the first two. The main plank of his programme was advocacy of the use of solar and other natural energies — a sound enough theory and a probable necessity of the future when its techniques have been perfected.

Pat, having packed off the Nigerian boys to their own country, left Wheal Betsy in the first week of July as she had promised. She did not say goodbye to her friends and I only heard the details some weeks later, from Angus. She departed in a hurry, piling herself and her baggage, with Bruce, Helga, two of the Alsatians and the two cats into her car. Angus drove them through the night, finally arriving at the cottage in Devonshire recently vacated by his sister Morag. A number of local creditors had been paid with cheques that bounced, but none took any legal action. For weeks there were rumours and counter-rumours about her whereabouts, the only solid news-item being provided by *The Cornishman* again. This reported that she had been fined for three motoring offences while still in Cornwall, but gave her new address in Devonshire.

When Morag returned for a few days to Wheal Betsy in order to retrieve some possessions left behind at her mother's first exit, she was astonished to encounter on the doorstep a woman asking for Aleister. This was none other than Jean, his legal wife, whom it appeared he had married some thirteen or fourteen years previously but kept secret from his relations. She now discovered his situation from Morag, scooped him up out of St. Lawrence's, and took him to live with her in London.

So the publicity the Count's exploits had attracted at least inspired Jean to claim him and thus served to provide him with hearth and home, if nothing more pretentious. But a base for future operations?

# Echoes of Silence



Alistair Coombs

## Echoes of Silence

*I praise the luxuriant Rapture of Innocence, the virile and pantomorphous Ecstasy of All-Fulfilment; I praise the Crowned and Conquering Child whose name is Force and Fire, whose subtlety and strength make sure serenity, whose energy and endurance accomplish the Attainment of the Virgin of the Absolute; who, being manifested, is the Player upon the sevenfold pipe, the Great God Pan, and, being withdrawn into the Perfection that he willed, is Silence.*

*Little Essays toward Truth, Aleister Crowley*

Buddhism is founded upon a body of teachings elaborated from psychological and spiritual insights. It is also a vigorous method of deconstructive analysis. There are many different schools within Buddhism whose doctrinal tenets differ widely although commonly placed under three main doctrinal and historical groups: Theravada; Mahayana, and Vajrayana.

Theravada corresponds to early Buddhism, comprising what are regarded as the original teachings of Siddhartha Gautama (c. 560-480 BC). There is scant historical evidence that this individual ever existed, at least as portrayed in his hagiographies. He didn't commit his teachings to writing, and there has been no royal lineage discovered to which he might have belonged. The works that purport to be his original teachings were compiled around a thousand years after his death. If there really was an historical Buddha then he would most likely have been the wandering son of a warring clan-leader from the foothills of the Himalayas, probably illiterate, and belonging to a slightly earlier period of history.

What we do find in the teachings attributed to Buddha are many references to those found in the *Upanisads*, themselves expansions upon

the teachings embodied in the much earlier Vedas. Buddha's central critique and reinterpretation of upanisadic lore was to do with the understanding of the self, which is now commonly known as the doctrine of *anatman* (no atman or 'soul'). The actual meaning behind anatman has been the subject of debate for a very long time, many of the original teachings having acquired layers of rigid accretion from scholastic communities since originally conceived.

Early Buddhism wasn't only concerned with the meaning of the self, but also appealed against animal sacrifice, and revised the understanding of karma. Previously applied as a (Vedic) ritual act, Karma now became psychologised into intention, volition or an act of will; all motivations needed to be understood as binding all activity to the cycle of samsara. One of the ways in which Buddha reworked these elements was by transforming the meaning of the ritual fire, undoubtedly the most sacred item at the heart of Brahmanism. He did this chiefly by considering the negative aspects of fire, such as hunger, insatiability and destructiveness, etc. How some of this was achieved may be gleaned from this brief but implicit example which illustrates fairly well the emergence of Buddhist philosophy from its Vedic background:

In Vedic cosmology, the cognitive process is undertaken by the self-cognizing Absolute. The reflexive character of this process is expressed by the word *atman*, which denotes both the Absolute itself, the conveyor of the cosmogonic process, and the forms assumed by the Absolute in the process: the world, the human being, the inner Self and finally the fire altar, which expresses those manifestations on the ritual level. The negation of the *atman*'s existence postulated in the Buddha's doctrine of *anatta* leads to the conclusion that the whole Vedic cosmogony is based on a false assumption and its acceptance inevitably leads only to suffering.<sup>1</sup>

The origin of Mahayana is no less misty than that of early Buddhism. The origin of it is popularly attributed to Nagarjuna (**c.150-250AD**), founder of the *Madhyamaka* or 'middle-way' school, and considered the second Buddha in Mahayana regions such as China, Tibet and Japan. He is supposed to have received the *Prajnaparamita* or 'perfection of wisdom' teachings - which are the hidden or esoteric doctrines of Buddha, said to have been unintelligible to his contemporaries - from supernatural cobras that inhabit a palace beneath a lake. In brief, the teachings of the Mahayana, revealed in order to sustain the Dharma throughout the period of the Dark Age, are intensifications of terms found in early Buddhism. Broadly speaking, Nagarjuna and the movement did to early Buddhism what Buddha had done to Brahmanism.

1. Joanna Jurewicz: 'Playing with Fire: The pratityasamutpada from the perspective of Vedic thought'. *Journal of the Pali Text Society*, Vol. XXVI, 2000, p.96.



### *Echoes of Silence*

Nagarjuna questioned many of the excessive classifications of reality or abstracted elements delineated in the *Abhidharmakosa*, largely by extending the original understanding of *anatman* into the more primary implication of *siinyata* ('emptiness'), striking more of a cosmological statement. Here, all things are dependent upon cause and effect, for the very reason that they are empty of any enduring self-nature. In Mahayana, emptiness is heavily connected to the question of compassion, and is considered a dynamic signature of it. Ironically, a great deal has been written on the subject of emptiness, but here Chang explains the basic meaning of it adequately enough in a single paragraph:

If there is no T, no 'mine', and all dharmas are utterly empty, how can the law of karma prevail? The answer is: it is precisely because everything *is* empty and there is no self or 'I', that everything *can* exist and the principal of karma *can* prevail. If things were truly existent, i.e., with a definite, enduring substance or entity, then *no* change or flow would be possible. Because nothing has a self-nature (*svabhava*), everything is possible.<sup>2</sup>

In Mahayana the doctrine of the bodhisattva was also developed, with an emphasis upon assisting others to attain enlightenment through realising consciousness as being innately luminous. Over time, besides providing the foundations of subsequent Vajrayana philosophy and practice, these teachings also portrayed cosmic bodhisattvas and universe-emanating Buddhas, who unfold an infinite drama of world-systems subsisting within oceans of Dharma-charged sound, motion and light. However, being primarily concerned with the ultimate nature of reality, McGovern offers a possible reason for some of these aspects not being developed more systematically:

From the absolute standpoint the universe was completely non-existent - why, therefore, would one bother to classify the fictitious.<sup>3</sup>

Wherever Buddhism has taken root, it has assumed a very different hue, incorporating new practices and doctrinal elements seen to be harmonious. In the case of the importation of Buddhism to the west, Buddhism merged with science and this was an interaction engendered to some degree by the efforts of the early Theosophical Society. Shortly before embarking upon his pan-Asian Buddhist revival and attempt at unification, commencing in what was then Ceylon, Henry Steele Olcott authored his *Buddhist Catechism* (1881) which became part of the

2. C.C. Chang (ed): *A Treasury of Mahayana Sutras*. Pennsylvania State University, 1983, p.411, fn.

3. From *Buddhist Cosmology* by Randolph Kloetzli, Motilal Banarsidass, 1997, p.7.

curriculum in Buddhist schools in Ceylon. Chapter V of this work proposes a relationship between Buddhism and science, and is regarded as the earliest succinct expression of a dialogue. The former protege of the Theosophical Society, Anagarika Dharmapala, further popularised the compatibility of the two at the World Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893, which inspired the writer and publisher Paul Carus to do the same on a wide scale. The dialogue has increased in momentum considerably, and is now an area beyond many of the connotations formerly associated with it. A good representative example is *Buddhism & Science* (2003),<sup>4</sup> which draws together a collection of research papers by a number of Buddhologists and scientists from a broad range of disciplinary backgrounds, whose research in identifying areas in common has proved very fruitful. A useful although highly critical historical review of the whole Buddhism-Science conjunction, on the other hand, would be Donald S. Lopez's *Buddhism & Science* (2004), where Lopez asserts that Mahayana isn't authentic Buddhism, and yet appears quite undaunted by the fact that the movement and its concepts has already been in existence for some two thousand years.

The convergence of science and religion was an area of great interest to Aleister Crowley. In 1906 he published an essay titled *Science and Buddhism* via his 'Society for the Propagation of Religious Truth' — a caption in harmony with the Theosophical Society's dictum 'There is no Religion Higher than Truth'. Thelema also declared itself to be 'the method of science, the aim of religion'. Despite this, the scientific bearings of Theosophy and Thelema are not very comparable; in fact, it is difficult to find any points of similarity between them at all. Theosophy has been concerned with the unfolding vision of science from many disciplines as a means of apprehending reality and achieving holism. Often dubbed 'the synthesis of science and religion', Theosophy originally proposed that science and religion share the same fundamental concerns. This differed from Crowley's assessment of how 'sane science' should have been united with occultism. However, belief in the paranormal development of mind and its extrasensory perception resulting from an examination of mental phenomena (i.e. the 'subjective'), has been a tradition for millennia.<sup>5</sup>

The possible reasons for Crowley adopting the type of scientific theories which he did, when others before had specifically rejected them, might be noticed in his matter-of-fact criticisms levelled at the

4. B. Alan Wallace (ed): *Buddhism & Science*, Columbia University Press, 2003.

5. B. Alan Wallace, *Hidden Dimensions*, Columbia University Press, p.66.

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prevailing occultism of the day, which he sometimes believed unnecessary for mystical attainment. He was often of the view that such attainment could be assisted, if not accomplished entirely, by an applied ethos of scientific materialism.<sup>6</sup> While his embrace of materialism may well have been for creative reasons of producing a synthesis with its opposite, it tends nevertheless to remain ascendant in a lot of his thinking. His earlier belief in the union of magic and materialism became subsequently reassessed; in *Magick Without Tears*, for instance, he happily salutes emissaries of Blavatsky for destroying Victorian materialism, and with it many of the scientific ideological commitments that were part of that particular age.

With its eye all-too-happily stuck to the wrong end of the telescope, as it were, science cannot really claim the non-existence of cosmic intelligence, spirits, reincarnation, matters surrounding causality, etc., when such areas clearly remain outside the concerns of the current scientific mainstream and consequently its programme of inquiry. Here in fact lies the main point of apparent psychological antagonism between orthodox science and some forms of esotericism. The former labels such items from a distance as unverifiable superstitions or untestable dogmas. The latter are faced with the difficulty of assimilating shifting conclusions which either quickly become obsolete, or go on to assume new dimensions of such proportion as to overturn the foundations supporting its prior and often much-vaunted model of reality.<sup>7</sup>

This is not to suggest that certain conceptions drawn from science have not found home and growth within esotericism; they clearly have. But for that matter, some of the major developments in science have their origin in the same areas of consciousness engaged with in occult and contemplative practice — experience, meditation, imagination, inference and critical analysis. We should consider Isaac Newton's oft-voiced (but just as often dismissed) preoccupation with alchemy, along with his *intelligent* belief in god, or a god principle. Pierre and Marie Curie are well known for their pioneering discoveries in the fields of magnetism and radioactivity; but what isn't mentioned so often is their regular participation in seances, in the belief that such activities would provide insights into the unanswered questions of physics. Although the work is not concerned with fortune-telling, *The Secret Doctrine*

6. This is not to suggest that Blavatsky was less *objective*. Like Crowley, she was of the opinion that one could access psycho-mystical states through 'scientific' means.

7. In 1893, for instance, the chairman of physics at Harvard was under the impression that there was nothing left to discover in physics.

made a noteworthy prediction that, nine years after its publication (1888-97), a large rent in the veil of nature would be made and materialistic science would receive a death-blow. This prophecy was fulfilled to a large extent, with x-rays, radioactivity and the discovery of the electron all being made in this nine-year period, findings that went on to revolutionise science from what it was. Similarly, the clairvoyant investigations made by Charles Leadbeater and Annie Besant into atoms and sub-atomic particles, as presented in their *Occult Chemistry* (1908), has found substantial corroboration in the findings of modern particle physics.<sup>8</sup> We should also consider Albert Einstein's frequent comments about the redundancy of logic in comparison to the faculty of imagination, and numerous allusions to other subjective outlooks that normally reside outside the ramparts of orthodox science. It is also alleged that Einstein was very fond of the *The Secret Doctrine* and kept a copy of it on his desk.

It is notable that one of Einstein's most remarkable contemporaries, David Bohm — the work of whom Einstein admired very much, even though they fell out in later years — held dialogues with Jiddu Krishnamurti and others. The current Dalai Lama termed Bohm as one of his 'scientific gurus'. Bohm's conception of time was also influenced by the work of one of Gurdjieff's disciples, J.G. Bennett. Bohm's super implicate order (based on a neo-Platonic concept) provides an excellent contemporary example of how the apparent antagonism between science and esoteric philosophy appears more to do with modern education than each originating from a different segment of an inherently divided brain. In any event, the whole matter is one beyond a question of 'pagan revolts against modernity', and similar banalities promoted by some areas of academia.

Now that science has declared consciousness as its new frontier — as it has been for a while — one particular area in development here concerns the interdependent relationship between mind and phenomena. An observer imparts upon any scientific experiment, or basic observation of any kind, the conditioning effect of their own mental attitude, observational awareness, and preconceptions of it. As leading Biologist Mae-Wan Hoe stated, sounding a growing majority: 'There can be no *a priori* dualism between consciousness and science. I see physics and chemistry evolving more and more under the guidance of an active

8. See Stephen Phillips' *Anima - Remote Viewing of Subatomic Particles* (1996), which carries a Foreword by Dr Srinivasan, Director of India's Bhabha Centre of Atomic Research.

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consciousness that *participates* in knowing.<sup>9</sup> If science were a process that worked independently of the mind, its faculties, and its perceptual flaws, then perhaps mainstream science by its own profile would not be the consistently inconsistent, self-correcting, and foundation-shifting entity which it so clearly is. Moreover, there is as much marketing involved in scientific theories as there is behind women's fashion; the support of new theories often similarly relies upon opinion simply rolling over and sleeping on its other side.

Crowley's interaction with Theosophy — or 'toshosophy' as he sometimes termed it — was too broad to fully explore here. However, he often believed himself to be the magical heir to the mission and work of Blavatsky, considering it portended in the year of his birth. He also at one point thought highly of Dr Anna Kingsford, as he expressed in his 'Preliminary Remarks' to the first volume of *Book Four*:

Now this woman, though handicapped by a brain that was a mass of putrid pulp, and a complete lack of social status, education, and moral character, did more in the religious world than any other person had done for generations. She, and she alone, made Theosophy possible, and without Theosophy the world-wide interest in similar matters would never have been aroused. This interest is to the Law of Thelema what the preaching of John the Baptist was to Christianity.

Kingsford was an early feminist, anti-vivisectionist, advocate of vegetarianism, one of the first women to have studied medicine, and the first to have obtained her degree without having experimented upon an animal. She apparently killed three prominent representatives of vivisection by sending them 'psychic thunderbolts', but caught a cold in the rain while waiting outside Louis Pasteur's laboratory to do so, contributing to her early death aged forty-one. While Crowley's opinion here is in a sense misleading, it would be more accurate were it referring to the Society of the Golden Dawn, for which Kingsford's sublime *The Perfect Way* (1882) was of considerable founding importance. In fact, it has even been suggested that Kingsford was the real character behind W. Westcott's adept from Nuremburg, Anna Sprengel.

Crowley was far less keen on Annie Besant. His dislike here is especially curious because Kingsford and Besant were virtually identical in what they stood for. His antipathy may have owed everything to Besant's position as Theosophical Society president; for during a later part of his career, as prophet of the New Aeon, he made attempts via a propaganda campaign to assume leadership of the Theosophical Society. However, Besant's distortion of the early teachings

9. From Mae-Wan Ho's *The Rainbow and The Worm*.

and the promulgation of pseudo-humanitarianism has been noted. Crowley also claimed to be the reincarnation of Eliphas Levi. There is, in all honesty, a megalith of disparity between the views of Levi and those of Crowley, so this identification may itself have had more to do with strengthening Crowley's talismanic Levi-Blavatsky-Therion lineage. Levi was indeed regarded highly by Blavatsky and sometimes crops up in *The Mahatma Letters*, although he was far from being the guru which Crowley appears to have thought he was.

There are numerous other interactions with Theosophical literature throughout Crowley's work. While there isn't much mention of *Isis Unveiled* or the *The Secret Doctrine*, his *Liber Trigrammaton* is described by him as "the stanzas of Dzyan in another system." Although ambiguous, Mabel Collins' *Light on the Path* is an interesting exposition of an esotericism remarkably in tune with the principles of Thelema. Despite being a Theosophical bestseller for over a hundred years, the book had originally been condemned by Blavatsky for containing elements of tantrism. On the other hand, Collins' quaint but engaging occult drama, *Blossom & the Fruit: A True Story of a Black Magician* — the final six chapters of which were authored by Blavatsky during its serialisation for *Lucifer* — had been met by Crowley with some praise: "... [a] novel which has left so deep a mark upon my early ideas about Magick"<sup>10</sup> Related to the Collins affair is Crowley's bewildering opinion, noted in a diary entry,<sup>11</sup> that he thought Blavatsky was Jack the Ripper - an accusation that seems eccentric for his type of humour, although it was clearly intended as some sort of joke. Interestingly, however, a recent short story titled *The Black Mirror*<sup>12</sup> could shed light on this otherwise bizarre opinion. It is suggested that an explosive event, such as the first publication of *The Secret Doctrine* that occurred in London in 1888, would attract a very contrary movement from the inner planes — in this case, 'dugpa' or elemental activities overseeing a series of unusually horrendous murders, giving birth in turn to a new voyeuristic type of debased media and journalism. So, perhaps there was something behind Crowley's mysterious diary entry.

*The Secret Doctrine* also appears within the works of Crowley's magical successor, Kenneth Grant. The idea is conveyed through Grant's Typhonian Trilogies that the *The Secret Doctrine* forms part of an 'akashic grimoire', along with *Liber AL* and Lovecraft's

10. *Confessions*, p.690.

11. Kim Farnell: *Mystical Vampire: The Life and Works of Mabel Collins*, Mandrake, 2005, p.117.

12. By Robert Bruce MacDonald, *Fohat Journal* Volume XI, Number 2, 2007, pp.42-47.

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*Necronomicon*. Leadbeater had formerly suggested much the same about Collins' *Light on the Path* and Blavatsky's *The Voice of the Silence* in his 1911 introduction to the former. Following John Symonds' study on Blavatsky, *The Lady with the Magic Eyes*, and shortly before Grant's *The Magical Revival* was set to appear, the two may have been planning a work on *The Secret Doctrine* in terms of present-day occultism which never came to light, as suggested in a letter from Grant to Symonds dated 28 March 1972:

I have been reading Blavatsky's Secret Doctrine. The matter is overwhelming and I have scrapped several attempts at making a synopsis. It is such a rich and finely meshed work, so astonishingly complex, that it is beyond me to do more than give the barest of bare outlines. Reading the book again after many years I now see it as a stupendous mine of occult lore; it would require, literally, years to attempt to assess it in terms of the present-day occult scene.

In an earlier communication from Grant to Symonds dated 19 December 1957, Grant also expresses some appreciation for Krishnamurti, whom he elsewhere described as the 'Moonchild' of Besant and Leadbeater. Despite Crowley's highly-vocal denunciation of Krishnamurti as a fraud, the acknowledgement by Grant isn't surprising given his early interest in various other contemporary eastern mystics and gurus:

One thing you should ponder deeply in connection with the T.S. and that is: for all its chicanery, charlatanism, false claims (K.H. and Morya etc), how account for Krishnamurti who, if he is not an avatar of God, is certainly one of the Great religious geni of today? This is a great puzzle and one that cannot easily be solved. After all, Krishnamurti himself on one occasion said that if it had not been for Leadbeater (who discovered him with Annie!) he would have been dead along with his other brother. I shall be interested to see how you treat this matter in your book for he is indubitably the flower of the T.S. and H.R.B.'s magical child — her greatest miracle, AND THAT WASN'T A FRAUD, because he is a genuine 'Master.'<sup>13</sup>

Of all Blavatsky's works, Crowley's favourite was the comparatively small and far less popular *The Voice of the Silence* (1889) a work 'dedicated to the few'. On the basis of Crowley's A.-A.-, classification of texts, the *Voice* fell outside the normal sphere of scholarship, and he saw it as Blavatsky's *Cloud upon the Sanctuary*. The *Voice*, albeit with Crowley's commentary, is one of the few texts within the canon of thelemic Holy Books not authored by Crowley. It appears from the following that the commentary was intended to gain support in his bid for presidency of the Theosophical Society:

I will bet you a dollar that the publication of *The Voice of the Silence* will have the San Francisco earthquake looking like 300. I am just reading through the

13. Both these letters from Grant to Symonds dated 1972 and 1957 respectively are from the private collection of Dr. Henrik Bogdan.

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proofs, and it shocks even me. What will happen to the ordinary, gentle-Jesus-meek-and-mild theosophist, I cannot say, but I suggest your arranging with the United Undertakers Association for a fat commission.<sup>14</sup>

There was no seismic activity following its publication; in fact, it didn't appear to raise an eyebrow anywhere at all.

In *The Equinox* of 1919 in which it was published, Crowley mentions that he had been studying the *Voice* for eighteen years; and in certain respects this is undoubtedly borne out in his level of analysis of the text; not to mention parts of the *Voice* being an inspiration behind his own A.-A.-, system of initiation, despite the latter's more immediate kabbalistic structure.

The *Voice* is said to derive from *The Book of Golden Precepts* and is Blavatsky's translation (from memory) of one of its ninety separate treatises. While the *Precepts* claim the same source as Nagarjuna's wisdom texts, they are also said to contain pre-Buddhistic treatises, in line with Blavatsky's claim that the source is concerned more with psychic and spiritual development than in upholding a particular tradition. One does, on that level, notice a fusion of different elements going on in the *Voice*, drawn from Brahmanism, Mahayana, Vajrayana, Yoga, and Theosophy. It is for this reason that some have considered the *Voice* as Blavatsky's own literary invention, and thus placed it in the same category as Sir Edwin Arnold's epic poem about the life of Buddha, *The Light of Asia*. While there certainly is a great deal of Blavatsky in its Victorian poetic style and ornamental inversions, and an appearance of theosophical schemata uncommon in Buddhism, the *Voice* still exhorts a central theme of Mahayana teaching and is the first English transmission of this school's doctrine to appear in the west. Reigle has noted some correspondences in the *Voice* with the central Mahayana bodhisattva text, the *Bodhicaryavatara*.<sup>15</sup> He also cites a work published in 1983 titled *Cosmic Ecumenism via Hindu-Buddhist Catholicism*, in which around 1950 a Tibetan Lama in Kalimpong allegedly compared the original (Tibetan) *Voice* to Blavatsky's English translation. Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup, the translator of the texts now subsumed within Evans-Wentz's *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, remarked on Blavatsky's works:

... there is adequate internal evidence in them of their author's intimate acquaintance with the higher lamastic teachings, into which she claimed to have been initiated.<sup>16</sup>

14. Richard Kaczynski, Ph.D: *Panic in Detroit*, Blue Equinox Journal, 2006, p.32.

15. David Reigle: *Blavatsky's Secret Books*, Wizards Bookshelf, 1999, pp. 139-144.

16. Samdup had also assisted Arthur Avalon with the translation of his tantric corpus of texts.



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The former world authority on Mahayana Buddhism, D.T. Suzuki, had the following to say in relation to the *Voice*:

Undoubtedly Madame Blavatsky had in some way been initiated into the deeper side of Mahayana teaching ... There is no doubt whatever that the Theosophical Movement made known to the general world the main doctrines of Mahayana Buddhism, and the interest now being taken in Mahayana in the Western world has most certainly been helped forward by the knowledge of Theosophy.<sup>17</sup>

The ninth Panchen Lama of Tibet similarly considered the *Voice* authentic enough for him to write a foreword to the 1927 Peking Buddhist Society edition.

Crowley was no less enthusiastic than the above regarding the *Voice's* mystical content, although he didn't hold the same view about it deriving from an authentic source:

Madame Blavatsky's method of exegesis, in the absence of original information, was to take existing commentators and disagree with them, her standard being what the unknown originals ought, in her opinion, to have said. This method saves much of the labour of research, and with a little luck it ought to be possible to discover subsequently much justification in the originals as they become known. Madame Blavatsky was justified in employing this method because she really did know the subject better than either commentator or original. She merely used Oriental lore as an Ostrich hunter uses the skin of a dead bird. She was Ulysses, and the East her Wooden Horse.<sup>18</sup>

While this isn't an unreasonable theory in itself, there is an assumption here over "unknown originals" becoming known and then justification somehow being traced in prior forgeries of them. It would be difficult to think of any other convincing instances of this. Crowley, who didn't himself know a word of any Asian language (besides Russian, Arabic and European languages, Blavatsky was proficient in Sanskrit), seems to be projecting his own method of appropriation with Legge's translation of the *Tao Te Ching*; not entirely incomparable to what others have seen in Arthur Waley in terms of Chinese literature, and Idries Shah in terms of Sufi teachings. The lack of original information here suggested by Crowley appears to be referring to Mahayana, and it becomes clear throughout his commentary on the *Voice* that he is unaware of the basic doctrinal tenets of this school, which he thought Blavatsky was inventing. His ignorance, however, could have been in part deliberate, so as to legitimise his commentary over the text by

17. From *Reincarnation* by Sylvia Cranston, TUP, 1998, p. 102.

18. *The Equinox*, Volume III, Number 1. Weiser, 1972, p.77.

adopting the doctrinal characteristics of early Buddhism as his standard of reference. Theravada, incidentally, was also much in line with his own scientific preferences. This was prior to the popular advent of quantum physics and the ‘discovery’ of Mahayana which, as mentioned before, are the two predominant representatives from each of these fields used in the Buddhism-science dialogue at present.

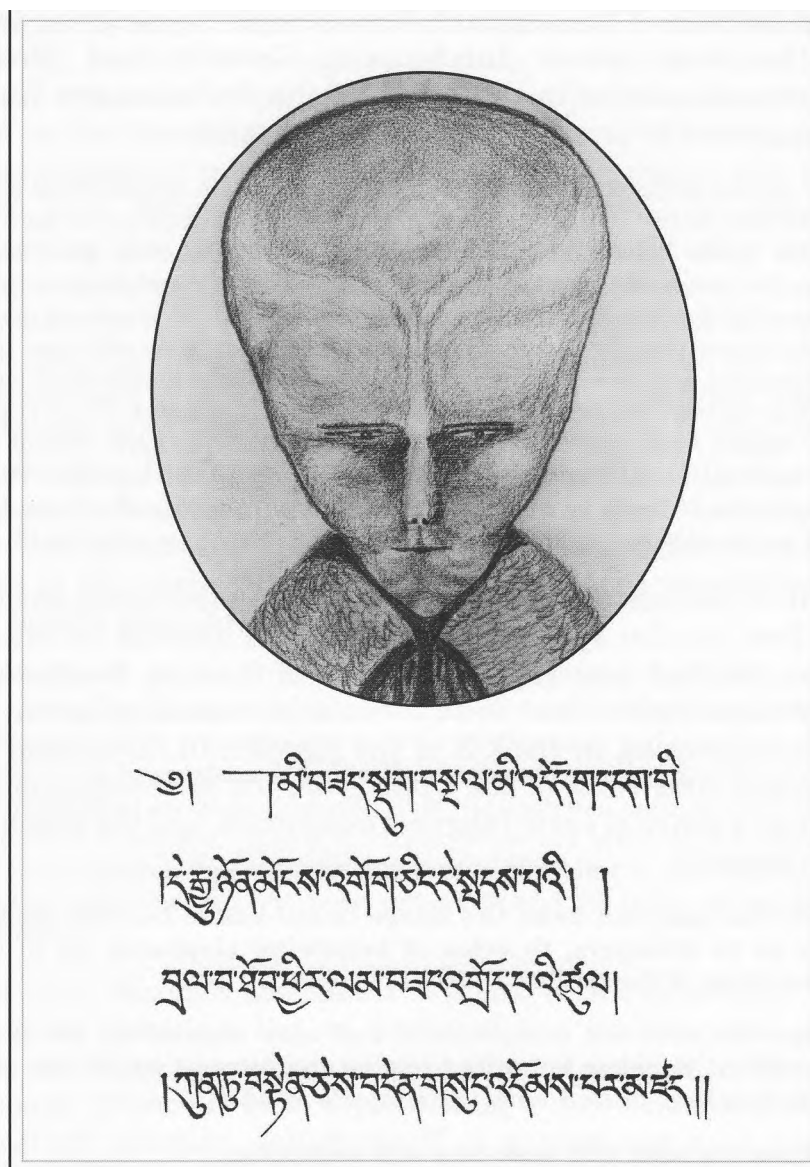
The *Voice* is a manual of initiation, or rather of awareness, and the stages of its actualisation. It is divided into three fragments; I *The Voice of the Silence*, II *The Two Paths*; and III *The Seven Portals*. What follows is neither a full assessment and summary of the *Voice*, nor of Crowley’s percipient and often very jocular commentary on it; in view of the commentary we have selected passages which are of interest, while at times also comparing the views of Crowley and Blavatsky in the broader sense.

#### **The Voice of the Silence**

1. These Instructions are for those ignorant of the dangers of the lower *iddhi*.
2. He who would hear the voice of *nada*, the ‘soundless sound,’ and comprehend it, he has to learn the nature of Dharana.
3. Having become indifferent to objects of perception, the pupil must seek out the Raja of the senses, the thought-producer, he who awakes illusion.
4. The mind is the great slayer of the Real.
5. Let the disciple slay the slayer.

Crowley starts by drawing a parallel between the *Voice* and Robert Browning’s poem of dream and brooding uncertainty, *Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came*, suggesting that the disciple is lost in the dark due to a lack of an intelligible and coherent cosmology. While the *Voice* is indeed a mystical poem, not a logical tract on metaphysics, it is drawn from a consistent cosmology, one which Blavatsky was presupposing the reader to be familiar with. Despite this, and with the assistance of his commentary, Crowley reckons the *Voice* to be a serious initiatory guide to be studied by members of the A.:. Aλ and also practiced by them.

These opening verses deal with traditional techniques of meditation. *Iddhi* is the Pali form of the Sanskrit. The lower *iddhi* indicate psychic faculties which emerge through meditation; these can hamper progress at preliminary stages and thus need to be checked, although they yet remain present in various guises of subtlety as one advances. They are considered impediments chiefly because they create distracting



*The 1927 Peking edition of Blavatsky's The Voice of the Silence included the above four lines of Tibetan script written especially for the edition by the Panchen Lama. Glossed as The Path of Liberation, it was freely rendered in English as:*

*All beings desire liberation from misery.  
 Seek, therefore, for the causes of misery and expunge them.  
 By entering on the Path, liberation from misery is attained.  
 Exhort, then, all beings to enter the Path.*

*Crowley's drawing 'The Way' was not reproduced with the script, but is here included to highlight its close association with the essence of Blavatsky's book.*

divisions in the will of the aspirant, thus hampering progress towards realising the true nature. Incidentally, Crowley and Blavatsky elsewhere shared a belief in the power of the Probationary Pledge to prepare the ground by troubling the timid or uncertain:

As soon as anyone pledges himself as a 'Probationer,' certain occult effects ensue. Of these the first is the *throwing outward* of everything latent in the nature of the man: his faults, habits, qualities or subdued desires, whether good, bad or indifferent. For instance, if a man is vain or a sensualist, or ambitious, whether by Atavism or by Karmic heirloom, all those vices are sure to break out, even if he has hitherto successfully concealed and repressed them. They will come to the front irrepressibly, and he will have to fight a hundred times harder than before, until he kills all such tendencies in himself. On the other hand, if one is good, generous, chaste, and abstemious, or has any virtue hitherto latent and concealed in him, it will work its way out as irrepressibly as the rest. Thus a civilised man who hates to be considered a Grandison, and therefore assumes a mask, will not be able to conceal his true nature, whether base or noble.<sup>19</sup>

It is difficult to estimate when and from where meditative techniques arose. The first popular systematisation of them appears in Patanjali's *Yoga Sūtras*. We find emerging indications of them in the *Katha* and *Svetasvatara Upanisads*-, there is an even earlier instance, known as the Kesin hymn, appearing in Book X of the *Rgveda*. In distinction to the priestly esoteric constructs of the *Upanisads*, the near-shamanic Vedic hymns display a range of early religious experience, and the Kesin hymn is a unique example.

**10. Before the soul can hear, the image (man) has to become deaf to roarings as to whispers, to cries of bellowing elephants as to the silvery buzzing of the golden firefly.**

**11. Before the soul can comprehend and may remember, she must unto the Silent Speaker be united just as the form to which the clay is modelled is first united with the potter's mind.**

**12. For then the soul will hear, and will remember.**

**13. And then to the inner ear will speak - THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE.**

Silence in the Buddhist arena originally symbolised Buddha's calculated silence over certain questions which disciples would ask, chiefly concerning atman and other transcendental affairs. It represented his teaching that reality should not be confounded with empirical categorisations and theories, that it was impossible to conceive the transcendent in terms of the empirical, and that enlightenment cannot

19. Daniel Caldwell: *The Esoteric Papers of Madame Blavatsky*, Kessinger, 2004, p.83.

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be conveyed by any of these material and mental forms. Buddha not only applied this position to metaphysical theories, but also stood against the use of an autocratic empiricism, in terms of progression along the path and of achieving enlightenment. By means of his imposed silence, Buddha attempted to remove the centre of perception and knowing to another level entirely; although this is commonly referred to in Buddhism as the doctrine of the middle-way, it actually implies more than an awareness simply balancing mid-way between two extremes. It is important to note that, in relation to his mantle of silence, Buddha was not denying the existence of an atman or absolute. His position was that attempting to *conceive* of such with reality-obscuring language and concepts was deception, which could only culminate in static dogmatism and a resulting literalism — a criticism Mahayana subsequently made against early Buddhism, provoked by the way that the early teachings were being upheld. Buddha's silence over these areas was a significant impetus in the early formation of Mahayana, the orientation of which can be briefly summarised here:

Historically, it must be said that Buddha preached his phenomenological doctrines in an 'Exoteric form' to the people and his Ontological doctrine in the 'Esoteric form' was reserved only for advanced or brilliant men. Teachings on both these lines proceeded simultaneously without implying any periodical or chronological division. However, from the doctrinal point of view, the former is the more expedient (upaya) doctrine, while the latter is the real doctrine. This order equates well with the inherent natural law in the spiritual domain. Here the former or 'exoteric' must come first and the latter or 'esoteric' would come next.<sup>20</sup>

Silence, then, becomes the means to access occult knowledge. Not occult in terms of secretive, but in terms of the development of intuitive insight, and thus a process analogous to the retrieval of the 'lost word' in masonry. Silence is here representing a non-conceptual cognition at the level of intuition, which itself is a response to a sound of an otherwise indiscernible cosmic type — or, 'a voice of silence'. It is an activity which some would associate with a burgeoning spiritual instinct grappling upon a higher plane of awareness or memory. In terms of verse twelve, in ancient mystery tradition as put forth by Plato, there is no such thing as original thought or being able to think; all is rather a reorganisation or assimilation of recollection invoked from a submerged but ever-active state of memory. Similarly, Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and even Krishna as an embodiment of the supreme in the *Bhagavad Gita*, become revealers and upholders of the Dharma by having remembered

20. From *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism: A Study of the Madhyamika System* by T.R.V. Murti, Munshiram Manoharlal, 2006, p.50.

the successive continuity of their former lives — a hallmark underlying their enlightenment.

Crowley similarly interprets ‘remember’ as ‘will to attain memory’, noting that as an ordinary man does this with his own experiences, an adept does so with *all* experiences. This provides a rationale for why — according to Crowley, Sri Krishna Prem, Nicholas Roerich, Lama Anagarika Govinda, and others — an artist can be considered an adept, in the sense that a great artist expresses what is felt and experienced by everybody. This he achieves by expressing his deepest nature, which naturally isn’t any part of ‘him’ at all. We can sometimes notice this occurring through many different channels, although it is a design worked towards specifically in Vajrayana Buddhist art.

Crowley’s ideas on reincarnation, in terms of his magical memory recalling previous incarnations, connect for the most part to literary identifications. However, there is an atypical theory of reincarnation of his mentioned in a magical diary of 1923, resonating loosely with the theosophical doctrine of globes which carry the human life-wave in its evolution across the planets of the solar-system:

With regard to Reincarnation, the heliocentric theory is right. As we conquer the conditions of a planet, we incarnate upon the next planet inwards, until we return to the Father of All (the Sun), when our experiences link together, become intelligible, and star speaks to star. Terra is the last planet where bodies are made of earth; in Venus they are fluid; on Mercury aerial; while in the Sun they are fashioned of pure Fire.<sup>21</sup>

While this does convey a basic sense of Levi’s remark ‘In the suns we remember; in the planets we forget’, it is a fragmentary glimpse in proportion to the more comprehensive scope of the globe doctrine, but an independent vision that harmonises with it all the same.

**19. Saith the Great Law: ‘In order to become the KNOWER of ALL-SELF thou hast first of Self to be the knower.’ To reach the knowledge of that Self, thou hast to give up self to non-self, being to non-being, and then thou canst repose between the wings of the Great Bird. Aye, sweet is rest between the wings of that which is not born, nor dies, but is the AUM throughout eternal ages.**

**20. Bestride the Bird of Life, if thou wouldst know.**

On account of the symbolism in this verse, Crowley includes in the commentary a similar passage from *Liber Cordis Cincti Serpente*, involving journey upon the royal swan in a region beyond space and time. The earlier version of these narratives appears in the *Nadabindu*

21. *The Book of Thoth*, Weiser, 1974, pp.129-130.

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*Upanisad*, where repose between the wings of the divine swan — a symbol of the sacred OM syllable with the right wing being A, the left U and the tail M — portrays a remove from all interplaying sets of opposites, via concentration upon the thought-eliminating sound which the airborne swan symbolises. Somewhat similarly, the Mahayana teachings, in distinction to those delivered at Varanasi by Buddha, were revealed to hearers from the altitudinous remove of a vulture's peak.

One will notice in this verse, and others, an enunciation of the term 'self' appearing in three different case variations. Crowley also mentions this in reference to the use of the term 'soul' in other instances. At first sight this may appear strange, given the Buddhist declaration of *anatman* — the refutation of a Bramanical self or soul infused with a personality enduring throughout eternity. However, as mentioned before, Buddha doesn't appear originally to have ever denied the existence of the atman; neither was *anatman* intended to be the word of an aeon or some universal mystic message. Rather, he rejected the *conception* — propounded by the Brahmin orthodoxy then predominant — of atman as a static entity, incapable of change. *Anatman* came out of a specific philosophical debate, and its original meaning would naturally have become lost on subsequent generations of followers. We can let Buddha make his point about the whole subject again here, noting that if he chose to answer in either the negative or the positive then there would be no such thing as Buddhism today:

... bear always in mind what it is I have not elucidated and what it is that I have elucidated ... I have not elucidated that the world is eternal, I have not elucidated that the world is not eternal ... I have not elucidated that the saint lives after death, I have not elucidated that the saint does not live after death. I have not elucidated that the saint both exists and does not exist after death ... what have I elucidated? Misery ... the origin of misery ... the cessation of misery ... the path leading to the cessation of misery.

- *Majjhima-Nikaya*

This is just one example out of many, and it is important to point out that the history of Buddhist doctrine of all schools has shown a skilful tendency to produce a surrogate of the atman, providing explanations for the continuity of incarnated existence that allow the conditions of karma and rebirth to function. This can be noticed in *bhavanga* (subliminal-consciousness), *bodhicitta* (wisdom-consciousness), *alayavijnana* (store-consciousness), *tathagatagarbha* (Buddha-matrix), and the *dharmakaya* and *sambhogakaya* subtle bodies. Blavatsky's use of the terms *self* and *soul* thus have their correspondences in the schools from which she is drawing. The term 'eternity', as it appears throughout the verses, could in some cases be seen in the same translational light; it would be

dissonant to replace it with ‘duration’ or ‘infinity’, perhaps a more accurate rendering of the Buddhist cosmogonical conception of ‘without beginning or end’. However, the term isn’t here indicating the anomalous Hebraic understanding of eternity as commencing immediately post-mortem. As long as the term isn’t being misunderstood as implying this sort of unconditional extreme, then one is beginning to understand Buddha’s position correctly.

Commenting on verse nineteen, Crowley suggests: “The words ‘give up’ may be explained as ‘yield’ in its subtler or quasi-masochistic erotic sense, but on a higher plane”. This is an interesting suggestion, although also likely designed to breed potentially *outré* complexes in the imagination of the all-too-acquiescent pilgrim.

**22. Three Halls, O weary pilgrim, lead to the end of toils. Three Halls,  
O conqueror of Mara, will bring thee through three states into the  
fourth and thence into the seven worlds, the worlds of Rest Eternal.**

Crowley was reasonable in pointing out that the “seven worlds” mentioned is not a feature of Buddhism; but there do exist seven world ages in Buddhism, as well as seven ‘diamond’ mysteries. As it happens, he appears not to have noticed that in Fragment III there are seven paramitas listed instead of the traditional six.<sup>22</sup> Crowley suggests also that the four states could be referring to the four stages which it takes a *srotapatti* to become an *arhat*. This could well be the case, although what seems indicated are the comparable four stages which it takes to become a bodhisattva.

The appearance of the number seven is widespread throughout religion, folklore and mythology. It is not purely an iconographic number; it is rather representative of an active process of sequence in occult psychology, a numerical power providing a link between mind and cosmos. The number seven features in the *Hermetica*, which is often though erroneously considered the backbone of western esotericism. This itself is preceded by Plato’s *Myth of Er*, which mentions seven concentric cosmic ‘whorls’ or vortices. Far earlier, however, the number seven held a fundamental position not only in ancient Egyptian mysticism, but in the founding layout of its initiatory temples. One also notices it in the Assyrio-Phoenician and Chaldeo-Babylonian systems, and in Vedic and later Hindu cosmology. An early Vedic example of its use features in the *Nasadiya* hymn, which is composed of seven verses, each illustrating a phase of an unknowable cosmic creation. Like the

22. The paramitas do in fact range from six to ten in number, so it is by no means outrageous to notice Blavatsky’s text listing seven.



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majority of Vedic paradoxes or riddles, the clue containing the solution to all of the verses resides in the middle, the fourth verse, which is a transformative stage between two reflective triplicities.

The sacredness attached to this number is not a modern invention. As a mystical number *par excellence*, seven is central not only in Theosophy but is important in Gurdjieff's Fourth Way system also. The import of the number seven as it appears in these instances may possibly in part be derived from the heretical Isma'ili branch of Shia Islam, where the importance of seven is intrinsic in cosmology and initiation. The Druze communities of Lebanon are an offshoot of the Isma'ilis, and these sects could possibly have provided a connection between Blavatsky and Gurdjieff's secret brotherhood of adepts.

In relation to the Tibetan bardo tradition, Evans-Wentz has this to say of the significance of seven and its sevenfold multiplication;

... these Vowels were the mystery of the Seven Fires and their forty-nine subdivisional fires or aspects. They are also represented by the swastika signs upon the crowns of the seven heads of the Serpent of Eternity of the Northern Buddhist Mysteries, originating in ancient India. In Hermetic writings they are the seven zones of after-death, or Bardo experiences, each symbolising the eruption in the intermediate state of a particular seven-fold element of the complex principle of consciousness, thus giving the consciousness principle forty-nine aspects, or fires, or fields of manifestation. ... In nature, the number seven governs the periodicity and phenomena of life, as, for example, in the series of chemical elements, in the physics of sound and colour, and it is upon the number forty-nine, or  $7 \times 7$ , that the [Tibetan Book of the Dead] is thus scientifically based.<sup>23</sup>

Evans-Wentz's "Tibetan Book of the Dead" was first published in 1927, so it is unlikely that Crowley was aware of this particular cultural meaning of the number forty-nine during the time of the Amalantrah working and the writing of his commentary to the *Voice*, unless he had read through *The Secret Doctrine* and found it there. It is therefore curious why the stylised numerals of the number forty-nine appear at the bottom left-hand corner of the portrait of Lam. Wentz's expositions on Tibetan wisdom have evoked more scorn from the academic community than Blavatsky. However, Bryan Cuevas in his *The Hidden History of the Tibetan Book of the Dead* reports "even academic specialists in Tibetan studies have found it difficult to escape the intoxicating power of Evans-Wentz's romance."

**32. This light shines from the jewel of the great ensnarer (Mara). The senses it bewitches, blinds the mind, and leaves the unwary an abandoned wreck.**

23. *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, Oxford 1989 Edition, p. 7.

**33. The moth attracted to the dazzling flame of thy night-lamp is doomed to perish in the viscid oil. The unwary soul that fails to grapple with the mocking demon of illusion, will return to earth the slave of Mara.**

The Bardo theme continues, and Crowley associates his understanding of Mara with Bulwer Lytton's term the 'Dweller on the Threshold,' and the light here mentioned as that which streams forth from the threshold of nirvana. While this could be supported in a sort of tantric sense — the 'dweller' being more inherent than just a projected thought-form — it would be more accurately considered a condition, although one with several eye-catching emissaries admittedly. Although several chapters of Lytton's work are extremely laborious reading today, the dweller entity evoked so vividly in *Zanoni* — by all accounts Blavatsky's favourite novel — naturally became strongly aspected in her works. Amongst other things, the dweller on the threshold provided a useful archetype with notable parallels in other traditions. The dweller also lurks within the channelled works of Alice Bailey; her Tibetan adept describes it thus:

There emerges from individual past lives and experience that which is the sumtotal of all instinctive tendencies, of all inherited glammers and of all phases of wrong mental attitudes. To these (as they constitute a blended whole) we give the name 'Dweller on the Threshold'. This Dweller is the sumtotal of all the personality characteristics which have remained unconquered and unsubdued and which must finally be overcome.<sup>24</sup>

Regarding this particular grade of glow to which Crowley makes reference, if it is one emerging normally and regularly in meditation, then we would have to suggest that it is a relatively evanescent affair rather than an indication of any ongoing neurological alteration.

**36. Let not thy 'Heaven-born,' merged in the sea of Maya, break from the Universal Parent (Soul), but let the fiery power retire into the inmost chamber, the chamber of the Heart and the abode of the World's Mother.**

**37. Then from the heart that Power shall rise into the sixth, the middle region, the place between thine eyes, when it becomes the breath of the ONE-SOUL, the voice which filleth all, thy Master's voice.**

**38. 'Tis only then thou canst become a 'Walker of the Sky' who treads the winds above the waves, whose step touches not the waters.**

The first two verses refer to the kundalini, or the coiled electro-spiritual energy at the base of the spine. Crowley accurately identifies the

24. Alice Bailey: *Esoteric Astrology*, Lucis Publishing Company, 1997, p.207.

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‘Heaven-born’ as the human consciousness, even though in its original solar nature it often remains in a state of inertia as pure potential. Kundalini and its symbolism, however, is a later sophistication of the earlier Vedic experience of psychic fire conferred by the most commonly invoked divinity in the *Rgveda* — Agni, the ancient fire god of the cremation grounds and a mediating divinity between different realms, who has sharp glistening jaws with jagged shiny teeth, is footless and headless, and has a thousand eyes and a thousand tongues. The “abode of the World’s Mother” might not necessarily be referring to the Muladhara lotus at the base of the spine, but rather to the centre of the body, or to the body as a whole. This emerges from a forerunner to yoga, the *Katha Upanisad*, the central narrative of which is woven from a dialogue between Naciketas and the Lord of Death concerning the nature of the atman after the death of the body. The traditional charnel-ground location of Agni (as the fire altar being a portal between worlds) becomes internalised and situated within the ‘inner cave’ of the heart. In Mahayana, the primary seat of consciousness similarly resides within the heart region, or centre of the body, from where in meditative practices one projects a psychic Buddha-body or lunar disk of consciousness.

Regarding the development of *iddhis*, Blavatsky’s notes to verse thirty-eight are:

*Khechara* or ‘sky-walker’ or ‘goer’. As explained in the 6th *adhyaya* of that king of mystic works the *Jnaneshvari* - the body of the yogi becomes as one *formed of the wind* as ‘a cloud from which limbs have sprouted out,’ after which - “he beholds the things beyond the seas and stars; he hears the language of the Devas and comprehends it, and perceives what is passing in the mind of the ant.’

Crowley’s remark that “The ‘walker of the sky’ is much superior to the mere reader of the minds of ants” seems immature and lacks any real justification.

**39. Before thou sett’st thy foot upon the ladder’s upper rung, the ladder of the mystic sounds, thou has to hear the voice of thy *inner* God in seven manners.**

**40. The first is like the nightingale’s sweet voice chanting a song of parting to its mate.**

**The second comes as the sound of a silver cymbal of the Dhyanis, awakening the twinkling stars.**

**The next is the plaint melodious of the ocean-sprite imprisoned in its shell.**

**And this is followed by the chant of Vina.**

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**The fifth like sound of bamboo-flute shrills in thine ear. It changes  
next into a trumpet-blast.**

**The last vibrates like the dull rumbling of a thunder-cloud.**

**The seventh swallows all the othersounds. They die, and then are  
heard no more.**

In view of the first verse stating that “thou has to hear” all seven sounds before progression can be made, Crowley responds to the challenge by suggesting that it wouldn’t be necessary for an advanced adept, who may already have fried the seeds of the sounds in a previous incarnation. Such advanced individuals could mean for Crowley those born with a natural gift for apprehending a higher reality, with the ability of expressing it artistically - or, individuals who were incapable of preliminary A.-.A.-, magical exercises due to having already arrived at the level of contemplating formlessness. As Crowley points out in his *Eight Lectures on Yoga*,<sup>25</sup> Blavatsky held a similar opinion about apparently natural gifts being the aggregated results of merits from previous lives — although she wasn’t of the view that gifts (of any nature) were concomitant upon spiritual or visionary perceptions, as she further distinguished between gifts of a karmic nature and others of a mediumistic type.

Either way, the randomness and spontaneity of the gifted would indeed appear to be an occurrence in nature; such abilities are evidently not transmitted genetically, and neither are they the result of nurture. Both Crowley and Blavatsky regarded them as latent in most, with differing levels of activation. For Crowley, however, definite progress was being made if his disciples were able to churn out a few lines of readable poetry. His advice to certain of his acolytes upon artistic expression was to facilitate a deliberate encounter with what he identified as the deepest driving instincts, to then be able to incorporate these otherwise suppressed or ambling forces into the central motor of will, so as to possess full magical or artistic reign over them.<sup>26</sup> As regards Blavatsky, the emphasis is rather upon the age-old relationship between symbolic art, visualisation, and inner transformation generally. There are techniques, suggested in the *The Secret Doctrine*, that were clearly drawn from authentic tantric Buddhist tradition, involving what is known very generally as deity-yoga — the visualisation of subtle energies in the form of shape, sound and colour to influence any number of things at the gross level, as mentioned in this example:

25. *The Equinox*, Volume III, Number 3. Sangreal Foundation Inc., 1969, p.77.

26. A slightly different example of this would be Jung’s recently exhumed *Liber Novus*.

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This line, though you may call it ‘imaginary,’ is, once you succeed in seeing it with your mental eye and give it a shape and colour, in truth as good as real. Moreover, according to the prismatic colour with which you endow your line, so will the influence act.<sup>27</sup>

What constitutes a work of art in these areas is the degree to which the artist has coordinated his or her subjective nature to the extent that they reveal the same in the field of reference of others. This is what Arthur Machen identified in a short story as ‘processes’, meaning an awareness of a convergence and interpenetration of different apparitions of reality.

There is a possible connection proposed by K. Paul Johnson between these sounds and those found in *Radhasoami* meditation, along with other techniques found in the *Voice*, although they can be found in other traditions too.<sup>28</sup> In any event, whatever their origin and however advanced we all are, they are delightful sounds to reproduce in meditation, stirring-up a range of associated colour and otherworldly image.

**44. Heaven’s dew-drop glittering in the morn’s first sunbeam within the bosom of the lotus, when dropped on earth becomes a piece of clay; behold, the pearl is now a speck of mire.**

The analysis of this verse identifies the lotus with the sacred lotus in Buddhism and thus with the mantra *Om Mane Padme Hum*. On the face of it, the interpretation of what this refers to would suggest an area in which Crowley and Blavatsky were diametrically opposed beyond any reconciliation. However, in her less-known analysis of the lotus in her grade papers for the Esoteric Section, Blavatsky does discuss the sexual dimension of its symbolism in terms of the “creative organs corresponding to the Creative Forces of the Kosmos”, advising her students that they had better abandon any “false propriety bred by hypocrisy and the shameful misuse of primeval functions once considered divine” before they take up the pursuit of esotericism. Before its publication in English, Blavatsky may also have been acquainted with the ‘L’Amoureux’ chapter of Levi’s *The Magical Ritual*, about the “brilliant phantom of a vision” achieved at orgasm. Because of this, however, we are obviously *not* suggesting that Blavatsky and Crowley were in any way alike in their views on the use of sex as a means to awaken spirituality; although, going by his own recorded experiences

27. From *The Books of Kiu-Te or The Tibetan Buddhist Tantras* by David Reigle, Wizards Bookshelf, 1983, p.9.

28. K. Paul Johnson: *Initiates of Theosophical Masters*, SUNY, 1995, p.63. In his *Yoga*, J.F.C. Fuller compares the sounds to similar ones found in the *Hatha Yoga Pradapika*.

and success rates with sexual practices, it would be difficult to see Crowley truly believing it to be the ultimate jewel which he portrayed it as, at least as he applied it.

Blavatsky's criticisms of the works of R. Payne Knight, Allen Campbell and Hargrave Jennings on the subjects of sex and phallic worship really had nothing to do with phobia, but concerned entirely her exposition on cosmic evolution and the genesis of humanity along with it. In short, as can similarly be seen in the views of Gerald Massey, it concerns a fundamental divergence in the understanding of derivation (ultimately of consciousness) from the physical/physiological vs. cosmic/metaphysical. Regarding her own sexual proclivities, the basis is unclear for Crowley's claim that she "loved like a Cleopatra", while being quite correct about the drinking, smoking and swearing. For besides her first marriage, a more than likely encounter with Richard F. Burton in Egypt in 1853 (who incidentally did much to popularise sex and spirituality in the west with his 1883 translation of the *Kama Sutra*), some probable extra-friendly relations with Olcott, a brief second marriage to a young Armenian man in New York in 1875, and some unlikely (although possible) lesbian encounters with Annie Besant and Mabel Collins, the evidence for a voluptuous sexual history is fairly scant.

**46. Before the mystic power can make of thee a god, Lanoo, thou must have gained the faculty to slay thy lunar form at will.**

**63. Silence thy thoughts and fix thy whole attention on thy Master whom yet thou dost not see, but whom thou feelest.**

**64. Merge into one sense thy senses, if thou wouldst be secure against the foe. 'Tis by that sense alone which lies concealed within the hollow of thy brain, that the steep path which leadeth to thy Master may be disclosed before thy soul's dim eyes.**

This slaying of the lunar form is similar to Crowley's A.: A., task for a Neophyte to acquire perfect control of the astral plane. Briefly, this lunar body is understood as the *chhaya* or shade (in a sense the astral body) of the physical: the ethereal gel out of which it evolved, as certain life-forms still do from the egg. An early example of the lunar association with this shade comes from a portion of the *Bṛhadaranyaka Upanisad* known as the 'five fire wisdom' which relates to an early doctrine of reincarnation. Here the atman rises upon the smoke of the funeral pyre and becomes absorbed into the waxing moon, to eventually return to earth via rain during the moon's waning. The rain then fecundates harvests, which are in turn ingested by men, who then transfer it via their semen to women, recommencing the cycle. For those who are illuminated, however, and who are thus able to liberate themselves from the lunar cycle, the

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atman makes an alternative route into the centre of the sun at the commencement of a year when the sun moves north, marking the period of amassing light and energy that occurs after the winter solstice. Following this, the atman then enters the world of the gods and from there into a region of lightning. Thus, some of this detail may well be behind Gurdjieff's saying about automaton humanity being "food for the moon".

Crowley interprets the preceding verse, and the two verses following, as not allowing any emotions or moral impressions to invade the mental plane that would be likely to cause agitation and hence division of will. While this is fair enough, it would seem in view of verse sixty-four that the overall aim is to render ourselves passive to the spirit behind the senses, utilising quite normal preparatory affects of meditation. The plasmic cavities of the brain are where images of the hidden god reside. "The eye with which I see God is the same eye with which God sees me".

**68. The rose must re-become the bud born of its parent stem, before the parasite has eaten through its heart and drunk its life-sap.**

**69. The golden tree puts forth its jewel-buds before its trunk is withered by the storm.**

**70. The pupil must regain the *child-state he has lost*, ere the first sound can fall upon his ear.**

Crowley comments upon the need to purify and consecrate the Temple of the Holy Ghost before the miracle of the One Substance can occur. Associating the 'child-state' with the mystery of Harpocrates and with the unconsciousness of Jung, Crowley provides an idea as to how culturally diffuse traditions show marked similarities whilst lacking any apparent means of communication. The way that these patterns of behaviour remain present in the ether, to be transferred to isolated animal and human groups, is a key element within Rupert Sheldrake's recent formulation of morphogenesis. Whilst referring chiefly to adaptive changes in the form of the body, it implies telepathic transmissions through fields of consciousness (morphic resonance), explaining how 'new' behaviours and ideas spread. Of course, to mainstream science, the idea is probably just as outrageous today as was the *The Secret Doctrine's* 1888 claim about the atom being divisible.

### **The Two Paths**

**9. Yea, ignorance is like unto a closed and airless vessel; the Soul a bird shut up within. It warbles not, nor can it stir a feather; but the songster, mute and torpid sits, and of exhaustion dies.**

It remains a problem to many, how the atman — or its luminiferous Mahayanic equivalents — can mingle in the springs of defilement which water the sea of ignorance. It is similar to the mystery of how reality is able to produce illusion. Like much else here, it is a question insoluble by reason, as Crowley points out. However, it can begin to provide a purely philosophical explanation as to how a whole with all of its faculties can be contained in many parts, yet remain unaware of its greater potentials. A far simpler analogy would be the case of a young child who, while containing potentialities within his or her own nature, has yet to have the experience and application to bring them out.

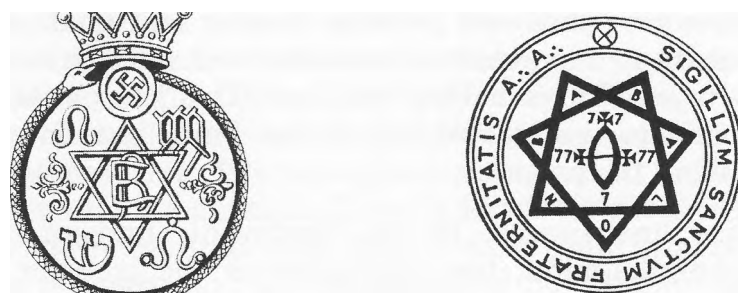
**12. For mind is like a mirror; it gathers dust while it reflects. It needs the gentle breezes of Soul-Wisdom to brush away the dust of our illusions. Seek O beginner, to blend thy mind and Soul.**

The likening of the mind to a mirror, which when dusty is incapable of reflecting the Dharma realm, derives originally from Shen-hsiu's Northern China school of Ch'an. Shen-hsiu, following a fabled debate, was succeeded by Hui-neng who became the sixth Patriarch of Chinese Zen (though in her notes Blavatsky mistakenly states Shen-hsiu as being such). Shen-hsiu's school emphasised gradual enlightenment, while that of Hui-neng emphasised sudden enlightenment. In any event, texts containing these teachings were not widely available during Blavatsky's day and certainly not available in any European translation.

'Soul-Wisdom' is here interpreted by Crowley as the will, obscured by illusions of various kinds. There has been endless debate over what the True Will actually means: as much useless debate as there has been over what analogues mean in many other systems. The problems arise here largely due to there being a search for correct definitions which don't provide a solution to anything, because they address pseudo-problems to which there is no end. Here in fact lies the common ground between Buddhism and academia: in both cases one is often getting to know more and more about less and less. However, the terms *will*, *volition*, and *intention*, on their own plane, correspond to the same thing. Despite their interrelationship they are different from, for example, motivation and action, since they are the propelling agents and causes of these behavioural cycles. Will, volition and intention interlink profoundly with non-action, which is different from asceticism, quietism, not acting, and general immobility. This sort of 'non-action' correlates behaviour with cosmic will, volition and intention; and while these are responses to greater causes — much as a star or galaxy is reacting to something else — they are given emphasis as the tools behind release from the planetary thralldom of samsara, or nature *in abscondito*.



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*Seals used by Blavatsky (left) and by Crowley (right)*

Will, volition, intention — and we could say ‘imagination’ also — are gaining recognition as formative powers that do influence phenomena, however subtly:

A phenomenon is not yet a phenomenon until it has been brought to a close by an irreversible act of amplification, such as the blackening of a grain of silver bromide emulsion or the triggering of a photodetector. In broader terms, we find that the nature at the quantum level is not a machine gun that goes its inexorable way. Instead, what answer we get depends on the question we put, the experiment we arrange, the registering device we choose. We are inescapably involved in bringing about that which appears to be happening.<sup>29</sup>

This understanding, earlier espoused by Paracelsus, could without too much difficulty be easily compared to, amongst other things, earlier beliefs and practices related to the projection into, and post-mortem experience of, the (self-created) bardo realms of which our own world forms but one interdependent and complementary division.

**13. Shun ignorance, and likewise shun illusion. Avert thy face from world deceptions; mistrust thy senses, they are false. But within thy body - the shrine of thy sensation - seek in the impersonal for the Eternal Man; and having sought him out, look inward: thou art Buddha.**

The very fabric of the universe is generated and held in thrall by ignorance, augmented on our own level by attachment to illusory identifications — whether individual, group, national, etc. It is due to being enmeshed in these identities, which perpetuate the illusion of

29. Vic Mansfield: *Tibetan Buddhism and Modern Physics*, Templeton Foundation Press, 2008, p.158.

duality, that keeps the samsaric wheel of suffering, catastrophe, and rebirth in place. This perpetuation occurs — so we are told — because these identities are ephemeral patterns lacking any innate reality. The Buddhist mission is to understand them in their relative and transient sense, hence to see things as they truly are. The “Eternal Man” or soul here mentioned is really nothing of the kind, but an impersonal aggregation of all the patterns.

It remains unanswered, in the Theravadic understanding of a perishable skandha-mind, how liberation or the transfer of karmic impediment or merit can occur at all. In Mahayana, this is all accounted for via the agency of a luminous mind — something which, unlike the skandha-mind, is capable of achieving transformation and realising multi-dimensional perspectives, making enlightenment possible. Coming from his perspective, one can understand Crowley questioning the statement that “thou art Buddha”; but as mentioned before, this is just an expression (in English) of what is termed variously as *bodhicitta* or *tathagatagarbha*, implying that progress towards enlightenment does not happen from entering an external state, but from a Buddha-germ of luminosity within. However, Crowley’s comparison of this particular inner ‘Buddha’ to the Augoeides is a good cross-cultural parallel.

**28. Wouldst thou become a Yogi of Time’s Circle? Then, O Lanoo:**

**29. Believe thou not that sitting in dark forests, in proud seclusion  
and apart from men; believe thou not that life on roots and plants,  
that thirst assuaged with snow from the great Range - believe thou  
not, O devotee, that this will lead thee to the goal of final liberation.**

The circle of time mentioned here refers to the *Kalacakratantra* or ‘wheel of time’ teachings with which some of Blavatsky’s works have a connection. In aim the Kalacakra tradition was similar to Crowley’s A.-. A.\ exercises, in the sense of aiming to achieve illumination within a number of years, rather than lifetimes ranging across aeons.

The understanding of time in Buddhism is a fickle mistress, and from the early schools there exist some strange conceptions of it indeed. The general explanation in Mahayana is that time is entirely relative and not a sovereign absolute, an entity constructed on the basis of an observed continuum of momentary and ultimately delusional phenomena. It is limited to this continuum; past, present and future are merely relations developed by the mind. It is for this reason that some have found this Mahayana understanding to conform tidily to modern scientific space-time paradigms, where Einstein’s remark that “time and space are modes by which we think and not conditions in which we live” would apply. What we also have from ancient eastern

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traditions is the idea of time operating in cycles rather than in a linear sequence, whether in application to the life of a man, culture, civilisation, or entire cosmic system. The linear conception of time seems to derive from Aristotle's imagination, and was helped along the way by Hebraic religion and colonial calendars. However, it is a pattern of thinking that colours even modern scientific theories regarding the origin of the universe. The metaphorical 'big bang', out of which time suddenly began, is an example. There is fortunately a growing scientific reservation with this splintered (and actually quite bizarre) conception, supporting the view that the universe had no ultimate beginning but rather operates in infinite cycles, which agrees entirely with earlier doctrines.<sup>30</sup> As regards the evolution of consciousness, Buddhism doesn't make a great deal of use of Brahmanical time-cycles but does possess its own derivative versions. In Mahayana, consciousness is already illuminated but has been conditioned by external defilements. The consciousness may or may not become liberated during a certain point in a time-cycle, but its release wouldn't have been dependent upon that point. However, there are Maitreya cults which would say that specific periods of astrological alignment would be more favourable points to some.

Despite having affinities with ancient Egypt, and declaring the work of Thelema to be the rediscovery of the Sumerian tradition, Crowley wasn't fond of what was revived in Theosophy as the cyclic succession of ancient lost continents and civilisations, their residual cultural consciousness providing the foundational link between each. However, Michail Bakhtin presents three far more simplified layers of temporal identity as drawn up in his work *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981).<sup>31</sup> Bakhtin's three stages commence with what he terms the folkloric chronotope, characterised by the ancient experience of time working in cycles; personal identity is relational and connecting with symbolic landmarks, all being features of the shamanic worldview. The second identity portrays much of our own modern culture, being a fragmentation between cosmic and personal time and an isolated sense of individual becoming, cut off from others and the world matrix and often in vigorous competition with them. The Hebraic religions typify this sense of individual destiny partitioned in the religious sphere, not to mention socio-economic schemes. Using *Gargantua & Pantagruel* as

30. There are several research papers on this topic but, for a recent example, see 'Why the universe had no beginning' by Paul J. Steinhardt, *Astronomy*, April 2009, pp.28-33.

31. A lot of Bakhtin's works were originally published in Russia during the 1920s.

an example, the third identity is termed by Bakhtin a ‘Rabelaisian unmasking’, marked by a resurgence of personal time re-linking with historical and future consciousness. Mythological accuracy resumes precedence over mundane correctness which is characterised in part through a revival of images from the ancient matrix, this time in the form of a ‘heteroglossia’ that interpenetrates different cultures on a global scale. Theosophy, Thelema, the collective unconscious, emerging emphasis upon ecology, and the globalisation of esotericism generally, express well the Rabelaisian process of unmasking, many themes of which can also be seen, as Bakhtin suggests, in the modern mystery-horror novel.

Left to itself, this model would, like many others, be subject to the usual revisions and comparisons. However, modern astronomical and astrophysical data suggests that our solar-system forms part of a relationship with other systems; during which, at different points of orbit and alignments with the galactic-centre, our earth periodically absorbs sudden influxes of ions and other electromagnetic particles. These influence consciousness and behaviour, providing us with an idea as to what might be the cause behind these larger patterns of anthropological tendencies.

Regarding verse twenty-nine of this fragment, Crowley and Blavatsky were in near agreement over the redundancy of imposed seclusion and strict asceticism in the development of occult abilities. It has been said that cerebral abnegation alone is far more powerful in the production of effects on the higher planes than a physical separation from the world; that the importance lies in mental isolation rather than physical. However, both Crowley and Blavatsky recognised utility in occasional retreats of abstention for occult training.

**38. These vestures are: Nirmanakaya, Sambhogakaya, and Dharmakaya, robe sublime.**

Blavatsky’s account of the robes or bodies, and the states associated with them in Mahayana, is not as misleading or as arrogated as Crowley appears to think. Crowley’s aversion to anything even vaguely hinting at compassion — which gets banished outright as “mawkish sentimentality” or “toshi slop treacle-goo”, possibly because it is seen by him as some sort of infiltration from Christianity — has practically nothing to do with virtues and the like in the puritanical sense. It is rather a disciplinary means of inculcating new patterns of mental actions and reactions. There is also an important cosmological dimension to the understanding of compassion in Buddhism, the idea of which Crowley appears unintentionally to express elsewhere. Without

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this type of cosmogonic-love ‘compassion’ there would be galaxies and universes quite out of control, and not a world-system stable enough anywhere to support a pursuit of occult interests.

Further in his commentary to this verse, Crowley also criticises the frequent use of the ‘ten thousand worlds’ and incalculably large time-cycles which are common features in oriental arcana. However, these schemes are more practical than just a naive attempt to impress others with an exaggerated knowledge. It is actually irrelevant to their purpose whether or not one chooses to accept them as realities. If we used elements from the *Vajracchedika* or ‘diamond-cutter sutra’ as examples here, we could say that these features are designed to impress in the awareness a sense of relativity between two extremes; obviously what William Blake attempts to portray in the commencing verse of *Auguries of Innocence*, and what ziggurats, pyramids and European cathedrals attempt to communicate through their proportion to the individual. They are reminders that we move and have our being within a larger environment.

### **The Seven Portals**

1. ‘Upadhyaya, the choice is made, I thirst for Wisdom. Now hast thou rent the veil before the Secret Path and taught the greater Yana. Thy servant here is ready for thy guidance.’

2. ‘Tis well, Shravaka. Prepare thyself, for thou wilt have to travel on alone. The Teacher can but point the way. The Path is one for all, the means to reach the goal must vary with the pilgrims.

3. Which wilt thou choose, O thou of dauntless heart? The Samtan of Eye Doctrine, fourfold Dhyana, or thread thy way through Paramitas, six in number, noble gates of virtue leading to Bodhi and to Prajna, seventh step of Wisdom?

Commenting on the first verse, Crowley dismisses the idea that the two paths referred to are Theravada and Mahayana. But when considering the reasons behind the latter school’s critique of the former, and how the doctrine of the succeeding school has been characterised fairly accurately thus far, there seems little justification for this. Though he doesn’t pick up on it, the term *shravaka* (hearer) doesn’t stand well in the literature of this school, since this was a monastic designation which had apparently become ossified through dogmatism and which the early Mahayana cults chose to denigrate. However, anyone who has engaged with any of the source material of this movement will notice that there are frequent scribal errors, sometimes of the most elementary nature. They are light years away

from the polished textbook translations that most are familiar with from recent years. It is, moreover, incredible how certain terms have become defined as they appear in their consensual use today, which are so often quoted by some as infallible standards of comparison.

There are too many individuals to mention who get chided in Crowley's commentary to these verses, one being T.W. Rhys Davids, who appears to be Crowley's textual support in areas of Buddhist doctrine throughout his commentary. In regards to a perceived lack of Buddhist mystical experience on the part of Rhys Davids, Crowley writes:

What was wanted was a Master of some Occidental language to obtain the experiences of the East by undertaking the practices of the East. His own experience put into words would then form a far better translation of Oriental works on the same subject, than any translation which a scholar might furnish. I am inclined to think that this was Blavatsky's method. So obvious a forgery as this volume only contains so much truth and wisdom because this is the case.<sup>32</sup>

Some of this statement naturally makes one wonder what Crowley really saw in Buddhism at all. Elsewhere, Crowley suggests that the *Voice* is the forgery of a great adept — comparable to *The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosencreutz* — and therefore superior to anything 'genuine'. This is a good appraisal of a factor behind the development of religious ideas and shows how new texts can become incorporated into the canon of what is accepted as genuine scripture.

Crowley's most significant connection to Buddhism appears to have been Allan Bennett (Ananda Metteyya), founder of the International Buddhist Society and leader of the first Buddhist mission to England in 1908. Bennett, a former member of the Theosophical Society and The Golden Dawn, is an interesting and rather atypical case. Having a background in science, Bennett was dissatisfied with the theosophical influence already present in Buddhism in Ceylon, and went to the trouble of relocating to Burma in order to receive his ordination there. Despite his apparent thirst for a 'pure' Buddhism, unmingled with the 'esoteric Buddhism' of Theosophy, Bennett yet seemed as eager as had Olcott and Dharmapala to present the west with a Buddhism consonant with the investigative principles of western science. Whatever his success in this particular endeavour may have been, the popularity of Theravada has certainly been outstripped by the subsequent arrival of Mahayana, in terms not only of its popularity in the west as a more enriching form of Buddhism, but also intrinsically within the framework of the Buddhism-science dialogue.

32. *The Equinox* Volume III, Number 1, Weiser, 1972; supplement, p.80.

### *Echoes of Silence*

**15. Before thou canst approach the foremost gate thou hast to learn to part the body from thy mind, to dissipate the shadow, and to live in the eternal. For this, thou hast to live and breathe in all, as all that thou perceivest breathes in thee; to feel thyself abiding in all things, all things in SELF.**

Taken as an instruction which Crowley feels should have been mastered before the first gate, he concludes that it is probably indicative of a joke on the part of the guru. Intentionally placing disciples in amusing, awkward or even life-threatening situations in order to tease out a faculty (or just wake them up), is a technique in several Buddhist traditions and elsewhere. Human relations on this planet are generally highly antagonistic affairs, and humanity seems more than capable of producing enough trauma to deal with, without need for 'gurus' to throw in an extra strain, requisite for some though this may seem. All genuine traditions assert after all that real progress is often furnished from the doldrums of bitterest experience, or through shock — although it is necessary for it to become assimilated — and this is a learning opportunity independent of any formal institution or ritualism. It is part of the crisis of sensitivity that Buddha identified as suffering.

Considering this verse again, it would follow naturally that a mind possessing an awareness of itself would turn its attention, by way of natural course, to residing in all its diverse locations. Crowley expresses this elsewhere:

... each one of us has thus an universe of his own, but it is the same universe for each one as soon as it includes all possible experience. This implies the extension of consciousness to include all other consciousness.<sup>33</sup>

The engine of this process of the transference of consciousness is known in Tibetan as *phowa*. Preliminary practices can involve dispersing the consciousness into either a visualised form or the body of others. Other than practising this in meditation or at dinner parties, surviving the initial onslaught of a particularly powerful steam bath without walking outside can indeed induce a sense of dispersion that can be localised in a specific location or area with practice.

**24. Thus do the 'Brothers of the Shadow' - the murderers of their Souls, the dread Dad-Dugpa clan.**

Crowley compares these 'Brothers of the Shadow' with his version of Black Magicians, the Black Brotherhood. Despite the appellation *Dugpa*, this class of entity as it is understood in Theosophical literature is not confined to this particular sect of Bhutanese Buddhism. While on

33. From the Introduction to the 1938 edition of *The Book of the Law*.

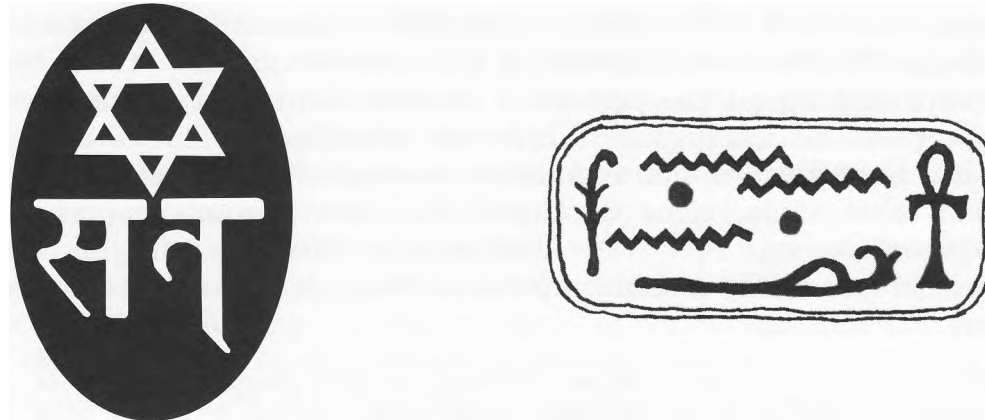
one level it is an exotic term for a necromancer or black magician, a Dugpa is rather a principle that occurs throughout nature. There are animal dugpas, and one should also consider the invisible 'death rays' that occur in certain species of the plant kingdom that have been known to vampirise other individual plant cultures. Crowley's Black Brother, on the other hand, seems more related to kabbalistic Tree of Life pathworking, whereby an initiate becomes stuck in Daath due to his or her aspirations being of a purely personal and selfish nature, a type of self-awareness that cannot encounter the experience of the abyss and thus pass beyond it. Madness results for the obvious reasons. In sight, however, of the universal initiatory path from which both Blavatsky and Crowley were drawing, there are connections between dugpas and Black Brothers at least in terms of stages, even though ninety-five percent of black magicians of the dugpa variety are entirely unconscious of what they actually are and do. The term appears to derive from the noun *brug*, meaning 'thunder' or 'dragon'.

**43. Stern and exacting is the virtue of Viraga. If thou its path wouldst master, thou must keep thy mind and thy perceptions far freer than before from killing action.**

The reference to "killing action" relates possibly to the *Bhagavad Gita* and the meaning behind the advice given by Arjuna to Krsna about performing any number of acts without forming attachment to them, which similarly features in Confucianism by letting thoughts ponder the whole memory of experience without reacting to any of its content. This is known in the *Gita* as *appadharmā* and holds a clear correlation with the Buddhist 'skill in means'; implying that when one is so far advanced on the path, and virtually incapable of not being an expression of the true will, one can use all manner of methods to illumine others. Such behaviour on the part of bodhisattvas may often be misunderstood by those who don't possess the same level of realisation, generally because these actions are context-specific in the sense of addressing individual recipients and situations. There is an echo of this *modus operandi* in Greek tradition by way of the early Greek goddess of wisdom and profound contemplation, Metis, who formerly represented creative ingenuity in the sense of crafty inventiveness and cunning magic. This was a power embodied by even the highest of the Greek pantheon, Zeus, in his methods of shape-shifting with the aim of whisking away, and achieving congress with, human women. Naturally, the only method to estimate the success of such means would be to gauge the extent to which anything of benefit resulted from it. Blavatsky was perhaps as conversant with this darker goddess as much as she was with Sophia, for in worldly circumstances the two are often irresolvably loving sisters. Certain of her colourful



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*The personal seals of Blavatsky (left) and Crowley (right).*

parlour tricks, however, remain beyond any reasonable doubt outside the circle of normal manufacture.

**44. Thou hast to saturate thyself with pure Alaya, become as one with Nature's Soul-Thought. At one with it thou art invincible: in separation, thou becomest the playground of *Samvritti*; origin of all the world's delusions.**

Blavatsky's notes on samvriti give the general idea of it quite accurately. It was a pity therefore that Crowley rejected it, even though it doesn't itself present an important part in the distinction of mind and consciousness in Yogacara insight, a school which Blavatsky mentions in the notes. However, he certainly picks up on the verse's entreaty to acquire *paramartha* (the opposite of samvriti), which is the meaning here of saturating oneself with alaya. This implies cosmic consciousness in the sense of containing all present, past and future psychic energy of the planet which alternately appears either calm or violent, beautiful or grotesque only at the level of samvriti. A Dhyani-Buddha contains this within their own nature, as an adept does with human experience on their own level. It would thus not be so diagrammatically misleading in preliminary meditation to visualise alaya as if centered within a sphere surrounded by the reflected light from the stars — this encircling inverted ethereal counterpart being the astral serpent of Levi, or the gaseous and highly-electrified 'sidereal light' of Paracelsus.

**46. Be of good cheer, O daring pilgrim 'to the other shore.' Heed not the whisperings of Mara's hosts: wave off the tempters, those ill-natured sprites, the jealous *Lhamayin* in endless space.**

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The *Lhamayin* are influences that wander footloose through space from decaying stars and solar-systems; they fulfil the cosmological aspect of the dugpa. Mathematically speaking they are the numerical ratios that interrupt and upend the process of element formation, disruptive to those grades of intelligence which are directly dependent upon a physical base. Despite his work being permeated with the amount of realism that it is, some of Crowley's later opinions concerning incorporeal or supra-physical intelligences, deriving from his own experiences, certainly measure up to and reiterate Blavatsky's to some extent. For instance:

My observation of the universe convinces me that there are beings of intelligence and power of a far higher quality than anything we can conceive of as human; that they are not necessarily based on the cerebral and nervous structures that we know, and that the one and only chance for mankind to advance as a whole is for individuals to make contact with such beings.<sup>34</sup>

This is a truly remarkable statement for somebody so plagued with the conceptions of an unsighted inanimate science and at times over-possessed by a corroding intellect inspired from the same, happy to criticise scholasticism but replicating its more suffocating attributes whenever possible.

**49. Have mastery o'er thy Soul, O seeker after truths undying, if thou wouldst reach the goal.**

Crowley again raises the issue of the soul in relation to Buddhism and Theosophy, which is understandable as the term is liable to so much misunderstanding. However, the principle of the septenary organisation of the soul is comparable to the bundle of skandha continua, though it is more intricate, interdynamic and conveys a more complete picture. Souls, atoms, cells or stars are temporary fields of activity, being the emanation of a greater quality of containing intelligence; the organism is thus a projected expression of a greater soul's consciousness. *Soul* here means an organisation of lesser constituent parts. Thus, in the Buddhist analysis of sentient life there is no atman *identity*, yet there is *that* which experiences. The qualitative substance of the souls, which are really aggregations of cosmic memory, contain the potentialities — in terms of being extensions of sentience — that enable expansion and manipulation of consciousness and eventual progression towards illumination over multiple lives. Each soul or subtle body division is by no means emblazoned with an everlasting personality idealised from the human — for which there are many terms in different traditions — although the substances of the soul natures are

34. Crowley, *Magick Without Tears*, Llewellyn Publications, 1973, p.217.

### *Echoes of Silence*

malleable and reactive to the type of activities impressed upon them by sustained intensities of thinking or behaviour. This all may all appear somewhat confusing, although it will be helpful to think of the whole of space as one vast continuum of infinitely varying potential, due to aggregations of energy being in very different states of activity, whose processes of change through development, mutability and transition are a product of consciousness itself. There is no such thing as dead matter. Regarding the durability of the soul over other aggregates with an apparent lesser life-span — the question which seems to create most of the misunderstanding over the existence or non-existence of this entity

— then one could easily compare a passing emotion in relation to the personality, the life of a fingernail in relation to the hand, a cell in the optic nerve in relation to the eye, or a life of a star in relation to its mother galaxy. The longer durability doesn't mean that something isn't dependent on its own cycle of emergence and dissolution, that it isn't subject to change.

**51. The dreary task is done, thy labour well-nigh o'er. The wide abyss  
that gaped to swallow thee is almost spanned ...**

In view of Crowley elsewhere not seeming to understand why the term *Myalba* ('hell') is referring to (our) man-bearing planet as a whole, we could say that this is, by and large, the same meaning which Blavatsky gives to the Abyss. This sense is one which arguably upholds the ancient view of the underworld as similarly corresponding to this planet during its cyclic progressions through obscuring cosmic influences of various kinds. In more practical terms — for instance, as regards Ordeals of the Abyss, etc. — we would have to emphasise the categorical difference between ceremonial ritual and initiation.

**57. Ere thou canst settle in *Jnana Marga* and call it thine, thy Soul  
has to become as the ripe mango fruit: as soft and sweet as its bright  
golden pulp for others' woes, as hard as that fruit's stone for thine  
own throes and sorrows, O Conqueror of Weal and Woe.**

**58. Make hard thy Soul against the snares of self; deserve for it the  
name of 'Diamond-Soul'.**

**59. For, as the diamond buried deep within the throbbing heart of  
earth can never mirror back the earthly lights, so are thy mind and  
Soul; plunged in *Jnana Marga*, these must mirror nought of Maya's  
realm illusive.**

The 'Diamond-Soul' refers to what in tantric Buddhism is termed as *Vajrasattva* ('diamond-being' or 'diamond-essence'), something of a hybrid between the earlier bodhisattva and Tathagatagarbha doctrines. The diamond (or crystallised light) symbolism illustrates the clear, transparent, yet indestructible character of its nature. Since *Vajrasattva*

sometimes presides over the five Dhyani-Buddhas, this implies the connection of the undivided awareness of soul-consciousness with the universe. It also carries a meaning in bardo terms as the matrix of primordial deity from where post-mortem manifestations of consciousness (as figurations of light) are pre-programmed to appear as tantric deities or Buddhas, according to the agitation of karmic seeds incurred by the disembodied mind. With all this luminosity in view we should consider the same in regards to consciousness through an interpretation of modern physics by Dr Edi Bilimoria:

... the very word 'consider', is derived from the Latin *con sideris*, 'with starlight'. It is a graphical illustration of how the intimate relation between light and mind is deeply embedded in our everyday use of language. Slightly more technically, we all know that  $E = mc^2$ , which invokes light as a factor in the interconversion of radiant energy (light) and matter. However, Einstein's famous equation can as well be rewritten as  $c = VE/m$ . Now the dynamic, Shakti-derived function predominates in  $m$ . So an intuitive reading of the rewritten equation can be stated in words as: light is the dynamic function of Shakti *underpinned* (as the denominator of the equation) by the consciousness quality of Shiva. Therefore light is *propelled consciousness*.<sup>35</sup>

**71. Henceforth thy way is clear right through the Virya gate, the fifth one of the Seven Portals. Thou art now on the way that leadeth to the Dhyana haven, the sixth, the Bodhi Portal.**

**72. The Dhyana gate is like an alabaster vase, white and transparent; within there burns a steady golden fire, the flame of *prajna* that radiates from Atman.**

**Thou art that vase.**

The vase is an important symbol in Tibetan Buddhism, for it contains the water of immortality, as well as the heavenly dwelling place within its calm deeps. Alabaster as a translucent building material was considered a magical substance in ancient Egypt, representing the milk of life. This seems to have had something to do with the process of the rock's geological formation taking place in the bowels of the earth, as well as its milky colour. Also termed *Ankh*, alabaster was used to line the walls of the sarcophagus chamber in tombs, due to it being a material representing an alchemical transformation from a gross or terrestrial state to a more subtle one. The vase is also symbolic of the sixth theosophical 'soul principle' known as buddhi.

**74. Know, conqueror of sins, once that a Sowanee hath crossed the Seventh Path, all nature thrills with joyous awe and feels subdued. The silver star now twinkles out the news to the night-blossoms, the**

35. Dr Edi Bilimoria: *The Snake and The Rope*, TPH, 2006, pp.237-238.

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streamlet to the pebbles ripples out the tale; dark ocean-waves will roar it to the rocks surf-bound, scent laden breezes sing it to the vales, and stately pines mysteriously whisper: 'A Master has arisen, a Master of the Day.'

75. He standeth now like a white pillar to the west, upon whose face the rising sun of thought eternal poureth forth its first most glorious waves. His mind, like a becalmed and boundless ocean, spreadeth out in shoreless space. He holdeth life and death in his strong hand.

76. Yea, He is mighty. The living power made free in him, that power which is HIMSELF, can raise the tabernacle of illusion high above the gods, above great Brahm and Indra. Now he shall surely reach his great reward!

Crowley appears to accept Blavatsky's note that a Master of the Day is referring to a *manvantara*. He thus suggests that there is confusion over the personal initiatory progress of the man and his cumulative progress in relation to his incarnations, although no confusion is apparent. Neither is there any dubious mix-up of Buddhism and Hinduism taking place, as Indra is indeed happily ensconced within the Buddhist heaven world. Now able to raise the tabernacle of illusion above the abode of Indra, this aspirant is at least able to quell future incarnations, or has autonomy to take them or not. While it might be far-fetched for Blavatsky to suggest that 'Master of the Day' is referring to a whole manvantara, it could also read as Master of the Aeon - the incarnation of (a) god in flesh — although not as these successive ages were somewhat linearly adumbrated by Crowley, but rather on a cyclic and thus concurrent basis.

78. Nay, O thou candidate for Nature's hidden lore! If one would follow in the steps of holy Tathagata, those gifts and powers are not for Self.

79. Wouldst thou thus dam the waters born on Sumeru? Shalt thou divert the stream for thine own sake, or send it back to its prime source along the crests of cycles?

From his own understanding, and attentiveness to what is happening in the text, Crowley would be on good tracks in his oblique reference to the first verse, where he compares a Magus to a bodhisattva, he who:

... detaches the being that was once called 'Self' to fling it down from the Abyss that it may 'appear in the Heaven of Jupiter as a morning star or as an evening star, to give light to them that dwell upon the earth'.

The 'Order of the Silver Star' seems to fulfil a similar function, at least in terms of its description. It appears to be on account of the different meaning of the bodhisattva in Mahayana, and the fact that Mahayana is less deterministically arranged than Theravada, which is behind

Crowley's reason for designating Blavatsky an A.-A.- Magister Templi rather than, for instance, a Magus. By his own authority on this, the conferral of any one of these three supernal grades alone would appear fairly arbitrary as "... these Grades are not necessarily attained fully, and in strict consecution, or manifested wholly on all planes".<sup>36</sup> Their interchangeability seems supported further by the fact that Crowley correlates the qualities of an Ipsissimus, Magus and Magister Templi with the three *laksanas* (marks) of Buddha's insight into the conditioned world — *anitya* (impermanence), *duhkha* (suffering, although more appropriately, imperfection), and *anatman*. These three insights, despite Crowley's hierarchical arrangement of them commencing with anatman, were not originally consecutive realisations but were developed from each other by fairly logical consequence. They may at one point even have had a connection with the higher threefold-knowledge in earlier Vedism.<sup>37</sup> Keeping with the role of a bodhisattva here, however, Crowley's description of an Ipsissimus having no relation as such with any Being: He has no will in any direction, and no consciousness of any kind involving duality, for in Him all is accomplished ..." <sup>38</sup> compares moderately well with the trans-personal attainment of sunyata and what this means for a bodhisattva, as Sangharakshita intimates:

If *Sunyata* is described as the absolute cessation of even the faintest vestige of self-consciousness or ego-sense, however, and if from the cessation of self-consciousness the cessation of self-will necessarily follows, then obviously it should be possible to regard the complete cessation of self-will as equivalent to the realisation of *sunyata*. Silence in its profoundest sense is thus *Sunyata* and *Sunyata* is the Absolute Silence.<sup>39</sup>

Having realised that there is no enduring self-identity — and thus no personal motivations manifesting as 'I will attain', or 'I will endure' — compassion reveals itself as a 'law without attribute', a dynamic expression resulting from this insight into what is described as a luminous emptiness, where there is no sense of self. This is somehow towards the understanding of compassion in Mahayana as it goes hand-in-hand with emptiness; it is not really seen as a normal human attribute — in the sense of a superficial narcissistic kindness, or an emotion directed towards others — but rather the manifestation of a

36. *Magick*, 1973, p.329.

37. Elsewhere in the commentary the marks are identified as the laws of illusion and banished for being the emblems of Klingsor's castle! However, this does find home in Madhyamika.

38. *Magick*, 1973, p.330.

39. From *Paradox and Poetry in 'The Voice of the Silence'* by Bhikshu Sangharakshita. Indian Institute of World Culture, 1958.

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trans-personal or Buddha-like quality. It would naturally follow at this level that a rejection of the bodhisattva path would result in an attempted avoidance of suffering rather than an overcoming of it, so any ultimate liberation from the cycle would not be possible. Does Crowley infer any of this despite being unaware of the terms? Not particularly, although in a routinely bumptious remark to a verse in this commentary:

It is with no hope of personal advancement that the Masters teach. Personal advancement has ceased to have any meaning long before one becomes a Master. Nor do they teach because they are such Nice Kind People. Masters are like Dogs, which 'bark and bite, for 'tis their nature to.' We want no credit, no thanks; we are sick of you; only, we have to go on.<sup>40</sup>

This suggests that the principle of this type of compassion is really the underlying ground of advancement of all kinds, even if not immediately of any discernable self-aggrandising benefit to the agent.

**97. 'Yea; on the Arya Path thou art no more Srotapatti, thou art a Bodhisattva. The stream is cross'd. 'Tis true thou hast a right to Dharmakaya vesture; but Sambhogakaya is greater than a Nirvane, and greater still is a Nirmanakaya - the Buddha of Compassion.'**

Crowley seems dissatisfied towards the end of his commentary, as if he had been expecting a shotgun to the brain. There is clearly a lack of pharmacological effect going on for him; his commentary degenerates under a host of discursive quibbling and, when it suits, an omnipotent literalism. However, the real crux of the problem — something we see presented in the verse above — is due to Crowley not being aware that, despite possessing the highest attainments, a bodhisattva does not become by his A.-A.-. classification of mystical experiences a liberated god; he 'remains' as a "Buddha of Compassion". We could therefore more productively conceive of Crowley's opinions over this as an attitude towards this aspect of Mahayana as a whole, as it is no mere 'salvation army' whimsy injected by Blavatsky or, even worse, something smacking of a Black Brother. This being said, one naturally imagines that had he ever known about Nagarjuna's development of the middle-way doctrine, he would probably have assimilated its proposition assiduously above all else.

Further on in his commentary he seems to repeat what he believes is being attempted in the text, by including material describing the nature of liberated consciousness, a transcendent realm of reality with which he liked to declare intimate familiarity, often via the categories of his supernal grading system. Leaving aside the obvious reasons for him

40. *The Equinox*, Volume III, Number 3, Weiser, 1972; supplement, p.74.

including it in the commentary here, however, it is quite systemic of his view that these conditions could be communicated in language, that they were somehow even ingrained in written language; never pausing to consider that language itself originates from and elucidates only a specific spectrum of experience - our modern trade and commerce languages especially. The only real animation we find in written language is in the invisible glue that binds correspondence to word; there is nothing inherently substantial in language itself, any more than there is in the imprints of mathematical equations. The summoning magnetism — that which binds object to shadow from a two-dimensional representation — occurs by association from memory.

Concerning the geography of progression, Crowley points out as a criticism in the commentary that the pilgrim moves along the path but not in point of view. This seems to restate only that the transcendent realities being indicated are, by their very nature, not subject to logical analysis because unable to be experienced referentially through the pattern and frame of word. His related view which he often projects as confirmatory of his attainments — that truths contradict themselves and become their opposite through the abyss happily ever after — is again a drama subsisting upon the apparatus of reason, however deeply submerged or richly mediated. There is no movement beyond this endlessly pole-shifting category of meaning; for as intellectual approximations at best of what they are attempting to describe, they remain figures at play in the reactive stop-gap sensorium of reason, thus remaining dialectically subversive only. Experience of the other natures — suggested only through paradox in a 'language of silence', and sensed only by the nature of the Wandering Fool — is never present to participate fully in the rattle of dialectical sensation, for the very simple reason that it is not susceptible to a cage of words as it involves a trans-conceptual knowledge, one that doesn't have to declare or prove itself. In the ancient world, silence was likened to the piping of a *syrinx*, which was known for making the sound of a serpent hissing.

Crowley's commentary to the *Voice*, despite some interpretational flaws, occasionally shows some brilliant insights. It is also an interesting document in terms of presenting a working vision towards the practical stages of his A.∴A., system of magical training, which like Blavatsky's work in some respects presents a fusion and synthesis of eastern and western esoteric tradition. Both Blavatsky and Crowley had also provided a methodology for the assimilation of aspects of eastern spiritual thinking, which was neither so well developed by, nor as readily available from, the scholarly commentators of their times. Regarding another theme here — that of the development of Buddhism — it will be noticed that even in its origins it is in reality far from



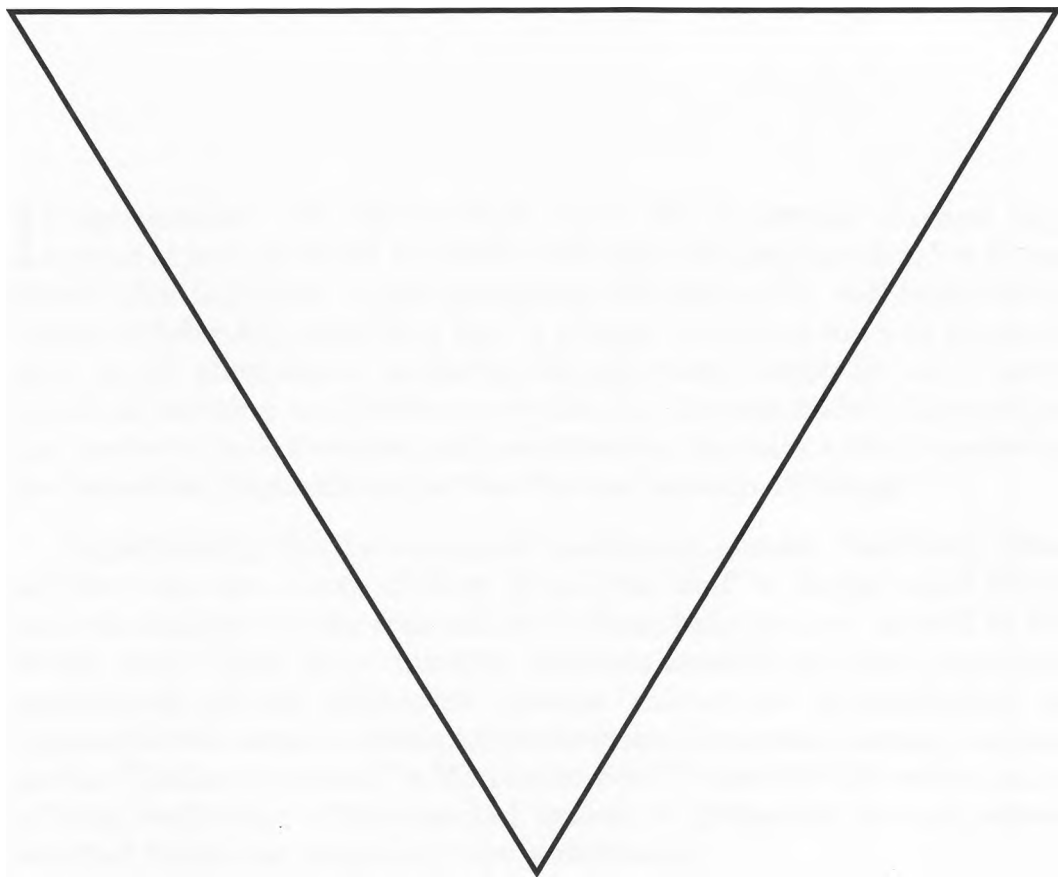
### *Echoes of Silence*

something that manifested independently, and that over its existence it has remained anything but a homogenous and unchanging train of events. If humanity is still around for the next thousand years, then the forms of Buddhism recognised today will not be the only ones practised and discussed. Lama Anagarika Govinda had something to say about this which incorporates an observation that could just as easily apply to many other things as well:

In our work in the West, we have the great opportunity today presented by a new beginning. We are not bound to any one national tradition of Buddhism, and we do not need to carry around with us the burden of an outmoded inheritance. We can approach Buddhism in the spirit of beginners, and ... we have the chance to observe without prejudice the living dynamism of the development of Buddhism through the thousands of years of its existence. In this way we can gain an overall picture of the variety of forms that developed at an early date in India before spreading to South, Central, and East Asia and unfolding there. Every one of these forms is a grandiose and unique creation that accentuates and displays the different aspects of the Buddha Dharma, so that it is of importance not only for its own time and culture, but also for the further development of the Dharma as a whole. We respect the different traditions as they are, without trying merely to imitate them. For if we were to imitate any one particular tradition, we would be binding ourselves to something that belonged to a different time and a different culture. We would merely be exchanging our tradition for another - which in the long run would be senseless.<sup>41</sup>

41. From *A Living Buddhism for the West*, Shambhala, 1989, p. 10.

# Sermon From a Haunted Cellar



Richard Gavin

## Sermon From a Haunted Cellar

If apprehended with the intellect alone, the Typhonian Current may appear at best ominous, at worst a self-contradicting paradox. For in one breath this Initiatory organ champions the liberating, self-empowering verses of *Liber AL*, while at a turn it chimes with deep Advaita precepts, such as all phenomena, including the ego-rooted construct of T, being devoid of meaning, and furthermore that the Dayside realm of dynamism and matter is in fact created and nourished by the black void of non-being, the boundless Nightside abyss that thrums beneath all things.<sup>1</sup>

Superficially, this two-pronged meditation cancels itself out. After all, how can one evolve if there is no true ‘self’ to begin with? While patient enquiry into the true nature of these twin stances, as well as the ambit they hew, is a fruitful commencement for any aspirant, negotiation of the Nightside byways cannot be accomplished by contemplation alone. It demands immersion. One must become, as poet Arthur Rimbaud devised, “a Monstrous Soul”;<sup>2</sup> one who is a nexus point, a living reification of the myriad unseen, a grotesque through which occulted forces can erupt and flow unhindered.

The only way one may become a Monstrous Soul is by awakening and refining the subtle awareness. The process is essential. It is also complex, demanding, and its rewards do not manifest with lustre and lock, but rather with whispers and skein-delicate apparitions.

1. See *Nightside of Eden* by Kenneth Grant.
2. Arthur Rimbaud: *Complete Works*, Paul Schmidt (trans.) (Harper Collins, New York, 2000).

The Nightside, whether apprehended as the continual Void or in its guise of weird visions, will begin to appear only in flits and glimmers. These reflexes are so subtle and fleeting that the aspirant may scarcely notice them; and some who do are so jarred by the influx of the undivided Real that they run the risk of distorting their encounter into something unbearably gruesome. Indeed much of the Nightside's seemingly "dark" or "morbid" ambiance stems from the fact that the underlying All is a great shock to common sensibilities. The human life-wave almost reflexively displaces certain currents, refracting them as something separate, something "other". This hampering symptom will only worsen if one cleaves to solar-centric, assumptive dualisms such as "pure" and "unclean", "this" and "that".

Typhonian Initiation is dependent on a practitioner's willingness to transform themselves into a finely-tuned instrument of receptivity of their sub-consciousness, that wellspring of latent potentialities and slumbering atavistic energies which Austin Osman Spare referred to as "the Inferno".<sup>3</sup> One must become a Sensitive, able to appreciate and yoke many shades of these Infernal eruptions from Below. Thus the Monstrous Soul actively engages and keeps company with energies that would frighten off the biased or the ill-prepared. As the *Kularnava Tantra* instructs us, "One reaches heaven by the very things which may lead to hell."

Unless the aspirant can serve as a living chapel wherein the openness of the child is wedded with the valour of the Knight, these deep reservoirs of power will eventually slither back, unnoticed and unutilized. They will simply regress to the Void from whence they bloomed.

Ancient teachings from the East remind us that this undifferentiated Void underlies and informs the realm of the manifest. In Hindu tradition, this boundless Underworld — the Real — is glyphed as the great Goddess Kali-Ma, but it may also be just as aptly be appreciated as She who is "Infinite Space, and the Infinite Stars thereof" [AL 1:22].

Human beings possess their own trapdoors to the Void, for it is reified in us as *sushupti* ('dreamless sleep'). Sushupti is the state of liberation wherein we are able to exist as ego-less Being. It is a temporary but nonetheless invaluable immersion into the no-thing

3. "My formula and Sigils for sub-conscious activity are the means of inspiration, capacity or genius, and the means of accelerating evolution." — Spare, *The Book of Pleasure*, p.48.

*Sermon from a Haunted Cellar*

below. There we are able to function without images or forms that our waking selves use in order to have “things” from which, and through which, we can distinguish and define ourselves.

Invariably preceding or succeeding sushupti is *svapna*, the dreaming state. Less dense than the waking state, through *svapna* we are able to pass through image-laden realms that, of course, have come “out of nowhere” (or rather “out of no-thing”). This internal process also occurs on a macrocosmic scale. For just as *svapna* can bubble up from sushupti, so too does the physical universe arise from the Void. Matter and form seem to have an objective reality, but then so do our more vivid dreams. The physical universe and all its inhabitants are but the spontaneous reflexes of this Void. They are the *Lila* (‘Divine Play’) of Kali.

Matter and mentation, regardless of how “real” they may seem to our senses, are but mirages with numinous Hearts. When apprehended via the Nightmind these masks dissolve like soaked sugar, vanishing into the black silence.

Egyptian lore tells of the world’s conception occurring when the *neter* Atum forged the primal hill from the ocean of primordial chaos (Nu). This resultant hill (also called Nu or Nun) seemed solid and symmetrical; yet its peaks were fashioned from, and filled with, Nu’s waters. Thus the very earth we walk upon is but a skin created by — and only nominally concealing — the churning chaos that seethes beneath the surface. From this model it can be extrapolated that all creation is the outgrowth of Divine Wishes; the joyful, spontaneous *Lila* through which the Goddess divides Herself and goes forth in infinite guises (“For I am divided for love’s sake, for the chance of union”. *AL* 1:29). Within these guises is the essence of the Goddess Herself. As Her children, it is our charge to find Her and join the *Lila*.

If executed with diligence and sincerity, this joining process will eventually lead the aspirant to become a *Jivanmukta*: one who is still incarnate yet fully liberated from the ego and other worldly tethers. A *Jivanmukta* is a living reification of the Void. To them, all gesture is sacred, all words truthful, all image profound. They have, by deed, become a living nexus for the infernal Below. They do not merely collect theories or individual experiences but instead radiate the Underworld whole, at all times.

Should this state of being sound woefully unobtainable, it must be remembered that as children we existed in a cruder, one might say “introductory” state of the *Jivanmukta*.

In his erudite essay *The Uncanny*,<sup>4</sup> Sigmund Freud provides insight into this mystical aspect of childhood, which he refers to as “the omnipotence of thought”. Ostensibly, in our formative years we rarely distinguish ourselves from the world around us. Instead we project our desires and thoughts (what Freud termed ‘the ego’) upon the physical. Thus there is no true distinction made between the imaginary and the tangible. One need only observe a child playing with the simulacrum of dolls and other playthings for a demonstration of this principle. In a child’s imaginative throes a plastic figure is as “real” as any human playmate.

As children mature, this omnipresent awareness/identification suffers entropy. Cultural conditioning and myriad other factors result in the ‘ego’ (re: projected Awareness) being placed in check. Adolescence and adulthood instils in us a variety of bad habits of differentiation, and as such there are psychical blocks that must be overcome. Initiation is one method to help us cleave through these imposed barriers in order to (re-)attain the state of the Jivanmukta.

However, it should be noted that “omnipotence of thought” never fully leaves us. It simply becomes silted-in under dualist misconceptions like ‘I’ and ‘not I’, ‘real’ and ‘imaginary’. This clouds the Advaita worldview which we naturally possessed as children, but does not obliterate it completely. We are very much like the Nun hill, with a great power seething beneath our psychical charnel-ground of falsely divisive philosophies. The Below, despite its seeming detachment from us, continually sends us glimpses of its splendours. These glimpses are unmistakable, for they palpably affect us. There is a quality unique to such experiences: a feeling of the uncanny.

When we begin to re-discover or determinedly build those passages back to the intact Real, the effects are undeniable: our spines tingle and our pulses race. After encountering a locus where Night has erupted into Day, the illusory boundaries that we’d unwittingly been employing in order to fence the apparent away from the ‘impossible’ begin to crack. Our world begins to feel like a markedly different place. It becomes eerier, less stable. The reason that our environment assumes the air of a haunted place is because, in a manner of speaking, that’s precisely what it is.

Conjure the image of a stone ruin in some dense autumnal woodland. Picture its ancient walls crumbling, choked with rampant

4. *The Uncanny*, Sigmund Freud (Penguin Books, New York, 2003).

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ivy and weeds. Imagine the neglected place awash in gibbous moonlight and a pale mist stretched across the whole scene like a great shroud.

Why do locations such as this, even the mere description of them, stir us? What is it about these atmospheres that exude a sense of the spectral? The answer is quite simple: places removed from the linear, frenetic activity of deosil life, places that are left to be ravaged by time (Kali), lose their footing in the physical realm.

As they ebb from manifestation, such stations flow with the un-manifest, the Abyss. Visiting these sites conjures in us a deep thrill of recognition. For although intellectually we conceive of that crumbling home as simply an untended structure that is dilapidating from age and the natural elements, spiritually we harmonize with the fact that the ruin is a portal to the Abyss. It is a gateway where non-being has flooded in and, in a manner of speaking, “overpowered” the material world.

Being in the proximity of such places also reminds us of the process occurring within us; the abyss of forgetfulness imbuing the fragments of our past with an aura of the Underworld. When we re-encounter these elements they will feel every bit as haunted as the ruin in the woods.

A Typhonian Initiate may feel the holistic awareness which they possessed in childhood restoring itself. She or he will likely begin re-encountering people, places or objects they had not seen since those formative years; yet these things exude a weird quality, an aura of oneiric strangeness. They are familiar yet alien. The reason for this shift is because our apparent detachment from undivided consciousness resulted in these things slipping our minds, vanishing from our memories. By forgetting them, these aspects of ourselves were cast into the Amenta below. Once we open the infernal gate that leads unto the primordial continuum, we re-encounter those fragments that seemed to our Dayside minds to have “vanished”. Like the stone ruin, these fragments are more of Abyss than of matter. They are “us” but at the same time “not us”, or rather “nought-us”. Thus, these manifestations feel “haunted”, “uncanny”.

Like the castrated neter Osiris who could not properly function until his severed lingam was restored, we are fragmented, unable to function holistically until these submerged components of ourselves are remembered. The truth is that these forms are not “returning” so much as the Initiate is continually descending, shuffling their way down a few

more steps into that unlit reliquary. This is the lure of what Kenneth Grant referred to as “the downward demon pull”.<sup>5</sup>

Although phenomena may manifest spontaneously, it does not do so randomly. Every image that moves through our minds — whether in dream or during the waking state — as well as every form we encounter, was conjured Below with great precision and thus carries a particular aspect of the All in its being. Therefore, the aspirant must appreciate images until he or she is able to commune fully with the essential nothing-ness with which the image is imbued. Through this, the state of Jivanmukta is restored and it is we who begin to channel the great dark Silence all about us. We become as Kali or as ISIS (see *AL* 1:29), engaging the world as a great conversation between the All and the Nothing. This transforms all barriers into gateways, mutates every shackle into a skeleton key to the eerie, haunted basement which forever calls to us from below.

While the no-thing is the Real, it is crucial that the aspirant avoid the grand temptation to strike down every idea and image as a septic temptation of samsara whose sole purpose is to lure one from their spiritual path. An ascetic might do well adopting such a stance, but the Typhonian current is more dynamic. Its followers understand that discarding the phenomenal would utterly destroy a trove of occult power. This Art is not about learning how to dispense with Universe A. Rather it strives to access and radiate the Universe B that lies hidden in all things.

All images, all forms, are lush with vibratory energies because they are the products of the divine Lila and are therefore boons, not hindrances, to one’s occult pursuits. Accessing and communing with the noumenon that yawns under the skin of all form, forces one to apprehend without employing the blunt mechanisms of the five senses. We must Know without mentation, Realize without conceptualizing. In order to attain this rarefied state, one must stimulate their Jiva, for it is this immaterial quality that the aspirant shares with everything around them, both living and inert. Such is the path to the Real.

The reasons for embarking on the Descent will by necessity vary from individual to individual. To impose mandates on so sacred a Way is to stultify it. However, it bears noting that intellectually computing

5. *The Magical Revival* (Starfire Publishing, London, 2010), p. 144.

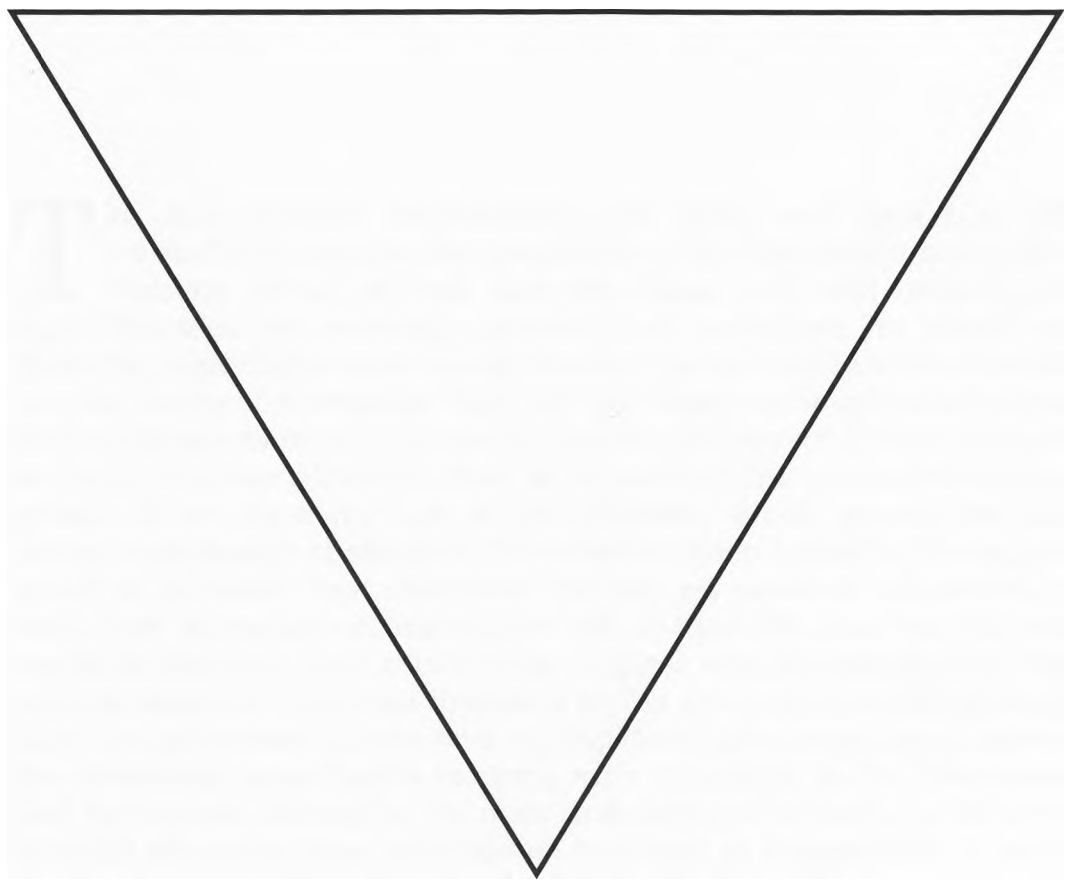


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the aforementioned concepts is one matter, Knowing them is something else entirely. Knowing involves a direct apprehension of the Void. Echoing a prior point, the sole method by which one can properly understand and appreciate the Nightside is by immersing one's self in it.

For all its horrors, the Real holds indescribable splendour for those daring enough to descend that stairway which coils beneath the house of life.

# Sleeping Buddha



Hector Djoun

## Sleeping Buddha

The rain drizzled mesmerically and night was upon him. He wanted only another few moments to his destination along that desolate sprawl of road that was dense and solid beneath his rapid footsteps, yet seemingly isolated from anywhere. He beheld six flickering streetlights stood along his way, the coronas of which bloated out dim moons of rubenesque light into the damp umbrageous ambience above that moved in the sky over his head in full powerful flood, as much as the turbid river did beside him. He listened all the while to the fading grizzle of his departing taxi in the distance, which seemed his last contact with reality of any kind. His attention then turned to the remote sound of a seagull that dissipated further his sense of connection to land, now becoming an amorphous sea of manifold location. He had forgotten his name, and who he was, so great was his anxiety now. The isolated area that had been indicated to him amounted to nothing more than a small ruinous alcove with a dilapidated pier, creeping out across the streaming water before merging with it invisibly in the blackness. Had he not been looking for the place and managed to find it, he believed it would otherwise have only existed in dream as a possibility. A small trapdoor aperture alighted from the base of the pier, and from within he noticed a flutter of candlelight.

The light was from a lantern that hung from the ceiling of what presented itself as a crypt, with a flight of stairs falling away into darkness. It was as if he heard a distant chanting issuing from its depths. There was a noxious smell of incense, intertwined with profusions of some strange opiate, the familial spirits of which seemed to dance and cast florid murals over the upper-walls of the place. He

became overcome by what he could only identify as a demonic hijacking of mind, followed by a play upon his senses of what appeared as a vision of a Mesopotamian woman, slowly ascending the wooden-steps towards him. Her dress was certainly of this style, but wondering why she was wearing such a costume in this horrid place only stormed his disorientation further. A closer inspection revealed that, despite its beautiful array of colour and ancient temple design, it was also ragged, soiled and torn: looking thousands of years old, as if it should belong to skeletal remains in an undisturbed tomb below tiers of sand in a far wilderness. Two mythological eyes emerged closer to him through the smoke and gloom, regarding him fixedly from the world of an ancestral age; millennia of desert hardship and savagery, together with a treacherous magnetism, coalesced within their strange depths. He was a man of some physical ability, and would have otherwise smothered the attempts of this now-conspicuous aggressor quite easily, he thought. But having been struck and rooted to the spot by the malodorous incense, or whatever world-colliding drug it was, and the loathing way this woman, or creature, was now scurrying towards him, he had been overtaken by complete paralysis. What had caused his seizure more than anything, however, had been due to a sudden breeze wafting the lantern's light into the cavern below where, like a spider at the centre of its web, it had been present all the time. Hidden like a collage of disparate parts only waiting for one to notice the central design, like a *jinn* concealed in smoke, a beast camouflaged in a jungle grove, a crocodile suspended lifelessly in water; ever-present and scheming ceaselessly, just waiting, waiting for that one dire moment of realisation to erupt within those they observe. The woman, some sort of *doppelganger* protrusion of that which stood at the foot of the stairwell, was now upon him. He felt a short, sharp agony of pain at the back of his neck, and then experienced his consciousness drawn through a series of ravenous sweeps, down into the depths of a gurgling catacomb below the Thames ...

Alvaro Mendes gazed out from the balcony at the moored boats in the marina below, all swaying gently upon the opaque water, huddled away from the adjoining river and its parent sea. His apartment was situated on the easterly side of St. Katherine's, at the top of a six-storey building in full view of the sanctuary provided by the docks, with Tower Bridge looming in the background now adorned with an awning of light to signal its passing into dusk. It was May, close to the time of full-moon, and the sky was heavy and condensed with a thatch

### *Sleeping Buddha*

of cloud seeming to promise a pluvial period of rain. Alvaro stubbed out his cigarette and retreated from his balcony into his lounge, still listening to the chorus of plashing boat helms and awning cords jingling against hollow aluminium masts from the moorings below.

For its moderate size, his lounge was furnished sparingly and with few decorations. The walls and ceiling were panelled in stained pinewood and a pale green carpet covered the floor. From the balcony, a tattered white two-seater sofa occupied a place on the left-side of the room, above which hung a large framed hand-drawn map of Lake Baikal. In the centre stood a medium-sized oval-shaped table of glass accompanied by three brown Moroccan wrought-iron chairs. To the right, several shelves extended from the wall, displaying two large Clarice Cliff pots of falling ivy, several scattered books, a golden embroidered raffia camel, one large camphorwood box, and other miscellaneous curios. Towards the far right corner of the room, shortly after an archway hewn through the wall that admitted entrance to his bedroom, lay - or rather, grew - his study. A large yellow-surfaced desk strewn with loose sheets of noted paper, a scatter of diagrams stuck to the wall behind them; two towering narrow bookcases tumbling a multitude of unbound manuscripts, folios, medium-sized volumes and smaller pamphlets; these, on either side, marked the spot where he spent most of his day. His subject of research, which he believed had in some way assumed a life of its own, was a comparative study of iconographic symbolism in the commonality of the spectral apparitions recorded in the funerary rites of ancient Egypt and Central Asia, utilising as his main source the once-dispersed texts now conveniently *a massed under their respective generic terms as 'Books of the Dead*

But his attention, once more, was drawn inescapably towards the centre of the table, where it stood; and where it had always been, so he thought. Alvaro once again contemplated the unusual murky-blue image. About eight inches high, it was supported by rounded feminine legs that were flexed as to posture a dance, the left leg thrust adamantly to the side. Both limbs remained supple and alluringly playful to the eye, even though they happened to protrude from this unnamed ogress. Above them churned a dangling globular belly; pregnant, so it seemed, with jupiterian fire ingested from the sky, and agreeably the idol's centre of gravity. Above its torso, its arms flew into an upward cascade; and if this area of the sculpture had been less charred, from whatever incident had caused it, the curious gesticulations of the hands would have been more discernable. The head region bore more or less the usual marks of a flaring crown of a *Dharmapala*, the wrathful aspect of the Buddha

nature; the trailing ribbons and five skulls eternally grimacing at heaven, or at some part of him. The figure's own countenance, however, provoked the most intrigue, and along with it an obscure unease. Its face had been either hacked clean off or similarly marred by some unknown means; he considered it doubtful that it had originally been so designed, and similarly discounted the other instances of fire damage, or possible aquatic tarnishing, being responsible for it. Its facelessness seemed curiously to enhance the thing's brooding presence even more - as if from inside his apartment, its hidden countenance possessed omnivision and was staring at him persistently. And with what expression ... Unlike the common bronze or copper, or other metallic substance, used in the construction of similar statuettes, this instance had been crafted from some sort of clay material; and despite the age he had estimated it to belong to, in places it still felt faintly malleable to the touch, as if he could craft the whole object into any shape at will.

After re-examining the folded sheet of paper that had been delivered with the statue from "The Incense Smellers" detailing date, and their Wapping address in Prospero Wharf, he drank much wine while studying. He became distracted by what he thought was his unsettled Georgian landlady-cum-mistress banging on the door, but which was instead a sudden gale lashing against one of the patio windows. It was as if this often dreary land of London was caught in a rain-cloud or a bubble floating about within an unfathomable sea of sleep. He found it hardly surprising that, in such continual climatic conditions of darkness or of a lustreless whitewashed diffusion of cloud, a heightened attention to certain items of colourful mystique and exotica should occur, why indeed such items and other traditions of noticeably strange lore should live on in the awareness of these shores more than anywhere else. Then again, he pondered upon how the forgotten beliefs and lost experiences of ancient mystery cults, of both east and west, were perhaps no longer traceable to or dependent upon corresponding text or relic, but were instead stored away in emporiums of the imagination; often, so it appeared, of obscure artistic coteries or occult sects, who employed devices to revivify forgotten sense and memory, and so often at their own peril.

Alvaro ordered the room slightly, stacked files, indexes and re-shelved books. After closing the windows and turning off the lights he lay down in bed, ever directing a short gazing scrutiny at the ornately framed deluxe reproduction of Ernst's *The Robing of the Bride* that hung upon the facing wall. He had always been extremely fond of it, but the painting had grown upon him even more ever since he had once come to

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the realisation that it illustrated the same elements from a beguiling novel of Scottish origin, *The Devil's Mistress*. After contemplating some of these features from the castle's inner-chamber he eventually drifted off into a heavy sleep.

He woke up slightly later than he had expected, and prepared coffee while beginning to draw-up a long list of references he needed to obtain from the library that day. During his coffee at the table, largely in response to a subject-matter perused in his reference list, he suddenly recalled a dream from the night just passed which was like a study in delirium. Its recollection was invigorated considerably due to a nightmare he had experienced some nights prior that involved being strangled by a giant serpent; and upon waking on that occasion, he had found a long strand of witch-black hair upon one of his pillows. Rather than pausing at the find of this souvenir of that previous occasion, he had as a result of it flown into a web of correspondence, a hall of psychic mirrors, where he pictorially recalled a Tibetan legend that involved a gorgonic sorceress who, out of wanton destructiveness and commitment to an unknown curse, would cast clumps of her hair around the land to suffocate unsuspecting victims in their sleep. Alvaro rethought his most recent dream whilst gathering some belongings together and preparing to leave for the library.

He had traversed upon a barque to the centre of a lake, and had entered a large fortress overgrown with foliage. Somewhere within its structure there was a long and seemingly endless corridor, although a faint stirring of dawn had become noticeable from a large window terminating its distant length. Within the corridor there flitted about from either side of the walls a female figure with long black hair. Whether she was a child or an old woman was impossible to say. Upon the tall arching walls of the corridor, which were decked out in fading medieval tapestries and materials, there hung innumerable creatures that appeared to be moths, although some were too large to belong to any known species; in fact, some that were positioned upon the heights of the walls, unless due to a trick of the dark, appeared monstrous in contour. The female, hovering to and fro each side like a marsh-light, seemed to be whispering to the many creatures displayed. The closer he approached to her and the end of the corridor, the whispering instead revealed itself to be a hissing; and from each of these creatures to which she drew near there was a faint tremor, as if a life concealed inside was awakening or being extinguished. Following her to a hidden side-door below the window, he caught a glimpse of her angular rankled frame outlined beneath a thin white shawl. It appeared cadaverous, covered

with contusions, and contorted as if having been stretched upon a rack. Knowing not why, he followed down a winding stone staircase, slowly becoming aware of the stairs providing a conduit between two worlds in his descent into an increasingly amphibious environment. Whatever sort of lair it was he arrived at he knew not, for like many European castles forgotten in dream, the cellars could well be endless. Yet at a distance before him the female, or whatever being she was, presided at the opening of a large circular well from where rings of sickly green smoke belched infernally, emerging from the deeps below in rhythmic palpitations before fading out in the heights above. Within the rings at the opening of the well there gravitated vertically a sarcophagi of lapis-lazuli, which seemed designed for an occupant of an unthinkable genealogy. The young girl turned towards him and dispersed into crawling mayhem.

Whatever it meant, the memory of it disintegrated, like all other impressions of night under the hurried rays of day and the semester of schedule. He paced steadily along his usual route by the river, to cut across different straight and winding streets that would eventually lead him to Bloomsbury Square. As ever he had over the past week or so, he considered the force of form of the cityscape, noticing the slow but steady surrendering of a grey fossilising imperial sternness to that of a turreting of architectural explorations of space, constructed in less heavier appearing glass and steel frames, structures that built their floors of translucent mazes into the air. The shapes of some counterpointed the skyline more elegantly than others, but many increasingly appeared to embody the use of the curvilinear in their embryonic bioderm designs. In every building, he thought, within every single resolution of junction strewn across this landscape, the hidden worm of change lay devouring every day and every second. The whole landscape presented itself as a coming and going of historical relations, from one age to another, with all of their mysterious transactions being acted out upon a stage built upon hidden threads of impermanence.

It started to rain shortly before he made his usual turning right, at which point his attention was drawn towards the Thames, the only feature of the landscape that always seemed blissfully impervious to the clutter of activity surrounding it. He was ever curious about the Roman statues that lay scattered about its bed; and below those, wherever they may lay, the skulls and jewel-encrusted swords of a previous Celtic kingship. And further below these? He wondered what lay encased in those deeper stratas of mud. Metres or possibly miles below that flowing stream, there perhaps lay the remnants of a city of



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a civilisation that had once existed where this one now stood. Possibly if he contemplated the unusual thought for long enough and with enough intensity, ghostly fellow-occupants would return for him and drag him back to it, or perhaps to an intermediary world that somehow hid in-between. At the very instant of such a thought arising, one that caused a despotic crowd bustlingly intent on avoiding rain in the many side-streets, which always seemed to make journeys shorter through the city, Alvaro arrived at the library. Using the elevator, he made his way up to the third floor. Over the balcony domed the usual high ceiling perforated by a concaved grid of eight large sky-windows. Around this centre was arranged the different floors of the library, with its many avenues and cul-de-sacs of book-shelves and small islands of tables, occupied by occasional isolated figures studiously busying away in cloistered silence. After visiting the areas of shelves necessary to him, and a repository situated in the basement archives, he went along to his own usual corner of study next to a large window. Several yew trees and weeping-willows were visible through the window in a small allotted white-walled greenery, the wind dragging their soggy branches across the glass. He attempted to arrange his acquisitions into order for reading, note-taking and references.

Amongst others he had *The Ghoul of Crystal Mountain*, *Demonology in Samarkand*, *The Occult World in British India*, *Cult of the Cosmic Bull*, and Baalbeki-Naamah's immeasurably rare *Emissions de VOrchidee de Nuit Abyssinienne*.

Alvaro studied intensively for about an hour and a half, this constituting the usual amount of time he could study in a library without requiring a break. However, like galleries he found the enclosed atmosphere of libraries particularly condensed and somewhat oppressive to prolonged research, as if the pages of wood-pulp belonging to every book siphoned oxygen from the dry and airless atmosphere. He would then employ his usual method of dispersing the stuffiness, which was to take a large sniff from a vial of eucalyptus essential oil he always took with him, or to scatter a few drops of it upon a piece of tissue, which always helped to refresh and sustain a more avid condition of concentration. He worked on for about another forty minutes or so, before becoming too easily distracted by some hushed murmurings in the library and the view of the drenched swaying trees outside the window, and thus eventually veered off into a reverie.

Reflecting upon the statue standing upon his living room table at home, his thoughts inevitably gathered around the Buddha and what Alvaro considered could be termed this figure's cult of self-extinction. The doctrine of the Lord Buddha, he pondered, bore much in comparison with the psychological mysticism of the early neo-Platonists in terms of unhindered depth, sublimity, and re-integrative vision of cosmic identity. But while the mystic wizard Iamblichus had stated that the phenomenal world was confused and ever-changing, and the world of the divine, stable and everlasting; the Buddha instead had revealed an enlightenment of sleeping death, awareness destined to vanish abysmally into a supreme catalepsy. The Buddha's prescriptions to achieve it involved an ever-refining concentration upon, and absorption in, the void. For what else was meditation, with its entire retinue for removing the signs of waking life, anything other than a mimicking and gradual inducement of coma, of sentience grasped in deathly suspension. Replacing a dazzling display of angelic hierarchy and starry glistening orbs of godly purpose, the Buddha had instead erected his shrine of contemplative worship deep within the charnel grounds.

As every symbol corresponded to a part of the human mind, Alvaro considered this bearer of the Graal of Negation whose comatose wisdom was sealed within his many images. All of these god-forms displayed a reversion of the senses into an intermediary dimension of being, which was also perhaps a universe of incommunicable nightmare. He saw

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Buddha statues slowly multiplying across landscapes, each image sunken in its own private trance of morbidity from beyond its mantle of passivity, of a withdrawn postural recline. And behind them all and their permeating purge of the pollution of life languished the Lord of dissolution himself, the ontological eater of souls, eternally dazed in a cosmic dream of transcendent murder. Incanting his lightning law of celestial putrefaction from an unseen world of absence beyond, this Lord was frozen within his tomb of Samadhi upon the icy vertiginous heights of Meru. Once again, he saw shifting fields of illusion in which Buddha-images materialised as silent assassins of a living death, encroaching upon the boundaries of this world like an octopus of black smoke rising through the fissures of the earth from the subterranean caves of Agharti

— those vast passages and halls of silence where the merest cognition creates reverberant echoes of haunting sound, where colossal stone statues of Buddhas amass in circles of horrifying stillness. The Buddha's temptation of seeing through the illusion, for just one instant, shone out, and Alvaro once again plunged into empty space inhabited by ghosts. He sensed the spirit of an ancient peacock divinity unfurl its plumage of many eyes within his being, eyes that wandered elliptically at the sight of constellations turning to falling embers in blackness. Then there was a flicker of light and a muffled amplified voice in the background. The library was announcing its imminent closure.

Walking for some considerable time along a different route to the one he had earlier come by, Alvaro recalled that there was a film showing which he thought might be worth going to view. It was called *The Glamour*, although he unfortunately couldn't remember the area of town where the cinema was situated. If and when he partook of cinematic productions, it would usually be the supernatural category of film that he would go and see. In virtually all instances, however, he was exceedingly disappointed by the quality of production in most of its aspects, so often found them largely forgettable experiences, although he found another level of fascination about them that most certainly lay beyond the motives of the production. To Alvaro, it ran more along the lines of what the intended depiction was that seemed to him to matter. Why would there be, or how *could* there be, any such enactment at all if it wasn't being governed by an unconscious attempt to grasp at something real, to relocate a lost incident, to re-integrate that missing fragment of memory for which all had gathered together and were attempting to portray. This is what aroused his curiosity. In terms of their own merits alone, he felt the same way about the majority of written fictions of the same category. Just what was it around which these countless stories would aggregate, and attempt to furnish with

outer illustration? With his line of reasoning he moreover considered the usual permutations, plot structures, and character developments to be largely conditioned by their own point within space-time, because schemes such as those didn't exist anywhere outside of the stories, being empty constructions of a reality they only attempted to postulate. To Alvaro, real characters were often as chillingly empty as Buddha statues, and similarly infested with whatever scavenging life-forms that chose to nest within their black hollow interiors. These characters amounted to not much more than a temporary emanation of obsessions lurching their way between states; and, following certain encounters or *visitations* of the kind Alvaro studied, a host to innumerable forces beyond their own control.

After walking for some hours along many meandering streets in intermittent showers, taking several empty side-streets through residential and warehouse districts, he arrived eventually at one his usual haunts, the Whitechapel Jazz Theatre. On either side of the lettered panel above the venue that was illuminated by a single chrome bar light, there were two finely-painted floating mermaids, both bearing the feathered-head of a green parrot. The main bar area, which was itself very old, lay between an adjoining warren arrangement of halls; and was situated below ground within a large rectilinear area, the serving area junctioning the far left corner. There was no live music that evening, although fragments of rosy-pink still flew over the charmingly discoloured walls and the monkish brick arches of the ceiling, being projected from a small revolving crystal-ball positioned above the empty band stage. Bacchus had evidently roamed about the place for years, although now mostly mastering the environment through a series of valves, pumps and tubes. Alvaro ordered tall blends of Kailua, vodka and Baileys, and took to his usual seating area by an entrance to one of the halls and in view of the bar.

He had been studying a book while occasionally looking around at the few people present at the venue that evening. He then perceived a glimpse of what struck upon his impressions as a cross between a distraught Waterhouse and a satanic Alice Bailey, concealing an aura of hidden turbulence. She sat drinking from a glass at the end of the bar with half a bottle of rose in front of her. The woman was mid-to-late-thirties and probably, when standing, around medium height. She had dyed black hair contrasting a white, almost pallid, complexion that was most likely powdered. She had high arching eyebrows and her fleshy lips were painted with a vermillion lipstick; her nose terminated in a slight upward flick, faintly suggesting to him the idea that she was

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French. She was of delicate spindly frame, far too pronounced for his liking, although proportioned generously in the crucial areas. She wore, from what he could see, mostly black; flounced and gothic in style, with sharp pointed knee-high leather boots, a morass of silver bangles hanging from her wrists, and several ornate silver and onyx rings clasping her idle tapering fingers. From her neck hung a pendant, a sort of pentagram symbol with a crescent moon attached below, and slightly above this she wore a neatly-tied kerchief, patterned all over with the skull and crossbones design. The languorous way that her hand supported her chin on the bar, the deep lines of mascara, the submerged sparkle of green in her eyes, and the way she nonchalantly rolled her spider fingers in the air over her glass, made her appear like some sort of abstracted reptile. She was jaded, but in a lovely sort of way.

After noticing Alvaro in his corner, the woman gathered together her bottle and glass and walked over to his table. He found her confidence unusual, which in his theology of woman suggested that there was an ulterior motive behind it. Having exchanged the usual pleasantries, at least as far as this was possible under the circumstances, he asked her what she did. "Oh, I'm a priestess of Hecate. Yes, I channel her — *really*!" She burst out in laughter, looking around the area, before composing herself again quite rapidly. She was very drunk; and while she slurred round the consonants and lingered upon vowels and emphases, he couldn't discern the province of her accent, which danced comfortably between northern English and Mediterranean. "How unusual. How do you go about doing that?" he asked while she was throwing back a large mouthful of rose. Despite her unquestionably feminine characteristics, there was something deeply masculine about her. "Ah, well *one* of the ways we do it — sorry, *I* do it" she laughed, shaking her right hand in the air at the error, "is through stories. I'm a bit of a litterateur — a novelist you see, so discreetly kick away those impertinent pesky little tenterhooks and engage people with their primitive infatuations. I rub to life those hidden enthusiasms. Yes, honey: *entheos*. From the Greek, meaning to be possessed by a demon". She spoke attentively, while using her hands to try and guide her thoughts and concentration. Following a moment's reflective staring that eventually targeted something in her own world, she continued. "Yes, darling, consider *malignus*." The word seemed to issue from her mouth like a pencilling of smoke from a primordial censer. "Now, the Latin root, or Christian *rotl*" she interjected, giving him a long wink, "originally meant an entity, an ill-begotten entity at that, but the word can also mean to construct plots, so is part and parcel of the storymaker's craft." She sat back, appearing adoringly

pleased with her abnormal erudition. "In what sort of genre do you write" he asked, while still digesting some of her oddities. "Pagan, paganesque?" he ventured, hazarding a reasonable suggestion. "Not really ..." she replied, shaking her head while observing him. "Just horror, or ... narcotic horror ..." she exclaimed with a tiny cat grin, revealing a set of finely arranged sharp and sparkly teeth. "But don't worry honey, only the most finely dressed imps stab and slash your brain in *my* stories!" She had got up and smacked his leg while saying it, before sitting down again and succumbing to another bout of insane laughter, one eventually quelled by another long absorption of rose. "You know what?" she said, this time leaning all the way over the table, steadily rolling her fingers as if manipulating an invisible substance or stroking the neck of an unseen companion, "I scratch them all down on pages at night, in a pitch-black room without windows". She had said it almost in a whisper, as if she thought she was being watched. She was also smiling deviantly, like she had just thrown a daringly lewd suggestion over the table and was awaiting response. "Why on earth do you do that?" he asked with a natural curiosity and slight unease at the thought of it. "Oh, well, that is when they speak to me. They want to infect people through their stories so they can control them. Oh yes", she began laughing and nodding her head affirmingly, "we invade minds through our stories and can do to them whatever the hell we like, just the other day I ..." She broke off abruptly, placing her hand over her mouth, and began to giggle menacingly. He truly did find some women deeply disturbing, and this particular one was beginning to prove exemplary. Instead of querying why or to what end these literary invasions were for, he found her non-verbal conviction over the matter to be too closely aligned with some fabric of reality for comfort, so left the whole thing there; although not without a moment's pondering upon the shady harbingers of the novel such as street magicians, wonder-workers, and obscure story-telling gypsy cults.

The evening's drinking and numerous other forays into strange regions of the mind carried on until they eventually left together. The frightful woman, who had persisted in not telling him her name, had indeed, Alvaro thought, flown a broomstick across his psyche. Later, having walked together some distance away from the venue, they arrived at a thoroughly abandoned and molested area of the city, a region of avenging spirits of every possible kind. Next to the railings of a deserted moonlit park, with figures appearing to drift lifelessly in its farther reaches, she pulled herself up closely to him and laid a cold arm over his shoulder, while also beginning to caress his sleeve. "Come, let us wander inside" she said, in a grainy sulphuric voice in between short

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asthmatic breaths which he hadn't noticed before. In fact, the voice didn't seem to come from her at all; it was as if the utterances clothed whatever errant presences inhabited the area. "I've been taking all of my clients in here for hundreds of years," she said, and added, "I brought my temple of escapade to this place from worlds long past. Please do come and revel and strengthen it, for it will soon become a tornado". He felt confused and lost for words, and her hair was hiding her features. The woman spoke again, this time in a voice like the sound of crystals forming in a cave of enchantments. "Enter my book of black stars and become the blissful space where the chronicling of screams casts no reflection". He gasped suddenly, noticing that her closed eyelids were smudged in mascara, but then seeing they weren't her eyelids at all, but rather two living pools of a ghastly sentience. They began to swirl and increase in size consumingly, as did her mouth, until her whole face disintegrated into a light-sucking maelstrom; and then, momentarily, into the collapsing vision of a galactic tarantula fumblingly descending upon him.

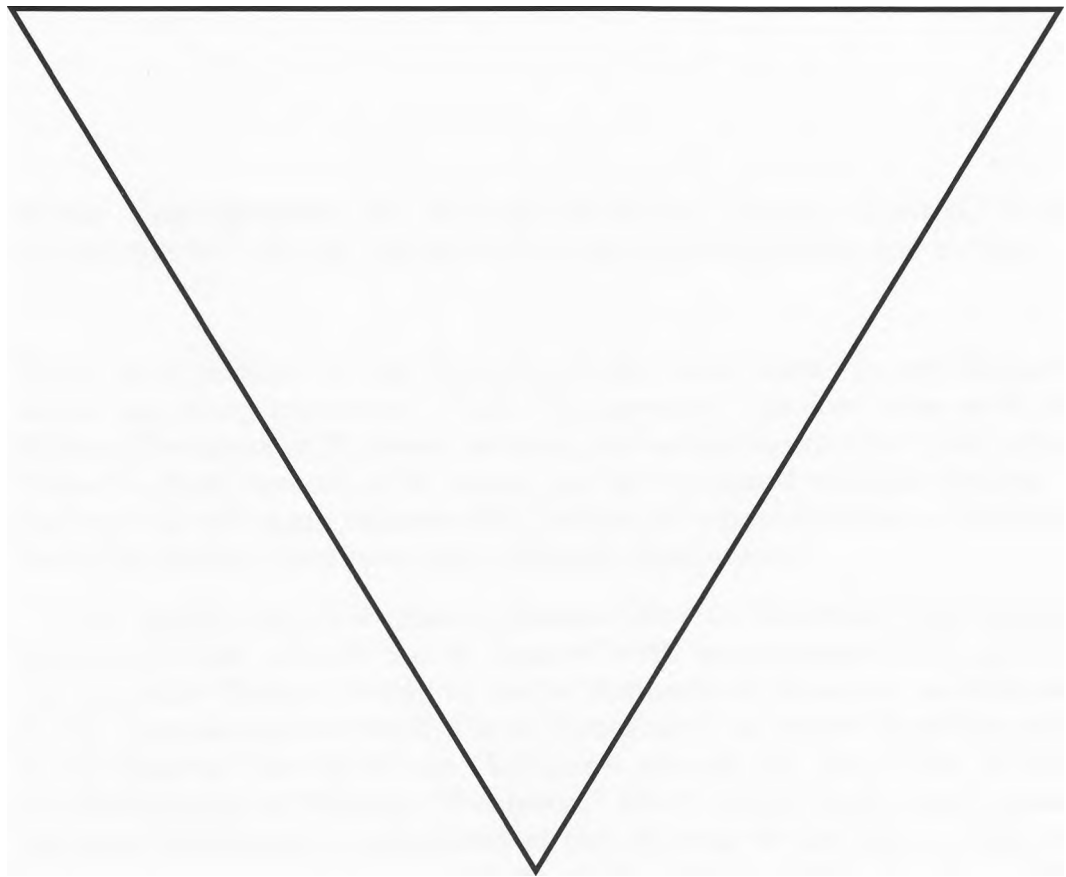
His awareness was summoned by a chiming of silver-bells expanding within silence. In darkness he stood within a circle of figures in white ceremonial gowns and wearing brazen masks of dragons and phoenixes, their arms outstretched, holding flames on their upturned palms. A thunderous *OM* reverberated from the congregation, as if shuddering forth from the bowels of the earth, and the figures melted into a roaring circle of fire. He then beheld a pink sea of mist and vapour, above which spun a scintillating circle; and this multiplied itself into seven hovering circles, each separating from the other by the piercing sound of sabres being ripped from their sheaths. Sweet waves of throbbing heat passed through his brain, and these became a raging *khamsin* blast across a searing desert waste. A tower of precious alchemical jewels stood at its centre, around which mighty howling dust-devils moved instinctively like guardian sentinels. Liquid blue currents of water raised him up from the cooling depths of a mountain lake; and there upon an island he witnessed the lady of our dreams, royal enchantress, swirling gracefully like a minaret, her fanged open mouth gushing out seas of glowing emerald. From the woman of song he passed, then, to an underworld network of intersecting rivers and streams; half-submerged ethereal figures slumbered and dreamed in their balming drifts. From here he alighted to a cave of gleaming amethyst, around which implements of scrying and seership lay upon shelves hewn from the glittering frosted rock. He beheld a large circular mirror that hung magically in the air before him, as if it were an optic of clairsentience.

Through this quantum mirage he looked down into a majestically arranged chamber from above. Curtains swathed the four walls, intensely clear blue and green as if being woven of pure mineral. Four horned tripod braziers marked the cardinal directions, their steady fires as lambent and ornate as the gloriously decorated golden designs that bore them. There was faint music; rather a sustained note somehow containing a variety of melodies, than any noticeable change or movement occurring in its continuous flow. Marble steps led towards the centre of the chamber; and there within a circle, a nest of serpents writhed in ecstasy upon a bed of phosphorescent violet. From within their centre grew a lotus flower, and upon this lotus there lay a child. This child was the colour of gold, with radiant sapphire eyes and a long crimson forked tongue that delicately flayed the air. It had the chest of a lion, and its infantile grasping hands and feet were webbed. It possessed a protrusion of the cranium that resembled a crown, and it showed other signs of imponderable auspiciousness. A slight tremor occurred in the cave as he moved his hand towards the mirror, the image of the chamber momentarily dispersing into an image of him treading his way along dark drenched streets towards Prospero Wharf. The scene of the chamber and of the lotus child arose again to the surface of the mirror. He attempted again to raise his hand to the mysterious electromagnetic composition of the glass, this time perceiving a far chorus of foreboding murmurs growing in proximity. The image of the chamber once more disappeared, this time being replaced by the sight of his lifeless body floating upon the current of a murky river. The image of the chamber then once more filtered into view. He knew the child was him and that he, his very absence, was already being reborn in a distant future world; and thence, to an even mightier oblivion.

*Day passed into night and night passed into day, and Karamaneh continued her story like a spinning prayer-wheel. The court enfolding the mental playground of the gods around her was silent and gapingly vacuous.*



# Book Reviews



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**Vudu Cartography** by Michael Bertiaux. Fulgur Limited, 2010. Landscape 8vo, 192 pp., lavish full-colour illustrations by the author.

There is a passage in the Gospels where Jesus says “In my Father’s house are many mansions.” *Vudu Cartography*, the first new work by Michael Bertiaux in 20 years, certainly embodies the spirit of that verse. From the first perusal of its pages, one is impressed with the feeling of having entered some otherworldly cathedral whose luminous windows lead into further fortresses and different dimensions.

Not unlike the now-classic *Voudon-Gnostic Workbook*, the sundry sections of this volume can be entered with tremendous depth, giving rise to entire fields of study in and of themselves. However, in contrast to the aforementioned work, *Vudu Cartography* is woven together with a continuous narrative, an Ariadne’s thread in the form of the “autobiography of Michael Houdeaux.” Much more than a pen-name, Michael Houdeaux is introduced at the opening of the text, arising as Spirit in a primordial and prehistoric space while detailing the emergence of consciousness and its differentiations of awareness and sensation. Michael Houdeaux begins his interaction with human beings seeking after the Great Mystery, developing and growing his terrestrial cultus in conjunction with his own unfolding. This is a theme previously explored in Bertiaux’s *Cosmic Meditation*, where we saw that the Lwa are not static beings but entities which have their own place in the evolution of the planet and, ultimately, the Cosmos. The revelations of Michael Houdeaux are preternatural yet not without limitation. He

states in several places that he is moving through his own process of development. We come to the understanding of our work and interaction with these Great Beings as taking place within a vast scheme of universal growth on all levels.

The tale is told with glorious language, shifting from the highly esoteric and didactic to the down-to-earth and downright humorous. There are passages where we can practically hear the amusement and laughter of the narrator. From ancient Theogonic abstractions to their extension into more modern 'soap-opera,' *Vudu Cartography* conveys a sprawling and, ultimately, trans-cosmic vision, a unified masterwork in which the reader is swept up, through poetry, prose and visual image, into an epiphany of Grand Erzulie, the Ultimate Goddess of remotest past and distant future, the 'Black Isis' in which the world has its being.

There is a section discussing the "Secrets of Legbha" in which the mystery of Ti-Bon-Ange ("The Little Good Angel") and Gros-Bon-Ange ("The Big Good Angel") is elucidated. I found this to be particularly fascinating as it would seem to relate to the basic elements in Thelemic mysticism. "The invisible self is twofold," says Michael Houdeaux. "The little angel is the finer or more eternal part... an eternal essence or ideal being. It is never in time, directly; yet it acts upon the being-in-time." That "being-in-time" is the "Big Good Angel," described as "the way the little angel gathers experiences." Michael Houdeaux's comments continue: "Vudu-psychology should exist to bring about the harmony of the ego and the id, as well as the efforts to achieve initiation into the reality and consciousness-life of the Little-Good-Angel." Without attempting to unduly force a fit, we may, nevertheless, see in the "Big Good Angel" a picture of the individual True Will and its relationship to the Cosmic Life — or Thelema — through the medium of the "Little Good Angel." Beyond the temporal personality is the soul which is, itself, a portion of Soul, a transpersonal reality. Thus we have the two great crisis-points in Thelema, the achievement of Knowledge & Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel and the Crossing of the Abyss into the illumination which lies beyond. "Vudu-psychology," as herein described, is very concerned with these dynamics, stating: "what we live is an unfolding of the soul."

In addition to its prose, poetry, prayers and pictures, *Vudu Cartography* contains an amazing commentary on each and every artwork adorning its pages. This alone would constitute a very nice art catalogue. Bertiaux's artistry is unique in the realm of occult and religious imagery. Many artists simply illustrate their themes. We find much "art about magic" but it is rare to find a truly "magical art." Bertiaux's art unequivocally belongs to the latter category. The simplicity of his linework is complimented by a tremendous richness

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and layering of color, opening channels for the radiance of nature and supernature. A comparison to the similar approach of Paul Klee may be made. One can see and feel in these images a direct connection to the spirit-infused thought for which they provide embodiment. These pictures are not secondary but direct. They are windows to Gnosis.

*Vudu Cartography*, like so many other works by its author, cannot simply be read, comprehended and put onto a shelf. Such an approach would be akin to listening to a symphony or viewing a great work of art and setting it aside to revisit no more. In this sense, I regard this tome as an edifice which we have the great privilege and joy of entering again and again. It is a magical edifice, one which does, in fact, open into “many mansions.” It is in the exploration and penetration of these dimensions that we get a feel for what has been called “Voudon-Gnosis.” The forms and *fetichisme* of the Afro-Atlantean traditions call forth a Knowing whereby we discover for ourselves the reality of the Angels discussed above. We are opened to an increasing vision of the *Grand Chemin*, the ‘Great Way or Path,’ and understand, first-hand, that “in the pathway of Vudu, you are where you are supposed to be, or not too far from it.” Wherever we find ourselves on the Great Map, we move in the company of the many forces and factors described in *Vudu Cartography*, our faith in the “unfolding of the soul” keenly vivified.

I cannot recommend this work too highly. It is impossible to voyage through, even once, and not find something of value. Previous knowledge of Voodoo is not necessary as the “cast of characters” are well introduced in sequence. Fulgur’s assembly and production is impeccable, resulting in a work of great power and beauty. The total package is more than a mere book. *Vudu Cartography* is an experience, a true Voudon-Gnostic *tour de force*.

Kyle Fite

Φ \* \*

**Austin Osman Spare: The Life and Legend of London’s Lost Artist** by Phil Baker. Strange Attractor Press, 2011. Hardback, 334 pages, colour plates, b/w illustrations throughout text. £25.00.

Although there has been a fair amount of biographical material by Spare available over the years, this has been scattered amongst a number of

sources such as *Images & Oracles of Austin Osman Spare* and *Zos Speaks!*, Gavin Semple's *Zos Kia*, Frank Letchford's memoir *Michelangelo in a Teacup*, and some reprinted articles. However, a biography has been long overdue, and Phil Baker's book is therefore welcome.

During his early years in Edwardian London, Spare had to a large extent been seen as a 'bright young thing' in terms of his draughtsmanship, though the subject-matter of his drawings and paintings was considered by some to contain a substratum of dark and morbid elements. This ambiguity towards Spare is evident in extracts here presented of some of the reviews of his early exhibitions, and must have been reinforced by the publication of *The Book of Pleasure* in 1913. There are signs therefore that Spare's star was already on the wane in the years immediately preceding the First World War.

Of particular interest to me in this biography was the account of Spare's life in the 1920s and 1930s, between the wars. The decline in his fortunes after the First World War is well-chronicled here — the collapse of Spare's publishing ventures *Form* and *The Golden Hind*, the lack of paid work and consequently Spare's increasing impoverishment, the retreat to the Borough — and with it came Spare's increasing isolation. Although sigils are largely absent from his surviving artwork from this period, his belief in the underlying principle — that of a means of engaging with the subconscious, in order to bring about the fulfilment of a desire — remained. There is an account here on pages 138-9 of Spare speaking to Clifford Bax in the early to mid 1920s of a method by which, Spare maintained, "whatever you really want, you can get". After outlining the principle of enshrining the desire in a symbol which "drops down into the subconscious", thence to germinate, Spare added as an afterthought: "I suppose my own subconscious desire is to be poor!"

This preoccupation with the principles of seeding the subconscious with the wish continued, and is chronicled in this biography. The author quotes Dennis Bardens, who met Spare in the mid 1930s, and who subsequently wrote of "his technique of implanting symbols of wishes and desires into the subconscious mind" and "personally devised cryptology he kept a secret except for a few trusted friends". There is also a remark quoted here which Spare made to a journalist for *Psychic News* in 1932 when showing him a panel he had painted of Egyptian deities: "I do not merely make the request and leave it at that. When I ask for a thing — which I do by placing a note in front of the panel — I deliberately make some sacrifice. I give up smoking — which is a great hardship — or something like that until the request has been granted".

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During these years Spare also produced some simple but extraordinarily beautiful anamorphic portraits, generally of film stars, based on transcriptions from publicity photographs, introducing these in his 1930 exhibition as 'Studies in Relativity'. Often involving strange angles and planes, or juxtapositions, he termed these 'sidereal', later incorporating the technique into his more orthodox portraiture. He also started, a few years later, to produce a series which he called 'Cockney Types', intense portraits of local people. His self-portraits were always intense, but many of those executed during the 1930s increasingly so, climaxing perhaps with the pastel self-portraits of the late 1930s where the artist stares out with an almost demonic intensity. Spare became an increasingly obscure figure, and these years of privation finally crippled his health.

Spare's averse star continued during the Second World War, when his studio was bombed during the blitz and as a consequence he lost his home, his possessions, and a great deal of his artwork. Also injured, he was unable to draw for a while. This ability gradually returned, and some of the sketchbooks which he produced during the remaining years of the War are amongst his finest work — an excellent example is 'Adventures in Limbo', published several years ago by Keith Richmond.

His first exhibition after the War was in 1947 at the Archer Gallery, West London, and was extremely successful, marking the beginning of something of a renaissance in his fortunes. This can be sensed in many of the pictures he drew and painted for the exhibition. Over the next few years there was a succession of exhibitions in pubs, until he returned to the Archer Gallery in 1955 for his final exhibition.

In 1949 Spare met Kenneth and Steffi Grant, and this sparked in Spare a resurgence of his interest in magic and mysticism. Kenneth Grant was particularly interested in the system of sigils which Spare had developed during the years leading up to the publication of *The Book of Pleasure*. Sigils are largely absent from Spare's surviving work between the early 1920s and his meeting with the Grants. There are some notable exceptions, such as the beautiful 1928 drawing 'Theurgy', in which Spare sets out a summary of the stages of sigillisation from the initial desire, its expression in sigillic form, its projection into the deeper layers of consciousness, and its subsequent flowering. Spare confessed to Grant that he had by now largely forgotten the principles, and spurred on by Grant's enthusiasm he set about reconstructing these principles. The result was not only the subsequent eruption of sigils into his artwork once more, but also the late manuscripts which the Grants published in their riveting and beautiful *Zos Speaks!*

It's at this point that some of my reservations about this biography come into play. Concerning Spare's impending meeting with the Grants, the author writes: "Soon, however, tales of Spare are going to move on to a whole new level, a level that is going to make run-down, post-war London seem like HP Lovecraft's Arkham County. Spare is going to make another young friend, a man whose taste for confabulation matches his own."

*Confabulation* is an interesting term with several meanings. On the one hand it can indicate something as innocuous as conversing. It is also used to indicate a psychiatric disorder, a narrative flow to cover lapses in memory. On a wider level, it can refer to the tendency to construct an image of reality on the basis of known facts where there are gaps; building on the basis of the known to imagine the unknown. On this basis, we can see that confabulation provides the foundation of artistic endeavour. It also provides a basis for science, since we are continuously extrapolating from the known to the unknown, testing these extrapolations so far as we can.

The word crops up several times in this biography, the first time in relation to a quote from Frank Letchford concerning Spare's difficult family relationships: "His bile rose up from conflicting family relationships during formative years leading later (by his own admission) to an inability to separate fantasy from reality." Baker continues that "Spare had a life-long tendency to confabulation and self-mythologising, beginning with the date of his birth, which he claimed was not 30 December but the liminal, Janus-faced moment of midnight on December 31<sup>st</sup>". Later, writing of the interest of Grant and Spare in Vaihinger's *The Philosophy of 'As If'*, Baker writes "At the very least it became a manifesto for creative confabulation, something at which both men were adepts".

It becomes plain from this and other references that, unfortunately, the author is using the term *confabulation* more in the sense of "telling fibs".

There are suggestions in this biography that Grant presented Spare to the world as other than he really was. On page 148, for instance, talking about Spare's interest in transmuting the ugly into a new aesthetic, Baker adds:

*It was an idea taken much further in paraphrase by his young friend Kenneth Grant (who went some way towards creating his own version of Spare) ...*

Elsewhere, Baker suggests that Spare exaggerated his interest in mysticism and magic in order to impress the Grants. Personally I don't accept either suggestion. Spare must have been delighted to come across

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people so interested in his more occult work, as quintessentialised perhaps in the systems of sigils set out in *The Book of Pleasure*, and he set about recovering and developing those systems. It's clear from the success of his 1947 exhibition that Spare was already undergoing a renaissance, and subsequent contact with the Grants accelerated and enriched that process. He produced some of his best work in the 1950s, in the shape of the glorious pastels, epitomised perhaps by the 'Contexture of Being' series of twelve pictures in the 1955 exhibition. The Grants, with their intense interest in magic and mysticism, must have been a breath of fresh air to Spare, awakening visions which had been dormant for many years.

Whilst appreciating that this is a biography of Spare and not Grant, some of the remarks about Grant are so jarring that one wonders why they were made. Speaking of Grant's interest in Lovecraft, for instance, the author says:

*Grant went on to become an authority on Crowley's work, although some people in the field find his views unorthodox. Even more influential than the time spent as tea boy to the Beast, however, was Grant's reading of visionary and pulp fiction by writers such as Arthur Machen, Sax Rohmer, and particularly HP Lovecraft: Grant developed an unusual and darkly mystical take on Lovecraft, which was that tales of monstrously trans-aemonic and inter-galactic entities, such as Cthulhu the squid god, were in fact essentially true, unknown to Lovecraft himself. These writers would eventually shape Grant's own depiction of Spare.*

Let's leave aside the snide reference to Grant as "teaboy to the Beast"; Crowley's diary entries make it clear that the relationship between the two was more substantial. Let's leave aside, too, the irony of the suggestion that Grant's views on so unorthodox a man as Crowley, whose work is so eclectic, diverse and wide-ranging, are themselves "unorthodox". It is evident from even a cursory examination of Grant's work that Crowley is the central influence; the suggestion that "visionary and pulp fiction" was more influential than Crowley is remarkably perverse. It is also plain from the same cursory examination that, suggestive though he found Lovecraft's stories, he didn't regard them as "essentially true". Grant argued in *The Magical Revival* that there were suggestive analogies between Crowley's mythology and that of Lovecraft, and that perhaps they had a common source in the archetypes of the collective unconscious; that's a far cry from regarding the Cthulhu pantheon as "essentially true".

The basis for "Grant's own depiction of Spare" was a relationship with Spare over several years, the typing and constructive criticism of Spare's late manuscripts, and the immersion in Spare's work in the



years after his death. Amongst the output of Kenneth Grant concerning Spare - one of the Carfax Monographs; the chapters in *The Magical Revival; Images & Oracles of Austin Osman Spare*, *Zos Speaks!* — there is precious little mention of Lovecraft, and nothing whatever to suggest that Lovecraft or any other writer of fiction “shaped” Grant’s understanding, let alone depiction, of Spare.

These criticisms aside, this is a good book, written in the engaging, easy style of writing with which readers of previous work by Phil Baker will be familiar. However, bearing in mind the author’s recent biography of Dennis Wheatley, I was hoping for a substantial study, and was thus a little disappointed. It may be that Spare is a more elusive figure for the biographer; as the author remarks at one point:

*Biography can only follow its subject so far?, especially a character like Spare, whose real life was internal. The life of an occultist is very different from the life of a tycoon or a general, and Spare was a hidden figure whose life was lived largely on the inner planes: years later he wrote on a Christmas card “I thank the Gods that be - I see myself as no other seeth me”.*

In summary, my reservations here notwithstanding, this book does provide a good introduction to Spare’s life. The dust jacket features detail from one of Spare’s gorgeous early 1930s sidereals, and a smaller detail from the same picture has been used highly effectively as a page marker. There are a number of remarkable colour plates, and plenty of black and white images interspersed amongst the text. Highly recommended.

Michael Staley

\* \* \* \*

**A Gathering of Masks** by Robert Fitzgerald. Three Hands Press, All Hallows, 2010. Hardbound, pp. 142. Deluxe Edition of 44; standard Edition of 462.

On 4 December 1911 Aleister Crowley asked the wizard Abuldiz: “How will I get this *Book Four*?” Receiving the answer: “Waiting in London” he replied: “I don’t want the rational; I want the absurd.” Why did he want the absurd? Probably, paradoxically, because there is less room for error if the conscious mind is bypassed and the recipient doesn’t expect something straightforward. But “the absurd” would have to be couched in terms and symbolism that Crowley could unravel and check.

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Consider the revealed or mediumistically received works that have been published by the *Society of the Inner Light*. They are in prose; occasionally idiosyncratic, but prose nonetheless, with a tendency to deal in propositions which purport to be simple statements of fact and “rational” answers to questions. In considering the way of testing the truth and validity of such material, Gareth Knight assures his readers that in a properly “contacted” fraternity there will be a number of mediums who can, as it were, peer review each others’ messages. He acknowledges, however, that because “all contact with the Master is subjective there is of course much room for error and delusion.” In his advice as to the preparation of the mind for receipt of inner plane communications in as undistorted a form as possible, he suggests studying previous material from the same source in order to “build direct mind to mind contact ... until ... one has become familiar enough with the way the mind of a Master works to be able to gauge to some extent what he would answer to any given question.” This, I think, points to the value of the “absurd”. If all the mediums cross-checking each others’ work expect the same sort of rational answers, the checks are going to be invalid. Jean Overton Fuller (with whom I generally disagree) makes a good point in asserting that when judging inner plane or inspired communications “the only useful criterion lies in the internal evidence or the quality of the writing.”

In the Thelemic tradition, because Crowley had the mind of a poet, the inspired texts tend to be poetic and veiled, so that their meanings are never immediately unequivocally clear; hence the strict prohibition against any editing of Class A books. *Liber 231* is, perhaps, more obscure than most of these texts, being in the form of 44 sigils and 22 verses related to the *Atus* of Thoth. It resists any attempt at commentary from a purely academic stance; to make anything of it one has to experience the realities glyphed by the sigils. Such investigations have been undertaken and some of the results published: Kenneth Grant boiled down the products of his experiments with the qlippoth in *Nightside of Eden*; Marcello Motta attempted a systematic investigation of the astral plane through the sigils of both genii and qlippoth, which he published in a volume of his *Equinox* series; and Motta was followed in this by his disciple Ray Eales.

In *A Gathering of Masks* Robert Fitzgerald extends this work by summoning and obtaining ‘oracles’ from the genii of the paths. He is well aware of the dangers of “error and delusion” in this sort of work, and acknowledges that “information gathered from ‘Ascended Masters’ or discarnate genii is bound to be colored and distorted by the sensorium of the source it is channelled through.” (p. 35.) But by way of preparation

he has obviously absorbed much of the content and the style of earlier material, either by Crowley or derived from his teachings — specifically, in this context, that pertaining to the paths and the Tarot Trumps. He is also well versed in the style of the Thelemic Holy Books.

So, how does the received material published here stand up? In discussing the oracle obtained in the Dome of the Chariot he says: “The rest of the oracle consists of similar enigmatic statements ... the truth of the oracle abides in its *motion*, its *poetry*.” Much of the received content reads as if he is striving toward the style of *The Vision and the Voice*, and it may be that such is the style which these entities adopt or what Fitzgerald expected to hear. He has taken seriously the need to be able to anticipate what sort of material to expect and obviously knows his correspondences. A large proportion of each oracle resumes the attributes of the corresponding *Atu* and, indeed, parts read like encrypted paraphrases of Crowley’s individual essays on each Trump in *The Book of Thoth*. There is also, especially in the material received from the genii of the Priestess, the Empress and the Star, additional symbolism drawn from traditional witchcraft (as transmitted through the *Cultus Sabbati*). Each oracle is more than just a rehash of published material, however, and it is likely that the recitation of standard correspondences does, in fact, put the mind *en rapport* with the intelligence communicating so as to facilitate the transmission of more data. Comprehension of what is received relies upon the mind having a firm grasp of the meanings of the symbols employed; one has to understand the language. What is presented is expanded upon in the individual commentaries to every “forth-speaking” and these often suggest the existence of deeper mysteries, indicating that elements were withheld from publication while hinting at what other investigators might look for. On internal evidence and style, therefore, I think these communications pass.

However, in keeping with his statement that anyone wanting to test the truth of the material should replicate his methods, Fitzgerald provides the skeleton of a ritual for each of the genii as an appendix to the main text. (He also sets out a good deal of basic Qabalistic data early in the book, parts of which, I felt, would have been better presented on diagrams of the Tree of Life.) Interestingly, he states of “both Marcello Motta and Kenneth Grant ... that their methods and results are seriously flawed.” This is with reference to the evocation of qliploth separately from the genii. He says: “the shells of the Tree dwell within the shadows of their essence. In other words, if one calls a genius, the qliploth will, undoubtedly show up. It is therefore not necessary to summon them as a practice in its own right.” (p.45.) I suppose, following the metaphor, that if

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one evokes a genius into the light, its shadow inevitably manifests with it. Equally, however, by evoking the shadow (non-being) in the tunnels of Set, the substance (being) comes too, but one obtains a different aspect. And, if Fitzgerald is right, why does *Liber 231* include sigils for the qliphoth as well as, and separate from, those for the genii? It would appear that Fitzgerald goes along with the trend that Grant refers to on page one of *Nightside of Eden* where he writes: "Occultism in the West, however, has been dominated by interpretations that take into account only the positive aspect of this great symbol. The other side, the negative or averse side of the Tree has been kept out of sight and sedulously ignored. But there is no day without night, and Being itself cannot be without reference to Non-Being." Fitzgerald also seems to be saying, in the bibliographical notes at the end of the book, that Grant posited the existence of a second Tree to accommodate the tunnels of Set. And yet, the interesting 'Prophecy' following the main text, which refers to the qliphoth, appears to be entirely in accordance with Grant.

There is much in *A Gathering of Masks* that would benefit the reader in meditation on the paths and the Trumps. In this the sigils received during the workings, appearing as headers to each vision, will be valuable in contacting the same aspect which Fitzgerald accessed. The book stands as a pointer on a particular path, a 'work in progress', and a valuable companion volume to Motta's *Equinox* V ii, Grant's *Nightside of Eden* and Crowley's *Book of Thoth*, as well as, of course, *Liber 231* itself.

Edward Gauntlett

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**Aleister Crowley and the Aeon of Horus: History, Magick, Psychedelia, UFOlogy** by Paul Weston. Avalonian Aeon Publications, 2009. 384 pp., £13.99

Writing this review of *Aleister Crowley and the Aeon of Horus* I am reminded of the text Paul uses to describe himself on Facebook and other places. These words really do serve as a perfect introduction to the various books and essays which Paul has written over the years.

*Paul is a Psychic Questing, Reiki, Crowley, Fellowship of Isis, Scientology, Adi Da, Kriya Yoga, Mother Meera, Druid, Osho, Gurdjieff, Anthony Robbins firewalking, Ufological, Avalon of the Heart, 2012 kind of guy.*

This is an incredibly eclectic mix, the sort of list that nobody upon first glance would relate to as the interests of a single person. However, this list, diverse that it is, represents very well how Paul writes and the way he connects ideas and concepts, often pulling upon very diverse and seemingly disconnected events in order to construct a thesis. Paul is very much an occult *Dirk Gently*, fully aware of the interconnectedness of all things and in his questing finding new paths, connections and insight all of which enrich our collective understanding of the subject.

As an example of this, let us refer to the chapter *a man surrounded by a whirlwind of sand* which concerns Tim Leary's desert adventures in the same region of Bou Saada in which Crowley conducted his famous Choronzon working with Victor Neuberg. Paul compares Crowley's abyss experience with the experiences Leary lived through just after visiting this location, considering Leary's subsequent (re)capture and imprisonment as a similarly deep and disintegrating abyss experience, then suggesting that Leary did succeed, simply by his subsequently healthy attitude to life and death. Connecting Leary and Crowley in this way was to me very novel and eye-opening, but with the 2020 vision of hindsight clearly a valid connection.

I feel that this book is quite an achievement in a subject which has recently been *done to death*, however here there is a permanent sense of freshness and interest. Paul's connections and ideas within this aeon-space are highly insightful and original, more than enough to making the reading of this book so worthwhile to Thelemites who already know the history of Crowley, Leary, Parsons etc. However, despite this original depth, this book remains very accessible; people without knowledge of these people and events have more than enough intellectual fodder to immerse themselves in Crowley and the various characters who have followed the 93 current regardless of whether they were aware of that or not.

Part of what I really like in Paul's writing is that he explores and connects the less known and often occasionally dodgy characters and locations. For example I am sure that we all have heard unsavoury stories about L. Ron Hubbard and Scientology, and a simple internet search will reveal lots of lurid details here. However, what many people miss is that, because of their dodgy reputation, they are often ignored or glossed over as an embarrassing detail. Regardless of their past and present conduct they are a still part of the current which has encircled humanity since Crowley, and it is therefore essential that they and Crowley are examined reflecting the light of each other. Paul has enough focus and enough inner-niceness to ignore the more lurid stories and characters to focus solely on the topic at hand. To quote Paul:

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*It's clear what my attitude is to Crowley. I'm not denying his failings but I consider it a major error to allow them to exclusively define him for us. It means we miss out on a lot. Whilst it may be important to acknowledge such factors in a persons' total psyche, exclusive focus is clearly unbalanced. What's actually far more significant is how someone is able to manage genius with such baggage on board.*

The same can be said for Paul's attitude concerning any of the people described in the book; this attitude is remarkably mature and refreshing, especially in a field where opinions such as "my guru is better than your guru" are so prevalent.

A further example concerns the Simon Necronomicon, a fictional recension of the dread *Necronomicon* which has haunted the night side of human dreaming since H.P Lovecraft started composing the various stories of the Cthulhu mythos. Let us start by noting (as Paul well knows and makes clear) that Lovecraft stated that he invented the title. Also there is not a single literary reference to this book prior to H.P Lovecraft's stories, so we can be fairly certain that Lovecraft is telling the truth here.

This is common knowledge everywhere outside certain conspiracy and teenage occult circles. However we also know that there is much more to the *Necronomicon* than first impressions would inform, as alluded to in the writings of Kenneth Grant, who suggests that Lovecraft was perhaps more psychic than he suspected; he channelled rather than invented the powers and principalities of the Cthulhu Mythos, thus leaving a deeper *less-conscious* universe and a sidereal *Necronomicon* existing in a world just a heartbeat away, emanating a mutating gnosis upon all us magicians.

In Paul's book we get to explore some of the darker aspects of this Simonomicon, appreciate how this grimoire (by accident or design) seems loaded to generate bad experiences, and consider how the energies that it emanates reverberate through the Aeon of Horus. Ultimately we will see how the Lovecraftian and Necronomic links bring us back to the beginning, to Sumer, a link of speculation connecting Aiwaz to this eldest of places and the cradle of our birth.

*Aiwaz is not a mere formula, like many angelic names, but it is the true, most ancient name of the God of the Yezidi, and thus returns to the highest antiquity. Our work is therefore historically authentic; the rediscovery of the Sumerian tradition.*

Aleister Crowley

As we could guess from the subtitle of this book, UFOlogy forms a major line of investigation in this work. Paul is clearly about as far from the

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'nuts and bolts' theory as it is possible to get; we see a lot of UFO lore interpreted in the light of the Stella Gnosis, with a discussion on Fairie lore, our friend Lam and even the Nazis playing their part here. It is strange to consider that there is a case to suggest that Aleister Crowley may have been the first UFO contactee in modern times; however, the facts are there and I am reminded of the words of Kenneth Grant regarding Jack Parsons: "*Parsons opened a door and something flew in*". Perhaps similar words could be said about Crowley after the Amalantrah working?

Of course in a book concerning such subject matter the work of Kenneth Grant is one of the major golden threads and guides which provide continuity throughout the text, and we see in many places where Paul has quoted Kenneth Grant, referenced one of his ideas or concepts. This is all to the good because I feel that it is showing, especially now after Kenneth's passing, that his Typhonian trilogies are a major synthesis of occult wisdom which will be referred to, referenced and built upon in future years. The value of Grant's work will clearly grow as time passes when we all realise how much he truly understood and elucidated.

In retrospect I count myself exceeding lucky in that when I first bought *Aleister Crowley and the Aeon of Horus* I was on the verge of Swine Flu, meaning that I could legitimately take a few days off work and settle back with lemsip and Paul's book. Two days of intensive reading such a grand occult tour-de-force proved to be remarkably therapeutic and in the slightly trippy state the medications left me in very literally mind expanding.

I really do feel that this is a very important book which shines new light on the Aeon of Horus and how (since Crowley) this gnosis has expressed itself through the vision and work of other people. Such a superbly well-written and researched grand tour, it covers many of the major themes since Doctor John Dee entered into the Angelical Conversation, and all of the major themes during and post Aleister Crowley. Anyone with the slightest interest in the areas will find this book valuable.

156 stars out of 156.

Paolo Sammut

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*Book Reviews*

**The Rise and Fall of the Cthulhu Mythos** by S. T. Joshi. Mythos Books, 2008, 323 pp., hardback in dustjacket, illustration by Jason Eckhardt, \$40.

Very few adherents of the works of H.P. Lovecraft and writers associated with his august name will not welcome this well-written and thought-provoking volume by the indefatigable S.T. Joshi.

Though not as vociferous as some of his colleagues — in particular Marc Michaud — in his condemnation of exponents of magick and the occult such as Kenneth Grant, and their ‘appropriation’ of Lovecraftian/Cthulhu Mythos concepts into their esoteric researches, Joshi has still frequently misunderstood the serious intentions of many such researchers — who see Lovecraft as having caught the specific Zeitgeist of the present age — instead only referencing the cheap and shoddy gimmicks of the popular press, or even worse, listening half-heartedly to the histrionics of self-styled ‘black magicians’ asininely spouting on about having a rare copy of ‘the real Necronomicon’, etc., etc.

Ironically, this has created the same sense of misunderstanding as Joshi and his colleagues have themselves faced in their dogged pursuit to get Lovecraft properly understood and accepted as a major literary figure. I’m referring to August Derleth’s perceived misinterpretation of Lovecraft’s central concepts, and his misappropriation of Lovecraft’s legacy. If literary critics had displayed the same lack of interest and attention to Joshi and his cohorts regarding ‘The Derleth Mythos’ as Joshi and his cohorts have paid to genuine occultists, such as members of the Typhonian Order, or the Esoteric Order Of Dagon, they would still be in the position of having to explain the vast differences between Lovecraft and Derleth, and still be covering elementary ground as to who really authored ‘The Peabody Heritage’ and the ilk.

Fortunately for Joshi and co., the Literary Establishment has been much more attentive towards them than Joshi and co. are prepared to be towards genuine occultists and exponents of magick.

Joshi’s otherwise penetrating critical acumen goes out of the window when it comes to the subjects of magick and the occult. It is an area that he has an unwillingness to engage in constructively, because as an avowed atheist he seems to dismiss/misidentify such subjects as ‘religious’, or as a product of religiously-minded belief.

One can, of course, have some sympathy with him. His position must seem to him similar to the majority of rationalist v. ‘irrational’ causes with



a vested interest, in which there is always ever-present the very reasonable fear that all one's good sense and clear thinking (in this case, Joshi's sterling work towards getting Lovecraft's name recognized by the Literary Establishment) will be submerged under the usual tide of stupidity and irrationality commonly evinced by the undiscerning, 'unthinking masses'.

The only problem with this view is the erroneous presumption that the 'heretical' challenge which the orthodox Lovecraft scholars face from the likes of the Typhonian Order is 'irrational' or the product of 'unthinking' processes — in fact, at its vanguard, the occult/magickal school of Lovecraftian research is neither religiously-minded nor a product of mass popular culture, and is therefore vitally different from the 'enemy' Joshi and co. think they have identified in it.

These remarks aside, there is still much good fruit to yield for the magician/occultist in Joshi's penetrating analysis of Lovecraft's key concepts, and especially in his critical appraisal of Lovecraft's innovations in the field of weird fiction, indicating why he both defines and transcends the genre at once, making Lovecraft the unique figure he is in 20th century letters — and something of a vizier in terms of his tapping into the aforementioned Zeitgeist of the present age.

With unfortunate and ill-considered snobbery (which ends up back-firing on him somewhat) Joshi also points out that while Lovecraft's work has now, through pre-eminently his own efforts, received acknowledgement from the vaunted Literary Establishment — citing Joshi's own three-volume Penguin Classics volumes and the prestigious Library of America volume (introduced, incidentally, by Peter Straub, whose 'Lovecraftian' novel, *Mr. X*, Joshi expresses some withering scorn towards in *Rise & Fall*) — in stark contrast, nearly all Cthulhu Mythos spin-offs are the products of 'small press' outfits, such as Chaosium, and 'print-on demand' publishers, suggesting that Lovecraft's sheer comparative quality has won-over a now vast, popular, readership through respected, mainstream, publishing houses; while the readership of his inferior imitators has rightfully dwindled to languish in these aforementioned cul-de-sacs.

There is some disingenuousness in this argument, as later on in the book Joshi comments on Stephen King's mainstream popularity and accessibility as being no indication of the intrinsic worth of his prose: "quite the reverse, in fact" (page 70). In addition, surely it cannot have escaped notice that the majority of Joshi's own work has been published by these same small presses? In fact, *Rise & Fall* itself is a semi-professional, 'print on demand' effort; merely an offshoot of second-hand book dealer, Mythos Books! To be frank, I don't like Joshi's simplistic line

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of reasoning here (Penguin Books = 'good'; Chaosium = 'bad') and feel that it does his status as an able critic of weird fiction no favours at all.

Further to this last point, while I would be hard-pressed to find much fault in Joshi's scholarly observations and references regarding Lovecraft's life and works (not having devoted the same time gathering and sifting data, or honing my critique to anywhere near the same extent), I am left with some misgivings in respect of one or two errors he makes in areas I do know something about...

Off the top of my head, two in particular spring to mind: Joshi cites Fritz Leiber's 1950 tale 'The Dead Man' as uncollected, when in fact it appears in Leiber's *Shadows With Eyes*, Ballantine, 1962. He also seems unaware that Leiber's 'A Bit Of The Dark World' also made its first book appearance in this volume.

Whilst Leiber is an author Joshi clearly admires, the same cannot be said of Hugh B. Cave, whom he lambasts. He is, however, fair to Cave in terms of equal inaccuracy regarding the author's works: *a propos* Cave's admittedly lurid and ridiculous tale, 'The Isle Of Dark Magic', he writes: "This rambling and long-winded tale would by now have been forgotten if not for its Lovecraftian references - indeed, it apparently has been forgotten [sic], for not even the diligent efforts of Robert M. Price have caused it to be reprinted ... [since its appearance in *Weird Tales*, August, 1934 ...]" (page 170).

Anybody who purports to have a wide knowledge of weird fiction, and especially someone with Joshi's critical cache, should have realized that this tale was actually reprinted in Karl Edward Wagner's Carcosa Press' World Fantasy Award-winning 1977 volume by Cave, *Murgunstrumm And Others*. In fact this volume is still in print, but presumably because it is published by one of those 'print on demand', small press outfits, it is beneath Joshi's cultural radar...

These caveats aside, *Rise & Fall* is a compelling read which makes a brilliant case for the acceptance of Lovecraft's tales as real and lasting source of philosophical speculation — and even some of the Cthulhu Mythos tales inspired by him! In accepting the latter case, S.T. Joshi must be congratulated for widening his perspective where Lovecraft and his work is concerned, thus producing a wider-sweeping and more broadly relevant study than any of his commendable, scholarly, but narrower-in-scope, previous works.

Stephen Sennitt

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**Perdurabo: The Life of Aleister Crowley** by Richard Kaczynski.  
Revised and expanded edition. North Atlantic Books, Berkeley,  
California, 2010. 714pp, illustrated. \$29.95

It's customary these days, especially in our disposable, online culture where conjecture and opinion are often more highly valued than knowledge and understanding, to begin a review of any vaguely 'occult' publication with a description of its physical properties. Throw in some references to half-leather bindings, hand-coloured endpapers, the opulence of the silk markers and — always a good one this — the 'talismanic' quality of the production and you're half-way there. This helps to pad the review out and to obscure two facts: first, the reviewer hasn't the faintest understanding of the subject matter and, secondly, almost certainly gave up reading some way through the first chapter.

It's not entirely the fault of the reviewer, of course: there's just so much unreadable but artfully printed filler out there in the world of 'occult publishing.' Take any arcane scribblings written in the author's bedsit (quite possibly in green crayon), supplement them with cabalistic noodlings, chuck in some vaguely disconcerting sigils and make sure that the name *Aleister Crowley* features prominently every couple of pages, and you have something that'll at least cover its production costs, especially if the printing work is done to order through the likes of Lulu. There are, of course and as ever, exceptions to these general rules. There are publishers that select works based on merit and deliver product that reflects the quality of the content: Teitan, Starfire, Jerusalem, Three Hands and Fulgur being obvious examples. Otherwise, though, it can be a dispiriting coalition between publishers looking for publicity and reviewers looking for free books.

And so we move on to the subject of this review (Richard Kaczynski's *Perdurabo*) with the reassurance to you, dear reader, that it's a book with completely ordinary production values. And one that this reviewer has read, in its two editions, perhaps a dozen times over a number of years.

Context is all and it's instructive to see the 'set and setting' from which *Perdurabo* hatched. Aleister Crowley, whatever his students, admirers and detractors might choose to imagine, is at best wholly marginal, largely a forgotten figure of fun. The average man in the street knows nothing of him, in all likelihood has never even heard of him, and certainly hasn't read anything by him. And yet, he's the subject of an extraordinary number of biographies. For an obscure decadent poet, he's done rather well in the memoir stakes. Leaving aside his

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surprisingly honest and accurate attempts at autobiography (sorry 'autohagiography') in *The Confessions*, the preface to *The World's Tragedy* and *The Temple of Solomon the King*, we've seen a remarkable number of biographical treatments, short and long, affectionate and contemptuous, some charming and some rubbish.

Inevitably we must start this whistle-stop tour with John Symonds' *The Great Beast* (1951), which was full of detail but utterly devoid of understanding; *The Magic of Aleister Crowley* (1958), which was much better and with sufficient extracts from A.C.'s writings to have made it a valuable resource; and several revisions of the former that incorporated material from the latter. Then we have his *The King Of The Shadow Realm: Aleister Crowley, His Life and Magic* (1989), a significant improvement reflecting a more liberal press but seemingly obsessed with Crowley's coprophilia and toilet habits; and, finally, the most accomplished of his many attempts to turn the legacy of Crowley into an effective income stream: *The Beast 666* (1997).

C. R. Cammell was apparently sufficiently offended by Symonds' treatment of his friend to publish an earnest, early memoir: *Aleister Crowley: The Man, The Mage, The Poet* (1951). This affectionate tribute helped provide some balance and created a more three-dimensional view of Symonds' bogeyman. Just what Cammell would have made of its reprinting as *Aleister Crowley: The Black Magician* in 1969 can only be imagined.

When mentioning Symonds it's inevitable that the mind moves on to Kenneth Grant, whose *Aleister Crowley and the Hidden God* (1973) was rather impressive, albeit with a somewhat idiosyncratic analysis of Thelema. Grant's *Remembering Aleister Crowley* (1991) doesn't really count as biography, being a scrapbook of photographs and letters, but it's an engaging account of Uncle Al's later years. And, talking of scrapbooks, there's Sandy Robertson's delightful *Aleister Crowley Scrapbook* (1998, reprinted as *The Illustrated Beast* in 2002) which is essential as a tour of 1980s Crowleyan influence. Throwing any sense of chronology to the winds, we move on to Daniel Mannix's *The Beast* (1959), which was an early attempt to cash in on Symonds' first work — it's easy-to-read, entertaining and was probably worth the thirty-five cents asking price.

Israel Regardie's *The Eye In The Triangle* (1970) tends to be admired by 'occultists' but to the lay reader it's a fairly tedious production. Regardie's internal battle between fondness for and contempt of Crowley, while honest, results in an implausible characterisation; and, to be 'frank', his understanding of Thelema — fundamental to any

meaningful study of Crowley's life — is confused, or at least presented in a confused way. While on the subject of Franks, Francis King's *The Magical World of Aleister Crowley* (1977) was a far more successful attempt to target the same area covered by Regardie and by Symonds in *The Magic of Aleister Crowley*, with the benefit of a decent understanding of the man, his magick and his philosophy. For many readers, King's book and Robertson's *Scrapbook* were to provide a first glimpse at the impact Crowley had had — and was continuing to have — on modern culture.

Other biographies followed in more recent years, including a trio published within just two years: Martin Booth's *A Magick Life: The Biography Of Aleister Crowley* (2000), which was a disappointment compared with the author's sensitive selection of Crowley's *Selected Poems* (1986); Roger Hutchinson's rather pointless *Aleister Crowley: The Beast Demystified* (1998); and Lawrence Sutin's *Do What Thou Wilt: A Life Of Aleister Crowley* (2000), which was very much the best of the three. There have been others, of course, including Gerald Suster's *Legacy Of The Beast* (1988) and Richard Spence's fascinating *Secret Agent 666: Aleister Crowley, British Intelligence and the Occult* (2008), but I'll leave this procession with mention of the worst of the lot: Colin Wilson's *The Nature Of The Beast*. Given that it was published in 1987, Wilson had a huge amount of previous scholarship and conjecture on which to draw, but didn't. There is usually much to admire about Colin Wilson's books: even his hackwork, such as the crime, Atlantis and Ancient Egyptian cash-ins, tends to be well researched and well written. *The Nature Of The Beast* is neither. He even refers to "Aiwas" in both text and index, a mis-spelling that is all the more impressive given that there are two correct spellings to choose from...

This lengthy diversion from the immediate subject of this review has been essential if we are to understand the significance of *Perdurabo*. Many of the biographies that went before were lazily reprinting 'facts' from Symonds' work. As a result, for example, many continued to give Leah Hirsig's year of death as 1951, even after it had been established that she did not die until 1975. In *Perdurabo*, Kaczynski avoids such basic errors by doing his homework. The book is, so far, the most scholarly biography of Crowley, with facts, dates and places re-examined and occasionally corrected, supported where necessary with extraordinarily detailed endnotes and references. The usual cost to the reader of such scholarship and detail tends to be readability but *Perdurabo* is very much the exception: it is astonishingly easy to read. The reader is swept along through Crowley's extraordinary life. And it is the very pace at which the book runs that helps to create a beautifully

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crafted impression of the subject: this superior poet, remarkable essayist and synthesizer of religions and philosophies appears fully rounded, one event in his life leading inexorably to the next rather than the snapshots of highs and lows with which we're usually presented.

Kaczynski understands Crowley, sympathizing, empathizing and criticizing as necessary. As a result, the real Crowley, for the first time in this long line of biographies, shines forth: wise and foolish, egocentric and generous, inspiring and abusive. And Kaczynski understands the context, describing the lives of Crowley's associates, admirers and enemies in far more detail in this second edition of the book than we're used to reading. Finally, Kaczynski, an OTO initiate, understands Thelema and recognizes that nothing in Crowley's extraordinary life after 1904 makes any sense whatsoever unless seen in the context of a man convinced that he is a Prophet.

First-rate writing, scholarship of the highest order and a critical respect for its subject matter combine to make *Perdurabo* the finest biography of Crowley yet published.

Paul Feazey

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**Three Dangerous Magi** by P. T. Mistlberger. Paperback, 724 pages. O Books, 2010. £19.99.

The "three dangerous Magi" here presented are Crowley, Gurdjieff, and Osho (formerly Rajneesh). They are described as "dangerous" in that they didn't correspond to the traditional image of holy men, but represented a challenge to the prevailing standards of society. Over the course of many chapters, their lives and work are compared and contrasted.

The material on Crowley is likely to be fairly familiar territory to many readers of *Starfire*. It is though very thoughtfully presented, and the author here provokes some interesting thoughts.

I found the chapters on Gurdjieff of the most interest, largely because of an increasing interest in his concept of wakefulness. We spend most of our waking hours in a state of daydream, our attention absorbed in fantasy, thoughts and feelings. We move in a state of fog, shrouded by what are often referred to as the *skandhas* or habit-patterns. We have a mental image of ourselves, and shackle ourselves with it. Gurdjieff often

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prescribed what seemed menial tasks for his students, but to be done with full attention or mindfulness, not absent-mindedly.

The chapters on Osho were most welcome, too. I had come across little by or about Osho before, and found the account of him fascinating. Like many, I recall Rajneesh — as he then was — being portrayed as something of a scandalous figure, derided as a money-grabbing, sex-obsessed charlatan. In fact, it is evident from his writings that he was a man of deep spiritual insight, a genuine guru with a profound gnosis to transmit. Unfortunately his tantric teachings ran counter to the prevailing orthodoxy in India, and he was traduced: something which gathered pace and became applied internationally. His relatively early death left his body of work unfinished, though the community which he founded continues to flourish.

This is an extremely interesting and useful book, drawing the similarities between the work of these three men.

Michael Staley

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**Legion 49** by Barry William Hale. Fulgur Publishing, 2009, 150 pp. (approx.). Limited Edition, 777 copies, hardback: £147 deluxe, £25 standard.

This beautifully produced and designed volume contains paper-cut silhouettes of the 49 servitors of Beelzebub, Lord of the Flies; each image prefaced by the demon's name(s), numbers by Hebraic and Greek Gematria, an analysis of those numbers, and a brief description of the servitor's appearance when evoked.

The grimoire itself is prefaced by a well-written and convincing introduction by Hale, which is particularly compelling in its discussion of the nature of demonic entities as viral-like colonies existent within the infinite interior of man's consciousness — 'Legion' indeed.

As a grimoire of demonic names and images it is, to my knowledge, unique; its only possible precedent being the deadly lace-like paper-cut images made by Oscar Clinton in H. Russell Wakefield's late-1920s short tale of the occult, 'He Cometh and He Passeth By'.

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The character of Oscar Clinton — member of the aptly-named Chorazin Club — is of course based on popular contemporary conceptions of Aleister Crowley, and could be said to be one of the most convincing portraits of that indulgent, impulsive, perhaps self-destructive, aspect of The Great Beast which he, himself, referred to as, “The Demon Crowley”. Certainly, stories of his “wickedness”, either fictional as in Wakefield’s case, or purportedly ‘factual’, were and continue to be... Legion. Maybe, as Barry Hale suggests by inference, our illusionary demons are more real than what we take to be our “real selves”?

After all, “The Demon Crowley” is now more ‘real’ than ever was Edward Alexander Crowley.

Stephen Sennitt

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**Brother Curwen, Brother Crowley** compiled, edited and introduced by Henrik Bogdan. 184 pages, hardbound, dustjacket. Teitan Press, Maine, 2010. \$45.00

David Curwen first wrote to Crowley in September 1944, seeking initiation. After a somewhat tortuous correspondence, this finally came to nothing. Curwen had a background of interest in tantra, having made contact with an initiate in South India. Arising from this contact, Curwen came into possession of a Commentary on the *Anandalahari*, the first portion of the larger work the *Saundaryalahari*, and also gained some sort of instruction from his contact.

It is clear from the correspondence that Curwen was looking for further initiation into the Mysteries and the communication of secrets, but at the same time he was wary that he might be defrauded. In one of his letters to Curwen, Crowley responded to this:

*There is, however, another point. That is you seem to suffer from the delusion that secrets can be communicated to you by other people. This is altogether contrary to the principles of the Order which I represent.*

Curwen continued with his attitude of suspicion. Crowley does seem to have been impressed with Curwen’s knowledge of tantra, happy to



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admit to Kenneth Grant that it surpassed his own. Eventually the correspondence led to Curwen's initiation into the IX<sup>0</sup> Degree, a strange affair which finally convinced Curwen that he was indeed being 'had'. Crowley needed another IX<sup>0</sup> initiate to officiate at the ceremony, and thus inducted his friend Louis Wilkinson — who had little enthusiasm for mysticism and magick — into the IX<sup>0</sup> specifically for that purpose. As Wilkinson subsequently made clear in his *Seven Friends*, he had no interest in magick. Not surprisingly, Curwen soon realised that the IX<sup>0</sup> Degree initiate officiating at his initiation ceremony had little interest and even less knowledge, and drew the obvious conclusions.

Soon after Crowley's death, Curwen met Kenneth Grant who took a great deal of interest in the typescript Commentary. Grant referred to the Commentary in several of the volumes of his Typhonian Trilogies, including extracts from it in the penultimate volume *Beyond the Mauve Zone*. Curwen was involved in the early days of New Isis Lodge in the late forties and early 1950s, when his furrier's shop in the Baker Street area was used for lodge workings. It seems, though, that Curwen and Grant had parted company by the time that the Lodge got properly underway in 1955.

The correspondence between Crowley and Curwen here published is fascinating, though it is regrettable that so many of the letters between the two men are missing. What is presented here, however, is fascinating and instructive.

Michael Staley

**Austin Osman Spare — Cockney Visionary.** Limited Edition of 1000 (100 deluxe and 900 standard), pp. 98 plus DVD. Jerusalem Press, "South of the River Thames", October 2010. £60 (Standard) £160 (Deluxe)

When I first read *Outside the Circles of Time* in 1980 it was a copy borrowed from the public library close to where I was then living, in Southwark. I didn't know at the time (and neither, I suspect, did anyone else) that Southwark Council owned a dozen or so items by Austin Osman Spare: original artworks and three first editions,

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including *The Book of Pleasure*. Neither did I discover, until required to make frequent visits to Crystal Palace recently, that the public library there is home to the Gerald Massey archive. These resources may soon vanish; and the contingent, even unlikely, fact of their existence at all comes over in Stephen Pochin's essay on South London collections and Christopher Jordan's piece on Southwark's Spares in *Cockney Visionary*. The other papers included in the book, with one exception, also deal with the temporal and fleeting, and the local aspects of bygone Walworth and surrounding areas that were Spare's home. Michael Staley's essay turns to Spare's more timeless and mystical concerns, though his discussion is, inevitably, anchored in examples of the images, which as physical objects are subject to loss, destruction and decay.

Arising from, rather than being a catalogue of, the 2010 exhibition 'Fallen Visionary' this book, with its accompanying DVD, places Spare in particular context as a South London artist. Here we see how Spare recorded the people he lived amongst, as well as the inner realms that he explored at length and in depth. His work spans, and to a degree chronicles, the changing world he inhabited: the misplaced optimism of the Edwardian era, World War One, the 'long weekend' between the wars during which Spare suffered neglect and privation, the Second World War, and the subsequent renaissance of his magical work. The book boasts 140 illustrations, all reproduced to a very high standard (though a good magnifying glass is recommended for many of the images). The focus, however, is on the small collection owned by Southwark Council and housed in the Cuming Museum; these images in particular enjoy full-page display, and the individual commentaries on them by Dr. William Wallace are valuable as an introduction to the exegesis of Spare's work. I feel that some of the pictures could have been positioned more carefully on the page: 'Mirage', for instance, on page 83 is jammed into the top left corner, and 'The Terrace by Shenley Road' (page 67) disappears into the central gutter between the pages while leaving a large white margin on the right.

Stephen Pochin's essay documents the history of the Cuming collection, a fine example of a 19<sup>th</sup> Century Cabinet of Curiosities, an accumulation of objects which is like "the European curiosity cabinets of the sixteenth century, it is diverse, eclectic and idiosyncratic in nature and embodies the eccentric tastes of the extraordinary individuals who amassed them, rather than any overriding scientific quest or objective." The once-large display drawn from "more than 100,000 objects of an ethnographical origin and ritual significance" would have been a primary source of models for the animals, statues of gods and various

*outré* objects that adorn many of Spare's portraits and help transform his images into gateways to other dimensions.

Into this strange, haphazard collection a tiny random sample of Spare's *oeuvre* found its way over the years. That Southwark's small collection of Spare's work went unrecognized and disregarded by its owner and has only recently come to light is vividly demonstrated in the short essay by Dr. Christopher Jordan. He discusses the gaps in documentation regarding acquisitions and cataloguing, and relates that in the course of "a recent [2007] showing of our collection to Spare enthusiasts at the Cuming Museum a member of staff recalled a work of similar style". People who were there that day may recall that she left the cluttered storeroom in which we were gathered, reappearing a little later carrying "a previously unidentified monogrammed Spare watercolour" which had presumably lain disregarded in some cupboard or drawer until that fortuitous moment.

The DVD included with the book contains the thirty-minute documentary 'The Bones Go Last'. This can stand alone as a thumbnail sketch of Spare's life and times, chronologically ordered into seven stages or chapters. The interviews through which this is done (with Robert Ansell, Phil Baker, Stephen Pochin and Robert Wallis) touch on some aspects not mentioned in the text of the book, such as the question of whether there was a Mrs Paterson, Spare's marriage, and his dealings with Crowley. A telling point, made explicit particularly by Baker, is that Spare's career, as far as outward success and recognition by the art world was concerned, ran a reverse course. A little like Orson Welles, his first work was his most successful and from that over-ambitious beginning his outer career steadily contracted. In Spare's case, left to himself with very few, if any commissions to fulfil, he could indulge his vision to the fullest extent that his restricted finances and circumstances would allow. Regrettably there are large gaps in what can be known about this since Spare lost many years' worth of work, as well as the possessions which might have given valuable insights into it, when his studio (just round the corner from the Cuming) was destroyed by the Luftwaffe in May 1941. Spare's personal survival then was fortunate; and had he not lived on into the 1950s and met Steffi and Kenneth Grant, then what place, if any, would he hold in the history of Art or Magick?

*Cockney Visionary* is a very satisfying and valuable addition to the literature and scholarship on Austin Spare. Though a fine quality production it may, at £60, seem a little on the expensive side; this is justified by the fact that some of the proceeds will be applied to the preservation and restoration of the collection at Southwark. The gallery

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has space for only a very small part of its collection to be on permanent show and at present the Spares do not form a part of that display. How long money will be available to maintain the collection is currently, of course, a moot point.

Edward Gauntlett

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**Voudon Gnosis** by David Beth. Revised and expanded version. Fulgur Limited, London, 2010. 176pp, illustrated. £25.00

In 1975, Kenneth Grant's *Cults of the Shadow* gave many their primary introduction to Michael Bertiaux and the groups he worked with. David Beth is one such person who credits Grant for pointing him to Bertiaux, and thus to Esoteric Voudon. After years of study and practice, David became the head of some of the Voudon Cults that Grant wrote of in his *Typhonian Trilogies*. Some Starfire readers will be aware of Beth's work via Michael Staley's introduction to his *Voudon Gnosis* published by Scarlet Imprint in 2008. Now comes a revised and expanded version of this work, this time by Fulgur Limited.

*Parampara*, or spiritual lineage in action, is the development of the work your teacher has handed to you. David Beth was personally mentored and initiated into the Voudon Mysteries by Michael Bertiaux. He later became the Sovereign Grand Master of the *Ordo Templi Orientis Antiqua* and *La Couleuvre Noire*; and through his published work and teaching and lectures, he has helped revive the Voudon Gnostic Current. David understands that the concept of *parampara* involves the body of work viewed as a living being that evolves and grows. Clinging to a sense of orthodoxy stagnates at best, and in the case of Voudon can only serve to snuff the flame. Shortly after the publishing of the first edition of *Voudon Gnosis*, David felt his work with the OTOA and LCN complete, and moved on to advanced magical research and exchange with initiates in *La Societe Voudon Gnostique*. In his short but productive early time working with the S.V.G., David felt the need to revisit *Voudon Gnosis*, for clarification and expansion of ideas, and to bring the results of new work to light. Much of the new material in the revised edition reflects this work. Fulgur, who had begun publishing

Bertiaux's new material, picked up the project with an enthusiasm that translated into an impressive end-product.

The book itself is a treat to behold. If the devil is in the detail, then Fulgur Limited and Old Scratch must be drinking companions. The dust cover displays an incredible painting by Marlies Beth. Under it, the book cover displays the evocative art of Hagen von Tulien in black against the blood-orange cloth cover that seems to shift shades in the light. Fulgur's Robert Ansell recalled a story of raising eyebrows by requesting the *veve* design on the endpapers to be black-on-black. While sounding vaguely like a Spinal Tap set-up, it works to create a stunning effect. The book is illustrated throughout by S.V.G. initiates von Tulien and Jonas Sen. Limited to 800 copies, there was also a further limited deluxe edition of just 80. Selling out in less than 24 hours, this *Medji* edition raises the bar for talismanic works. Hand-bound in quarter goat, top edge gilt, with handmade paper boards, this inscribed and number edition came in a hand-carved red-lined 'fetish' box.

The contents of the book are equally impressive. Reading Michael Bertiaux's *Voudon Gnostic Workbook*, with its size, odd terminology and abstract concepts, can be a daunting task. In an age when Google is the new grimoire, David Beth set to make the *VGW* and the concepts of Esoteric Voudon more accessible to the seeker. Bertiaux gives David credit for his sensitivity to "the youth-culture of the contemporary electronic age" (p.ix) as he addresses using the *VGW* and its concepts in a concise and modern manner. While *Voudon Gnosis* is a great guide to the system of Les Vudu, it is by no means a step-by-step instruction book. It is more of a "guide by example" or personal journal of how to gain understanding in the Current, which reflects well the individualistic, creative and Gnostic nature of the subject.

Those owning the Scarlet Imprint version of this book will be surprised and pleased with Fulgur's. More than simply a reprint of the previous edition, the original text has been significantly edited for clarity and expanded in the light of the author's recent esoteric work. There are two new chapters in the main text: "Mo Ayon: The Dark Doctrine" and "The Cult of Juju Rouge". "Mo Ayon" covers the ground familiar to Typhonians via Kenneth Grant's *Nightside of Eden*. The qabalistic system is explored here through the Voudon looking-glass, and David gives us the esoteric phrase of the decade: "the Great Wastes of metacosmic darkness". David was initiated into various indigenous systems in his time in Africa, and in "The Cult of Juju Rouge", he discusses the introduction of the *Juju Rouge* tradition into his work with the *La Societe Voudon Gnostique*. With talk of blood magic and necromancy, this fascinating material is not for the faint of heart. At the

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tail-end of the book an appendix has been added which presents four complete rituals that are used within *La Societe*. Add to all of this a new foreword by Michael Bertiaux, and you have, as David describes it, “a comprehensive exposition of Voudon Gnostic sorcery”, (p.3)

One early statement in the book, which may turn off those looking for easy answers, is that there are no significant secrets contained within it (nor in the *Voudon Gnostic Workbook* for that matter). Instead, we find keys that unlock doors to the halls of wisdom. Readers of Kenneth Grant understand well the concept that not all esoteric writing is meant to be understood by the rational mind. David explores the mental and physical workings one must undergo to immerse oneself in the deeper temples of Voudon.

After the reprint of Bertiaux’s *VGW* and David’s work with Scarlet Imprint, interest in Esoteric Voudon is growing, with an increasing number of items coming to print. Fulgur has recently released *Cosmic Meditation* and *Vudu Cartography*, representing Bertiaux’s first new work in 30 years. Both Bertiaux and David Beth have an active publishing schedule of new material ahead, and the S.V.G.’s own journal will see print this year as well. For the curious, *Voudon Gnosis* presents a jumping-on point with clear language. For those wanting something deeper, they will learn to find the keys they are looking for between the beats of the Vudu drum.

Ariock Van de Voorde

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**The Book of Pleasure.** Jerusalem Press, 2011. Large format, 100 pages, illustrated. £44.00

This is a beautifully produced edition of the book by Spare. The text has been freshly typeset, and the publisher has corrected typographical errors where it seemed appropriate. The illustrations by Spare have been scanned to a high resolution from a particularly pristine copy of the first edition, and the quality of reproduction is consequently very high. The whole edition is exquisitely designed and produced, and printed on extremely good quality paper.

This edition includes a contemporary Introduction by Allan Moore, and an essay ‘The Resurgence of Cosmic Identity’ by Michael

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Staley upon what he sees as some of the basic themes of *The Book of Pleasure*. This is followed by the illuminating Introduction by Kenneth Grant to the 1975 edition of *The Book of Pleasure* from 93 Publishing. Then we have the new setting of what many see as Spare's *magnum opus*.

*The Book of Pleasure* is not an easy read, made more difficult by Spare's grammar and syntax. Nevertheless, the locks to the citadel are opened with application and perseverance, and the profundities of Spare's magical and mystical philosophy of the Kia and the Zos become apparent.

Spare's manuscripts of the late 1940s and early 1950s, finally published in *Zos Speaks!* by Kenneth and Steffi Grant, are clearer and more readily comprehensible in my opinion. Nevertheless, *The Book of Pleasure* is the foundation on which that later work is built, and the effort to understand it is well worthwhile.

Michael Staley

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**The New Gods and The Exploration of the Nightside.** Frequency 435. Nightside Publications, Seattle, WA 2010. 112pp. £10.99 (Midian Books Price)

This small book is one of the most densely layered and closely argued things of its kind I have ever had the pleasure of reading. Such precision and rationality does the author, Frequency 435, great credit, as he is mapping mostly unfamiliar territory here; taking Kenneth Grant's conceptualization of the Nightside of the Tree of Life (first covered in depth in the most important occult book of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Grant's *Nightside Of Eden*) and focusing on the Tree's Middle Pillar and how its archetypes interact with their demonic counterparts.

In doing this the author manages to be both ingenious and methodical, providing a thorough and entirely appropriate investigation; in that the subject matter under discussion calls for the touch of an expert detective, as it is a matter of working with 'negative evidence'. In this respect the author treats his qabalistic arcana and mythic

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archetypes like a Sherlock Holmes, sifting through the amassed evidence in order to isolate the one item of data that, no matter how improbable it appears to be, is the only one that explains the mystery.

In other words, Frequency 435 provides a clear and rational exegesis on things more normally sensed by those perceptions usually considered to be 'non-rational', such as intuition and clairvoyance, or oneiric states of varying kinds. Here is proof, provided by a scientific and logical methodology, that the other, darker, weirder world of the Nightside - which has always been suspected to exist and has been encapsulated in mankind's myths, lore, legends and collective nightmares - has a *clear and definable actuality*. It is in this sense that this book is highly recommended.

In addition, the author provides some brief but compelling contextualization beyond the Typhonian-Thelemic nexus in the form of The Process Church of the Final Judgement and theistic Satanism, and also provides two versions of Nightside sex magick workings based on the IX<sup>o</sup> and XI<sup>o</sup> O.T.O. While these rituals look in print as though they would be potentially effective (at the very least on a psychological level), unfortunately nothing is mentioned about the specific qliphothic *Liber 231* sigils or the use of *kalas* in ritual as outlined by Grant, which seems to me a much more powerful and expedient method of investigating the Nightside than Frequency 435's more general approach.

Interestingly, the author says in the letter which accompanied my review copy of his book that he has found many correlations between his investigations and the schemata outlined in my *Liber Koth* - this is very much the case, though my investigations at the point when *Koth* was first published were much less rigorous than what is on offer here. Also of interest is his remark about the funnel-like energy fields which obtain through Da'ath and through the various loci of the evolution/involution process which he identifies at its apex and nadir as the twin facets of Satan, in 'higher' and 'lower' aspects. The only other writer I've come across who explicitly stressed the importance of this Da'athian 'funnel effect' was Gareth Hewitson-May in *Dark Doorway of the Beast*.

No greater praise can be given than to say *The New Gods and the Exploration of the Nightside* is on a par with that influential and much sought-after book.

Stephen Sennitt

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**Wormwood Star: The Magical Life of Marjorie Cameron** by  
Spencer Kansa. Paperback, 280 pages, illustrated. Mandrake, 2011.

Marjorie Cameron is known to most Thelemites through her connection with Jack Parsons. However, it was during the long years after the death of Parsons in 1952 that Cameron forged for herself a place as an intense, gifted and highly-respected artist.

This biography charts her pilgrimage through the often desolate times of the 1950s and 1960s. Cameron had been rather ambivalent about magick at the outset of her relationship with Parsons, but came to view Parsons as her mentor in such matters. There is a series of letters from Parsons to Cameron during the period 1949-50 which are very lucid and inspiring. In the years after his death she assumed his mantle to some degree, being known to some as Crowley's successor, the new Scarlet Woman, etc. To judge from this biography, she used a great deal of sex and drugs in her drive for initiation.

The biography charts her volatile relationship with Kenneth Anger, from her starring role in his film *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome* to the strained relations and bitter disputes of the later 1950s and the 1960s. Whatever feelings Anger had for Cameron, he was enraged by what he saw as her casual approach to the papers and artefacts which she had inherited from Parsons, many of which went missing or were sold over the years.

A strong selection of Cameron's art was featured in the film *Wormwood Star* made by Curtis Harrington, but many of the paintings and drawing there have not survived, being destroyed across the years by Cameron herself in periodic attempts to escape from what she saw as bondage to the past. More recently, there was an exhibition of her work at the Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery in New York, the catalogue of which features some remarkable pieces.

Since the death of Marjorie Cameron in 1995, the copyrights to the work of her and Parsons have passed to the Parsons Cameron Foundation. This was founded in order to promote the work of both, although it doesn't seem to have done much so far apart from the consignment of Parsons' output to some sort of contractual limbo.

Michael Staley

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**Abraxas: International Journal of Esoteric Studies.** Issue 2, Summer Solstice 2011. Sewn softcover, large format, 210 pages, illustrated. £30.00

The second issue of *Abraxas* is double the size of the previous issue, printed on good quality paper, and beautifully laid out with many interesting illustrations.

Amongst the large number of good contributions, one that particularly stood out for me was Edward Gauntlett's article on Peter Redgrove, a varied writer and poet perhaps best known for his superb book *The Black Goddess and the Sixth Sense* published in the late 1980s, as well as *The Wise Wound* written with his partner and fellow-poet Penelope Shuttle. This is just one of the interesting articles, short stories and poems in this welcome second issue.

Michael Staley

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**Thee Psychick Bible** By Genesis Breyer P-Orridge. Feral House, 2009, 542 pp. Limited edition, 999 copies, signed and numbered hardback, with DVD *Thee Psychic Videos*, 93 mins. \$69

Not to seem too facile, but there is definitely an analogy to be made between the punk and new wave/industrial groups that appeared at the end of the 1970s, and the magical and occult currents which emerged at the same time, such as chaos magic.

Looking back from the vantage of the present, a picture would seem to emerge, showing that the substance of the vast bulk of new wave rock/pop music actually sounded remarkably similar to the serious brands of rock/pop music which preceded it.

It was only the fashion of the moment, and 'the shock of the new', which made bands like *Magazine* and *The Clash* seem such radical departures from the likes of *Pink Floyd* and *Led Zeppelin*.

In fact both sets of bands played, respectively, progressive, self-introspective critiques of modern society (*Magazine* and *Pink Floyd*) and

‘sexy’, upbeat, rebellious rock tunes (*The Clash* and *Led Zeppelin*). The difference is only in the approach, style and imagery utilized by the groups in question.

It should therefore be no surprise to find that the material featured in *Thee Psychick Bible* from *The Temple of Psychic Youth* (TOPY), and its leader and most recognized spokesperson, Genesis P-Orridge, should still be so cogent and relevant to today’s scene, irrespective of the fashions and attitudes it evinced throughout the years of its existence. Like chaos magic — which came along at the same time (1979-1980) and influenced, and in turn was influenced by, TOPY — P-Orridge’s punk-like notion was to shake up perceptions of magick and reinterpret it through the lenses of performance art, cult-identity, and most famously through music and video, via such media projects as the bands *Throbbing Gristle* and *Psychic TV*. These seemed like very radical departures at the time, and led on to some of the most adventurous magickal projects I personally have been involved in, having been an ‘ally’ of TOPY from 1987 to its horribly-curtailed demise in 1991.

It is a testament to the seriousness and vitality of such projects that these writings survive so well, and now seem (like the musical analogy I make above, divested of the fashions and attitudes of the 1980s) more clearly relevant and imminent than ever.

P-Orridge avowed to take occult practices, in particular the use of sigils, inspired by Austin Osman Spare, out of what he called the stuffy ‘museum of magic’, or the middle-upper class establishment’s ‘hermetic museum’, and place them in everyday life; thus energizing the ordinary individual, and enabling the finding of his/her ‘real self’ and ‘true desires’. It’s all here, featuring documents such as ‘Thee Grey Book’, the brilliant ‘Levels of Meaning within TOPY’, ‘Time Mirrors’, ‘Sigils’, ‘Thee Green Book’ — *et al.*

*Thee Psychick Bible* is, then, merely an epic collection of TOPY documents relating to, and extrapolated from, this most worthy of aims, and stands as a superb testament to the honesty, integrity and diligence of those involved.

‘Happiness is when the Inside and the Outside are the same’.

Stephen Sennitt

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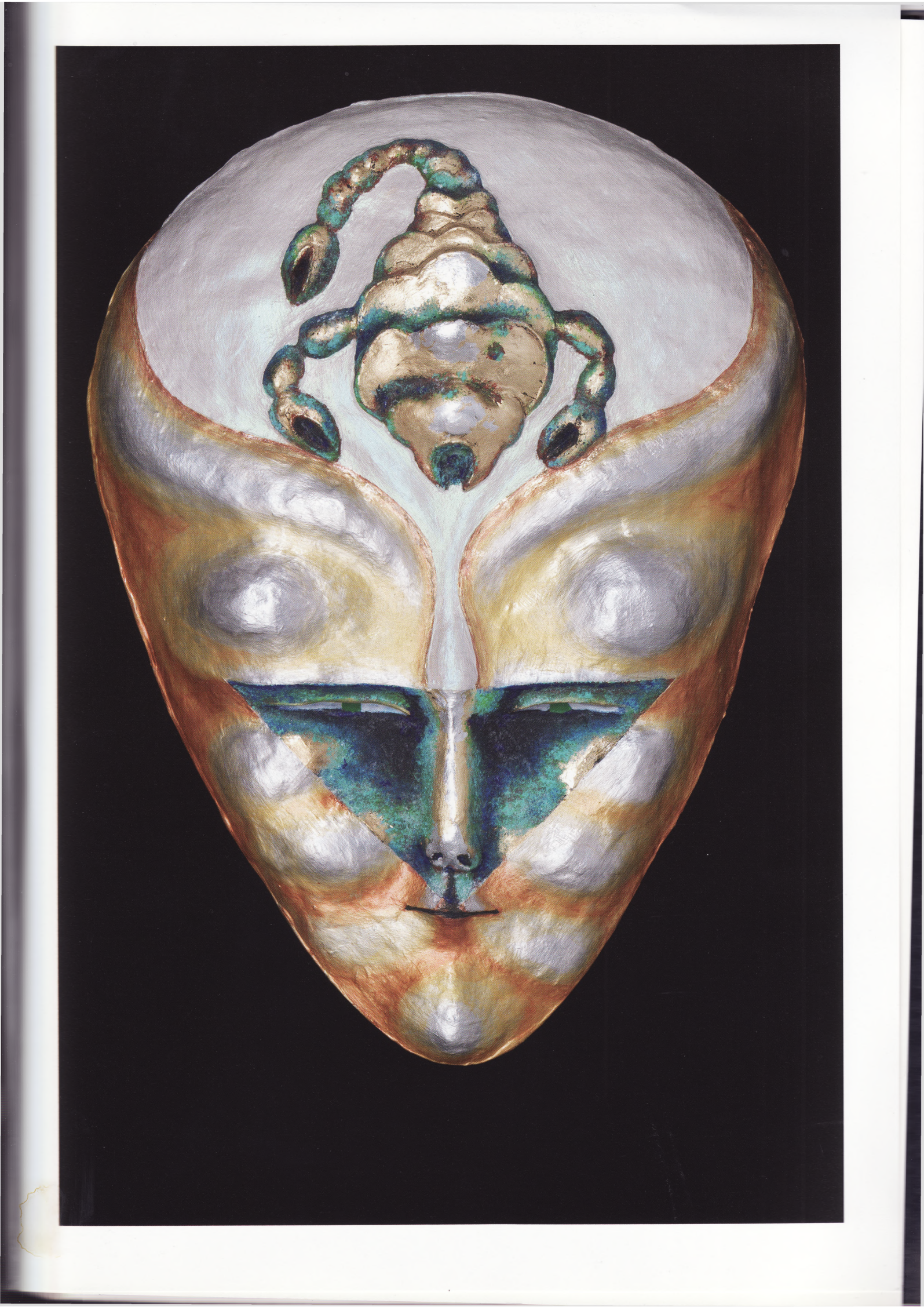
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**ATUA: Voices from** *La Societe Voudon Gnostique*. Fulgur Limited, 2011. Hardbound, 98 pages, illustrated. £35.00

This is an interesting collection of essays upon various aspects of Voudon Gnosis, gathered and edited by David Beth, who has written an Introduction as well as an essay. The book is richly and beautifully presented by Fulgur with a superb sense of layout and some arresting artwork. The common thread is that each contributor is a practitioner of Voudon-Gnosis, and what we have here is an interesting and diverse set of essays which are considerable food for thought.

Michael Staley









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