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AION

A JOURNAL
OF TRADITIONAL SCIENCE

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AION is a Journal of the Traditional Sciences which, in C.G. Jung's phrase, include "Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self" as understood in Alchemy, Astrology, Ceremonial Magic and related disciplines.

AION will serve as an exchange between purely "Occult" and other concerns; literary, historical, scientific; thus, texts from, essays about, accounts of, poems out of.

AION will be as open as possible in terms of doctrine, operating with few assumptions other than that these concerns are relevant now.

We would hope to effect an opening of the "occult" to influences from without - at least an opening of what is already public to intelligent examination as well as a presentation of "occult" material in a more intellectually palatable form than in publications now out and correspondence courses generally available.

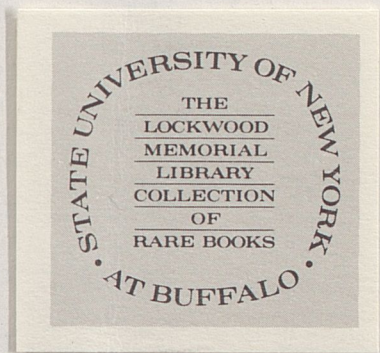
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RE: THE OCCULT

Robert Kelly



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Robert R. Lynd

RE: THE OCCULT

Robert Kelly

The traditional sciences became 'occult' when the city took on its modern sense & the bulk of a nation's people came to live in it.

The horoscope (13⁰⁰) of this Nation proclaims by its existence the country farmer our typical Founder was.

[Goethe's Faust can still stroll outside the city.] [He is the opposite of the Socrates of the Phaedrus, & grazes widely.]

Living the life of the seasons, the life of 'nature', is the beginning & consecution of the traditional sciences.

Just as the sky over a modern city is occulted by smoke & industrial throwaway, its proper atmosphere, so that antique science based on the inspection of the sky becomes mythologized, & hence a fossilized, hence a despised, science, rather than an open possibility.

[Cumont points out that in the deserts of the middle east, Venus as evening star still casts a shadow.]

[Countrymen are unlikely to forget how after a quarrel with the wife & a quick getaway, they came out to see the Pleiades flirting in & out of sight at the top of a cold sky. Or 'Orion blazing.']

Living up here, barely a hundred miles from New York, the calendar the hardware store gives me is marked out zodiacally, & tells me how the planets affect the parts of my body or the times of my plantings.

[Waite reasons that doctrine (true or false, profitable or foolish) becomes superstition only when the hypothesis motivating the symbolic form is lost.]

The sort of wisdom that the City of Athens spent two weeks a year in steady pursuit of, in the month of the branding of oxen, the journey outside the city walls to Eleusis, that wisdom was outlawed & made criminal by the City of Rome, that post-Augustan first 'modern' city, terrified of the interpenetrations of the world. Not until orientalism dominated Rome (the majesty of those orderings we have been taught by etiolate Gibbon to despise) did Rome become a city.

I point out two kinds of city: the cosmically-oriented city, laid out to be the type of the heavenly (i.e., the kosmos itself), the city that serves as focus for all the natural forces (Athens, Alexandria, Byzantium, Peking)

& the other sort of city, that serves as refuge from the natural order, & strives to deny it as extensively as it can. (Republican Rome, that misunderstood the Etruscan mundus, or ditch, around the city, falsely apprehended it to be a mode of excluding the outside, rather than a mode of harmonizing the ground of the city with the forces of nature & the cosmological realities that ancient people seemed to have grasped. The sin of Sodom had not to do with the worshipful cock

at the lips & gates of the body: Sodom sinned contra naturam in the most literal sense of those words, an inane hubris, to set a city on bitumen, & was burned. That is the sin a city can commit: To deny in its plan & life & ordering the great wheel of which it should be the hub. America is filled with such cities, abstract negations of the body of man.)

Rome was purified & redeemed specifically by the influx of Jew & Syrian & African & Egyptian, by their bodies, wise loins, & memories of a wider measure brought back to the sharpness of focus Latium had lost. I have predicted a like novation for New York, that will bring it to the fully functional & unparalleled fruitfulness of the City balanced between sea & land, between New world & Old. It will yet be the world city, Frobenius' altar to which all roads lead.

The traditional sciences, which can by our social forms be made superstitious holdovers, represent at best that empirical speculativeness which constitutes our best mind --- study thereof can make us perceptive of conditions, states, rhythms we are no longer in our bodies conscious of. For the New Yorker, the stars are for the most part hearsay (which can be 'superstitious holdover'), like the rings of Saturn to an eye without a telescope, like the virus to the man without an electron microscope. There are no ready pragmatic ways of inferring the Pleiades. They go unseen, their dance ignored. And we are cut off.

The stars would lead us to the city, & the city restore us to ourselves.

THE H.D. BOOK : CHAPTER 5

Robert Duncan

THE E.H. BOOK : CHAPTER 5

Robert D. Brown

This is not the beginning of the book. That was later, or, coming later, it was written earlier. What was to become our study began long ago. In one sense it began before writing or reading began, when as a child I lay drifting in the environment of voices talking in the next room. I would be put to bed among the potted plants by the wall that was all windows of a sunroom or herbarium at my grandmother's, and as my elders talked in the inner chamber, I, outside, could gaze at the night sky where some star was "mine" and watched over me, stars were eyes, or the first star seen was a wish or would grant a wish. My soul, they told me, went out to the stars or to other worlds. I laid my body down in the bed as if it were a little boat and sailed on a voyage I pretended. "Wynken, Blynken, and Nod," the rime went, "one night

Sailed off in a wooden shoe--
Sailed on a river of crystal light,
Into a sea of dew."

"Where are you going, and what do you wish?" --so the old moon questions the voyagers. "I know where I'm going and who's going with me" another old song went. The rime was a child's fancy by Eugene Field, a crude versifier, a despised source. In Maxfield Parrish's picture-- "Show us the picture," we used to ask as Mother read --still glowing in memory, they go out into a sea of stars, into the blue of the night-sky. "I pray the Lord my soul to keep."

The soul, my mother's sister--Aunt Fay-- told me years later, was like a swarm of bees, and, at night, certain entities of that swarm left the body-hive and went to feed in fields of helium-- was it in the upper atmosphere of the earth or in the fire-clouds of the Sun? The "higher" ascended nightly, and in its absence, the "lower" dreamed, flooded the mind with versions of the Underworld. "While the cat's away, the mice will play." There were not only pretend dreams or plagiarized dreams like making up the Wynken-Blynken-and-Nod Boat of Eugene Field to be one's own, but there were rare dreams of the higher realms, instructions from angels of the Sun, and there were dreams of one's own "lower" nature, messages from the Underworld, rebellious images that flooded the mind in the absence of its King, when genitals or liver, heart or bowels, took over the imagining screens of the brain for their own uses.

My aunt's name, Fay or fairy, had to do with illusions or enchantments, bewilderments of the mind in which we saw an other world behind or under things, and at the same time with the enchanters themselves, the folk who lived under the Hill. Fate, faith, feign, and fair, we find, following the winding associations of fay, fey, and fairy in the O.E.D., are related.

From many roots, words gathered into one stem of meaning, confused into a collective suggestion. There is fay, too, from fe an, meaning to join, to fix. In the United States of the nineteenth century it could mean the fit of a garment: "Your coat fays well," the O.E.D. gives us. The casting of the image is high fairy, phanopoëia; But the image itself, as Pound conceived it to be -- a nexus, "an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time," he wrote in A Stray Document, "which gives that sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth..." -- the image itself is fay: an apparition and a joining in one.

The little poem by Field was fay, for it cast its spell. And in the inner chamber, the adults, talking on, wove for me in my childish overhearing, Egypt, a land of spells and secret knowledge, a background drift of things close to dreaming--spirit communications, reincarnation memories, clairvoyant journeys into a realm of astral phantasy where all times and places were seen in a new light, of Plato's illustrations of the nature of the soul's life, of most real Osiris and Isis, of the lost Atlantis and Lemuria, and of the god or teacher my parents had taken as theirs, the Hermetic Christos. This word teacher, as I first heard it, before I went to school, meant the same as a god. God was not a god, but from His Being He sent out teachers or gods. True teachers, like Christ, Buddha, Hermes or Lao-Tse, were Light Beings, Messengers of the Sun Itself. Hermes, Mercury, was the one with winged helmet and winged sandals I had seen in the bronze figure that stood on the piano at Aunt Fay's. He was the god of the high air, of those helium fields, carrying a rod around which two snakes twisted. This wand or caduceus meant, Aunt Fay explained, that he was god of Life, systole and diastole of the heart beat. But the real image of the god was the picture Grandmother showed me in The Book of the Dead. Egypt was the hidden meaning of things, not only of Greek things but of Hebrew things. The wand of Hermes was the rod of Moses, and my grandmother studied hieroglyphics as she studied Hebrew letters and searched in dictionaries for Greek roots, to come into the primal knowledge of the universe. This god, the Egyptian Thoth, was Truth, the truth of what life is that we know in death. He appeared not in the high air but was a Being of the Sun Below the Earth, a Lord of the Dead. He held the scales and weighed the soul; he judged between the fair and unfair. He had another title in The Book of the Dead: He-Who-Decides-In-The-Favor-Of-Osiris.

Fay from fata had to do with the dead. The fairies as fates or norms were spinners of the threads from which life was woven, who measured man's span and cut the cord to deliver him into death as once they had cut the first cord or chord when the music began. But the word fey too came from another root that meant fated to die, cowardly or weak, as the O.E.D. tells us--unnamed. In our common speech it meant

"crazed", "touched", and then, "clairvoyant", "in tune with the dead". The lords of the dead were in the Egyptian writing: the Ibis-headed Thoth, Isis with the disc-crown, the lion-headed Sekmet, the winged serpented Sun, showing the animal nature in which our souls had evolved.

Just as, when the rime of Eugene Field's was all but forgotten, in the study of Pound's Cantos I was to come again to a "river of crystal light" and in the study of Yeats's or Breton's poetry I was to come to hear of a "dew" or a "sea of dew", so in Whitman's "eidolon yacht of me", in Lawrence's Ship of Death, in the "caravel" that in Helen in Egypt carries Achilles to the shore where his Helen waits, I was to come again to that "wooden shoe", the Wynken-Blynken-and-Nod Boat. When I was no longer a child but a boy in my early teens, I had found it too in the fairy ship of Avalon. The Boat of Dreams, the Boat of the Dead, was one of the great images of Poetry. In the late Cantos of Pound it has appeared as I saw it, almost as early as that other picture by Maxfield Parrish, in the Egyptian picture-writing my grandmother studied: it was the Ra-Set Boat. "And then went down to the ship," Pound had begun the established text of those Cantos, moving with the phantoms of Odysseus and his descent to the dead upon a sea of the imagination.

In the fairy-world, the otherness or alien nearness of the dead and of hidden elements, of illusion and delusion in our daily life, the witchcraft of phantasy and the bewitched obsessions of madness, all the psychological dangers, combined as if they were the heart's wish. The specter that haunts Europe, Marx had called the hidden wish of the human spirit in history; the traumatic image, Freud had called the repressed wish of the psyche--the primal scene. The underground uprises into the place of what is above-board. Justice demands it. The verso appears, so vivid that we see the surface of things had faded in the sunlight, and what we most feared we might be we become. The living seem dead and the dead most alive. Men could no longer trust what was fair or appeared fair. The words fey, fay, and fairy, had a meaning I was to learn among schoolmates that in the common usage superseded all other meanings: queer, perverted, effeminate. Old concepts of sodomy and shamanism--the cult that Orpheus brought of mediumship, poetry and homosexuality, from the forest world of the North into Greece--carry over into our vulgar sense of the word fairy, where men's fear and mistrust of a sexual duplicity is most active.

The Above and the Below, the Left and the Right --Hermetic doctrine and Cabalistic lore suggested a reality that was duplicit. Love, I was taught, had once been, in an other life, hatred; and hatred, love. There were times when in flashes of anger against my mother's will, I would glower and strike out. That was the law of karma, my mother would explain, that hatred and love were so intertwined. Like those snakes on the magic wand, above which the wings of the mind hovered.

Male and female were mixed too, I learned, for we who were men had been women in other lives and understood what to be a woman meant out of the depths of our human experience, the source of sexual sympathies and powers. So, Shakespeare, because he had the memories of lives, had inner knowledge of Lady Macbeth and Macbeth, Anthony and Cleopatra, Hamlet and his mother, the Queen. Being was the ground of an ambivalence that was the counterpart in turn of the ambivalence of the universe at large hidden and disclosed in things!

In the beginning I heard of guardian angels and of genii, of vision in dreams and truth in fairy tales, long before Jung expounded the gnosis or Henri Corbin revived Avicenna. For these ideas were properties not only of the mind above, the high thought of Neo-Platonists or Romantic poets, but they were lasting lore of the folk mind below too, wherever old wives told their tales. Gossip had brought rumors of the divine wisdom into American folk ways. From the popular movement of nineteenth century American spiritualism, where witch tradition out of Salem, shaman rite out of the world of the American Indian, and talking with tongues or from the spirit out of congregations of the Holy Ghost in the Protestant movement, mingled to become an obsession at large, so that in the last decades of the century in town and countryside groups met to raise the dead at rapping and levitating tables, new affinities with more ancient mystery cults of spirit and of a life beyond life were awakened. The theosophy of Plutarch, Plotinus and Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, the hermeticism of Pico della Mirandola, or The Light of Asia and the Bhagavad-Gita, joined in the confusion of texts and testimonies of libraries that could include accounts written by trance-mediums of travel to past time or far planets, manuals of practical astrology and numerology, or Max Heindel's The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception--"Its Message and Mission: A Sane Mind. A Soft Heart. A Sound Body."

My grandmother, as a young wife of eighteen, had lost two babies in a polio epidemic, and she came down to San Francisco from what is still backwoods Sierra country, to go from one spiritualistic circle to another, seeking consolation or communication, some continuity of feeling. The Indian guides must have seemed not out of place, for she had been born in Indian country in the wilderness of the Modoc territory in Eastern Oregon, just after the Civil War. My father's family had moved West too, first into Ohio at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and then on, at the frontier or beyond the frontier of America, into California. Tales of pioneer days, of Indian wars and Indian sympathies, lingered on along with the new lore of strange ways. From Modoc County in northeastern California, where she had gone as a young bride, my grandmother brought Indian baskets and beaded belts, feathered charms and wampum or strings of

shell money, her curios. In my childhood, there were still mediums at times, among those meeting in the other room, talking in Indian voices; but my grandmother had gone on from the spiritualist circles within a year or so, and sometime in the eighties, had joined a group to form a Hermetic Brotherhood.

Their thought rose from a swarming ground prepared by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. Isis Unveiled had appeared in 1877; The Secret Doctrine in 1888; Sinnett's Esoteric Buddhism had appeared in 1883. Into her alembic or witch's pot, Blavatsky had stirred whatever hints, scraps, legends, lore, visions, phantasies, things she made-up herself, into a muddle or stew, "Pot and Pan-theism" a contemporary wit dubbed it. Though she ransacked demonologies, histories of magic, studies of religion, encyclopedias of gnosticism and neo-platonism--"about 2100 quotations from and references to books that were copies at second hand ... without proper credit," an angry critic writes: "Nearly the whole of four pages was copied from Oliver's Pythagorean Triangle, while only a few lines were credited to that work"--the material of Isis Unveiled, H.P.B. insisted, was not out of reference books she had read, a matter of her imagination and research, but was revealed to her in the Astral Light. So her disciple Olcott describes how, in the evening when he would return from his office and sit opposite her as she wrote, "with the vacant eye of the clairvoyant seer"--but we see it also as with the vacant eye of one remembering what she had read that day-- she would "shorten her vision as though to look at something held invisibly in the air before her, and begin copying on her paper what she saw." Did she pretend, as I used to pretend as a child to sail out in the boat previous to dreaming? Why? Her references were actually all there in books that Olcott and she had gathered in their library in that very room or in libraries of occultist friends. She had an insatiable curiosity and energy in gathering information. She talked with everyone and read everything. In those very years (1875-1877) when Isis Unveiled was conceived and written, she drew upon the learning of Alexander Wilder, an American occultist, who had written Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries and Serpent and Siva Worship, or A Translation of the Theurgia of Iamblichos. Blavatsky insisted her guides were spirits. "One such collaborator," Gertrude Williams tells us in her book on Blavatsky, Priestess of the Occult, "was the Old Platonist who, remaining invisible, talked by the hour, dictating copy, checking references, answering questions." "The spirit Old Platonist would be more convincing," Mrs. Williams observes, "if there had not been an Old Platonist in the flesh--Dr. Wilder, who also talked by the hour, checking references and answering questions." But the work was not meant to be convincing. It was meant to be upsetting to the mind that would have tolerated Dr. Wilder as an authority in

a curious field of thought but would balk at the pretension of a spirit as an authority in a revelation. Her purpose was not to convert but to overthrow the established orders of thought, to set up whatever was doubted, feared or despised in the place of the ruling conventions. Yes, but mixed up with the hysterical impulse to insult and subvert the respectable and reasonable was --also a component of hysteria--the intense sense of how much the society itself was in need of some release of vital powers.

"I am solely occupied," Blavatsky wrote to her sister, not with writing Isis, but with Isis herself. I live in a kind of permanent enchantment, a life of visions and sights, with open eyes, and no chance whatever to deceive my senses! I sit and watch the fair good goddess constantly. And she displays before me the secret meaning of her long-lost secrets, and the veil, becoming with every hour thinner and more transparent, gradually falls off before my eyes, I hold my breath and can hardly trust to my senses! ... Night and day the images of the past are ever marshalled before my inner eyes. Slowly, and gliding silently like images in an enchanted panorama, centuries after centuries appear before me ... I certainly refuse point-blank to attribute it to my own knowledge or memory. I tell you seriously I am helped. And he who helps me is my Guru."

My "Daemon", Socrates had called him; or Genius. The Muse, a poet might have called Isis. But Blavatsky was not, she insisted, musing. Whatever else Isis Unveiled might be, it was not to be taken as a scholarly study, a philosophy, or a work of the imagination; it was to be taken as revelation, a dictate of the unconscious. A new specter was raised to haunt the course of Western Civilization.

"The mind is the great Slayer of the "Real" is one of the fragments in Voices of Silence, "translated" by Blavatsky out of Senzar, the language hidden from the mind. The scholar, the philosopher, the poet, were all men of the mind, and, in the critical distance of their discipline or art, slayers of the real. This "Real" was Isis naked, the Revealed Doctrine. We can read another message in the oracle, for the Mind, the idiotic or autistic dream and will, is also a great slayer of another "real", the common sense. Blavatsky had set out to destroy what Freud calls the reality principle. John Symonds in his book on Blavatsky, The Lady With The Magic Eyes, from which I quoted the fragment from Voices of Silence, comments: "The Mind is here used in the sense of consciousness, upon which all our Western scientific knowledge is based, but which the East regards as only part of the world of illusion." Blavatsky's Mind, as Slayer of the Real, may have stood for the conscious, as Freud was to find it in his study of hysteria at the end of the century, at war with the unconscious. Plagiarism, fraud, perversion by pun, by reversal of values and displacement of content, of above into below, male into female, left into right, before into after--all these Freud saw as operations of the unconscious.

She impersonated the Unconscious, but she also gave her ego over to unconscious--"invisible" or "occult", she called them-- guides. She was unconscious of what she read or learned in talking with Dr. Wilder, and accepted the information only in a trance-like state from the unconscious where it had been suppressed.

She was a wishful thinker, and she flew into rages when her wishes were questioned. She did not rage at Nature-- Nature seemed to cooperate with her powers-- but she was savage when confronted by ways of the mind that others took for granted, by what was proper to think, reasonable to hope for. More, she was outraged by her own disciples, the credulous and ever-admiring Olcott, the reason-seeking Sinnett, for she wanted the mind in following her Doctrine to be convinced by what it did not believe, to submit to the unreasonable. She did not want her theosophic manifesto to be accepted; she wanted men to come by way of what they could not accept into the rebellious impulses that lay back of Isis Unveiled. "If you only knew what lions and eagles in every part of the world have turned into asses at my whistle, and have obediently wagged their long ears in time as I piped," she wrote to a confidante.

There is pathos in her scorn. She had wanted to awaken a disobedience in man that would restore the lion or eagle he must be. The hidden Adam restored, man transformed under the dictatorship of the unconscious. You have nothing to lose but your chains of belief and disbelief, she had wanted to say.

For she was bound in chains of belief and disbelief. The imagination was intolerable to her conscious mind. She denied that there was any truth or trust in what a man might create or initiate. Even her book, in order to be doctrine, could not be created by her or have any virtue in her own thought but must be dictated by Masters outside the work, just as the truth of Man could not be immanent in his evolution but must be established in a paradigm, an actual plan given in the beginning and recorded in the eternal-- the "Akashic" or Astral Light. "I certainly refuse point-blank to attribute it to my own knowledge or memory," she had said then as if such an attribution would have brought the authenticity of Isis Unveiled into question. She would have excluded the more vehemently any suggestion of her own phantasy or imagination entering in.

Whatever came from the individual inner volition was suspect. Over and over again she warns against the elemental and animal entities, the false impulses, that threaten any free life of the psyche as a medium. It is experience itself that she warns against. What does not come from a superior external authority, from Adepts "closely connected with a certain island of an inland sea," what does not come from the teachings of a primal and esoteric wisdom comes from below, from the Left, from the swarming mass of a false science based

upon the senses. All the imaging, voicing, personating, creating activity that characterizes the imagination in the ego was denied and mistrusted by her conscious mind. Only what was actual and imperative was permitted reality. Her ideas, her intuitions, her voices--the imagined teachers Morya and Koot Houri--were illusions if they belonged to her own creative life. The Universe itself was Maya if it was created. The real could not be made-up.

Given the chains of belief and disbelief, the alternative of illusion is delusion. The creative was the veil of Isis. To find the hidden thing one had to strip the creative veil away. The magic of Blavatsky, the fascination of her writing, was never then to be the magic of enchanting prose, evoking its life in us to become most real in the weaving of a spell that is also a music with many images and levels of meaning--the illusion of an experience. Her magic was to be, on the contrary, the fascination of an argumentative delusion, the pursuit of proofs and laws behind appearances.

She sought in India and Egypt, she drew portraits, and, finally, she faked evidence to prove that her Masters were not figures of a dream or fiction, creatures of the veil, but actual persons. Anti-materialistic though she declared herself, she could not believe they might be spiritual beings "not of this world". She rejected all sublimations. Proof's lay in materialization--cups and saucers, gloved hands, bells rung, wafts of scents, actual letters received in a spirit post-office. Ideas, imaginings, visions were immaterial she sought only the manifest. Yet she could live too in "a kind of permanent enchantment", as she writes to her sister, smoking hashish and having, not her own phantasies but hashish phantasies. Given the manifest agency of the drug, so that any suspicion of her own psychic agency might be denied, she could dwell "with Isis herself".

In 1891, a month before her death, she closed her last essay with a quotation from Montaigne: "I have here made only a nosegay of culled flowers, and have brought nothing of my own but the string that ties them." But that string was the thread of her argument, a wish that she and mankind with her might be released from the contradictions of dream and fact, creative idea and actuality, volition and authority, that tortured her spirit. But the string was also the quest for an end of dream, creative idea, volition--if only they could be proved to be their opposites so that what we had thought was moving would prove to be schematic and settled. The string was the obsessional winding of the thread: the double-faced words "Mind" and "Real", the inversion of evolutionary theory, the perversion of geological theory, the transference of fact into fiction and fiction into mode of fact, the subversion of accepted scientific thought, the plagiarisms, the fraud--worst of all, the reasoning of a woman who knows she must be right or all is lost.

With pathos, she added: "Is anyone of my helpers prepared to say that I have not paid the full price of my string?"

She had been attacked and exposed, vilified and ridiculed. Her own followers had come to doubt that her Masters "really" existed. But the pathos was Mercurial, for she had meant for her followers in all the stupidity of their conscious minds, bound by chains of Theosophic belief, like her defamers bound by the chains of scientific or respectable disbelief, to pay the full price of her string.

For the price of the string, the price of the wish, the quest, the obsession, lay in an oppressive state. She had gathered a pitchblend of suggestion once her "doctrine" was mixed, in which some radium lay hid. In the mess of astrology, alchemy, numerology, magic orders, cabalistic and Vedic systems combined, confused, and explained, queered evolution and wishful geology, transposed heads-- the fact of her charged fascination, her need, remains. Her sense binds: that until man lives once more in these awes and consecrations, these obediences to what he does not know but feels, until he takes new thought in what he has discarded, he will not understand what he is.

Isis Unveiled and The Secret Doctrine, midden heaps that they are of unreasonable sources, are midden heaps where beyond the dictates of reason, as in the collagist's art from what has been disregarded or fallen into disregard, genres are mixed, exchanges are made, mutations begun from scraps ("2100 quotations ... without proper credit"), towards figures of a new world. In the conglomerate she gathered, things of disparate traditions whirl and take on new shapes for the conscious imagination, separated from their contexts and credits, tainted with foreign meanings. Her conscious insistence that her work was dedicated to the immutable archetypical Reality of the esoteric wisdom hid or veiled her unconscious wish--it was a vital intuition also of the meaning of science, religion and art--as a magic to take over Nature--our own inner nature then--from the Father, and to give birth to a new Nature, to prove What is to be an illusion in the light of What Must Be. The Isis, the Esoteric Wisdom of What Is, appears in the imagination to keep alive the rebellious writer's sympathies with her own nature, Nature then, in the presence of the would-be usurping wish.

So, Blavatsky saw vividly how Science, under dictatorship of Reason, had isolated itself from concern with any world of Spirit, psychic world, and finally from human and animal sympathies, declaring only that world to exist which could be positively known. "We must bravely face Science and declare," she wrote in 1888, "that the true Occultist believes in Lords of Light; that he believes in a Sun, which-- far from being simply a 'lamp of day' moving in accordance with physical laws; and far from being merely one of those Suns, which, according to Richter, 'are sun-flowers of a higher light-- is, like milliards of other Suns, the dwelling or the vehicle of a God, and host of Gods.'" Her chapter heading

Modern Physicists Are Playing At Blind Man's Buff has not lost meaning but has gained in terror in our day, seventy-five years later.

There had once been, she tells us in The Secret Doctrine, "on the plan of the Zodiac in the upper Ocean or the Heavens, a certain realm on Earth, an inland sea, consecrated and called the 'Abyss of Learning'; twelve centers on it, in the shape of twelve small islands, representing Zodiacal Signs--two of which remained for ages the 'mystery Signs'--were the abodes of twelve Hierophants and Masters of Wisdom. This 'Sea of Knowledge' or learning remained for ages there, where now stretches the Shamo or Gobi Desert. It existed until the last great glacial period, when a local cataclysm, which swept the waters South and West and so formed the present great desolate desert, left only a certain oasis, with a lake and one island in the midst of it, as a relic of the Zodiacal Ring on Earth. For ages the Watery Abyss--which, with the nations that preceded the later Babylonians, was the abode of the 'Great Mother,' the terrestrial post-type of the 'Great Mother Chaos' in Heaven, the parent of Ea (Wisdom), himself the early prototype of ~~Ornes~~, the Man-Fish of the Babylonians--for ages, then, the 'Abyss' or Chaos was the abode of Wisdom and not of Evil. The struggle of Bel and then Merodach, the Sun-God, with Tiamat, the Sea and its Dragon-- a 'War' which ended in the defeat of the latter--has a purely cosmic and geological meaning, as well as an historical one. It is a page torn out of the history of the Secret and Sacred Sciences, their evolution, growth and death--for the profane masses. It relates (a) to the systematic and gradual drying up of immense territories by the fierce Sun at a certain pre-historic period, one of the terrible droughts which ended by a gradual transformation of once fertile lands abundantly watered into the sandy deserts which they are now; and (b) to the as systematic persecution of the Prophets of the Right Path by those of the Left."

The psychic history of the Universe, Earth and Man was the drama of each in the other, written in traumatic scenes--the freezing of the Hyperborean continent, the submerging of Lemuria and Atlantis, the drying up of the Goby centers. Just as in the bardic tradition the poet has lived in all things--so that Gwion (Finn) in the thirteenth century Romance of Taliesin is not only the hero or god-child Fionn of the land of fairy but names himself also Taliesin, the ninth century poet, and, again, may be a power of the cosmos, for he claims: "Chief bard am I to Elphin, my original country is the region of the summer stars;"

I was with my lord in the highest space,
On the fall of Lucifer into the depth of hell.
I have borne a banner before Alexander...

This "I", the poet's persona in his song, lives in whatever It sings of:

I am a wonder whose origin is not known.
I have been in Asia with Noah in the Ark...

--just as in the psyche-mysteries of Freudian psychoanalysis, the individual psyche is seen to recapitulate the psychic life of the species.

"Since the time we recognized the error of supposing that ordinary forgetting signified destruction or annihilation of the memory-trace," Freud tells us in Civilization and Its Discontents: "we have been inclined to the opposite view that nothing once formed in the mind could ever perish, that everything survives in some way or other, and is capable under certain conditions of being brought to light again, as, for instance, when regression extends back far enough." Tracing the history of "the Eternal City", Freud then turns to picture the psyche itself as such an Eternal City: "Now let us make the fantastic supposition," he continues-- it is one of the creative phantasies of Freudian thought: "that Rome were not a human dwelling-place, but a mental entity with just as long and varied a past history: that is, in which nothing once constructed had perished, and all the earlier stages of development had survived alongside the latest. This would mean that in Rome the palaces of the Caesars were still standing on the Palatine and the Septizonium of Septimus Severus was still towering to its old height; that the beautiful statues were still standing in the colonnade of the Castle of St. Angelo, as they were up to its siege by the Goths, and so on. But more still: where the Palazzo Caffarelli stands there would also be, without this being removed, the Temple of Juptier Capitolinus, not merely in its latest form, moreover, as the Romans of the Caesars saw it, but also in its earliest shape, when it still wore an Etruscan design and was adorned with terra-cotta antefixae. Where the coliseum stands now we could at the same time admire Nero's Golden House; on the Piazza of the Pantheon we should find not only the Pantheon of to-day as bequeathed to us by Hadrian, but on the same site also Agrippa's original edifice; indeed, the same ground would support the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva and the old temple over which it was built..."

To penetrate the depths of the psychic life, Freud resolves: "We shall have no hesitation in allowing ourselves to be guided by the common usages of language, or as one might say, the feeling of language, confident that we shall thus take into account inner attitudes which still resist expression in abstract terms," and following clues, like the hero of the detective fiction which is the contemporary of psychoanalysis, he reads in the psyches of his patients the drama of a prehistory or metahistory, like the popular "Mystery". So, in the theosophic mystery, the traumas of Hyperborea or Atlantis may be our own--"those very Monads, which entered the empty, senseless Shells, or Astral Figures

of the First Race emanated by the Pitris," Blavatsky writes, "are the same who are now amongst us--nay, ourselves, perchance."

Canto VII, Pound "And all that day, another day," hearing "Thin husks I had known as men, / Dry casques of departed locusts / speaking a shell of speech," writing in a period when he was most conversant with Yeats's cabalistic lore, may have had the presence of the kelipah in mind, evil that is quickened only by the sin of man but in itself is but the dead residue of creation: "Life to make mock of motion:

For the husks, before me, move,
The words rattle: shells given out by shells

...
And the tall indifference moves,
a more living shell,
Drift in the air of fate, dry phantom, but intact.

The bardic tradition may be recalled by Graves in his "Historical grammar of poetic myth", The White Goddess, or the primal scene of Titanic infants playing with fire haunt Freud's Civilization and Its Discontents, as the Atlantean transgression of Nature's laws returns to Blavatsky's mind, because we live in a time into which all times are gathering. "The communion of saints is a great and inspiring assemblage," Whitehead writes in his Aims of Education in 1929: "but it has only one possible hall of meeting, and that is, the present." We find ourselves gathering what they were or drawn to the idea of them, for we have that wish for a great time or a great space--overpopulated as we are-- to love in; and we call up the whole population of mankind to live in us.

"Before the mind's eye, whether in sleep or waking, came images that one was to discover presently in some book one had never read," Yeats tells us in Per Amica Silentia Lunae: "And after looking in vain for explanation to the current theory of forgotten personal memory, I came to believe in a Great Memory passing on from generation to generation. But that was not enough, for these images showed intention and choice. They had a relation to what one knew and yet were an extension of one's knowledge. If no mind was there, why should I suddenly come upon salt and antimony, upon the liquefaction of the gold, as they were understood by the alchemists, or upon some detail of cabalistic symbolism verified at least by a learned scholar from his never-published manuscripts, and who can have put together so ingeniously, working by some law of association and yet with clear intention and personal application, certain mythological images? They have shown themselves to several minds, a fragment at a time, and had only shown their meaning when the puzzle picture had been put together. The thought was again and again before me that this study had created a contact or mingling with minds who had followed a like study in some other age, and that these minds still saw and thought and chose."

Yeats had sought out Helena Blavatsky in 1887 when he was in his early twenties, and he had gone on in other circles to devote his life to the esoteric wisdom cults. But it was the affinity that Poetry in the daemonic tradition has for the occult that moved him, for from the first Yeats had believed that Poetry was itself a secret doctrine. It was the study of Blake that had brought him to the threshold, leading beyond to Boehme and to the Zohar of Moses of Leon. It was Shelley who had set him on his way, for he had read in that poet's Hellas of a Jew, Ahasuerus, of whom it was said:

Some feign that he is Enoch: others dream
He was pre-Adamite, and has survived
Cycles of generation and of ruin,

"Already in Dublin, I had been attracted to the Theosophists because they had affirmed the real existence of the Jew, or of his like," Yeats tells us in The Trembling of the Veil. He demanded, like Blavatsky, that his images be verified. He had come in search of a Master in life who had appeared to him in Shelley's play--the Wandering Jew, Ahasuerus. "Mistake me not!" Ahasuerus had said in Hellas: "All is contained in each."

Thought

Alone, and its quick elements, Will, Passion,
Reason, Imagination, cannot die;
They are, what that which they regard appears,
The stuff whence mutability can weave
All that it hath dominion o'er, worlds, worms,
Empire, and superstitions.

It was to increase the dominion of the poetic mind that Yeats pursued his studies in the occult. The doctrine of correspondences that he found there enlarged the mission of metaphor and simile. The concept of the eidolon inherited from Iamblichus in which primal and eternal images are the movers or powers of the universe, agents of reality, charged the poet's reveries and visions with a radical purpose, a directive towards the heart of the matter, taken in what the majority of men took to be a literary pastime--at best a function of cultured sensibility, at worst an idle and childish indulgence in phantasy.

Yeats is often called a symbolist, but the symbol for him was a magic intermediate, having its efficiency in the route it made between the soul and the image, the objective. But it was also--it had--it moved into his mind without intention and choice. It was also the subject; it presented itself to him. For Yeats, as for Blavatsky, the great images were not imagined in the sense of being thought-up, but came to the imagination. There was a way, he tells us, in which men kept their bodies still and their minds awake and clear so that they became mirrors of the real.

"I had no natural gift for this clear quiet," he continues: "and I was seldom delighted by that sudden luminous definition of form which makes one understand almost in spite of oneself that one is not merely imagining." It was to live in this world as if it were more than imagined, as if it were a poetry that had its authors in eternity, as Blake called them, and the poet in his art projected a like-poetry, a microcosmos of the Real in the medium of words, guided, like Freud, "by the feeling of language." The Universe was a great Work or Language, life itself its voice, and all that the poet felt, heard, saw and sensed in the world about him or in himself was a language he must come to read, just as each art had its little language of images, sounds or movements in which meanings were evoked.

In an age when what we commonly call Science, the evocation of a world purely in terms of facts and uses, the dual presumption of mathematical and mechanical imaginations in place of all other imaginations, defined its own realms as the sole Real and all other worlds as unreal, there were men in the arts too who attempted to define realistic claims, working purely in terms of semantic or literary values, at war with unrealistic or animistic tendencies. Turning to the heretical or pseudo-Sciences of the occult, the evocation of a world in terms of a living language, Yeats was turning too from any purely literary or aesthetic interpretation of poetry, to affirm the truth he had found in Shelley or Blake as the most real. He sought not only theosophy, god-knowledge, but theurgy, god-work; and there was magic too, daemonic experiment. Words are at once agents of personal feeling and composition in a poem and also bearers of knowledge felt, evokers of the real and casters of spells.

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The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, the ritual cult to which Yeats belonged, begun by Dr. Woodman, Dr. Wynn-Wescott and MacGregor Mathers after the publication of Mathers' The Qabalah Unveiled in 1888, ten years after Blavatsky's Isis Unveiled and the year of The Secret Doctrine, gave rise not only to new formations in occultist circles but also to new formations in the literary worlds. There is a first splinter-group, as such mutinies are called in Marxist movements, when between 1900 and 1901, MacGregor Mathers and Aleister Crowley leave the party or are ousted from the party in a furor of legal battles, theoretical arguments and magic wars. Crowley, obsessed since the trauma of the Chogo Ri expedition of 1902 with the terror of the void ("The Abramelin demons, that Crowley had invoked at Boleskine, would seem to have formed a secret alliance with their cousins of the Hamalayan Heights," C.R. Cammell observed in his study of Crowley), devotes his life to finding a sufficient nightmare to fill the emptiness. Since the Second World War (where certainly the void and terror opened in the death chambers of the Nazis or the radioactive holocaust of the Americans over Japan

would seem a sufficient blackness), in the rise of a Poetry of emptiness and black humor, in the works of Philip Lamantia or in the film-poetry of Kenneth Anger the influence of Crowley begins to appear.

But we have here to do with a later division of the Order of the Golden Dawn into two distinct and even opposing groups among its members. Virginia Moore in her study of Yeats, The Unicorn, traces this history. The one, followed by Yeats and Algernon Blackwood, continued along the line of a pantheism in which all gods had reality in terms of the Anima Mundi below and the Great Mind or God above. The other, led by A.E. Waite and including Arthur Machen, Charles Williams and Evelyn Underhill, in 1903 broke with the parent body and formed a group which kept the Golden Dawn name and studied mysticism. For this group, the validity and verification of the esoteric tradition lay in the concern with the power of the Christos-- and outside the Christian reality, the esoteric was evil.

For Algernon Blackwood, who with Yeats and the elder Watkins formed, Virginia Moore tells us, a Society of the Three Kings, if we read his popular romances aright, there was a theurgy in the worship of the elements that united him with the region of the stars and opened a way into the elemental realm of Nature, the restored childhood world of The Education of Uncle Paul, The Centaur, A Prisoner in Fairyland. For Yeats, as The Trembling of the Veil and Per Amica Silentia Lunae testify, there was a magic that opened his mind to invasions of sensation and image, uniting his imagination with the passionate and daemonic life of the Anima Mundi. They may have been--those three Kings devoted, we are told, to "the study of Mysticism not Occultism"--- three Magi or Magicians too, studying the magic of the Child. Yeats in his Autobiography, like Blackwood in his novels, makes it clear that he seeks what he once knew in his childhood when he dwelt upon the thresholds of an enchantment or faerie in Nature, a closeness to the earth and to folk ways.

The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn is one stem then of divergent ways in the tradition: the first, is followed by Mathers and Crowley, from The Magic Operation of Abra-Melin the Mage, which Mathers had found in the Library of the Arsenal in Paris and translated, led--they no sooner split from the Order than they were at war with each other--to the struggle to become the Master, over Nature, the climbing to the heights of Chogo Ri, or over Poetry, the climbing to the heights, as he saw them, of Ambergris, A Selection from the Poems of Aleister Crowley. In the Black Fantasy of Crowley's Moonchild, Mathers and his wife, the sister of Henri Bergson, are seen twisted by hatred: "Douglas found his prestige gone, and his income

with it. Addiction to drink, which had accompanied his magical fall, now became an all-absorbing vice..." then: "It was the vilest thing charged against that vile parody of a man, his treatment of his wife, a young, beautiful, talented, and charming girl, the sister of a famous Professor at the Sorbonne. He had delighted to reduce her to the bedraggled street-walker that she now was." Among Crowley's saddest delusions is his perception of his own quality in writing. Yeats appears in the poetic insight of Moonchild as "a lean, cadaverous Protestant-Irishman named Gates," driven by his vanity to make war on Crowley. "He possessed real original talent, with now and then a flash of insight which came close to genius. But though his intellect was keen and fine, it was in some way confused; and there was a lack of virility in his make-up. His hair was long, lank and unkempt; his teeth were neglected; and he had a habit of physical dirt which was so obvious as to be repulsive even to a stranger." It may be, indeed, that Satan himself gave Crowley this gift of malice for it has turned out over years to be a prose of dirt and leaves, a mirror reflecting only its author's intent.

The second way from The Golden Dawn led towards the fictional reality of Yeats and Blackwood, the creative imagination and the search for a magic participation in Nature and the Divine World, an indwelling not a mastery. The third, in reaction to the first two, returning to the orthodoxy of the Anglo-Catholic or the Catholic church, portraying the evil of magic and even the evil of Nature, and interpreting the esoteric wisdom as the higher truth of Christian dogma.

There was another movement after the death of Madam Blavatsky. This time not in the temple of a ritual cult but in the lecture hall of a theosophic school. G.R.S. Mead, who had been Blavatsky's secretary, followed the way, not of magic rite nor of mystic ritual but of gnosis, the teaching in the divine mysteries. In 1896 he published his translation from a Latin version of the Coptic text the Pistis Sophia; in 1900 his study of surviving Gnostic texts and traditions, Fragments of a Faith Forgotten; in 1906 Thrice-Greatest Hermes, studies in Hellenistic theosophy and gnosis, with a translation of the Trismegistic literature; and then, the series of eleven texts: Echoes from the Gnosis. In the magazine The Quest edited by Mead, his purpose is clearly to establish all religions as one ground of man's search for a life in the Divine World, to free the mind of man in his quest for the Divine from the inhibiting forces of dogma and church views, and at the same time, to revive the senses of the Divine World as the Real, the source of man's vital life.

Along another path, at Oxford and especially Cambridge, following The Golden Bough of Frazer in 1890, both classicists and folklorists found themselves students of the mystery cults.

The way led from Bergson's L'Evolution créatrice, Jane Harrison tells us in her Preface to Themis in 1912: "I saw that Dionysos was an instinctive attempt to express what Professor Bergson calls durée, that life which is one, indivisible and yet ceaselessly changing." The mystery cult was then not only an agricultural rite but a psychological rite. From a second source, Durkheim's Représentations Individuelles et Représentations Collectives, she had gathered that not only was the mystery-god an agency of "those instincts, emotions, desires which attend and express life" but that "these emotions, desires, instincts, in so far as they are religious, are at the outset rather of a group than of an individual consciousness."

The texts of the classicist or the folklorist took on new dimensions in the light of ideas of life forces and collective mind. "I was no longer engaged merely in enquiring into the sources of a fascinating legend," Jessie Weston writes in telling of her conversion from the folklorist view in the Preface to From Ritual to Romance: "but on the identification of another field of activity for forces whose potency as agents of evolution we were only now beginning rightly to appreciate." Tracing the roots of Grail legend to "the mysterious border-land between Christianity and Paganism," she tells us, the path led from Cumont to Mead where she found "not only the final link that completed the chain of evolution from Pagan Mystery to Christian Ceremonial, but also proof of that wider significance I was beginning to apprehend."

In the Quest Society, as in the person of its leader, G. R. G. R. S. Mead, the higher learning and the lower world of the occult meet. Here again, in the pages of The Quest, we find the new philosophy of Bergson along with Jessie Weston's Grail essays, Eisler's studies in Orphic cult and the Fisher King, Pound's Psychology and Troubadours. And there is not only the study of the mythos, the lore, but there is--so the testimony goes--back of the texts some knowledge of the dromena, what was done in the rites. "I know, I mean, one man who understands Persephone and Demeter," Pound says, "and another who has, I should say, met Artemis. These things are for them real." The mysterious border-land between Christianity and Paganism that Jessie Weston sought knowledge of lay not only in the past but in the present London of 1909: "No inconsiderable part of the information at my disposal," she writes: "depended upon the personal testimony, the testimony of those who knew of the continued existence of such a ritual, and had actually been initiated into its mysteries."

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My grandmother was an elder in a provincial cult of this Hermetic movement, far from its center in London. Close to the wood-lore of her origins in frontier life, she had some

natural witch-craft perhaps. But then it may be too that all Grandmothers, as in fairytales, are Wise Women or Priestesses of Mother Nature. I was but a boy when she died, and with her death, my father's tie with the old wisdom-way was broken. There was no cult after her death.

There is only what I remember out of childhood: the colored lithographs of Egyptian temples and the images upon the table, the voices talking of "Logos" and "Nous", the old women looking wisely into the Astral Light and telling what they saw there.

My father and mother were initiates, but in their own lives the tenor of the initiation was lost. From the region of San Francisco, they moved to Bakersfield, obedient to the directions of the stars in the Zodiac, as now Zen converts are obedient to the I Ching-- Fate and Chance. They were isolated from their Brotherhood, their studies changed to studies that were respected by the community into which they moved. By the time I was adolescent, my father was involved in the study of botany and local historical sites. After his death, Mother was relieved, I think, that this way of studying things might be dismissed. New friends did not share her belief--that was part of it-- but then, tho their belief lasted, her interest did not last.

In my mind it has lasted. The lure is the lure of those voices weaving as I began to understand words a net of themes in which knots of meaning that refused any easy use appeared, glimpses from the adult world of words beyond them, as words were just beyond me, such a tapestry as Penelope is said to have woven that was never done but begun again each day, or as Helen wove, in which were all the scenes of the Trojan War. What was the hidden meaning of such a "Troy", of "War"? they would ask. It was not a dogma nor was it a magic that I understood for myself in the theosophic world about me but I understood that the meanings of life would always be, as they were in childhood, hidden away, in a mystery, exciting question after question.

The quest for meanings was a vital need in life that one recognized in romance where the hero must learn the language of birds, overhear the conversation of trees, call up even shadows to populate his consciousness. By associations, by metaphor, by likeness of the part, by fitting as part of a larger figure, by interlinking of members, by share, by equation, by correspondence, by reason, by contrast, by opposition, by pun or rime, by melodic coherence-- what might otherwise have seemed disparate things of the words as Chaos were brought into a moving, changing, eternal, interweaving design of the worlds as Creation. It was the multiplicity of meanings at play that I loved in the talk of my parents in the nineteen-twenties. Two phases of the psyche's development in childhood-- the endless questioning and the timeless play--found their reflection or continuation in the adult world of above and beyond.

We shall lose it all if it be not those voices talking over the evening fire. But the voices are gone. The waves throwing themselves down in ranks upon the shore are what I hear.

*

There had been catastrophe. There would be catastrophe. The time in which a man lived was a whirl or drift in a great sea that might rise out of itself into a roaring end of things. In the early years of the Depression, '29 or '30, when I was ten or eleven, I would lie awake before going off to sleep at the summer cottage at Morro Beach, letting the crash of the surf take over and grow enormous in my mind which dwelt at times like this upon the last days of Atlantis, imagining again the falling of towers, the ruin of cities, the outcry of a populace swept under by the raging element. When would it come? When would the long-awaited tidal wave, the advancing wall of water, sweep all before it? Even so the grown-ups talked of Atlantis and of America, as if it were a New Atlantis. The Atlanteans, even as we might, in their science had come to know too much, the grown-ups said; they had found some key of the universe and had unlocked forbidden, destroying, powers.

Taller than Morro Rock I would think the breakers must be. I would try to picture the flood enormous enough to crash upon the mountains of the Coast Range as if they had been but banks of sand and to drown the San Joaquin. Or I would listen, curled on the ledge back of the seat in the coupe, as Mother drove us home from the movies in San Luis Obispo to the beach, for the fascinating sound above the fascination of the motor-sound, for the sea-roar. Now it will come, now it is coming, pouring in from the coast to meet us.

Born in 1919 at the close of the War, I belonged, I had been told, to an Atlantean generation that would see once more last things and the destruction of the world. There was a repeated dream I had as a child that came to be my "Atlantean" dream, for my mother told me it was a memory-dream. I belonged, too, to the generation that had been destroyed in a cataclysm before the world we lived in began. I had a part in the fabulous.

Sometimes in phantasizing, calling up pictures like this to illustrate an other life, I would rescue myself and set out upon the sea again in a boat. But the boat was now no longer charmed or charming, like the Wynken-Blynken-and-Nod Boat had been. Huddled in the wrappings of my bedclothes, I was never sure how the dark exposed rowboat or life-boat had escaped the holocaust in which it had been said all was lost, but it had been said too that certain adepts escaped and I would be an adept. I was never sure how the boat was making its way now north and east over a grey and forbidding sea towards new land. The way was alien. I was never sure that this part, going on to rescue myself like this, would work out

at all. On and on the boat sped towards some colony or destiny that had no such reality as the deluge, the sea itself, had, but lay ahead unseen and unreal.

We had moved from the Bay Region to the Valley in '28, away from the house my father had designed in Alameda as a young architect before I was born or adopted by my parents, away from the towers of San Francisco where he had worked in a firm as a junior architect; and away too from the circle of Hermetic students. Back of what we knew as children, scenes were being shifted: from the big house with its parties, the garden and the studio, to the crowded little house in Bakersfield where my sister and I slept in the same room; from the conversation at table that was all fabulous history and fantastic science to the admonitions and explanations of the Depression years, the economic worrying and the ~~things-to-be-discussed-later~~. What was left me from the talk of the elders in that antechamber of my childhood was now all my own. My parents, living far from the center of things, were concerned now with security and status, the politics and business opportunities of Bakersfield. Our religion became something we did not talk about to everybody. I talked to myself about it.

I would shake the Mah Jong Table and the palace of many gardens and courts, the majestic halls and ramparts, constructed by giant hands from another world, the corridor where the Queen walked in the evening to meet the King, would fall. It seemed as if distant almost real shouts of anguish rose among the tottering ivory walls, and, making my play of earthquake, for I was the genius of the scene, I almost heard the confusion of delicious dismay, grief and fear, echoed in my heart as if bonds of human sympathy united me with the inhabitants of this world I created to destroy again and again. What I would see then was... Yes, I would see the actual mahjong tiles. I had had to build with utmost care and grandeur my little piled-up city or kingdom with many levels, for in the care piece by piece a place for something to happen was prepared, an other realm was built up, each tile the immediate occasion of a life fated to come to its last day. What I would see then was the monolithic real building I was engaged in, coming into existence block by block and yet the blocks themselves coming into existence in the building, out of what they were--the imposing gleam of the red dragon and green dragon walls, the mysterious symbols of the Chinese game with its winds and flowers converted into ancient glyphs and signs of a fated citadel. The Queen again would walk in the shadowed colonnade, the priests would sound their alarms from the tower, the scenes of human panic would flare up in the mind's eye, the pitiful consolation of the Queen in the King's embrace as the walls fell, the... No, he would not get to her! --the crashing house between, the grief

and loss. Each time I would experience what the victims of the holocaust experienced.

In the Atlantis phantasy and the Atlantis game or play, the most real emerged only in terms of what was most unreal. It was an experience true and untrue to itself. I could call up these returns of a scene, but I had no will in calling them that could go against the emerging pattern, given in the play. The intense reality, wherever I became arbitrary, dissolved into unreal and unsure elements. I could not name for sure any place as my destination. I could not name for sure any time as my appointed time. So, though I read eagerly anything and everything about my Atlantis, it grew only more suspect in the obsessional proofs of Ignatius Donnelly--I didn't believe in an historical Atlantis--and yet, when geologists and reasonable historians scorned the would-be fact of Atlantis, the sinking land seemed real. Outside of history, there was an Atlantis--the shuddering earth, the engulfing waters, came into their own again.

"In other words, they were not poeticised versions of unique historical events in the life of any individual hero," Jane Harrison writes of myths in Themis: "but reflect recurrent ritual practices, or dromena." The things said over the fire long ago in my grandmother's rooms, or the talk at table in my childhood of planetary influences, elemental powers, lives before this life--the whole pictured island of lost consciousness under the sea waves that might rise once more--Atlantis--was not false history but spoke of a feeling about the course of life itself. My grandmother died in her drama, her mis en scène of the Hermetic cult, and those who had lived in the enchantment of her stage survived to defend, to prove, to suspect or to put away what, when she had been alive, had been the language in which her living was written.

It is in the dream itself that we seem entirely creatures, without imagination, as if moved by a plot or myth told by a story-teller who is not ourselves. Wandering and wondering in a foreign land or struggling in the meshes of a nightmare, we cannot escape the compelling terms of the dream unless we wake, anymore than we can escape the terms of our living reality unless we die. There is a sense in which the "poet" of a poem forces us as writer or reader to obey a compelling form, the necessities of the poem, so that the poet has a likeness to the dreamer of the dream and to the creator of our living reality; dream, reality and the poem seem to be one.

The dream that was called my Atlantis dream was not something I thought up or that derived from the talk of my elders. The sequence remains emblematic and puzzling. Had my parents been Freudians instead of Hermeticists, they might have called it my birth-trauma dream. My mother had died in childbirth, and in some violent memory of

that initiation into life, she may be a counterpart of the mother-country that had been lost in legend. But for me, the figures of the dream remain as if they were not symbols but primal figures themselves of what was being expressed or shown. Memory of Atlantis or memory of birth-trauma, phantasy of Isis or play with words--these are not what the heart fears and needs, the showing forth of some power over the heart.

First there was the upward rise of a hill that filled the whole horizon of what was seen. A field of grass ripple as if by the life of the grass itself, yet I was told there was no wind. When I saw that there was no wind it was a fearful thing, where blade by blade the grass bowed of its own accord to the West. The grass moved towards the left. The seer or dreamer then was facing north. There may have been flowers--day's eyes--the grass was certainly in flower. The field was alive and, pointing that way, across the rise of the hill to the West, gave a sign.

Was I four or five when I first dreamt this dream? It came again and again as if to cut its shape for sure in what I would be. "For these images showed intention and choice," Yeats says of such showings-forth. When I heard the story of that nymph who fell hopelessly in love with the Lord of the Sun, Helios, I was drawn to identify with the Sunflower that rooted in her passion turns her head to follow the Sun's way, for there was some faint reminder there of the grass I had seen in my dream bowing to the West. But in my dream there was no sun. The light was everywhere, and I can not be certain it was morning, evening or high noon.

Then in a sudden almost blurred act of the play, there was a circle of children--sometimes they are all girls or all boys, sometimes they are boys and girls--dancing in the field. They choose or have chosen someone who is "IT" in the center of the ring, but I see no one there. The Dreamer is in the Center, the "I" or Eye of the Dream. And just here, I realize that this "I" is my self and second that I have been "chosen", but also that in dreaming I am the Chosen One, I have been caught in the wrong--a "King" or victim of the children's round dance. Ring a round of roses. Pocket full of posies. Or is it poses? for I had been proposed or I had posed as King, posed myself there. Ashes, ashes. All fall down!

In the third part--but it is the second section of the dream, for the Field and Its Dancers are two parts belonging to one section-- I am shown a cavern underground. A throne room? There is a stone chair on a dais. Seeing it is the King's chair or, even, in some dreamings of this dream, finding myself a lonely King in that chair, there is no one rightly there. A wave of fear seizes me. All things have gone wrong and I am in the wrong. Great doors break from their bats and hinges, and, under pressure, a wall of water floods the cavern.

The open field, the dance and the presumption, the seeing the dark throne and the flooding of the underworld (the dream that my mother believed to be memory of a past life) seem now a prediction of what life will be, now a showing forth of some content of what life is, as in the Orphic mysteries the story of Persephone was shown in scenes. The restless dead, the impending past life, what had been cast away--a seed--sprouts and in the vital impulse would speak to us. The head of a giant woman rises from the ground.

"I have seen Kore," the initiate Heracles says: "What face more terrible? I am initiate, prepared for Hades." Wonder and terror seem to be signs of the rite. But in my life dream, I have not seen the Maiden, for I stand in her place or in her way.

The open field, the dance and the...
the feeling the dark... and the...
understand the dream that my mother...
memory of a past life... now a...
this will be now... showing...
what life is as in the... the...
Peterson's... shown... the...
the... past life... had...
good... and in the... would...
... of a... from...
"I have seen you," the...
"What face were... I...
"Ladies," "Wonder and... to be...
But in my... I have not seen...
stand in her place or in her way.

THE NEPTUNIAN CHARACTER

Gerrit Lansing

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Geoffrey Hartman

Neptune was discovered in 1846, being then retrograde (in the Placidian system) in $25\frac{1}{2}$ Aquarius. Its single satellite, Triton, has a retrograde motion.

In 1848, year of the Communist Manifesto, the Fox sisters began their spiritualistic tricks under the influence of a married sister named Mrs. Fish.

Since Neptune stays for so long a period in one sign (it is now in Scorpio and will remain there until 1970) its influence in the lives of individuals will depend on its position in the houses of the chart and the aspects it makes with other planets, rather than on its zodiacal placement, which is a collective influence.

It also follows that the weight of Neptune is only ponderable when it is very strongly accentuated by other agents (mainly of a formal or musical nature) in an individual's horoscope. When it is so heightened we may speak of the Neptunian personality or the Neptunian character.

We would have to speak of a rapture, mirage, enchantment. We would have to speak of speech itself, of blood, of sex. The arcana of the pineal gland are Neptunian. We would have to speak of hair, sperm, and sweat. Secretions from secret holy places.

The negative Neptunian character is disposed to intrigue, duplicity, treachery, above all to secrecy. The triple veil of the negative is wound about him.

The positive Neptunian character is cosmically sensitive. He verges upon places where the human meets the possibility of a kind of further evolution, upon a place beyond human psychology where "intuition" is replaced by communion. The working of his intelligence is not rational but sensational, i.e. a kind of magnetic adhesion. He proceeds immediately to the secret, where it hides in its bushel of light. He finds it in the heart of the obvious.

He dissolves to create.

It is rare that the Neptunian does not sometimes disquiet even his closest friends or lovers. The impressions he makes are ambiguous, dreamlike, often profoundly disturbing or uncanny. It is as if one were hearing, far below the ground, murmur of unknown waters. No one is sure where Neptunian stands. He stands where others are unsure. He is ungraspable.

Constant evasion, fears and slidings away, the Neptunian's danger is a vaporous formlessness. Figures merge and divide in the misty desire world. In the stream of the mysteries.

The Neptunian is not attracted by ethics, by decisions. He is outside, below or beyond conventional morality, not by choice or affirmative power but by sheer incapacity or transcendence. Normal perception is a jail from which he wishes to break out.

As his emotional life is deep and strange, frequently abnormal and unstable, his sexual life is correspondingly manifold and mysterious, and to those unequipped to sympathize with mutable water, the "water of water" as it were, weird, abnormal, repellent. A cosmic pansexuality is hardly audible to ears tuned in to the earth.

It is rare that the Neptunian has the virile staying power of a Taurus or Scorpio, or the energy of an Aries, but as with any statement made about him, qualification is essential here, since it is by fantasies he is excited, in the mirage, and he may dream of endurance. Always, for him, sexuality is favored as a fundamental mode of knowledge, an access and key to the heights. The height he attains in sexual abandon is the acclivitas of the Brethren of the Free Spirit, who flourished in the Netherlands in the late middle ages. Frequently a Neptunian will have known physical love for an animal or a plant (usually a tree). At times when his essential seed leaves him he may experience the identity of the universe and his own body, an experience world-shaking enough to make other men lose their senses. The Neptunian emerges, not unscathed, but whole, from such revelations of deity.

Since he lives "on the margin," he represents the watery powers of the underworld. He is ineluctably attracted to the criminal, the forbidden, the untasted, always seeking to unveil, though not to the rational mind.

His human limits.

Physical maladies: voluntary intoxications (alcohol, opium, cocaine, goofballs, etc.). Ecstatic consumption. (Consumption in all senses. He is an oral character.) Hallucination, dissociation, the schizophrenic dream.

Spiritual maladies: Unbalance. The Middle Pillar not equilibrated. Treachery and conniving. Anxieties. Deceptions, all kinds of lies. Sexual frenzies. Obsession. Possession (incubus and succubus).

It is a black star of chimaeras that lures him.
But healing powers coil in the depths he sounds.

ON DIVINE VIRTUE

Zosimos

Zosimos was a Greek alchemist of the third century. These selections are translated from Greek texts in Bertholet's Collection des Alchimistes Grecs. texte, 107-112; 115-118.

Another translation of the selections printed here appeared in Ambix, 1937, by Sherwood Taylor, under the title, The Visions of Zosimos about which he writes:

"The Visions stand quite apart from his (Zosimos') other writings, and indeed from all other Greek alchemy, which contains nothing else of his elaborately allegorical character. They have indeed much of the character of actual dreams, which may have afforded a basis, at least, for these writings."

ON DIVINE VIRTUE

...of the first kind, though it is not
...of the second kind, though it is not
...of the third kind, though it is not
...of the fourth kind, though it is not
...of the fifth kind, though it is not
...of the sixth kind, though it is not
...of the seventh kind, though it is not
...of the eighth kind, though it is not
...of the ninth kind, though it is not
...of the tenth kind, though it is not

PRAXIS A

- 1/ The composition of the waters, and the movement and the growth, and the removal and restitution of bodily nature, and the splitting off of the spirit from the body, and the fixation of the spirit on the body, are not operations with natures alien one from the other, but, like the hard bodies of metals and the moist fluids of plants, are One Thing, of One Nature, acting upon itself. And in this system, of one kind but many colors, is preserved a research of all things, multiple and various, subject to lunar-influence and measure of time, which regulates the cessation and growth by which the One Nature transforms itself.
- 2/ And saying these things, I slept, and I saw a certain sacrificing priest standing before me and over an altar which had the form of a bowl. And that altar had fifteen steps going up to it. Then the priest stood up and I heard from above a voice say to me, "I have completed the descent of the fifteen steps and the ascent of the steps of light. And it is the sacrificing priest who renews me, casting off the body's coarseness, and, consecrated by necessity, I have become a spirit." And when I had heard the voice of him who stood in the altar formed like a bowl, I questioned him, desiring to understand who he was. He answered me in a weak voice saying, "I am (ΩV (ION), Priest of the Adytum, and I have born an intolerable force. For someone came at me headlong in the morning and dismembered me with a sword and tore me apart, according to the rigor of harmony. And, having cut my head off with the sword, he mashed my flesh with my bones and burned them in the fire of the treatment, until, my body transformed, I should learn to become a spirit." And I sustained the same intolerable force." And even as he said these things to me and I forced him to speak, it was as if his eyes turned to blood and he vomited up all his flesh. And I saw him as a mutilated image of a little man and he was tearing at his flesh and falling away.
- 3/ And being afraid I woke and considered, "Is this not the composition of the waters?" I thought that I was right and fell asleep again. And I saw the same altar in the shape of a bowl and water bubbled at the top of it, and in it were many people endlessly. And there was no one whom I might question outside of the bowl. And I went up to the altar to view the spectacle. And I saw a little man, a barber, whitened with age, and he said to me,

"What are you looking at?" I answered that I wondered at the boiling water and the men who were burning but remained alive. And he answered me saying, "The spectacle which you see is at once the entrance and the exit and the process." I questioned him further, "What is the nature of the process?" And he answered saying, "It is the place of the practice called the embalming. Men wishing to obtain virtue enter here and, fleeing the body, become spirits." I said to him, "And are you a spirit?" And he answered saying, "Both a spirit and a guardian of spirits." And he was saying these things to me and the boiling increased and the people wailed, I saw a copper man holding a lead tablet in his hand. He spoke aloud, looking at the tablet, "I counsel all those in mortification to become calm and that each take in his hand a lead tablet and write with his own hand and that each bear his eyes upward and open his mouth until his grapes be grown." The act followed the word and the master of the house said to me, "Have you stretched your neck up and have you seen what is done?" And I said that I had and he said to me, "This man of copper whom you have seen is the sacrificial priest and the sacrifice and he who vomited out his own flesh. To him was given authority over the water and over those men in mortification."

4/ And when I had seen these visions, I woke again and said to myself, "What is the cause of this vision? Is this not the white and yellow water, boiling, sulphurous, divine?" And I found that I understood well. And I said that it was good to speak and good to hear and good to give and good to receive and good to be poor and good to be rich. And how does the Nature learn to give and to receive? The copper man gives and the water-stone receives; the metal gives and the plant receives; the stars give and the flowers receive; the heavens give and the earth receives; the thunder gives the fire that flashes from it. For all things are woven together and all things are taken apart and all things are mingled and all things combined and all things mixed and all things separated and all things are moistened and all things are dried and all things bud and all things blossom in the altar shaped like a bowl. For each, by method and by weight of the four elements, the interlacing and separation of the whole is accomplished for no bond can be made without method. The method is natural, breathing in and breathing out, keeping the orders of the method, increasing and decreasing. And all things by division and union come together in a harmony, the method not being neglected, the Nature is transformed. For the Nature, turning on itself, is changed. And the Nature is both the nature of the virtue and the bond of the world.

5/ And, so that I need not write to you of many things, friend, build a temple of one stone, like ceruse, like alabaster, like marble of Proconnesus in appearance, having neither beginning nor end in its building. Let it have within, a pure stream of water glittering like sunlight. Notice on what side the entry to the temple is and take your sword in hand and seek the entry. For thin-mouthed is the place where the opening is and a serpent lies by it guarding the temple. First seize him in your hands and make a sacrifice of him. And having skinned him, cut his flesh from his bones, divide him, member from member, and having brought together again the members and the bones, make them a stepping stone at the entry to the temple and mount upon them and go in, and there you will find what you seek. For the priest whom you see seated in the stream gathering his color, is not a man of copper. For he has changed the color of his nature and become a man of silver whom, if you wish, after a little time, you will have as a man of gold.

PRAXIS B

1/ Then, again wishing to ascend the seven steps and to behold the seven mortifications and, as it happened, one day only did I ascend the way. Retracing my steps, I thereupon ascended the way many times. And on returning, I could not find the way, and becoming discouraged, not seeing how to get out, I fell asleep. And I saw in my sleep a certain little man, a barber, wearing a red robe and royal garments, and he stood outside of the place of the mortifications and said, "What are you doing, Man?" I said to him, "I stand here because I have missed every road and am lost." He said, "Follow me." And going out, I followed him. And being near to the place of the mortifications, I saw the little barber man leading me and he cast into the place of the mortifications and his whole body was consumed by fire,

2/ Seeing this, I fled and trembled from the fear and I woke and said to myself, "What is this that I have seen?" And again I took thought and determined that this barber man is the man of copper. It is necessary for the first step to throw him into the place of the mortifications." My soul again desired to ascend - the third step also. And again, alone, I went along the way, and as I drew near the place of the mortifications, again I got lost, losing sight of the path, and stood, out of my mind.

3/ And again I saw an old man of hair so white my eyes were blinded by the whiteness. His name was Agathodaemon. And the white old man, turning, looked on me for a whole hour. And I asked him, "Show me the right way." He did not turn towards me but hastened to go on the right way. And going and coming in this manner he quickly effected the altar. As I went up to the altar I saw the white old man, He was cast into the mortifications. O Creator-gods of celestial natures - straightway the flames took him up entire, which is a terrible story, my brother. For from the great energy of the mortifications his eyes became full with blood. And I questioned him saying, "Why do you lie there?" And he opened his mouth and said, "I am the man of lead and I am withstanding an intolerable force." And then I woke out of fear and sought in myself the cause of this fact. And again I reflected and said to myself, "I understand well that thus must one cast out the lead - truly the vision is concerning the combination of liquids.

PRAXIS G

And again I knew the theophany and again the sacred altar and I saw a certain priest clothed in white celebrating those same terrible mysteries and I said, "Who is this?" And answering he said to me, "This is the priest of the Adytum. He wishes to put blood into the bodies, to make the eyes clear, and to raise up the dead. And again I fell asleep for a while and while I was mounting the fourth step I saw one with a sword in his hand coming out of the east. And I saw another behind him, holding a disk, white and shining and beautiful to behold. And it was called the meridian of the Sun and I approached the place of the mortifications and the one who held the sword said to me, "Cut off his head and sacrifice his meat and muscles part by part so that first the flesh may be boiled according to the method and that he might then suffer the mortifications" And waking, I said, "I understand well that these matters concern the liquids of the art of the metals." And the one who held the sword said, "You have fulfilled the seven steps beneath." And the other said at the same time as the casting out of the lead by all the liquids, "The Work is completed."

TAROT JOURNAL

Charles Stein

The Tarot Journal is a section of the author's notebooks including meditations on individual tarot cards as well as other meditations and psychic events occurring during the period when the author was using the cards. While some of the entries do not refer to specific tarots, the Tarot is a general background for all the concerns of the journal.

The journal is not a "magical notebook" in the sense of a private record of experiences and events intended for purely personal uses, but was undertaken with the forethought that it would eventually be published.

CHAPTER 1

CHAPTER 2

The first journal is a record of the author's researches including reflections on individual cases as well as other reflections and personal events occurring during the period when the author was using the cards. While some of the material is not related to specific cases, the fact is a general background for all the contents of the journal.

The journal is not a "cookbook" in the sense of a private record of experiences and events, intended for purely personal use, but was undertaken with the hope that it would eventually be published.

Mon., April 13

The HighPriestess as Mistress of the cells.
her position: equilibrium.
The Tower—the Body itself?

What is cast out?

Tue., April 14

The Wheel—the speed of the wheel increases
as we move to the periphery.
The center is absolutely still and from it all
motion goes out.

Wed., April 15

meditation:

my own face seen in a mirror.

Friday., April 17

Her body in the woods, well
for the light to fall on it—
as he took each piece of garment off her
so the brightness grew.

Waking at Josie's - actually asleep on couch in
living room, I wanted to project my astral body,
and, succeeding, proceeded to where Josie was, in
her mother's room, standing in front of a mirror.
I, it seemed, flew towards her - flight was the kind of
motion I made - moving off the ground not being noted.
I flew, then, towards her and touched her and stroked her
breasts. I noticed then in the mirror both an image
of her and of myself, though strangely, now, the un-
reflected 'bodily' Josie was no longer before the
mirror, or she was not 'manifested' there. I say
not manifested because I felt I could see in astral
travel only those things I imagined in a particular
way.

As on the astral, one can will any thing, make
any image, correctly willed or imaged appear, so,
as if conversely, only those things willed or imaged
in fact did appear.

For some reason, then, Josie did not appear except in the mirror: I had not formed her image outside of the mirror while I was seeing her in it.

The mirror itself had a peculiar quality of depth to it, as if the depth of my own consciousness, that pool, was projected out to behind the mirror.

I did try to will Josie outside the mirror but do not remember with what success.

I soon returned to the living room, but could not see the couch I was lying on. I imaged the couch with my body on it, re-entered my body and 'came out'.

moisture coming up the
earth of a new
quality so

moths are
new beings in the middle of the air

flowering out of it

confirm
(the stars now tell)
the changing year

and what I willed last night this morning
takes the color of

Sun., April 19

meditation:

a garden like Madison Square, in my head,
from end to end or ear to ear of which
a tight rope. a car rode to center of it.
:that obstacles aid us in centering
by serving as guides or sights.

Mon., April 20

meditation:

giving suggestion I think I always spoke to myself
as 'we' in the concentration: trying to become 'I.'

Tuesday, April 21

Meditation:

Somewhere I got involved in myth of Queen Guenevere and her abduction by Bademagus. like a dream coming up. Did, however, get image of sea coast with clouds and gulls which I was showing someone and which seemed to me to be always present and easily accessible. No light came through those clouds.

Thursday, April 23

Meditation:

A girl, a child, riding on a bull.
The bull was the offspring of a greater bull and seemed to me to symbolize an image rising on the psychic energy of meditation. As if the energy of a poem and meditation - all going forth -
The energy was
the offspring of another energy.

Girl riding bull - in Waite's tarot - on the Sun card
a young child similarly rides a horse.

.

I remembered (in meditation) that this morning a part of me was terrified while I was awake, walking in Josie's house; that I had not been conscious of the terror, but the terror nevertheless had made an impression on my memory.

All layers of consciousness are working all the time. Meditation concentrates attention, draws up power, from all the layers, or, going to the layers, makes them conscious.

Tue., May 4

Demons: They came from the same 'level' as the sense of centrality I had was on. The resolve that I must fear nothing; that in going into 'any world whatever' I must leave all fear behind as Mr. Raven advises in Macdonald's Lilith, rescued me.

I understand that the center I felt to be on the same level as demons was a reflection of a 'true' or 'deeper' center down to this shallower level, or a projection of an image of center down to that level. The reason that I could think it a center deeper than it was (and expect it, that I was at such a level, to be adequate protection against demons); some thing to do with a projection into a 'deeper sky', much like the viewer's projection of a meteorite falling close at hand out far into among the fixed stars.

sun
in my heart

back of it
a darkness spreads for many spaces to
a star

Sun., May 9

Going to sleep. I remember that I 'consciously' went to sleep. Much flying about as if a parachute, coming down from great height. But I was also conscious of being in bed and doing this in my head. At one point, one of the last 'jumps' I learned this:

that the turning-in and going into flight
was a turning into the body -
that the body (as shell) or the mind (what's in
the shell)

was a universe in which the 'point' flies
exactly as a man would fly
in the outer sky.

Wed., May 13

several sensings of . . . in forehead.
also that plane
at the end of which are low mountains (or at times
an orchard).

concentration pretty poor - brain
going and going I
just finished a poem but

again, in forehead,
a slit and through it
the sky

Fri., May 15

High Priestess -
her strangeness-
a woman's veil is before her, veils
her face or
the secrets of her body - Priestess is
before the veil
a presence
come through

Sat., May 16

Dream in morning I had taken a rocket to the moon,
approached it. there was a blue glow.
I saw on the moon there was a city, a tall city,
a deep blue sky
and surfaces of
the rock of it
boardered a silver sea.

Somehow I entered the buildings.
they were like docks
at the sea
and I began falling
and terror came
but I held to,
fell, saw many changes of light
until I was in a subway and finally
out on a street of a day city
on earth.
then woke.

This was not really a dream, though I did see and
feel all these things like a dream. I was partly
conscious of the process making it, as if something
in me were willing these things; and yet, they
were distinctly happening to me.

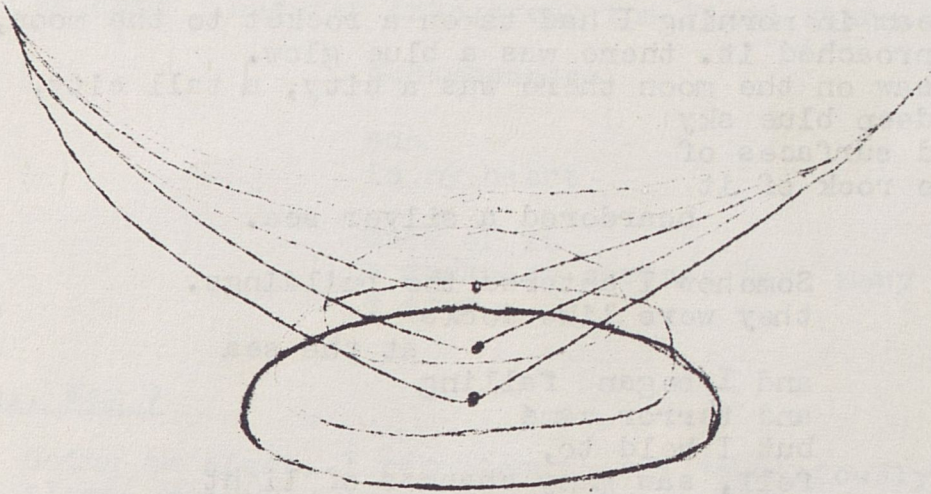
Tue., May 19

meditation:

point in the heart - a column of light
rises

consciousness up to a chamber in the head
which blesses with planes
of quietness there

so that each grade of subtlety
within the point
is the center of a field or plane
of corresponding subtlety.



The largest ring is properly matter, the
physical world which reveals and conceals,
is and contains all. But because there is no
contrast between it and the 'spiritual'
universe(s), the spirit is most difficultly seen.

From May 28 until June 2 I was on a brief retreat to a mountain cabin, upstate New York. I include here the complete record for one day of the retreat rather than excerpts from the whole of it.

Thu., May 28

4:15 P.M. Arrived at cabin, registered, unpacked.
went for walk.
4:50 Back from walk. thinking. strange feeling
but this with me: I am here to move to
center, all thought moves to center.
but
confusion of selves - the image of doing
what I am doing is strong; I am describing
myself constantly.
asanas.
pranayama very difficult. hard to keep up.
concentration on tatwas very bad. every
manner of interruption. loss of sense of
what is "up" though imaging was good and
easy. get frantic when dealing with more
than one shape.
5:35 shower, then to dinner, back at
7:10 colored Fool and Magician.
7:55 read from Valentinus' Triumphal Chariot
of Antimony.
8:55 centering and med. for 40 minutes.
9:20 meditation for 25 minutes, but all was off.
anxiety, food on the belly, palpitations,
thought, tension, the works.
in head, tension - some sense of spaciality
there. sun, sky, but nothing real.
10:00 read New Testament in Greek a bit.
I think some trouble is the incense.
sleep.

Fri., May 29

up at
5:35 sun just up over the hill.
6:15 A.M. concentration still impossible.
anxiety, talk, only slight help came when
thinking of my own "consciousness"; rest
of time, nonsense.

is society necessary for this
business then? this seems to be
the problem:

- 1/ that peripheral objects are necessary to locate center.
- 2/ that anxiety over (1) makes centering difficult.
- 3/ that the "plane" I live on is of course mostly social, emotional, intellectual, filled with "gross" objects. Thus center is easily located in relation to these on the periphery and from there, once that "gross" center is contacted and attention established, it is possible to go on, move to subtler centers.
- 4/ But the plane I am now on is this: denying myself conversation and also the imagined conversation carried on constantly with people I see, emotion disciplined out, though directed in a certain way - so I begin now from what was a center in other conditions I had to find.

When I had to work to hit this center, it was "hooked up" to real center, true center; but here, the "tie-in" is gone; what I have dissociates from center, floats free. It is not so much a loss of centrality as a loss of periphery.

*

going
on a path
through the outer forest
there is a path

but the main problem is still anxiety.

path through
the outer forest
hunter, stunned in
his woods rises and
looks about

 which way
to the river to
the forest's core?

 He knows.

I am no hunter
but a builder of cabins in the outlands
and blond light stuns
the forest. Losing heart,
the bleached trees darken.
The sound of falling water only
lasts in the rush of light.

6:45 went out at 6:30 but back. too cold no place
to go.

"Thus, reality is acquired solely through
repetition or participation; everything
which lacks an exemplary model is
'meaningless' i.e. it lacks reality."

 (Eliade, Cosmos and History)

But if things are made real by participation
in an archetype, if otherwise "profane" or
"unreal" activities take meaning by occurring
in a "consecrated space" by imitation, what
about the primal gesture itself? The Archetype?
Is it discovered other than in the gesture by
which it is returned to? Is the face of God
seen? Can we Know God as He knows Himself?

 For the time being, say, no.
In the world what is important is that "profane"
activities are made meaningful by their
elevation, that it is possible to act with
joy and purpose.

 Religion then, in addition to
my "mysticism."

 But my "mysticism" also,
that the tie-in not be lost.

 I finally trust in center, its
reality, absolutely. That, in other words, the
archetype has its reality independent of its
incidents, that it can be known, that the
Beatific experience is possible, does happen.

But- the elevation of "profane space" to "consecrated space" is only that, and serves the interests, finally, of the profane - or at least there is co-inherence here, exchange. God known by works in Him.

So, there is an apparent opposition : the "mystical" life, where the center is discovered for itself - where problems of human life become, simply, irrelevant; the religious life, where what is known in the mystical life raises the profane; where the profane becomes meaningful by participation in an archetype it (the profane, say, or the ritual) never totally realizes, never becomes. For full realization would necessitate a denial: the end of ritual and the irrelevance of the profane.

Thus this retreat and the strangeness so far.

We cannot choose the mystical: it chooses us through the mystery of our willing. Our work (what we can do) must be alchemical-religious- here-pointed, earth-down-directed, if upward, heaven-centered.

When the time happens that time must be put aside, that the tragic (and it may be tragic) effort to consecrate life, to live in the world, must be ended and the other way taken up, in all its unknownness (what it is - the "inner-counterwork" of Hubert Benoit) one will receive the message "through one's light".

7:20 finished writing. now to paint.

All voices in my head - ok except that I identify with them, put the push of my energies in them as they come up. So instead of hearing X speaking in me, I speak through the voice of X.

Language is abstract and pure. It is in me as I have heard it but in it I put my voice. "style is soul."

8:10 finished painting King and 1-10 of wands.

8:15-8:30 did concentration on tatwas. concentration much better than any time so far. great pressure in forehead - as if from without.

9:10 to breakfast.

9:10 - back from breakfast.

Interesting - that the "spiritual process" elevates myth, the "anti-historical fiction"- until the final step; the push over the abyss - where the historical is reclaimed and asserted.

Reading Cosmos and History and 'Valentinus'.

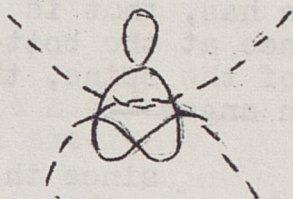
11:00 Valentinus speaks in first person as Antimony: "It is I, Antimony, that speaks to you. In me you find mercury, sulphur, and salt, the 3 great principles of health. "

and, Valentinus, as he says Antimony does, appears, as a personality in the text, and withdraws - these are digressions for which he apologizes and from which he returns to his 'subject'.

now go: for a walk.

11:40 back from walk. Meditated a while sitting on a stone in woods. ok. better than has been, but still a great deal to knock through.

pressure in head.
a bubble below:



12:15 out to lunch.

afternoon - read Valentinus, painted Queen and Knight of Wands

nap. up at

5:45 P.M. asanas: headstand, shoulderstand, twisting, locust, stretching, cobra, bow, plough.

pranayama.

shower

dinner.

Tue., June 9

Perhaps we must distinguish in meditation between images and structures. An image is an eruption from the unconscious, is distinctly seen.

A structure may or may not be seen. It may have an image - star, sun, wall, mountains etc. connected with it. But it seems to exist in the mind as a more or less permanent 'place' which we do not create or pour out with imagination. We can use imagination and "will" to become aware of a structure (sometimes) which seems to be present, latently, at all times, and is a kind of landmark in the journey inwards.

It is a lifetime concern to discover the meaning of these structures - what that star is, what the mountain is, the sky. Imagining helps in getting there, but what I get to is not what I imagine d.

Tuesday, June 23

Card: Strength

The Lady has become such that with her hands she opens the lions jaws. From his jaws a roar goes out from his belly.

The energy that the wild lion has, that is the coiled, stored violence at the bottom of consciousness, at the base of the spine, the energy down behind hidden anger—

since the lady is white all this can happen. the power enters the senses. the soul made clean, relaxed, lets the body's energy manifest and return.

Card: The Hermit

that energy has gone back up to its source -

The child is the virgin / that force held back. The hermit also, a vrigin (his sign is Virgo) has returned to that childhood. his energy is free, has risen through his body, stung the cortex and awakened its higher functioning.

Card: Death

what death is-

the severing of bonds.
the detachment from any weed/
hangup/limitation/image/notion

thus a cutting away from a self-image/
an identity/ego-structure.

Hands up — hold to—
the scythe cuts the hands off ,
ends connection to, breaks 'set'.

Death is a giving in, a falling to-
to what?

say the Hermit in us
the completed distant being I am

He is most remote in me and to him I
"refer" at the moment of any death

and here it is
the bones of me
do the work, no light
from a dark I look into
breaks my body but
from the bones themselves, the scythe
cuts

Saturday, June 27

Card: Death

from that slaying
the fish procreate

Tuesday, June 30

the moon where
it is (both
times) and standing out
the river stands out its flowing
heart. returned. love
from the deeps to
the body's core
where you are
the gulls beat
the waves

Sunday, July 12

what springs
from the dark ground.

the steel blade

Saturday, July 18

Card: The Hermit

The Hermit in Samadhi breaks "Set".
The Hermit is in the darkness of no-set, order
which makes light of is suspended.
The Devil's darkness is the darkness of
imposed order - "sets" which extend themselves
in time - holding what they hold though
the facts are changing. As if the set were
itself beyond what it ordered.

Card: Justice

Holding the scales, I feel the weights
ballance, the left and right fall into
place. The sword I hold up
guards against what approaches.
What approaches?

I enter the meditation setting the ballances.

The key to tarot is not number, is image.

Sunday, July 19

card: Death

Like a river flowing back to its source
the enrgy at the base of the spine goes up
to the other centers of the body, to the whole
body. The twist of pelvis in the skeleton is
that turning of currents which makes the water,
lets the water flow up. Water flows up?
fire? the images appearing on the current
of energy going up.

what grows up are new greens
and hands, open hands.

Or is the distorted pelvis the present pose,
choking off the flow, saying
we are skeletons, robbed of the life-giving currents
of these forces.

In either case, it is
by a turning around of the lower body that the
life flows.

In the Marseilles Tarot, the skeleton still has
his muscles on and has cut off his foot:

The dam itself
is water.

The thing that structures and contains
is a turning in.

There is nothing but self
constraint.

These knots that clod the wire
are made of wire.

The current cuts itself
off, the river of images dams
its own flow.

One way the energy is let flow is through the
visual imagination which operates by a severing
of attention from the visual apparatus -
that blade the skeleton has does it.

card: Wheel of Fortune

Marseilles Wheel. The animals on the Wheel
don't ride the wheel. they turn it. Their
animality seems to spin the wheel as if not
even capriciously but with violence -
a heavy and indifferent beast spins the wheel
riding its rim, driving it with bodily force
while no guiding hand holds the crank.

The crowned thing
which is pretending to be a sphynx looks
more like a shriveled monkey or a ruined
soldier holding a rifle (not a sword).
And still the crazy thing has wings.

The animals are rats that have gone up
on an abandoned ship and spin the wheel
running up and down it.

such a world it is.

Monday, July 20

we must reawaken the process by which
the world appears.

for the ship, deserted, is
beached or turns on an uncolored sea
and rats spin
the wheel at
the helm

what we've lost
chance has taken
(what turns the wheel)
has taken from us.

Tuesday, July 21

meditation:

Talking going on in my head, strange punning.
First thought - someone calling out the name
"Metanowsky" and I answered "I am that kid". Then
it hit me that the name was a garble of "meta-nous"
as in "metanoia" +repentence, or literally, change
of mind.

also, to get into "soul", I thought of my
"solar" system- to get down where
the planets turn
inside me.

images of sky, mountains and sun.

Wednesday, July 22

card: (Marseilles) Fool

ape, jackass, fool, has
his bones mis-fit, eyes
looking off and his huge body
walks a yellow desert
a vault under the sky is white.
a jackel at his coat,
bites pockets in his pants.
What he is walking away from
he has let the rats come in to fill.
but what you think is the top of the fool's
cap, goes off the card, like the animal
coming from where he has been.

it's mostly
not there

a shot
of what's going by.

The sense is, that everything's going on beyond
what is on the card. The Fool looks off and away. His hat
goes out of the picture above and his staff below. The beast
who is after him leaps out of a nowhere behind. The
horizon is low. The sky, white and imageless. What is without
draws us and does not reveal itself.

Everything that is shown is ambiguous. His glance
is up and his head cocked to the sky. His body is halt: his
behind sticks out, his arm is crooked and we don't see where
the staff which holds him rests on the ground.

The perspective is crazy. The two sticks (his staff
and his beggar's-bad pole) seem to bend around him but don't
bend. Is the stick that holds the bag on his right shoulder or
left? Does he hold it against the back of his neck?

And what part of his body faces us? The front of his
garment faces front, but his head, almost cut off by the
bag-pole, glances, as if from the other way, over his shoulder.

Nothing in the picture is certain. We don't know
where he is going, or how his body is placed. He is at once
tangled in the knots of his coats and gadgets, harrassed by
beasts and baggy pants -

There is an unknown world
outside the images on the card which in some way figure
in the ambiguity of what we see on it.

THE SOLDIER AND THE
HUNCHBACK:
! AND ?

Aleister Crowley

reprinted from
Vol.1, No.1 of
The Equinox,
March, 1909

THE BOSTON AND THE

WINTER:

I AND S

reprinted from
Vol. I, No. 1 of
The Boston
March, 1909

THE SOLDIER AND THE
HUNCHBACK:
! AND ?

"Expect seven misfortunes from the cripple,
and forty-two from the one-eyed man; but
when the hunchback comes, say 'Allah our aid.'"

-Arab Proverb

I

INQUIRY. Let us inquire in the first place: What is Scepticism? The word means looking, questioning, investigating. One must pass by contemptuously the Christian liar's gloss which interprets "sceptic" as "mockers"; though in a sense it is true for him, since to inquire into Christianity is assuredly to mock at it; but I am concerned to intensify the etymological connotation in several respects. First, I do not regard mere incredulity as necessary to the idea, though credulity is incompatible with it. Incredulity implies a prejudice in favour of a negative conclusion; and the true sceptic should be perfectly unbiassed.

Second, I exclude "vital scepticism." What's the good of anyfink? expects (as we used to learn about "nonne?") the answer, "Why, nuffink!" and again is prejudiced. Indolence is no virtue in a questioner. Eagerness, intentness, concentration, vigilance-- all these I include in the connotation of "sceptic." Such questioning as has been called "vital scepticism" is but a device to avoid true questioning, and therefore its very antithesis, the devil disguised as an angel of light.

(Or vice versa, friend, if you are a Satanist; 'tis a matter of words--words--words. You may write X for Y in your equations, so long as you consistently write Y for X. They remain unchanged-- and unsolved. Is not all our "knowledge" an example of this fallacy of writing one unknown for another, and then crowing like Peter's cock?)

I picture the true sceptic as a man eager and alert, his deep eyes glittering like sharp swords, his hands tense with effort as he asks, "What does it matter?"

I picture the false sceptic as a dude or popinjay, yawning, with dull eyes, his muscles limp, his purpose in asking the question but the expression of his slackness and stupidity.

This true sceptic is indeed a man of science; as Wells' "Moreau" tells us. He has devised some means of answering his first question, and its answer is another question. It is difficult to conceive of any question, indeed, whose answer does not imply a thousand further questions. So simple an inquiry as "Why is sugar sweet?" involves an infinity of chemical researches, each leading ultimately to the blank wall-- what is matter? and an infinity of physiological researches, each (similarly) leading to the blank wall-- what is the mind?

Even so, the relation between the two ideas is unthinkable; causality is itself unthinkable; it depends, for one thing, upon experience-- and what, in God's name, is experience? Experience is impossible without memory. What is memory? The mortar of the temple of the ego, whose bricks are the impressions. And the ego? The sum of our experience, may be. (I doubt it!) Anyhow, we have got values of Y and Z for X, and values of X and Z for Y-- all our equations are indeterminate; all our knowledge is relative, even in a narrower sense than is usually implied by the statement. Under the whip of the clown God, our performing donkeys the philosophers and men of science run round and round in the ring; they have amusing tricks. they are cleverly trained; but they get nowhere.

I don't seem to be getting anywhere myself.

II

A fresh attempt. Let us look into the simplest and most certain of all possible statements. Thought exists, or if you will, Cogitatur.

Descartes supposed himself to have touched bedrock with his Cogito, ergo Sum.

Huxley pointed out the complex nature of this proposition, and that it was an enthymeme with the premiss Omnes sunt, qui cogitant suppressed. He reduced it to Cogito; or, to avoid the assumption of an ego, Cogitatur.

Examining more closely this statement, we may still cavil at its form. We cannot translate it into English without the use of the verb to be, so, that, after all, existence is implied. Nor do we readily conceive that contemptuous silence is sufficient answer to the further query, "By whom is it thought?" The Buddhist may find it easy to image an act without an agent; I am not so clever. It may be possible for a sane man; but I should like to know more about his mind before I gave a final opinion.

But apart from purely formal objections, we may still inquire: Is this Cogitatur true?

Yes; reply the sages; for to deny it implies thought; Negatur is only a sub-section of Cogitatur.

This involves, however, an axiom that the part is of the same nature as the whole; or (at the very least) an axiom that A is A.

Now, I do not wish to deny that A is A, or may occasionally be A. But certainly A is A is a very different statement to our original Cogitatur.

The proof of Cogitatur, in short, rests not upon itself but upon the validity of our logic; and if by logic we mean (as we should mean) the Code of the Laws of Thought, the irritating sceptic will have many more remarks to make: for it now appears that the proof that thought exists depends upon the truth of that which is thought, to say no more.

We have taken Cogitatur, to try and avoid the use of esse; but A is A involves that very idea, and the proof is fatally flawed

Cogitatur depends on Est; and there's no avoiding it.

III

Shall we get on any better if we investigate this Est- Something is-- Existence is--

What is existence? The question is so fundamental that it finds no answer. The most profound meditation only leads to an exasperating sense of impotence. There is, it seems, no simple rational idea in the mind which corresponds to the word.

It is easy of course to drown the question in definitions, leading us to further complexity-- but

"Existence is the gift of Divine Providence,"

"Existence is the opposite of non-Existence,"

do not help us much!

The plain Existence is Existence of the Hebrews goes farther. It is the most sceptical of statements, in spite of its form. Existence is just existence, and there's no more to be said about it; don't worry! Ah, but there is more to be said about it! Though we search ourselves for a thought to match the word, and fail, yet we have Berkeley's perfectly convincing argument that (so far as we know it) existence must mean thinking existence or spiritual existence.

Here then we find our Est to imply Cogitatur; and Berkeley's arguments are "irrefragable, yet fail to produce conviction" (Hume) because the Cogitatur, as we have shown, implies Est.

Neither of these ideas is simple; each involves the other. Is the division between them in our brain a proof of the total incapacity of that organ, or is there some flaw in our logic? For all depends upon logic; not upon the simple identity A is A only, but upon its whole structure from the question of simple propositions, enormously difficult from the moment when it occurred to the detestable genius that invented "existential import" to consider the matter, to that further complexity and contradiction, the syllogism.

IV

Thought is appears then (in the worst case possible, denial) as the conclusion of the premisses:

There is denial of thought.

(All) Denial of thought is thought.

Even formally, 'tis a clumsy monster. Essentially, it seems to involve a great deal beyond our original statement. We compass heaven and earth to make one syllogism; and when we have made it, it is tenfold more the child of mystery than ourselves.

We cannot here discuss the whole problem of the validity (the surface-question of the logical validity) of the syllogism; though one may throw out the hint that the doctrine of distributed middle seems to assume a knowledge of a Calculus of Infinites which is certainly beyond my own poor attainments, and hardly impregnable to the simple reflection that all mathematics is conventional, and not essential; relative, and not absolute.

We go deeper and deeper, then, it seems, from the One into the Many. Our primary proposition depends no longer upon itself, but upon the whole complex being of man, poor, disputing, muddle-headed man! Man with all his limitations and ignorance; man-- man!

V

We are of course no happier when we examine the Many, separately or together. They converge and diverge, each fresh hill-top of knowledge disclosing a vast land unexplored; each gain of power in our telescopes opening out new galaxies; each improvement in our microscopes showing us life minuter and more incomprehensible. A mystery of the mighty spaces between molecules; a mystery of the ether-cushions that fend off the stars from collision! A mystery of the fulness of things; a mystery of the emptiness of things! Yet, as we go, there grows a sense, an instinct, a premonition-- what shall I call it?-- that Being is One, and Thought is One, and Law is One-- until we ask What is that One?

Then again we spin words-- words-- words. And we have got no single question answered in any ultimate sense.

What is the moon made of?

Science replies "Green Cheese."

For our one moon we have now two ideas:

Greenness, and Cheese.

Greenness depends on the sunlight, and the eye, and a thousand other things.

Cheese depends upon bacteria and fermentation and the nature of the cow.

"Deeper, ever deeper, into the mire of things!"

Shall we cut the Gordian knot? shall we say "There is God"?

What, in the devil's name, is God?

If (with Moses) we picture Him as an old man showing us His back parts, who shall blame us? The great Question --any question is the great question-- does indeed treat us thus cavalierly, the disenchanting Sceptic is too prone to think!

Well, shall we define Him as a loving Father, as a jealous priest, as a gleam of light upon the holy ark? What does it matter? All these images are of wood and stone, the wood and stone of our own stupid brains! The Fatherhood of God is but a human type; the idea of a human father conjoined with the idea of immensity. Two for One again!

No combination of thoughts can be greater than the thinking brain itself; all we can think of God or say of Him, so long as our words really represent thoughts, is less than the whole brain which thinks, and orders speech.

Very good; shall we proceed by denying Him all thinkable qualities, as do the heathen? All we obtain is mere negation of thought.

Either He is unknowable, or He is less than we are. Then, too, that which is unknowable is unknown; and "God" or "There is God" as an answer to our question becomes as meaningless as any other.

Who are we, then?

We are Spencerian Agnostics, poor silly, damned Spencerian Agnostics!

And there is an end of the matter.

VI

It is surely time that we began to question the validity of some of our data. So far our scepticism has not only knocked to pieces our tower of thought, but rooted up the foundation-stone and ground it into finer and more poisonous powder than that into which Moses ground the calf. These golden Elohim! Our calf-heads that brought us not out of Egypt, but into a darkness deeper and more tangible than any darkness of the double Empire of Asar.

Hume put his little ? to Berkeley's God- !; Buddha his ? to the Vedic Atman- ! --and neither Hume nor Buddha was baulked of his reward. Ourselves may put ? to our own ? since we have found no ! to put it to; and wouldn't it be jolly if our own second ? suddenly straightened its back and threw its chest out and marched off as !?

Suppose then we accept our scepticism as having destroyed our knowledge root and branch-- is there no limit to its action? Does it not in a sense stultify itself? Having destroyed logic by logic-- if Satan cast out Satan, how shall his kingdom stand?

Let us stand on the Mount, Saviours of the World that we are, and answer "Get thee behind me, Satan!" though refraining from quoting texts or giving reasons.

Oho! says somebody; is Aleister Crowley here? --Samson blinded and bound, grinding corn for the Philistines!

Not at all, dear boy!

We shall put all the questions that we can put-- but we may find a tower built upon a rock, against which the winds beat in vain.

Not what Christians call faith, be sure! But what (possibly) the forgers of the Epistles-- those eminent mystics!-- meant by faith. What I call Samadhi-- and as "faith without works is dead," so, good friends, Samadhi is all humbug unless the practitioner shows the glint of its gold in his work in the world. If your mystic becomes Dante, well; if Tennyson, a fig for his trances!

But how does this tower of Samadhi stand the assault of Question-time?

Is not the idea of Samadhi just as dependent on all the other ideas-- man, time, being, thought, logic? If I seek to explain Samadhi by analogy, am I not often found talking as if we knew all about Evolution, and Mathematics, and History? Complex and unscientific studies, mere straws before the blast of our hunchback friend!

Well, one of the buttresses is just the small matter of common sense.

The other day I was with Dorothy, and, as I foolishly imagined, very cosy: for her sandwiches are celebrated. It was surely bad taste on the part of Father Bernard Vaughan, and Dr. Torrey, and Ananda Metteyya, and Mr. G. W. Foote,

and Captain Fuller, and the ghost of Immanuel Kant, and Mr. Bernard Shaw, and young Neuberg, to intrude. But intrude they did; and talk! I never heard anything like it. Every one with his own point of view; but all agreed that Dorothy was non-existent, or if existent, a most awful specimen, that her buns were stale, and her tea stewed; ergo, that I was having a very poor time of it. Talk! Good God! But Dorothy kept on quietly and took no notice; and in the end I forgot about them.

Thinking it over soberly, I see now that very likely they were quite right: I can't prove it either way! But as a mere practical man, I intend taking the steamer-- for my sins I am in Gibraltar-- back to Dorothy at the earliest possible moment. Sandwiches of bun and German sausage may be vulgar and even imaginary-- its the taste I like. And the more I munch, the more complacent I feel, until I go so far as to offer my critics a bite.

This sounds in a way like the "Interior Certainty" of the common or garden Christian; but there are differences.

The Christian insists on notorious lies being accepted as an essential part of his (more usually her) system; I, on the contrary, ask for facts, ~~for~~ observation. Under Scepticism, true, one is just as much a house of cards as the other; but only in the philosophical sense.

Practically, Science is true; and Faith is foolish.

Practically, $3 \times 1 = 3$ is the truth; and $3 \times 1 = 1$ is a lie; though, sceptically, both statements may be false or unintelligible.

Practically, Franklin's method of obtaining fire from heaven is better than that of Prometheus or Elijah. I am now writing by the light that Franklin's discovery enabled men to use.

Practically, "I concentrated my mind upon a white radiant triangle in whose centre was a shining eye, for 22 minutes and 10 seconds, my attention wandering 45 times" is a scientific and valuable statement. "I prayed fervently to the Lord for the space of many days" means anything or nothing. Anybody who cares to do so may imitate my experiment and compare his result with mine. In the latter case one would always be wondering what "fervently" meant and who "the Lord" was, and how many days made "many."

My claim, too, is more modest than the Christian's. He (usually she) knows more about my future than is altogether pleasant; I claim nothing absolute from my Samadhi-- I know only too well the worthlessness of single-handed observations, even on so simple a matter as a boiling-point determination! --and as for his (usually her) future, I content myself with mere common sense about the probable end of a fool.

So that after all I keep my scepticism intact-- and I keep my Samadhi intact. The one balances the other; I care nothing for the vulgar brawling of these two varlets of my mind!

VII

If, however, you would really like to know what might be said on the soldierly side of the question, I shall endeavour

to oblige.

It is necessary if a question is to be intelligibly put that the querent should be on the same plane as the quesited.

Answer is impossible if you ask: Are round squares triangular? or Is butter virtuous? or How many ounces go to the shilling? for the "questions" are not really questions at all.

So if you ask me Is Samadhi real? I reply: First, I pray you, establish a connection between the terms. What do you mean by Samadhi?

There is a physiological (or pathological; never mind now!) state which I call Samadhi; and that state is as real-- in relation to man-- as sleep, or intoxication, or death.

Philosophically we may doubt the existence of all of these; but we have no grounds for discriminating between them-- the Academic Scepticism is a wholesale firm, I hope!-- and practically, I challenge you to draw valid distinctions.

All these are states of the consciousness of man; and if you seek to destroy one, all fall together.

VIII

I must, at the risk of appearing to digress, insist upon this distinction between philosophical and practical points of view, or (in Qabalistic language) between Kether and Malkuth.

In private conversation I find it hard-- almost impossible--to get people to understand what seems to me so very simple a point. I shall try to make it exceptionally clear.

A boot is an illusion.

A hat is an illusion.

Therefore, a boot is a hat.

So argue my friends, not distributing the middle term.

But thus argue I.

All boots are illusions.

All hats are illusions.

Therefore (though it is not a syllogism), all boots and hats are illusions.

I add:

To the man in Kether no illusions matter.

Therefore: To the man in Kether neither boots nor hats matter.

In fact, the man in Kether is out of all relation to these boots and hats.

You, they say, claim to be a man in Kether (I don't). Why then, do you not wear boots on your head and hats on your feet?

I can only answer that I the man in Kether ('tis but an argument) am out of all relation as much with feet and heads as with boots and hats. But why should I (from my exalted pinnacle) stoop down and worry the headed and footed gentleman in Malkuth, who after all doesn't exist for me, by these drastic alterations in his toilet? There is no distinction whatever; I might easily put the boots on his shoulders, with his head on one foot and the hat on the other.

In short, why not be a clean-living Irish gentleman, even if you do have insane ideas about the universe?

Very good, say my friends, unabashed, then why not stick to that? Why glorify Spanish gipsies when you have married a clergyman's daughter?

Why go about proclaiming that you can get as good fun for eightpence as usually costs men a career?

Ah! let me introduce you to the man in Tiphereth; that is, the man who is trying to raise his consciousness from Malkuth to Kether.

This Tiphereth man is in a devil of a hole! He knows theoretically all about the Kether point of view (or thinks he does) and practically all about the Malkuth point of view. Consequently he goes about contradicting Malkuth; he refuses to allow Malkuth to obsess his thought. He keeps on crying out that there is no difference between a goat and a God, in the hope of hypnotising himself (as it were) into that perception of their identity, which is his (partial and incorrect) idea of how things look from Kether.

This man performs great magic; very strong medicine. He does really find gold on the midden and skeletons in pretty girls.

In Abiegnus the Sacred Mountain of the Rosicrucians the Postulant finds but a coffin in the central shrine; yet that coffin contains Christian Rosencreutz who is dead and is alive for evermore and hath the keys of Hell and of Death.

Ay! Your Tiphereth man, child of Mercy and Justice, looks deeper than the skin!

But he seems a ridiculous object enough both to the Malkuth man and the Kether man.

Still, he's the most interesting man there is; and we all must pass through that stage before we get our heads really clear, the Kether-vision above the clouds that encircle the mountain Abiegnus.

IX

Running and returning, like the Cherubin, we may now resume our attempt to drill our hunchback friend into a presentable soldier. The digression will not have been all digression, either; for it will have thrown a deal of light on the question of the limitations of scepticism.

We have questioned the Malkuth point of view; it appears absurd, be it agreed. But the Tiphereth position is unshaken; Tiphereth needs no telling that Malkuth is absurd. When we turn our artillery against Tiphereth, that too crumbles; but Kether frowns above us.

Attack Kether, and it falls; but the Yetziratic Malkuth is still there....until we reach Kether of Atziluth and the Infinite Light, and Space, and Nothing.

So then we retire up the path, fighting rear-guard actions; at every moment a soldier is slain by a hunchback; but as we retire there is always a soldier just by us.

Until the end! The end? Buddha thought the supply of hunchbacks infinite; but why should not the soldiers themselves be infinite in number?

However that may be, here is the point; it takes a moment for a hunchback to kill his man, and the farther we get from our base the longer it takes. You may crumble to ashes the dream-world of a boy, as it were, between your fingers; but before you can bring the physical universe tumbling about a man's ears he requires to drill his hunchbacks so devilish well that they are terribly like soldiers themselves. And a question capable of shaking the consciousness of Samadhi could, I imagine, give long odds to one of Frederick's grenadiers.

It is useless to attack the mystic by asking him if he is quite sure Samadhi is good for his poor health; 'tis like asking the huntsman to be very careful, please, not to hurt the fox.

The ultimate Question, the one that really knocks Samadhi to pieces, is such a stupendous Idea that it is far more of a ! than all previous !'s whatever, for all its ? form.

And the name of that Question is Nibbana.

Take this matter of the soul.

When Mr. Judas McCabbage asks the Man in the Street why he believes in a soul, the Man stammers out that he has always heard so; naturally McCabbage has no difficulty in proving to him by biological methods that he has no soul; and with a sunny smile each passes on his way.

But McCabbage is wasted on the philosopher whose belief in a soul rests on introspection; we must have heavier metal; Hume will serve our turn, may be.

But Hume in his turn becomes perfectly futile, pitted against the Hindu mystic, who is in constant intense enjoyment of his new-found Atman. It takes a Buddha-gun to knock his castle down.

Now the ideas of McCabbage are banal and dull; those of Hume are live and virile; there is a joy in them greater than the joy of the Man in the Street. So too the Buddha-thought, Anatta, is a more splendid conception than the philosopher's Dutch-doll-like Ego, or the rational artillery of Hume.

This weapon, too, that has destroyed our lesser, our illusionary universes, ever revealing one more real, shall we not wield it with divine ecstasy? Shall we not, too, perceive the inter-dependence of the Questions and the Answers, the necessary connection of the one with the other, so that (just as $o \times \infty$ is an indefinite) we destroy the absolutism of either? ? or ! by their alternation and balance, until in our series ?!?!?!?...!?!?...we care nothing as to which may prove the final term, any single term being so negligible a quantity in relation to the vastness of the series? Is it not a series of geometrical progression, with a factor positive and incalculably vast?

In the light of the whole process, then, we perceive that there is no absolute value in the swing of the pendulum, though its shaft lengthen, its rate grow slower, and its sweep wider at every swing.

What should interest us ~~is~~ the consideration of the point from which it hangs, motionless at the height of things! We are unfavourably placed to observe this, desparately clinging as we are to the bob of the pendulum, sick with our senseless swinging to and fro in the abyss!

We must climb up the shaft to reach that point-- but-- wait one moment! How obscure and subtle has our simile become! Can we attach any true meaning to the phrase? I doubt it, seeing what we have taken for the limits of the swing. True, it may be that the end of the swing is always 360° so that the !-point and the ?-point coincide; but that is not the same thing as having no swing at all, unless we make kinematics identical with statics.

What is to be done? How shall such mysteries be uttered?

Is this how it is that the true Path of the Wise is said to lie in a totally different plane from all his advance in the path of Knowledge, and of Trance? We have already been obliged to take the Fourth Dimension to illustrate (if not explain) the nature of Samadhi.

Ah, say the adepts, Samadhi is not the end, but the beginning. You must regard Samadhi as the normal state of mind which enables you to begin your researches, just as waking is the state from which you rise to Samadhi, sleep the state from which you rose to waking. And only from Sammasamadhi-- continuous trance of the right kind-- can you rise up as it were on tiptoe and peer through the clouds unto the mountains.

Now of course it is really awfully decent of the adepts to take all that trouble over us, and to put it so nicely and clearly. All we have to do, you see, is to acquire Samma-samadhi, and then rise on tiptoe. Just so!

But then there are the other adepts. Hark at him! Little brother, he says, let us rather consider that as the pendulum swings more and more slowly every time, it must ultimately stop, as soon as the shaft is of infinite length. Good! Then it isn't a pendulum at all but a Mahalingam-- The Mahalingam of Shiva (Namo Shivaya namaha Aum!) which is all I ever thought it was; all you have to do is to keep swinging hard-- I know it's hook-swinging!-- and you get there in the End. Why trouble to swing? First, because you're bound to swing, whether you like it or not; second, because your attention is thereby distracted from those lumbar muscles in which the hook is so firmly fixed; third, because after all it's a ripping good game; fourth, because you want to get on, and even to seem to progress is better than standing still. A treadmill is admittedly good exercise.

Then, the question, "Why become an Arahat?" should precede, "How become an Arahat?" but an unbiassed man will easily cancel the first question with "Why not?" --the How is not so easy to get rid of. Then, from the standpoint of the Arahat himself, perhaps this "Why did I become an Arahat?" and "How did I become an Arahat?" have but a single solution!

In any case, we are wasting our time-- we are as ridiculous with our Arahats as Herod the Tetrarch with his peacocks! We pose Life with the question Why? and the first answer is: To obtain the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel.

To attach meaning to this statement we must obtain that Knowledge and Conversation: and when we have done that, we may proceed to the next Question. It is no good asking it now.

"There are purse-proud, penniless ones who stand at the door of the tavern, and revile the guests."

We attach little importance to the Reverend Out-at-Elbows, thundering in Bareboards Chapel that the rich man gets no enjoyment from his wealth.

Good, then. Let us obtain the volume entitled "The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage"; or the magical writings of that holy illuminated Man of God, Captain Fuller, and carry out fully their instructions.

And only when we have succeeded, when we have put a colossal ! against our vital ? need we inquire whether after all the soldier is not going to develop spinal curvature.

Let us take the first step; let us sing:

"I do not ask to see
The distant path; one step's enough for me."

But (you will doubtless say) I pith your ? itself with another ? : Why question life at all? Why not remain "a clean-living Irish gentleman" content with his handicap, and contemptuous of card and pencil? Is not the Buddha's goad "Everything is sorrow" little better than a currish whine? What do I care for old age, disease, and death? I'm a man, and a Colt at that. I spit on your snivelling Hindu prince, emasculate with debauchery in the first place, and asceticism in the second. A weak, dirty, paltry cur, sir, your Gautama!

Yes, I think I have no answer to that. The sudden apprehension of some vital catastrophe may have been the exciting cause of my conscious devotion to the attainment of Adeptship-- but surely the capacity was there, inborn. Mere despair and desire can do little; anyway, the first impulse of fear was the passing spasm of an hour; the magnetism of the path itself was the true lure. It is as foolish to ask me "Why do you adept?" as to ask God "Why do you pardon?" C'est son métier.

I am not so foolish as to think that my doctrine can ever gain the ear of the world. I expect that ten centuries hence the "nominal Crowleians" will be as pestilent and numerous a body as the "nominal Christians" are to-day; for (at present) I have been able to devise no mechanism for excluding them. Rather, perhaps, should I seek to find them a niche in the shrine, just as Hinduism provides alike for those capable of the Upanishads and those whose intelligence hardly reaches to the Tantras. In short, one must abandon the reality of religion for a sham, so that the religion may be universal enough for those few who are capable of its reality to nestle to its breast, and nurse their nature on its starry milk. But we anticipate!

My message is then twofold; to the greasy bourgeois, I preach discontent; I shock him, I stagger him, I cut away earth from under his feet, I turn him upside down, I give him hashish and make him run amok, I twitch his buttocks with the red-hot tongs of my Sadistic fancy-- until he feels uncomfortable.

But to the man who is already as uneasy as St. Lawrence on his silver grill, who feels the Spirit stir in him, even as a woman feels, and sickens at, the first leap of the babe in

her womb, to him I bring the splendid vision, the perfume and the glory, the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel. And to whosoever hath attained that height will I put a further Question, announce a further Glory.

It is my misfortune and not my fault that I am bound to deliver this elementary message.

"Man has two sides; one to face the world with,
One to show a woman when he loves her."

We must pardon Browning his bawdy jest; for his truth is over true! But it is your own fault if you are the world instead of the beloved; and only see of me what Moses saw of God!

It is disgusting to have to spend one's life jettisoning dirt in the face of the British public in the hope that in washing it they may wash off the acrid grease of their commercialism, the saline streaks of their hypocritical tears, the putrid perspiration of their morality, the dribbling slobber of their sentimentality and their religion. And they don't wash it!...

But let us take a less unpleasing metaphor, the whip! As some schoolboy poet repeatedly wrote, his rimes as poor as Edwin Arnold, his metre as erratic and as good as Francis Thompson, his good sense and frank indecency a match for Browning!

"Can't be helped; must be done--
So..."

Nay! 'tis a bad, bad rime.

And only after the scourge that smites shall come the rod that consoles, if I may borrow a somewhat daring simile from Abdullah Haji of Shiraz and the twenty-third psalm.

Well, I would much prefer to spend my life at the rod; it is wearisome and loathsome to be constantly flogging the tough hide of Britons, whom after all I love. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son that He receiveth." I shall really be glad if a few of you will get it over, and come and sit on daddy's knee!

The first step is the hardest; make a start, and I will soon set the hunchback lion and the soldier unicorn fighting for your crown. And they shall lie down together at the end, equally glad, equally weary; while sole and sublime that crown of thine (brother!) shall glitter in the frosty Void of the abyss, its twelve stars filling that silence and solitude with a music and a motion that are more silent and more still than they; thou shalt sit throned on the Invisible, thine eyes fixed upon That which we call Nothing, because it is beyond Everything attainable by thought, or trance, thy right hand gripping the azure rod of Light, thy left hand clasped upon the scarlet scourge of Death; thy body girdled with a snake more brilliant than the sun, its name Eternity; thy mouth curved moonlike in a smile, in the invisible kiss of Nuit, our Lady of the Starry Abodes; thy body's electric flesh stilled by sheer might to a movement closed upon itself in the controlled fury of Her love-- nay, beyond all these Images art thou (little brother!) who art passed from I and Thou, and He unto That which hath no Name, no Image....

Little brother, give me thy hand; for the first step is hard.