

ADORATION OF THE IMAGINES ECCLESIA

O Bright Lord of Hosts!
O Holy Virgin astride the Moon!
Overturn'd is the Heresy of Fleshly Abnegation,
For by the body do I create thee,
And by the body do I venerate thee.
Come forth in procession unto mine Eye,
All ye Idols of Christ the Risen:
The Book of God as Sovereign *Logos*,
The Cross as the Gateway of Fate's Decree,
And the Post to which the Old Devil is nail'd.
Rais'd Art Thou, O Bloody Cup and Mortal Loaf
As the radiant objects of Ancient Covenant.
Prais'd Thou Art,
O Hollow Tomb and Risen Corpse!
Prais'd Thou Art,
Usurper and Sanctuary of the Ancient Ones.
Amen.

Idolatry Restor'd

WITCHCRAFT AND THE IMAGING OF POWER



Daniel A. Schulke

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In Media Noctis
Mensa nos Nostrum
Dilectum Convivium
Edimus



Preface

This work first appeared in 2009 as a short article in the British folklore and witchcraft quarterly *The Cauldron*, then titled 'Idolatry Restor'd: Witchcraft and the Imaging of the Divine'. Concerned with the power of the witch to create living images of embodied power, it emerged from a constellation of written and practical works on image-magic which I had engaged for several years, whose most complete textual form is a dyad of books of magical formulae called *Gammæas*.

The first of these, published in 2011, was entitled *Lux Hæresis*, or 'The Light Heretical', an appellation given to the power which animates magical images, as well as the animating spirit of the historical antinomian magical practitioner, particularly the witch. *Lux Hæresis* further concerns the magical powers of the human sensorium and how they can consciously be used in receptive and creative modalities, i.e. to both experience and empower images. This arcanum is a matter of interest to all practitioners of magic, no matter what their tradition, and, by extension, those who, as part of

their spirituality or religious practice, interact with or create images of power. As much as it is a work of magical ontology, *Lux Hæresis* is also a grimoire or manual of operative witchcraft. It is thus written specifically from the standpoint of the lore of traditional witchcraft, and more particularly of the folk-magic and sorcery embodied in the witchcraft order *Cultus Sabbati*, of which I have been a part for thirteen years. Over the course of its history, this eremitic magical society has been honored to count many original artists amongst its adepts, who have drawn their image-making forces and forms from the dark and ancient wellspring of the medieval Witches' Sabbat. This primal ecstatic rite, laden with a vast and disturbing multiplicity of Primordial Selves, is itself a rich magical substrate of images. These visual forms occupy a nether region between the nascent and the represented, arising in the twilight of consciousness to eclipse the usual constraints of sensorial experience. Embedded deep within the forgotten bodies of the Flesh Autochthonous, they are roused to life by the Magical Artist, and assume forms terrifying, grotesque and beautiful. The relation between these magically-realized images and the spiritual current

of the Cultus itself is both complex and perpetual, a means of linking the Dead with the Living, and the Living with the Flesh yet unborn.

The second part of the *Gammæas* dyad, still forthcoming, concerns the actuated or living embodiment of those principles set forth in its predecessor. In this work, the axiomata of 'The Light Heretical' progress into their enfleshed forms, and the entire range of Sabbatic Aesthesis is projected through the sensorial body of the witch. Through this specific modality, re-presentation of power ceases to be 'art' and becomes Entity fully-manifest.

Subsequent to the first publication of the essay, and after accepting several invitations to participate in public and educational discourse on the subject of Occult Art¹, I determined that the essay 'Idolatry Restor'd' was in want of an evolved body, one able to accommodate material too lengthy or obscure for inclusion in the original article. In its re-visioning I have sought to write specifically from my personal perspective as a 'Sacred Idolater' — a creator of

1. Occult Artists' panel, Esoteric Book Conference, September 2010; "Occult Aesthesis", Art Center College of Design, July 2012; "Occult Art and the Power of Hand & Eye", University of Southern California, March 2013.

Preface

magical images, placing emphasis on the many interior understandings which arise as a result of vision, figuration, embodiment, magical congress, and ravishment by the spirit of the Muse. This approach transmigrates the station of the image from catalogued object, merely possessing material attributes and provenance, to the realm of the sentient, also partaking of Fate. *Idolatry Restor'd* is thus primarily written for Magical Artists, those who produce images of power as parts of private magical operations, devotional worship, or as ciphers for interior occult knowledge. Through the gestation and birth of such images are the Hands and Eyes of the Artist exalted, and the Face of Spirit cast anew into the World.

Daniel A. Schulke
Hallows, 2013 e.v.

1

IMAGO AND SPIRITUS

The concept that certain objects contain and emanate magical power, sometimes given the name Fetishism, is ancient and has assumed myriad forms. The image-making powers of sorcery, and its attendant set of rites, are also encompassed by this secular term. Veneration of such objects as divine, termed 'idolatry' in the Abrahamic religions, has variously been viewed as a sin, error, crime, abomination or heresy. In contrast, from the perspective of the practitioner of image-magic, the concepts regarded by outsiders as fetishism and idolatry are part of a greater complex of magical knowledge and practices which permits varied levels of engagement with spirituous power. Whether such *wyrd*-infused images emanate bane or blessing, it is their sacrality of origin and use, transcendent of external definition, which, in part, elevates their power.

Witchcraft, because of its syncretic nature, partakes of multiple infusions of traditional image-making lore, including not only sorcery and religious iconography, but also the sciences, astrology, medicine, craftsmanship,

the fine arts and magical ontologies closely resembling totemism. However, because much of its magical images are used privately, and indeed are created for a limited set of viewers, they participate in a concentrated alembic of exposure wherein all who experience them do so principally in the context of magical practice and devotion. This intensity of private magical interaction provides a locus which enables the image to transcend its medium – and indeed that fetish known as ‘icon’ – and generates living *numen*. This is one essential distinction between images made by practicing sorcerers, and images made about them, from those outside their arena of magical operation.

In using the term witchcraft, I refer here not merely to the deeds of witches as imagined by the Christian Inquisitor or classic anthropologist literature, where such were defined purely as magical malefactors. Rather, in addition to the ideas accreted to the historical form of the *maledictus*, I speak of the art of the sorcerer, usually rural or marginal to society, who holds traffic with spirits and makes use of both healing and harming spells. This zone of definition penetrates many eras, and milieus, including juridical, heresiological, literary and

artistic. Of greater import than all of these to our study are the actual practices exacted by these historical practitioners, which are preserved as archaeological remains — and in the teachings and practices of the modern inheritors of these magical traditions.

The modern occult embodiment of traditional witchcraft, itself a reclusive and tightly-knit body of practitioners whose practices relate to those of the historical cunning-folk, is also an inheritor of a number of traditions of image-magic.² Consisting of small groups preserving teachings of archaic rural magic, these traditions are taught orally, passed from master or mistress to apprentice, in a direct person-to-person means of initiatic transmission. Though rooted in the past, this corpus of magic adapts to the present, and is self conscious of an envisioned magical future. As an initiate of these traditions, this body of knowledge, in part, informs my understanding of these subjects as expressed in the present treatise.

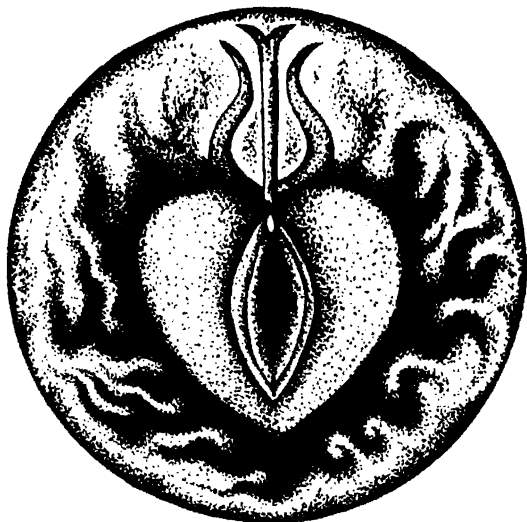
² For germane works on cunning-folk, see Thomas, Keith: *Religion and the Decline of Magic*; Wilby, Emma: *Cunning Folk and Familiar Spirits*; and Davies, Owen: *Cunning Folk: Popular Magic in English History*. I have excluded Wicca, as it self-defines as a religion, as opposed to Traditional Witchcraft, which is defined by a body of magical practices.

Scholarly investigations of image-magic in witchcraft have focused largely upon figures used for malediction. This is often because of the tendency of many researchers to define witchcraft principally as malevolent sorcery.³ In addition many such images, as a consequence of their purpose, were fated to become part of the archaeological record, sealed in walls, thrown into wells and springs, and inhumed under earth. The waxen image, seal-inscribed parchment, and curse-mommet have all been the subject of scrutiny, and recur in varied permutations in historical manuals of witchcraft and grimoires. Many such images are deemed crude in their craftsmanship, at least by the standards of art history, contributing to their lay perception as objects of ignorance and superstition, or, at best, 'folk art'. The exemplar of the sheep's heart, pierced with hawthorn spines and nailed to a door as a spell to stop gossip, is a case in point.⁴

Aesthetically, some lesser-known witchcraft images would seem to display precisely the

3 Historically, this definition also obtains in strata of society where witchcraft is feared.

4 The charm is an attested witchcraft fetish in early modern England; an early written reference to it in Northern France can also be found in Guidon's *Magic Secrets* of 1670 (2011, pp. 13-16).



opposite characteristics. One of the most striking objects of this kind on record, referenced in Ewen's *Witchcraft and Demonianism*, comes from an illustrated parchment found in 1606 in the chest of a Hertfordshire witch. It bore a central image of a human heart, from which radiated "very curiously divided braunches, on which hung dangling things like ashen keys", as well as delicately elaborated arterial termini detailing very specific portions of human anatomy. The owner of the parchment admitted to its use for sending magic to cause bodily harm, much in the same manner as a thorn-

pierced effigy.⁵ This example reveals a high degree of imaginal complexity in the origination of witch-imagery, and an almost scientific, or empirical, approach to cursing.

Enchanted Images of witchcraft praxis often serve a strictly sorcerous function, being vehicula of spell-craft and manifestation, as opposed to the veneration of a spirit or god, a dynamic more often present in religion. The large number of Mandrake charms extant in folk magic, where the natural or carved root is used as a fetish, bear witness to this. Mandrake sorcery may be considered a specialization of both image-magic and herbalism, historically found in witchcraft and cunning-folk practice⁶, but also in alchemy and ceremonial magic. The pattern common to all is the Art of image-magic, the Fetish serving as the embodiment of sorcerous desire, or as the manifest form of a familiar or *Magistellus*.

Cunning-folk traditions, and surviving corpora of charming practice, have within their

5 Wilby, Emma. *Cunning Folk and Familiar Spirits*, p. 43.

6 Rowlands, Alison. *Witchcraft Narratives in Germany: Rothenburg 1561-1652*, p. 73. The roots in question, where they have survived to endure scientific scrutiny, are often found to be plants other than Mandrake, such as Bryony. Beyond considerations of fraudulence, these substitutions evidence an imbedded tradition of European Root-witching resembling those in American Hoodoo.

communities an advanced set of images and regalia which exemplify a confluence of spirit-veneration and magical utility. Many of these objects can be found conserved in such places as the Museum of Witchcraft in Boscastle Cornwall, and the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford. The Cornish charmer Cecil Williamson, whose training intersected some patterns of cunning folk practice, was an adept maker of magical images, and several of his talismanic seals, composed for the concentration of specific energies, still reside at the Museum. There is also a series of photographs taken of Williamson demonstrating the grave art of making a curse-poppet.⁷

Similarly, some modern traditional witchcraft groups, drawing on the roots of their traditional cunning-folk practices, reckon the holed stone or 'hagstone' as a repository of feminine power, its central hollow having been formed by the forces of nature and serving as a simulacrum of the *lumen* of the Goddess of the Sabbat. Likewise the witch regards the 'Stone God', an oblong stone naturally shaped like

7 Cunning-folk traditions were not limited to the British Isles, but were found elsewhere, such as colonial North America and Scandinavia, for which see Tillhagen, *Folklig Låkekonst*, Stockholm, 1958.

the *membrum virile*, as the telluric embodiment of phallic virtue, and used as a surrogate for the God during rites of sexual magic. Their respective magical uses encompass the power of the Holy Icon, but importantly also serve as the sexual surrogate during ecstatic rites where the witch 'mounts the gods'. In this transcendental state of carnal reverie, Object and Spirit are co-identified and the boundaries between their states of identity are effectively eradicated. The state of physical alienation thus generated by transposing the sexual act from the realm of the human-relational into the realm of 'Other' assists in incepting a magical consciousness of praeter-sexuality.

The Richel-Eldermanns Collection, an assemblage of ritual objects and drawings residing in the previously-mentioned Museum of Witchcraft, presents one of the most potent examples of image-magic in the modern European magical traditions. While clearly linked to the arcana of the sex-magic practices of the modern magical orders O.T.O. and A.:A.:, there is also a strong and persistent component of rural cunning-craft⁸ and witch-

8 For example, instructions for the making of hunting snares for stalking and extracting roots of wild *Mandragora*.

iconography which is grafted, in varying degrees, to complex ceremonial formulæ. Part of this collection is a series of skillfully-carved wooden hands and genitalia, some united with sigillic forms such as pentagrams to form enigmatic magical regalia. Given the uniqueness of the images, as well as the detail with which they were produced, it is reasonable to surmise they were ritually-hallowed anatomical simulacra of initiates of the sexual magic order *Ars Amatoria* (of which Eldermanns was Magister) or, perhaps the more obscure *M.:M.:.* The collection, when considered as a whole, is a sound exemplar of a unified iconography within a magical order, but one arising from diverse pathways of magical aesthesis via the hands of many different artists and practitioners.⁹

Ritual veneration of images – or *eidolatRIA* – is challenging to document in historical witchcraft practice; many such images or figures are presumably concealed within cultic shrines, or as heirlooms in private collections. The so-called Hendy Head of Anglesey, a face carved of red sandstone in the manner of other

9 The eildolic form of the entity GOTOS, whose presence and magical function is subsumed within the German Magical Order *Fraternitas Saturni*, is another example of a vivified magical image present within a modern magical order.

ancient Celtic heads of the region, is in present times by cultic rites¹⁰ similar to some forms of image-veneration in traditional witchcraft. We may also consider the wandering head of Atho, a horned countenance carved of oak originally in the custodianship of English witchcraft practitioner Raymond Howard, since stolen. This large effigy, bearing some resemblance to the Dorset Ooser of Dorchester, is carved in a rustic and eldritch fashion evocative of the Janicot, the horned witches' god. Though it was later revealed the Atho head did not possess the antiquity Howard initially claimed, the rites of its veneration, its curious symbolism, the magnetic folklore surrounding it, and its sudden disappearance present a fascinating example of twentieth-century image-magic in the Craft.¹¹ More recently, witch-iconography present in Andrew Chumbley's grimoire *Azoëtia* utilizes several ancient magical visual grammars, notably the stele of the Near Eastern and

10 Ross, Anne. *Folklore of Wales*, pp 69-71; 151-154. In *Druids: Preachers of Immortality* (1999), Ross cites the persistent veneration of ancient bog-offerings in Ireland, such that those living near the bogs in modern times do not remove votive depositions for fear of ill luck (p.68).

11 Seims, Melissa. "The Coven of Atho". See also Howard, Michael and Jackson, Nigel, "The Bull of the Golden Horns", *The Cauldron* No. 88, May 1998.

Mayan religions of antiquity¹²; images of the Witch-guardians or 'Passionate Retinue' in Chumbley's *Dragon-Book of Essex* most closely approximate polytheistic iconography.

While the ritual veneration of images is often associated with religion, its practice in witchcraft is often compounded with other magical techniques that classify it as sorcery, or, at the least as part of a cult of spirit-congress. In the witchcraft Traditions of the Cultus Sabbati, the figure of Cain is one example of such image veneration which may be publicly documented.¹³ However, if one puts aside the images and artifacts of modern witchcraft orders — even those capable demonstrating some degree of historical linkage with the cunning folk magic and popular sorcery prior to the twentieth century — the preponderance of evidence for magical images in association with

12 The stele was also a preferred talismanic medium of the British artist and occult mystic Austin Osman Spare. As is often repeated in occult folklore, Spare's connection to witchcraft was, through the legend of the 'Witch Paterson'. From the perspective of technique, however, it is his imagery and mystical writings which demonstrate a clearer link with witchcraft, especially concerning the ancestral cult and the aesthesis of the Witches' Sabbat.

13 Chumbley, Andrew D. *The Dragon-Book of Essex* (1997, 2013); Schulke, Daniel A. "The Perfum'd Skull," *The Cauldron* 116, May 2005; Fitzgerald, Robert. "Consecrating the Skull of the Master", *The Cauldron* 135, February 2102.

magical images in association with witchcraft lies in their magical use, rather than in their veneration.¹⁴ This does not, however, negate their status as images of power.

Some years ago, whilst sojourning in the West Country, I was shown an imagic object of alleged cultic worship and witchcraft practice which, according to its present steward, had been used in this manner by fellow adepts of that tradition for ten generations. Indeed, the particulars of the item would place its manufacture in England, somewhere between the late sixteenth century and the early nineteenth century, a span of 150 years, and precisely the period from which some modern traditional witchcraft lineages in Britain claim descent. Upon examination, it was clear the object had been both ritually venerated and well cared for, but this no more proves its history as an image-artifact of witchcraft than any magical anecdote which cannot be independently confirmed. However, it was also evident that, whatever the facts of the idol's history truly were, there was no doubt of its owner's conviction in these matters, nor of its present power of imagic fascination.

14 Merrifield, Ralph. *The Archaeology of Ritual and Magic*.

2 ICONOCLASM

Implicit in the theological argument against idolatry is the dictum that venerating images as an act of spiritual devotion is in itself evil, false, or, in other instances, heretical, an 'error'. The religions which so vehemently condemn idolatry have, however, venerated idols of their own. Yahweh, the god of supreme primacy of the Hebrews, who decreed a ban on polytheism and image worship in the second and third commandments of the Decalogue, was, in prior centuries, a war god among many other deific forms in the Canaanite pantheon.¹⁵ The Hebrew Idols of The Ark of the Covenant and Teraphim stand out in this regard; *Nehushtan*, the Brazen Serpent, served as the Medicine of Deliverance until it was proclaimed an idol and destroyed. King Solomon, respected by magicians and the faithful of Judaism and Christianity alike for his impeccable wisdom,

¹⁵ A fourth century BCE silver drachm bears the striking image of the deity Yahweh seated on a winged wheel, though the significance of its inscription YEHUD is disputed by some scholars.

was known for keeping and venerating numerous idols in his temple, in particular the Phoenician Astarte.¹⁶ It may be argued that the Temple of Solomon itself is one of the supreme idols of Judaism, having come to embody the divine presence of its chief deific form. A further dimension of its emanative power of is the wisdom embodied in its magical architecture and construction, permeating Jewish and Christian magic, and beyond into occult orders and secret societies such as Freemasonry. Exemplars of image veneration in Islam include the Black Stone of the Kaaba (*al-Hajar-ul-Aswad*), an object of supreme veneration and, according to some Islamic lore, a meteorite or tektite.

Indeed Genesis 1:26, wherein the voice of Elohim utters "Let us make man in our image", presents an epistemological paradox for the believer. To the Christian who abhors idols, the power to create and animate images is either the sole preserve of the Demiurge, or an infernal wellspring of demonic *energia*. In

16 King David danced naked before the Ark of the Covenant, as was the ancient tradition for venerating statues of Baal. Here we recall the words of the traditional witch Robert Cochrane: "Begin a ritual with movement—which is the correct way to greet an alter—(sic) and end with sitting still."



either case, the faithful are presented with the dictum that the first act of vivified image-making originated with the supreme deity, together with the notion that image-making and veneration is an abhorrent act.

Despite ancient religious bans upon idols and their worship, the Holy Images of the gods persisted in the inheritors of Rome, itself a great reservoir of effigy and idol magic. The 'triumph' of Christianity over older religious imagery was dealt a blow in the early Renaissance by the rediscovery of ancient pagan iconography in subterranean grottoes, and its gradual incorporation in the design

elements of gardens, architecture, visual and literary art.¹⁷ Whilst the Gods of Old Rome and Greece were not officially revived in religious cults, the surface images of European culture suggested precisely the opposite, intimating an ingression of ancient power, via *aesthesia*, into the art and magical philosophy of the present. Embodied in these images were attributes of divinity absent in Christianity, particularly nudity, romantic sexuality, license, fertility, and the virtues of wildness. Thus was the outpouring of sexualized 'pagan' imagery permitted in the context of ornamentation and philosophical contemplation, even whilst Protestant iconoclasm raged during the Reformation.¹⁸

This Persistence of Image also occurred within Christian iconography, and passed, as a stream, into local religious experience through the monuments, texts, vestments, and relics of the Church. Where such images encountered complimentary folk belief, syncretism occurred, as has been the case for thousands of

17 Godwin, Jocelyn. *The Pagan Dream of the Renaissance*.

18 Iconoclasm, or the destruction of religious iconography for political or religious purposes, has an ancient pedigree in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. For a window into the mind of the Early Church on these matters, see Tertullian's *De Idolatria*.

years, and was adopted by the endemic template of magical practice. Thus to the Christian, the Crown of Thorns is the symbol of the kingdom of earthly suffering. To the witch, it symbolizes many things, including the stance of the Adept as the Kingly Assumption of Ordeal: not, as some would have, as the agency of victimhood or martyrdom, but as *prima materia* to be transmuted into Alchemical Gold.

The prohibition and destruction of images, especially those of spiritual or magical significance, betrays a particular split personality of the Sublimated Demiurge: the religious drive to consecrate raw materials for images of power, and the impulse to neutralize that power through destruction of the created image. Rationales for iconoclasm often become skewed, especially where they maintain that idols are 'merely' images and contain no divine power: such reasoning implies an inert object, incapable of inciting emotion, inspiration, or any other state of consciousness in the beholder. In this case, destruction of the images would be unnecessary because of their impotence, but also due to the impervious sensoria of those who behold them. The culmination

of the cycle of Iconoclasm may thus be seen not only as fanaticism, but also an implicit acknowledgement of, and an assault upon, the powers inherent in the human sensorium –the magical potentials of beauty, ugliness, and the Imagination itself.

§

Witchcraft, as a tradition of magic, is an Art. It is also, as its name implies, a craft, suggesting the action of disciplined fashioning. As part of its image-magic handiwork, the practitioner of witchcraft may subvert the errors of Iconoclasm by embracing it as a conscious magical process. When an object is created, part of its process of manifestation is the knowledge and intent that it will be sacrificed, as an offering to the spirit-allies of the sorcerer, his fellow adepts, or his ancestors. Such are the *Formulae* of Iconoclasm.

The *Formulae* are exacted by any number of ritual procedures, but the most common is the sacrificial pyre. Such sacrifices are referred to in some witchcraft circles as ‘marriages’ because the image, or earthly form, is wed by magic to the flame, and the resulting union

serves not only a propitiatory function, but also to liberate specified qualities of power. The bond of betrothal is absolute, because sacrifice and flame belong to each other, and none other; as with the sexual act, the sacrifice relies on the committed totality of each, burning until each is spent. Knowledge of destruction-in-creation thus operates at a sexualized level, preparing both bride and bridegroom for their nuptials, and serving as a driving ethos of aesthetics. Not only must the image be worthy of the fire, but the fire must be worthy of the image, kindled to great heat with holy and fragrant woods. Their union, as part of the realization of each enchantment must be perfect, the compound image of their conjunction forever impressed in memory, and in the aethyr, rather than on paper, canvas, or wood. In this manner the troglodytic rage which typically afflicts Iconoclasm is transubstantiated to ecstasy, holiness, and divine glory.

PARADOXA

I

An Idol is raised in the Temple of the High Holy God, and receives praise and libation. On seeing the statues, the Affronted Ones crieth aloud: "mine eyes offend me" and so, in accord with the scriptures, they pluck them out. All offense is thus put to rest, save that of the eternal castration of Discernment.

II

By decree of the Patriarch, the Temple of Jupiter is ransacked and its images destroyed. The Cult is declared anathema and criminal, and upon its rubble is raised the Basilica of Saint Whomever. But in this act of Iconoclasm, a thousand more sinister Idols are created: the histories preserve these *simulacra* in their record of the rape of the Old Gods by the insane acolytes of *Christos Troglodytus*.

III

Reducing it to its scattered portions, an image is comprised of flakes of paint, linen fiber, gums and other pigments. But it is also formed

of passion, of genius, and an haunting of the spirit serving to adhere its many powers. Such are the hordes the Daimon of Art, perpetually called to muster, in eternal assemblage and fragmentation.

IV

The Works of the Master are copied to gain knowledge of technique, and the discipline of commitment to manifestation. Those who vaunt them as original, or as genius newly-emergent, not only besmirch tradition, but would also deign reduce the gods to speaking with the voice of the Ape.

V

The inward face of the Witch's Circle radiates the familiarity of the alien; the outward face of the witch's circle betokens the dark alienation of the familiar. Only by mastering both may the Witch conjure all forms.

VI

Formula of Iconoclasm: let the Artist go forth beneath the Veil of the Mistress Despoina, there to sunder the Image in sacrifice, portion by portion, according to pleasure. If the pleasure

is mutual, he shall be rewarded. If pleasure is found wanting, the Artist himself shall become the Immolated, sundered limb from limb.

VII

Separation of the Image from the substance of its maker constitutes the Primal Iconoclasm: the moment of Fragmentation of Self. Where this obtains in the constructs of magic, three worlds are enriched; where it occurs without empowered intent, a pernicious vacuity shall result, emptying the Vessels of the Muse.

VIII

In the Arena of Witchcraft, Self is not singular, but a Unity of Many. Perpetually emergent from latency, the *ingenia* of the Body may generate an infinitude of visages, each with the ability to project an imagic form, or to serve as the animating shadow behind the Mask.

IX

Formula of Iconoclasm II: Magical Images, as the fire-begotten Children of Re-presentation, ever rely upon the Wisdom of Assembly. Let then All perceived by the senses be magically fragmented within the Sensorial Void, each

portion to serve as a Master to the Apprentice. When each has showered favor upon its disciple, let these teachings, strange and rare, serve as the empowered atoms of the Demiurge, ever to manifest the cosmos according to Will.

X

A Cult of Destruction emulates the fates which Matter itself is subject to: even Terra Mater thrusts her mountains into the fiery chasms, only to raise them up again as new Earth. But in their zeal, let not hubris constrain the piety of the Cult: they too shall be annihilated, in a sublime act of sacrifice unto their god.

XI

Perfected Forms represent a Singularity of Artifice, with a highly constrained set of possibilities, and a narrow modality of manifestation and perception. Where Inspiration is similarly constrained, seek amid the rubble and ashes of the Fallen for those embers which still glow: let the Magical Artist, no matter his level of attainment, each day destroy and make himself anew.

3

OPTICS OF WITCHCRAFT

As a matter of its unconscious function, the organ of the human eye is evolved and trained for the assessment of its surroundings. A portal admitting light and darkness, it is connected to a larger sensory complex which constantly strives to impress meaning upon all that it sees. Willed usurpation of this instinct occurs during ritual devotion to, or adoration of, images such as statues, magical seals, ikons and paintings, as a unique modality of sight is in force. Separated from the usual drives to assess, the Eye is connected to the emotive body of the Heart, as well as the sensorial contours of the flesh, and visual experience may thus be realigned to tactility and motion, connecting what one sees to what one feels, rather than thinks. Being a different form of experience, the image is experienced not in terms of its defining criteria, but rather its relational stance to the magical Self, or its deified status as an essential occult power.

And yet, where the rites of image veneration are concerned, Devotion in itself is an act sufficient to require no modifiers, as is Love. The relationship of a devotee to his gods or spirits therefore embraces special criteria of relation such as humility, receptivity, and the level of trust between Power and its recipient that allows for trance, vision, and ecstatic rapture. Accordingly, this acknowledges the crucial position of Self in the magical formula, and devotion is not therefore merely a 'selfless' religious act, meant to empower a priesthood: it is part of a reciprocal relation to spirit, part of which is empowerment, through ecstasy, of the Adorant. Such is axiomatic between Lover and the Beloved.

This principle is also active in images that have no known relation to spirits, gods, or entities other than the imagic representation itself. If an image delights the Eye through visual æsthesi, mundane perception is usurped and the emotive body is engaged. This action occurs as a natural part of religious fervor, magical ecstasi, and indeed sexual devotion.

A petroglyph marked on a lone boulder or standing stone will embody distinct powers for those who initially inscribed it as an act of cul-

tic or artistic activity. As a ruin, encountered centuries later by a different body of people, it will not convey the same set of meanings, nor even the same fundamental dynamic of viewing. But its essential and embodied power remains and, it may be argued, operates in a limited magical fashion, beneath the mantle of present awareness, due to the beholders' lack of origination-reference or 'insider knowledge'.

For the practitioner of the image magic, the danger of such encounters is not that the 'vulnerable' subconscious mind of the later viewer is penetrated by an unknown and potentially hostile force, but rather that the perceptual impediments of the modern eye prevent such a possession. Lack of origination-reference does not imply the absence of reference: the aforementioned witnesses will carry with them knowledge and assumptions arising from semiotics, history, archaeology, nature, time, and art, to name an important few. Magical perception of the object, therefore, is impeded by successive cascades of mental and ocular processes attempting to 'define' the Object and thereby subverting the magical sensorium. These processes, most of which operate at strata below consciousness, are artifacts of deeper

deeper demons, namely unexamined empiricism and fear of the unknown. In essence, the sensorial permeability which fosters gnostic and ecstatic experience is blocked due to conscious, irrelevant projections onto the glyphs. Therefore, where unknown runes are encountered, they are best greeted by the magical inception of a state seeking to prime the sensorium as an empty vessel.

THE SALUTATION
OF THE
UNHEWN STONE

Arranged in silence and presence before any object, one becomes acutely aware of his location in space and time. Each temporal detail of the surrounding environment is experienced consciously and separately as individuals, rather than as a contiguous and ambient whole, and the exercise is conducted rapidly, like beholding individual leaves upon a tree. This simultaneity of individualized perceptions is gradually increased until the sheer quantity of sensorial impressions eclipse the conscious operation of the exercise. At the moment of greatest experience, one allows all

things perceived to pass beyond their sensorial criteria. The same perceptual exercise is then undertaken with the magician himself as its focus. Finally, the Object of Fascination.

This principle is advanced from passive to active forms in the Art of sigilization, whereby primitive principles underlying the formation of the phonetic alphabets are engaged anew. In higher operations of this sorcery, sigils are not only invested with quintessence but also with belief and non-belief.

The Eye & The Circle

The Prime Sigil of the Witch is the Circle, the vivified image of which is created in the same context as its veneration –the High Sabbat. The magic circle is thus the Arena of Eternity, its respective orientations, according to difference in lore, may include the Compass, the Mill, the Plot, the Charnel Ground, and the Wheel of Breaking and Making.

To the witch, the Circle is many things; one being the Singular Eye of those Spirits collectively assembled at the Sabbat. Comprised in equal measure of Void and the Flesh of the Adepts, its empowerment is thus as a magical



organ of mediation between the sorcerer and the legions conjured. The function is thus a stage of mutual perception between the Gods and Flesh; where this state of perception is invoked as a specific power, the act of Iconogenesis emerges within the three ocular shrines of Witch, Spirit, and Circle. So are the patterns of time, life, and the heavens enshrined.

It is the circle's relation to the shape and structure of the Eye that gives it especial power over image creation. The pupil, as the circular portal admitting light, the iris as its master, the retina as the web to gather images from a swarm of photic information. Despite the human tendency to portray images in rectangular aspect ratios, this is not the manner in which the eye itself perceives image, preferring instead an ellipse, bounded by phantasms and uncertainty. Peripheral vision, as a function of its differences from the central field of vision, contains the zones where ghosts manifest, but at the same time, it may be empowered as a zone of witchcraft, both for perception and transmission of power.

CIRCLE: INTERIOR

CENTRAL VISION

CIRCLE: EDGE

PERIPHERAL VISION

CIRCLE: BEYOND

UNSEEN

In the physical world, the perception of an object at a distance presents a tableau of congress which admits influences of every other object standing between itself and the eye which beholds it. The nearer the object is to the eye, the lesser the impact of tangential objects upon perception, but the respective perceptual states of near and far each provide important apertures of power, that being object (near) and context (far). Additional phenomena such as light and darkness, atmospheric phenomena such as cloud or mist, all participate in the greater tableau. For the adept, engaged in the magical dynamic of seership, the object in question need not be separated from its context, for it provides additional powers augmenting the arcanum of the object, both seen and unseen. Total focus on the object alone is useful for meditative states, but by nature excludes power. At the zenith of ocular understanding, we must as ever return to the Circle, for what is true of the Witch's Eye is also true of the Body Whole.



The parameters of perception applicable to the visual organ may also be consciously extended to all corporeal apertures of sensory congress.

Image as Magical Artifact

A magical image may produce hypnotic or intoxicating effects under certain conditions of viewing, similar to, and sometimes exceeding, those incepted by the ingestion of narcotic poisons. This occult radiance is the result of careful and skilled encryption of power during

the process of image-creation. Successive layers of meaning serve prismatic functions of collection, concentration, separation, and recombination of magical radiances, such that a portal of ingress — a means of entry into the Arcanum — is granted the perceptor, but at multiple levels of reification. Obviously, the potency of such emanation is proportionate to the skill of the Artist and the receptivity of the Medium, but the unskilled viewer may readily become influenced by an ensorcelled image, albeit unconsciously. Other types of altered consciousness may result from these imagic forms, such as physical ecstacy, possession¹⁹, intrusive horror, transcendent mystical revelation, and spontaneous visions. Indeed, it is this ability of magical images to generate states resembling narco-aesthesia²⁰ that often differentiate magical images from the nonmagical, at least on the basis of activity. This analogy with drugs or poisons also opens the way for

19 To possession we may add the peculiar state of *aethyric extrusion*, or the ejection of Self thrown beyond one's personal aethyric field. In a willed state, this takes the form of the wayfaring spirit-double, and is referred to as 'Going Forth By Night' in the Sabbatic Cultus. When extrusion is accidental, it precipitates considerable chaos in the mind and body.

20 *Narco-aesthesia*: sensorial ecstacy arising from the use of drugs or poisons.

consideration of two perversions associated with magical images: addiction and overdose.

Images which are strongly encrypted as magical artifacts are usually designed to be perceived in a magical context, i.e. ritual or sorcerous action, whether it be the thaumaturgic strain of sorcery or simply devotion to a particular spirit. When such images are moved beyond this field, their emanative qualities become distorted, though their internal power remains strong. In this manner, they become objects of fascination transmigrated beyond the *logos* into a realm of pure essence.

Like a seismograph, a magically-created image receives multiple emanations from unseen forces and weaves them into a cohesive graphical manifestation. This reception is both passive, as in the propensity to harness ambient mood and emotion, and active, where kinesis becomes the operating mediator of artistic vision, preserving and encoding magical gestures. Various strata of information thus exist in any Magical image and may be accessed through sorcery or ritual. Co-identification between sorcerer and object may complete the loop, as in magico-sexual practices employing witches' fetish objects such as the Stone God.

Amalgamation of such ritually significant objects may, through certain operations, concentrate their force and efficacy for incepting states of liminal awareness, in a similar manner to the Buddhist *stupa*.

When realized according to cultic principles, the idol occupies a moment of constrained temporal power, extended into the future. This embodiment finds its natural expression in the concept of the coin, an artifact which in ancient time originally bore the images of the deities. Graven with the likenesses and emblems of supernatural powers, the gods were wed with their terrestrial counterparts in the form of precious metals, themselves the result of sacrifice, whether paid in the blood of war or the sweat of the mines. In this manner a threefold formula of spirit-matter-sacrifice gave rise to the embodiment of the Idol as coin. Freely circulated, each man and woman partook on the mystery of the god through the possession --and spending-- of its coin. In time, the likenesses of the gods were replaced by mortal rulers, signifying a debasing of the Idol. Similarly a corresponding debasement of the precious metal occurred, and alloys gradually weakened the purity of the metal, until at last,

today's numismatic descendants, in the form if modern currency, depict neither gods nor contain precious metals.

Allied with certain elemental attributions of the Disk or Pentacle, the function of the Coin in Sabbatic Witchcraft seems to have adopted some of the conscious cynicism of this eidolic decline, frequently allying it with Judas, an heretical patron of witchcraft but also of corruption and treachery; or of Abel, vain lord of the profane and worldly flesh that Cain, the body of the Sabbatic Adept, must slay. The word *coin* may also be used in these contexts to evince a betrayal.

A Christian corollary of the eidolic coin retaining strong fetishistic qualities was the medieval *Agnus Dei*, a wax sacramental disk impressed with an image of the Lamb of God and a papal sigil, consecrated with chrism, balsam and holy water, and used for private devotion. Possibly derived from earlier pagan praxes involving carrying of wax talismanic seals on the person, some of these disks were fortified with so-called 'martyrs' paste', dust ground from the bones of martyrs. The disks were used to protect their owners from disease, provide protection during childbirth, and ensure success in



battle.²¹ A curious witchcraft association with the Agnus Dei is the Draconic Coin of SA, which each initiate must forge individually as an offering to the atavistic / ancestral retinue of spirits. Ideally forged from the impressed earth of an animal's footprint, as well as the 'substance of Man', the coin is emblematic of Cain and the horse he rides, thus the Witchcraft Adept and his or her relation to power.²²

21 Cornelison, Sally J. and Montgomery, Scott B., eds. *Images, Relics, and Devotional Practices in Medieval and renaissance Italy*, pp. 144-148.

22 Chumbley, Andrew. *The Dragon Book of Essex*, 'Sa: The Rite of the Turnskin'.

Relationality and the Witches' Glamour

Witchcraft is haunted by the concept of the glamour, which posits an outer illusionary form projected by the witch as a form of sorcery. A well-known example of this is the transmogrification of a grotesque and elderly crone into a comely and nubile maiden, or vice versa. Both of these female physiomorphs are deeply rooted in the iconography of witchcraft. The conventional esoteric understanding of this mutability has rested upon several assumptions, the first of which is that one of the two faces is real, and the other illusion. However when both forms are abstracted beyond the realm of the absolute-corporeal, they are liberated from their fleshly moorings and participate in a shared continuum, thus possessing equal measures of the 'real' and 'unreal'. That both, as perceived forms, emanate from the origination-point of the witch, indicates a mutual indwelling of forces and forms within a shared arena of power. Thus, the common point of origination and the interchangeability of projected types blurs precise demarcations between the 'real' and 'imaginary'.

This should not be surprising, given the degree of liminal types and magical stances indwelling witchcraft. An axiom of magical imaging inherent in this example is that the *numen* or vital indwelling force of a thing, may grant it a more coalesced and compelling form in 'reality' than an actual physical body. Thus, in this state of reckoning, the 'real' is no longer anchored to the physical.

The second unacknowledged premise is that these two witch-types are opposites. Most often these polarities are first perceived as existing on a continuum of age: youth and elder. However this assumption is illusory, for in such a scenario the maiden would be replaced by a female infant, thus patterning the Dawn and Twilight of the Wytchan priestess. The nubile witch and the crone are, rather, polarities on the continuum of female sexual fascinum: one of attraction, the other repulsion; one of waxing sexual foison, the other of waning barrenness. Both of these projected witch-powers, as imagic projections, fulfil specific esoteric functions in both witchcraft iconology and the Grand Rite of the Sabbat. Additionally, each rely on imagic power which specifically disrupts modes of



perception in the viewer, rendering them vulnerable, either to allure or to revulsion.²³

There is an additional stratum of meaning in the historical example of the sexual glamour: the implication that the image-making power of the witch is directly associated with the body, especially the arenas of magical sexuality, resonated through multiple layers of ritual enchantment. This alignment of creativity with the sexual selves is a natural correlation, due in part to its procreative aspects: the reproductive potentials have been expanded beyond a biological mandate into the spheres of image generation and sensual perception, fecundating the act of re-presentation, whether it be a magical image or the appearance of the witch herself. These principles are greatly magnified through the simultaneous development of artistic skill, sexual magical practice, and understanding of the perceptual fields of those who encounter the image. This latter criterion suggests that the production of all truly magical images is ultimately congressive, whether the Image interacts with a person, a spirit, or the

²³ Intentional congress between such powers is suggested as a magical formula for the 'destruction of personal aesthetic culture' by Austin Osman Spare in *The Witches Sabbath*.

empowered Eye of the Artist. Within the Sorcerous Atelier, the perfected body resulting from image-magic is not a foetus, but more akin to the *homunculus*: generated of the magical self-coition of Artist.

Though part of its wellspring lies in the vast sexual strata of the witch, the glamour as a practice of corporeal image-magic may be extended beyond the realm of sexuality and the body itself, to ensorcel other imagic forms. One of the simplest of these is the sigil or magical glyph, which may attain form by a variety of routes, including sexual iconogenesis. Yet the indwelling *numen* of the final reified form is abstracted beyond conscious perception, such that it embodies an occulted principle, a shadow or glamour, of its interior fire. Conscious engagement, such as the perpetuation of the sigil through writing or carving, is but one of many magical routes of access.

Images of witchcraft exist in the realm of sorcery, to operate primarily as conduits of power according to the design of the adept. Born first of the emptiness beyond Self, their perfected forms arise in response to a fluctuation of congressive power which rises many strata before the logoiic. Inhabiting first

the æthyr, then the dream, then the dark fields of atavism latent within the incarnate flesh, then magico-sexual corporeality, then creative awareness, then the intellective mind, they cycle through these states, gaining incarnative form, and ultimately manifest through the Eye and Hand of the Artist.

In consideration of this, the Idolater-Artist cannot ignore the phenomenon of multiplicity of interpretation – an image may mean one thing to an initiate, versed in the rituals of its parsing and decryption, and yet may mean something entirely different to the uninitiated. Thus when fashioning the image, the Artificer of the Divine Image takes multiple viewpoints into consideration, and allows for their mutuality. Symbol is thus rendered in such a manner that it presents itself anew with each reading, according to context, and the unique mind of the reader. In this manner, the same words may be read by a thousand different eyes, and have a thousand different meanings, all of which are true.



Concealed & Revealed Images

Historically, a substantial number of witchcraft artifacts have been discovered buried, secreted in the walls of houses, under floors and cross-roads, and at the bottoms of wells or springs. Despite their appearance as imposing material forms, their creation doubtlessly included the intent that they were to function at peak level in an environment of darkness and secrecy, hidden from sight. Because of Witchcraft's hidden nature, the vast majority of its work — from the active sorcery of rituals and spells to the material embodiments of its Fetishes and magical instruments — remains concealed. Its outer representations thus serve as mediators, self-conscious of their stations as liminal, and partake of a duality of reference: the Signified and the Potentially Signified. Both states convey unique power as individuals; working in tandem they generate a field of magical influence allowing the expansion and rarefaction of Belief. As a Magical Formula of the Sabbat, this principle allows for the construction of the 'Open Vessel', a station which, though its boundaries exemplify extremes of structural integrity, is nonetheless vulnerable to penetration of its interior.

Effigy-Consciousness

In folk Christianity, where sorcery and religion are often unacknowledged bedfellows, the discovery of miraculous images buried underground, in streams and wells, represent a distinct form of spirit-intercession. Such images were more than the phenomenon of *pareidola*, and included the discovery or appearance of what the sorcerer would call fetishes: statues, crucifixes, and other objects. In particular, the Marian cult was especially rich in miraculously or 'self-revealed' statues; and it was the event of revelation itself, in addition to the sacred objects themselves, which formed a crucial component of the magical experience and reificatory power. The initial finding of the holy objects may have been part of a greater magical circuit preceding the event, including prayer, pilgrimage or dream-revelation. As William A. Christian notes, these discoveries later led to the establishment of holy places and shrines *in situ*, and formed an essential bridge between Christianity and the powers of Nature among rural practitioners.²⁴ These magical manifes-

²⁴ Christian, William A. *Apparitions in Late Medieval and Renaissance Spain*. This revelatory tradition also includes the 'revelatory' discovery of the corporeal remains of the Saints.

tations echoed the epiphanic discovery of sacred idols in earlier ages, such as that described by Pausanias in the cave-shrine of the goddess Despoina:

the throne on which they sit, along with the footstool under their feet, are all made out of one piece of stone. No part of the drapery, and no part of the carvings about the throne, is fastened to another stone by iron or cement, but the whole is from one block. This stone was not brought in by them, but they say that in obedience to a dream they dug up the earth within the enclosure and so found it.²⁵

A similar relationship to 'revealed' holy and numen-bearing objects endures in the ancient Tibetan Buddhist and Bön traditions of the *termas*.²⁶ The state of 'revelation' consists of a state of contact with a zone of power conceived of as being 'beyond self': the spirit-world, the Otherworld, or simply 'Otherness'.

²⁵ *Description of Greece* 8. 37. 1 - 8. 38. 2

²⁶ Tibetan གཏུར་མེད་ *gterma*, 'hidden treasure'.

*The Witches' Sabbat
As an Origin of Magical Images*

The magical unearthing or excavation of magical images in times past possesses a counterpart in witchcraft, in the spontaneous emanation of bizarre visions and sensations associated with the Witches' Sabbat. Writers on contemporary witchcraft practices have previously noted that the Sabbat, being the primeval rite of the *lamia*, often produces distortions of time and space, as well as kindred sensorial grotesqueries. The Sabbat contains a disparity of magical elements such as absolute mental focus, sensory overload and deprivation, extreme physical exertion, as well as, in some cases, the use of magico-sexual technique and the ingestion of psychoactive preparations. Although any one of these elements is often sufficient for incepting a flood of magical images, it should be remembered that a great number of witchcraft rites make use of none of these techniques and instead rely wholly on the conjuration of spirits and deific forms, the presence of which creates an distortion of form, of which author Peter Hamilton-Giles has recently written at length.²⁷

²⁷ *The Afflicted Mirror: A Study of Ordeals and the Making of Compacts*. Three Hands Press, 2013.

As a natural consequence of the ecstatic states thus induced within the Witches' Circle, imagic abberation extends to the entire sphere of experience within the Grand Rite itself, including both its recollected memory and its immediate impress. In describing the subjectivity of the initiate's experience of the Sabbat, Andrew D. Chumbley noted this irruptive phenomenon with particular descriptive force in his essay *Wisdom for the New Flesh*:

To some this Vision is full of glorious imagery, where angelic nymphs will lead them carousing and singing to feasts of delightful superabundance. Yet to others it is an infernal pilgrimage, traversing gulfs of pain upon ladders of knives, jostling with concupiscent hordes of half-formed Satyri and Succubi unto the oft'-bloodied altar, where the Anus of the Goat is kissed as though it were the tender lips of a Proserpinian Virgin.²⁸

Overcome by a flood of sensorial activity on both interior and peripheral levels, the varied perceptual gateways of the body of the adept struggle to establish coherence. When being

28 "Wisdom For the New Flesh". *Starfire* 1994.

subjected to the vagaries of this hyper-sensual storm, the distinction between the pathway of the witch-adept and the shattered vessel often lies in the willful suspension of the ordering of perception. Surrender to this deluge of alien revelation, rather than attempts to impose mundane structure or sense upon it, allows the genesis of a transcendent magical state. Although such consists of giving oneself wholly in trust over to the possessive state of 'beyond' or 'otherness', such is the very rubric of *ecstasis*.

Aside from the diverse magical techniques of witchcraft and the effects upon perception caused by the distorting presence of manifest spirits, another important component of the Witches' Sabbat is the forceful overshadowing of the conscious Self by the Atavistic Body, that being the sentient latencies of pre-incarnate Being which are roused either deliberately, or by accident, by the magical transgress of the senses. As I have recently noted in a separate paper elsewhere²⁹, the vivified Ancestral Substratum of the body is a defining feature of Sabbatic Witchcraft, and likely one of its oldest magical strands.

29 'Anatomies of Shadow' *The Cauldron* No. 149.

The depths of the human psyche contain an infinitude of images charged with power, whether having their origins in emotion, historical experience, dream, psychosis, phantasie, or the figurative realm of occult practice itself. These strata, interpenetrating the atavistic, are amplified in the rarefied magical arena of the witches Sabbat, which possesses its own visual ciphers serving as rudimentary zones of power. Ever-present, they penetrate all acts of power whether intentional (as sorcery) or ambient. In the distorted temporal fields of Sabbatic reception and projection, the Artist-adept may partake of these natural imagic strata, not only as Muses but also for the understanding which arises as a result of the recombinant graphical forms. In their receptive forms, they are the material of theophany, in their projective forms, they are the very pigments and brushes of the occult artist.

Magically, these upwellings from the Atavistic Reservoir are experienced in particularly visual forms, not just through the distortion of image, but through actual mutation of form, whether it be the assumption of morphological or wisdom-attributes of bestial-dæmonic forms, or the observation of those characteris-



tics in others. The frequent depiction of such forms in the elder iconography of European witchcraft serves as a reminder that the conflation of human and animal states — a classic feature of shamanism — was at least compatible with popular conceptions of witches, who assumed the ritual therianthrope forms within the bounds of the Sabbat (part human, part beast) or as part of the ritual of night-flight thereto, where winged and nocturnal creatures such as the bat and owl held prominence.

During the ecstatic frenzies of the witches' night-conclaves, each of these assumed atavistic

states offers a visually perceived form (as seen or experienced sensorially from without), as well as a unique perspective experienced within. For example, the sudden spiritual overshadowing of a priestess by an owl-form, or its selected bestial organs, may provoke horror or fear in those who witness it, no only because its appearance is unexpected but because its figuration is incongruous with both Owl and Woman. Yet, the one directly experiencing the descent of the Daimon into her flesh may enter into a sublime reverie which offers a uniquely empowered window of perception. Each perspective, Seer and Seen, offers the Magical Artist a wealth of tutelary power concerning the figuration of spirit and occult energies. Both perspectives may be drawn upon in the memory of the Artist, for the willed overshadowing of aesthesis, long after the Sabbatic revels have ceased. Further, the use of graphic representations created during such reveries, in the form of images, letters, shapes, and seals, or gestures used in their creation, may serve as concentrated gateways for returning to such states, and offer this power in accordance with the skill of the Artist and the force of the initial possession.

4 ICONOGENESIS

In the magical re-presentation of sorcerous fashioning, form, otherwise determined largely by utility, is determined both by magical function, and the Arcanum of its presiding spirit. Material corpora thus devoted as conduits of divine power are magically reckoned as the gods or spirits themselves, above and in addition to their more common conception as 'portals' by which to access that god's power. Thus an entire array of such cultic objects ceases to be 'tools' or 'instruments', and becomes instead Legion: an Assembled Host.

Where vital spirit-presence attends, this ethos of magical fashioning is operative across the entire spectrum of witching objects. In any consideration of fetishes, any number of these objects might be referenced, but the Witch Bottle, given its well-established historical record in relation to witchcraft, is particularly appropriate. Such artifacts naturally include the iconic salt-glazed bellarmine jug of the

16th and 17th centuries, but also representations in glass. Exterior forms of these artifacts varied from grotesque bellarmine countenances to visually neutral forms, but their interior forms were remarkably similar: pins, nails, thorns, sharp bits of bent iron, knotted cords, hair, sigilised parchment, and urine, forming the 'organs' of the embodied spirit. Given that the magical functions of the bottles — as is currently understood — was remarkably similar, their morphology implies of an entire ethos of sorcerous molding, one which allows great freedom for the artist, but also which has definite patterns and protocols of conception. Still other witchcraft usage of vessels included 'spirit traps', as in the bottle-trees and witch-balls of North America, and their use as concentrators of spiritual force in both Essex and Derbyshire traditional craft, also follow these historical patternings to a greater or lesser degree. In all cases both the magical process of fashioning of the vessels, as well as their appearance, are accompanied by an embodied presence which can be distinctly perceived, even by those who are not particularly disposed to magical ideation. Though possessing strikingly different powers, Cauldron, the Cup, bowl, and the

Poison Bottle are all part of the kinship of the witch-vessel, though each partakes of a separate magical pedigree. Other specialized vessels also obtain, such as those fashioned and dedicated for specialized sacramental wines, the vessel and liquid being 'of one being', i.e. united as Entity.

In consideration of magical image-making, the following traditional methods are asserted, proven to the benefit of the work. Before power assumes form, its formless attributes are invoked; thus is conceived the precise shape of the space it shall occupy. This conjured shape is not only dimensional, it embraces powers, desires, constants, and deviations. The potential presence of each is known and prefigured by the character of its absence. To the operation, this is the state of being equivalent to the Circle itself, the Virgin Ovum prepared for connubium.

The same considerations hold force when the raw substance for the Image is gathered up from the heart of the world. When spirits are cast in metal, we obtain virgin iron, bronze, copper, silver, or gold, and hallow the ingots with the seals of their spiritual governors, even before they are melted and cast. Likewise, we

hallow the furnace and all tools thereof to the ancient and sovereign gods of making: Azazel, Tubalcain, Hæphestos, and Vulcan.³⁰

Pre-incarnate sorcerous conception, impressed upon and within raw material consecrated for Effigy, participates in an understanding peculiar to traditional witchcraft, which has been called *The Fates of Matter*. This is the idea that the embodied spirit or god dwells in a dreamt state prefiguring the formation of the Idol. This dream is the foreshadowing, within wood, clay, stone or metal, of the cartography of the possible. Such Fates are not certainties but rather predilections and proclivities - lines of recognized fortune that may mark the material for a particular 'divine' purpose. When these converge with the inspiration and calling of the sorcerer, a revelation of Fate is made that marks the substance as chosen for the Idol.

The use of the Libation — sacrificial blood, sexual fluids, narcotic wines, and prepared philters — form the umbilicus of the Work. Aside from the phantasmal tether binding the

30 Alchemic patination of metal, serving the magical parameters as an animating fluid, may be accomplished by using suitably acidic or alkaline formulae, such as urine, blood, salts of copper, liver of sulfur, and verdigris. For those versed in the Mineral Work, the possibilities are endless, and frequently hazardous.

image to its creator, it is also used as *mumiya*, the ingressive and generative substance of the Idol. The libation is an emanative means of spirituous procreation, its sacrament being the magically elevated products of the incarnative Self. Through conscious magical separation from the carnal host, the Seed goes forth beyond Self and becomes Other. If it find purchase in a receptive Womb, the Effigy is awakened. The Division which occurs in this moment of sacrifice must be absolute in its magical will, desire and belief — as well as its consecration solely to the purpose of empowering the image.

With each image made, the Magical Artist becomes encrypted in the material substrate of form, though in a distorted sense, as the ingenuity has processed outside the temporal bounds of Self, and thus beyond familiarity. This process occurs regardless of conscious awareness and may result in a reciprocal grotesquerie: the Self-perceived-as-other. The most skilled images thus made produce a distorting effect on the perception of the viewer, though such often initially lurks below consciousness. When realized, the image gains the ability to access the world as an eidolon of the Artist, be

yond the constraints of the physical body. The reverse is also true: one who partakes in sensorial congress with the image may also access the chosen *eidolæ* of the Artist.

This magical formula, which has passed through the ages in various forms, is sublime and may be successfully accomplished by the solitary Mage, but if it can be maintained as an efficacious operation by a supremely focused body of adepts, its power may be vastly quantified. Such is one pathway of the High Sabbat, in which the sum emanative sexual force of all adepts aligns to manifest the Infernal Protoplast, the prefigurative form of the Opposer and the Black Man of the Sabbat.³¹ Although such rites are traditionally theurgic and used for the Witches' Theophany, they may also be used to concentrate power and vitality within a magical image, or other cultic objects borne of sorcerous fashioning.

Blood and sexual secretions may also form the basis of magical pigments, inks, and paints. This latter method appears in the work of 19th century American magician and mystic Pascal Beverly Randolph. His work *Magia Sexualis* detailed the doctrine of the Living Magical

31 Identified with the Devil in British and American folklore.

Picture, which may be magically charged to exert influence over the beholder. Such images are animated with Fluid Condenser, a preparation containing plant essences, blood, and human sexual fluids, and 'insulated' with gilt frames. Citing older magical operations for animated paintings, Randolph says:

Of other receipts we see, that if one mixes into the paint some drops of the blood of a pure virgin, who is offered, after this, to the pleasure of a succubus, one may give formidable power to a living picture.

The mумic emanation, ritually produced, should bear the deific impress of the god or spirit to be animated, and ideally is extracted during ecstatic possession by the entity.

We may also consider the relationship of Sigil, Amulet and Talisman to the Idol, as they are graphical, abstracted forms of spirituous powers, accessed initially through the sensorial arena of the Eye. The animation of figures by sigillic inscription, or by automatic engraving, is a procedure well known in many witch-circles, and an ancient component of magical image-making. One particularly germane

antecedent is the *golem* of Jewish mysticism. As part of its magical awakening, the figure's forehead was inscribed with the word *emet* (truth); this bears similarities to the ancient Egyptian servitor figurines known as *ushabti* ("answerer"), as Moshe Idel has noted.³² Where focused trance can be maintained for the duration of sigillic impress upon the image, it potentiates the process of actuation, and delivers the aethyric shadow of the written cipher, as formulated by the Grand Triangulum of Art.

These principles also apply to wood, cut from the Greenwood with suitable offering, or hallowed stone, quarried direct from the flesh of the Earth by one's own hand. In all cases, in accord with the doctrines of the Fates of Matter, the artificer must recognize the raw materials of the idol as an organ of the deity long before they assume any iconographic shape, and relate to them thus magically.

§

32 *Golem: Jewish Magical and Mystical Traditions of the Artificial Anthropoid*, pp. 3-4. Idel also notes the similarity of the ancient Greek story of Prometheus and Dolus.

FORMULAE OF ICONOGENESIS

I

The Word is invoked in the name of God; its slaughter and suppression seeds the Field of Image. The Field is fertilized with the Elixir of Copulation, prepared in strict devotion to the image's animating spirit. When living blood is poured out into the furrows, heads erupt from the soil. The Field is abloom with faces.

II

A severed head is animated by black magic, and in the course of its awakening serves as a prophetic oracle. But it is the act of severance, rather than the spells and seals that accompany it, that grants the head its power. Such is the font of all Living Images, being the artist's willed self-decapitation and transmigration of spirit from the body into the canvas.

III

Tension in re-presentation between the preconceived and the spontaneous prepares an habitation for spirit. Either may become a Tyranny: when usurped by the Artist, ingenium procreates.



IV

Particularly potent scenes of images witnessed from life of horror, ecstasy, suffering, rapture, creation, and destruction, may become impressed in the memory, retaining the power to haunt over time. This marking of the Mind's Eye mimics the physiological action of the carnal retina. Such fixed images, when unconsciously formed, may become despotic, and indeed possess the beholder to an eventual pathology. The Magical Art, however, may utilize such potent experiences for empowering personal gods. In like manner to Idols, they may move from the sphere of the imaginal-

obsessive to the manifest-devotional. Care must be taken, however, during this transition, that the process of embodiment leaves much to chance, for the artist must be as much medium as engineer.

V

Living Images act as portals, through which the Eye passes into Beyond. Dead images turn the Eye elsewhere ...or else attract a swarm of detritovores.

VI

Devotion and Ardour shall intervene where the Hand and Eye admit passion in equal measure to skillful exaction. The rough-hewn heathen idol may hold discourse with the finely-chiseled god of marble, and indeed may subdue it, performing ever greater miracles.

VII

Through the manifold carnal bodies generated of inspiration, flesh may copulate with flesh within the singularity of the Artist. Where Hand and Eye are met in this hidden bedchamber, manifestation of Image may be reciprocal, harmonious, and oppositional in simultaneity.

VIII

Unexamined Ego is a grotesquerie of Mind, whose influences pollute the Blessed Amnion of the gestating Image. From it proceeds the Ape, enemy of the Artist. Let Mind therefore endure careful scrutiny, that its minions be clearly tasked, and the Heart gain ascendance as the progenitor of imagic forms.

IX

The power to conceive and awaken the Living Image is great, but greater is the power to be ravished by it, and emerge as Flesh Anew.

X

The Living Image is as a Book unto itself, being but the surface manifestation of its hidden radices. Successive fields of emanation radiate outward from the image, each a text and subtext. The subtlest among them emerges from its hidden interior – the Citadel of the Divine Artist.

XI

Extrusion of Self beyond the bounds of the self-conceived may be crystallized in the form of Other, as an emanant attaining absolute

sentience. And yet for this to occur, the umbilicus, once it has served out its Fate as a conduit of nourishment, must be severed in bloody sacrifice, lest both Self and Other be strangulated in the Fields of the Equivocal.

XII

The Heresy of Animism embraces the Light of All-Enchantment: if All lives and self-conceives, then the all-relational, through Art and Congress, is possible.

XIII

The Monument is not erected to create a mark by which one will be remembered, but rather which will magically incept a state of Remembrance in the flesh of the present, to supremely empower futurity.

XIV

A statue is rais'd in the Forum, and showered with roses and blood by the hordes. In time its fame and genius are firmly fixed in temporal Dominion. But the Effigy which arises in darkness, and is carved and adored in Secret by the *via mystagogia* participates in the Secret Connubium of the Imagic Wedding. Its power and presence are fixed in Eternity.

XV

Formation of the Graven Image is a crystallization of power, according to the mandates of metallurgy and sorcery: as the cast metal cools, its crystal structure solidifies its form. Similarly, its imagic particulars also endure a crystallization of form which, like the Stone itself, references a concentrated reification of power. Thus, the Image becometh in flesh a simulacrum of stone, whose animation and life is aided by the otherworldly source of its origin, and the worldly source of its veneration.

XVI

The Living Idol is the body of the adept, raised from the estate of *hyle* to the station of god. This is achieved by the constant discipline of overcoming the vain delusions of Self, each as an intruder slain singly in the sacrifice of illumined power. In the Congressus of the Art Magical, let all adepts thus be adored.

XVII

The Body of the Beloved is the Living Idol, in whole and in part to be adored with magical formulæ, more so than any Image of Brass. Through the act of exhortation, libation, and

the Divine Caress, all flesh is augmented with the procession of divine intelligences, and expanded beyond its present form within the Circle of Art. According to this art, an infinitude of statues may be made: living, dead, and asleep, filled with strange dreams of their wondrous awakening.

XVIII

Our self-manifest Angel draws her material form from the collective flesh of the body of the initiates, the Great Circle of the Sabbat is her Womb. When arising as a collective inspirational node from the Great Congressus, the sense of *otherness* which arises in the percipient becomes reciprocal, and the once-prefigurative draws breath.

XIX

Formula of the Emanant-I: with the genesis of magical images, a moment arises when the execution of form eclipses both meaning and mundane understanding, and is an extension of Pleasure. At this moment, the rigid architecture of the Temple vanishes, and only its porticos remain, the *pronaos* of the ever-oncoming rush of spirit-horde.

XX

The Hidden Image, if truly magical, dwells in a space beyond mundane mediation and representation. Within this aethyric sanctum, a tension is generated between the Hermitage of the Unrevealed and the field of possibility which lies beyond it, a state of undifferentiated power like unto the Desire of the Virgin, the Formless-seeking-Form.

XXI

Where the Eye lacks magical empowerment, Ego becometh as the Unconscious Mirror of Void-Self, endlessly disgorging entrails.

XXII

The witch seeks not to unmask the Masked, but to perceive Mask and Face as One in congressive totality, power, and potentiality. Such is the nature of Sacred Idolatry, and of occult images.



5 TOWARD SACRED IDOLATRY

Folklore of the British Isles, as well as elsewhere in many lands, relates that the elder race of earth-dwelling spirits, the Faerie or Good Folk of Elphame, have from the most ancient times taken offense at the presence of iron. The presence of the taboo against ferrous metals is widespread in customs of plant-gathering and herb-magic, and has passed into various magical customs of spirit-conjuration, enchantment, and folk medicine. Like the calamity of faerie-haunting itself, the matter of iron taboo in magic is regarded so gravely in some contexts that its very presence is sufficient to abrogate the power of magic.

Whether this persistent teaching arises from belief or knowledge, it has direct implications for traditions of magical image-making, particularly since these precepts have filtered into witchcraft lore. In my own practice as an herbalist, certain magical operations, as I have learned them, specifically require use of the

bronze knife and pot, but the options for obtaining these when they were required were unacceptable to me. Through the guidance of dream, spirit-patrons, and the turn of Old Providence, I undertook apprenticeship in bronze foundry in early 2005 with the intent that items be made of my own hands, and in dedication to the powers they would serve. More than simply a means to an end, this act assumed responsibility for my own path, and in essence 'cast myself anew' through the *wyrd* of the Foundry. Much like the aspirant who stands at the edge of the Witches' Circle, as a novitiate of Bronze I was subject to the instruction and transmission of a Master and Mistress, destroyed and literally made anew by the fires of the gods. As a means of offering myself to the Work of Image-making, such was the sacrifice required, but also resonant with what had come before: the Gods of Shaping are no strangers to witchcraft.

The Biblical figure of Tubal-Cain, the 'first instructor in every artifice of brass and iron', and a descendant of Cain, has come to a rôle of prominence within certain convocations of Traditional Witchcraft. Within the Cultus Sabbati, the historical route of his entrance into

the Craft is likely through both Freemasonry and smithing-guilds, but, more recently, through Romany-Chovihani teachings concerning the figure of 'Old Tubalo'. As the earthly son of Lamech the Hunter, he is seen to preside over the art and artifice of metal; as the descendant of Cain, he embodies the inheritance of transgressive Fire of the Art Magical. In his Draconian aspect of Tubalo-Lucifer, he is the conduit of celestial fire, the shaper of the Adept in the Forge of Initiation, and the Arcanum of the Herald of the Dawn.

My foundry work has had a profound effect upon my experience of these ancient powers, allowing the understanding of craftsmanship to augment magical power. Through the vehicula of metal and fire, the crucible and the forge, the Presence of the Spirit of Metal assumes dimensions beyond those previously understood. In addition, the wisdom-teachings of Old Tubalo have deepened my active knowledge of the metallurgic aspects of Alchemy, which I have long studied.

Sacred Idolatry, or attainment of inner gnosis through sensorial perception of outward form, harnesses at once the tri-form sorcerous moduli of Ingress, Egress and Congress; it



achieves this by the unifying the gemini of Embodiment and Transcendence. The Fascinum of Sensorial Congress becomes a unitive enchantment, transcending the dual nature of Self and Other. In this wise, Self is to Other as Idol is to God; together the dyads form what Giordano Bruno calls 'The Living Mirror', and what the Witch calls the Plot or Field of Art. Containing all things, this Field is fixed in its state of being all-giving, but is also suggestible, as it contains the shadows of all things. The Living Idol is thus the correctly-rendered fleshing of Divine Void; the Sum of Entity infinite, and the Mask of Entity finite.

As with perception and veneration, the reification of witching-images must of necessity occur within the Circle of Art, whether such takes place in solitary worship, or in the High Sabbath itself with many congregants present. Origination of such objects and images is ecstatic; their purpose ultimately votary, Gnostic, or thaumaturgic. Each image conceived within this crucible is indeed become the literal embodiment of a spirit, spell, or other magical formulation, but also a temporal record of that diablerie which has transpired.

To the adept of the Sabbatic Mysteries, the *Imago* must transcend exclusively visual sensoria; all organs of sense may thus function magically as “eyes”. Thus the Arena of Reception, which serves as the conjured Field of the Sabbath, is comprised not only of the Eye, but also the Hand, Mouth, Phallus, Kteis, and other diverse anatomical gateways.³³ The living skull, in particular, is venerated as the Temple of Dreaming, and as a point of ingress-egress of the spirit.

³³ The five senses, as empowered magical intercessors, are referred to by Andrew Chumbley as ‘Pathways of Mediation’, stressing their liminal position between ‘Self’ and ‘Other’ and their function as gates allowing ingress and egress. Their applied unity is Telaesthesia. *Azoëtia, A Grimoire of the Sabbatic Craft*, Xoanon 2002 (1992) pp. 224-227.

These occult *principia* give rise to a different manner of "Seeing", wherein the Eye functions not only as the gateway of visual phenomena but as the sexualized extension of the sorcerer's Will, interacting in congress with the world. As expected, these expanded moduli of "Sight" also expand the frontiers of Magical Aesthesis beyond the constraints of the Image to all of Nature. We are familiar with metaphors for keen eyesight such as 'a penetrating gaze', perhaps initially referencing the active component of what is otherwise considered a passive sense. But the ability of the Magical Eye to penetrate zones of power, and be penetrated by them, is also implied, and this sexual symbolism is especially relevant for the making of occult images. This has far-ranging implications for the initiate of Witch-Mystery, especially amid the metamorphic synaesthesia of the Sabbat. Perhaps more than anything else, it reveals the Sexual Fascinum ever-present in perception, and thus redefines the Nature of the Beloved.

This ecstatic magical technique employs the medieval virtue of Phantasie as the active, image-making imagination, and it assists in the three magical spheres of reception, veneration, and reification. From this perspective, mun-

dane idolatry is worshipping a deity in visible form, and Sacred Idolatry the power and practice of venerating the divine in sensorial forms of all kinds, up to and including the act of Congress. This is not an argument for common sensualism; rather it is the living reality of the sorcerer who has hallowed all physical faculties in devotion to the Art Magical.

Given the importance of the Eye in image-making and veneration, the implications of religious condemnation of idolatry upon magical praxis are profound. Taken to its logical conclusion, adherence to its law would require a person to be blinded: the Eye is the Vessel of all Image, and their reception is a conscious magical act. If we extend the magical act of 'seeing' to all sensorial gateways, one becomes constrained to those prefected temples of Denial: the cloister and convent.

To the sorcerer, a Graven Image offends no True god, save that which fails to convey power. This is the Dead Image, which, like the Dead Letter, obstructs the intercourse of Spirit-unto-Spirit via the Corporeal Sensorium. The World is not Dead, save the Man of Clay make it so. Likewise the senses deceive not, save man empower them as deceivers.



MAKING PRAYER OF THE GRAVEN IMAGE

Heavenly force unto earthly form,
Blood-fire I call from the hallow'd height.
Earthly form unto heavenly force,
I raise my hand to the One of Light.
This Flesh once-hallow as the dawn-fire of Self;
This Holy Corpse rise anew
As Iron blood-red from the Forge of Midnight.
Fires of Offering I burn before thy hallow'd flesh,
To light the Banquet of Elder Worship,
Come forth in blessed substance,
Now receive the Heart's own sacrifice.

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